

## (b) Organization

By 1917 the membership of the Federal Council consisted of 28 denominations with a combined membership of about 17,000,000. The statement of purpose, given in the organization's preamble, indicated that the council's work and being was:

---to display essential oneness of the Christian Church in America

--to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and cooperation.

Particular objectives were defined in the charter in a five-fold step:

--expression of fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian church...

--bringing of the Christian bodies in America to united service for Christ and the world...

--encouragement of devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual and religious activities of the churches..

--securing a larger combined influence for the church of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social conditions of the people so as to promote the law of Christ in every relationship of life...

--the assisting in the organization of local branches of the council to promote aims in local committees.

Some limitations were accepted in the organization and some were imposed to make the council more palatable. Among these was the agreement that the council was not to be a binding power or to make polity for local churches. Constituent bodies would not lose their individual credibility.

Obviously some weaknesses are seen in the foregoing statements although they sound rather good with a quick reading. The glaring faults are in two areas:

The lack of solid theological posturing

The obsession with social issues

These two evident shortcomings made acceptance of the council a hard issue with many evangelicals...and even some liberals. They tended to make the council more involved with the culture and less committed to the Gospel work of the church.