

(b) The Life and Work Conferences

These were attempts to put together the ideas of church life and work in the world. Soderblum had a strong role. The major meetings were in Stockholm in 1925 and in Oxford in 1937. Things were beginning to roll towards a world meeting in 1937 but the second world war put things on hold.

(c) The Faith and Order Conference

The idea was to work out areas of common agreement in what is believed and what is practiced in religious life. With the many different liturgical and non-liturgical views held among the Christian bodies, this was not a little task and major conferences were held at Lausanne in 1927 and Edinburgh in 1937. The ten year cycle, incidentally was thought to be about right for the necessary review and preparation of agenda.

Both of these conferences issued calls for the World Council idea. They not only set the stage for the eventual formulation of the World Council but also determined the pattern of its inclusivistic nature by their own make-ups. We will not hammer this point at this time but the biblical concept of the church is not that of a gathering of religious persons but of those who are professed adherents of the Scriptural revelation as understood in the life of the church. Doctrinal hair-splitting is not the problem: the inclusion of liberals and modernists who patently deny the most fundamental truths of Christianity is the problem. Likely I will wax eloquent on this and on some of the leaders of the group. But probably not so eloquently or effectively as does the Apostle in Acts 20.

(4) The call for the council was issued by the aforementioned bodies, et al, in 1937...the war hindered the fulfilling of the call.

(5) Convening of the World Council of Churches: Amsterdam, 1948.

From 1939 to 1946 very little was accomplished or possible due to the stress of the conflict. With the end of the war came a great relaxation of tensions. The United Nations was developed and the pressures of the struggle for peace made the relaxation all-consuming to the point of near collapse. It is easier to understand that mental set if one has lived through such an era. The euphoria that comes at the end of such conflict is a false anesthetic to the real ills but it is very gripping and hard to offset. The formation of the World Council of Churches came as a part or an inclusion of that euphoria as did the United Nations and a bunch of similar international pleasantries.