

congregational bodies and was consummated in 1925 after nearly 25 years of discussion. It was hailed as an ecumenical success although in growth, development, etc., all of the entering bodies have indicated a decline since the union was accomplished. An attempt was made to amalgamate church government patterns so as to not bring a totally new thrust to any one segment and this was somewhat successful. Evangelicals in the Presbyterian church of Canada largely rejected the merger and maintained separate status. From our rather jaundiced view the United Church is a good study in how to lose effectiveness in witness. It currently is involved with talks among Anglicans and a few other smaller bodies. But in general it has continued to lose membership, churches, mission interest and general community potency.

(5) In summary:

Many merger discussions exist among American churches. The Free Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, and Evangelical Congregational churches have discussed union for some years but doctrine is still very important to these bodies and while they are all Wesleyan there are a few doctrinal bridges yet to be crossed. There have been divisionary moves in the old Church of God structures and complimentary merger suggestions with the Church of the Brethren, etc. The best thing is to keep your ears open...it takes a long time to effect merger when truth is a focal point...and even a long time when it is not!

b. "World" fellowships promoting ecumenical advance

The chief purposes in these fellowships as originally constituted was to give a fellowshiping opportunity to persons of different individual denominations but common denominational heritage. Many of the denominational bodies were purely geographic and these had no real difference with another body...they were simply moved away across the water, so to speak. Therefore there was no need for theological rapprochement, they already believed the same things, but what was needed was an opportunity to share in the work of one another and to have a fuller understanding of what the commitment of the group was to the total world. Many of these groups are much earlier than the modern movement (ecumenics) but most have come to have a role in it, probably a lot of it due to the loss of theological vitality on the part of the group. After all, if neither group really believes anything definitive, there is no reason for two groups. Well, here are a few:

(1) The World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Formed in 1875, the group was headed by some strongly evangelical presbyterian seeking cooperation among churches that held to a presbyterial form of government. With the passage of time the Alliance has seen itself as a catalyst in