

Odair Pedroso Mateus

The World Alliance  
of Reformed Churches  
and the  
Modern Ecumenical Movement

A Selected, Chronological, Annotated Bibliography  
(1863-2004)

Papers, Statements and Reports from  
Councils, Committees, Departments and Official Commissions

World Alliance of Reformed Churches  
Geneva 2005

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*This survey is dedicated to  
the memory of John Mackay  
and to the cloud of witnesses  
who help the Alliance  
carry out its ecumenical  
calling today.*



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# Presentation

Organisations which serve the ecumenical movement have historically produced volumes of statements and reports covering a wide range of issues. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches as one such organisation is not an exception to this. Often the constituency's frustrations stem from the fact that to access which statement was made at what time is very difficult. Researchers often have the difficult task of uncovering and deciphering these statements.

This is where the executive secretary of the WARC Department of Theology, my colleague, Odair Pedroso Mateus comes in with this refreshing instrument and puts together in one volume a bibliography on the life and work of the Alliance vis-à-vis the modern ecumenical movement. Through this annotated bibliography of WARC's statements and reports, researchers and others within and outside the Reformed family can have access to the wide range of material which serves as evidence of WARC's longstanding commitment within the ecumenical movement.

This instrument comes at a critical time in the ecumenical movement when churches and different ecumenical organisations are searching for a new and more effective configuration of ecumenism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. WARC's current investment in this process is based on a long history of ecumenical engagement as witnessed to in this annotated bibliography.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the author, who has done a thorough job of compiling the bibliographical material and organising it coherently in this volume. We pray that it will truly stand as a witness to WARC's engagement in the ecumenical movement and strengthen the member churches and their ecumenical actions in their localities.

**Setri Nyomi**  
**General Secretary**

# Explanatory Note

This survey was originally designed as an instrument for those who study, teach, practise, and serve the one ecumenical movement. It appears now also as a witness to a certain way of understanding the Reformation heritage in general, and the Reformed style in particular, which envisages the common search for visible expressions of the unity given in Christ as one of the destinations of a pilgrim confessional identity constantly reshaped by the historical preaching of the Gospel of justification and justice.

The official documents selected and annotated - in order to help the reader to discern their relevance for her or his interests - were organised into five chronological sections. These sections were established according to distinguishable periods in the history of the ecumenical movement and of the two Christian communions that merged in 1970 to create the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

James McCord, a former WARC President, once wrote that Visser't Hooft, the first general secretary of the World Council of Churches, was quoted as having said that "without the Alliance there would have been no World Council" and that Philip Potter, the third WCC general secretary, had spoken of the Council as "the child of the Reformed Alliance". This bibliographic survey does not offer documented evidence to the two quotations. But it makes the case for their substantial accuracy.

**Odair Pedroso Mateus**  
**Pentecost 2005**



# I. Towards a Presbyterian Alliance and a Congregational Council of Churches (1863-1876)

*The Presbyterian Alliance was founded in 1875 and the Congregational Council in 1891, both in London, England. Though the texts listed in this first section are mentioned in official documents of both organisations (this is particularly the case of William Blaikie's "Introductory Narrative", included in the Proceedings of the 1877 Alliance's first general council), most of them appeared in the years leading to their foundation.*

*These texts provide indications on different circumstances and different dynamics favouring the establishment of the first Christian world communions. These circumstances and dynamics have to do, among other factors, with Western colonialism and the missionary experience of Reformed churches in non-Christian cultures, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, with the Industrial Revolution and the pastoral challenges confronting Reformed churches in new urban situations, especially in Europe.*

*The need for growing interdenominational cooperation in overseas mission and in home mission contrasts, at the end of the 19th century, with a Reformed ecclesial landscape marked by secular isolation and by old and new divisions that begins to appear in a new spiritual light and gain a new meaning as Protestant theology engages with modern philosophy and culture.*

**1** **“The Presbyterian (Missionary) Alliance of India”.** *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World.* Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.367-370.

“The subject was mooted in 1863 by a Bengal civilian, an elder in the Church of Scotland, in a ‘Plea for a Presbyterian Church of India...’ 1865: The subject of organic union, “or a United Church of India, was also discussed...” (p. 367).

“As thus called, a Conference composed of representatives of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the American Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Reformed Church in America, met in November 1871, that it was then agreed, that, while the Conference was convinced of the desirability of a Corporate Union embracing all Presbyterians in India, it yet saw certain difficulties in the way of its immediate accomplishment...” (p. 368)

From a circular letter sent in 1875 to the churches in Europe and North America represented in the Presbyterian Alliance of India: “You have sent us to this country as Evangelists to preach the everlasting gospel of the grace of God and to organise churches according to the Presbyterian form of church-government; but we cannot suppose that you wish us to perpetuate here the divisions in the Presbyterian family, which adverse circumstances in our native countries have originated. We think that we are justified in this supposition by the efforts now being made at home to heal those divisions. Every argument in favour of union among Presbyterians in Christian countries is strengthened by our situation in the midst of Heathens and Mohammedans.” (p. 369)

**2** Macgregor, J. **“Our Presbyterian Empire”.** *The Presbyterian*, May 1868.

On the desirableness of “a Council of Presbyterians who hold by the Presbyterian standards (...) at which all the Churches might confer for œcumenical purposes, while each Church, for local purposes, would always retain her own autonomy, and hold

herself perfectly free to accept or reject the decisions of the Council in the exercise of her own independent judgment under Christ". W.G. Blaikie makes reference to Macgregor's article in his "Introductory Narrative", *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877*, p.2.

### **3** Blaikie, W. G. "**Confederation of English-speaking Presbyterians, - a Proposal**". *The Presbyterian*, November 1871.

Such a confederation would have the following objectives: 1. To foster the idea of an ecclesiastical family; 2. To give to the various churches more of "the communion of the saints"; 3. To communicate to each other the results of experience in practical work; 4. To show how the elements of true conservatism and legitimate freedom and progress might be adjusted to each other; 5. To divide foreign and other fields of labour among the Churches; 6. To give opportunities for united prayer; 7. To cultivate Christian friendship. W.G. Blaikie quotes this article that he wrote soon after J. McCosh's 1870 sermon on the foundation of the Presbyterian Alliance in his "Introductory Narrative", *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877*, p.3.

### **4** Moir Porteous, J. *The Government of the Kingdom of Christ*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1873 (1872).

Contains a proposal for a general council or a consultative assembly. "Would it not be a grand moral spectacle were representative associate presbyters from all the Presbyterian Churches of the world to meet in the name and by the authority of the King and Head of the Church, to consult and determine as to the best means of removing obstacles to, and of promoting the establishment of, His Kingdom in every part of the world?" (p.328). W.G. Blaikie (see below document 9) refers to Moir Porteous' work in his "Introductory Narrative", *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877*, p.3. A recent edition of *The government of the Kingdom of Christ* (renamed *Jesus Christ King of the Church*,

ISBN 0-9526799-4-9) no longer includes the survey on Presbyterian churches around the world.

**5** McCosh, J. **“Presbyterianism in Foreign Lands”**. *The Tercentenary Book*, Philadelphia, 1872.

McCosh’s contribution to a book marking the celebration of three 1572 events - the Saint Bartholomew massacre, the death of John Knox, and the establishment of Presbyterianism in England - includes a plea for a Pan-Presbyterian council:

“It has long been a favourite idea of mine that all the Presbyterian Churches might be brought together at a Pan-Presbyterian Council, at which each of them might be represented. (...) Of course there must be a doctrinal basis. But this should not consist in a new creed or confession. Let each Church retain its own standards, and be admitted into the Union only on condition that these embrace the cardinal truths of salvation. There must also be certain principles of Church order pre-supposed such as the parity of ministers, and government by representative councils, in which ministers and elders have a joint place. But the mode of carrying out these principles must be left to each organisation - in this way securing that we have in the Church, as in all the works of God, unity with variety. The Grand Council should have authority to see that their fundamental principles of doctrine and of government are carried out in each of the Churches, and might cut off those that deliberately departed from them in act or in profession. But beyond this it need have no other disciplinary power. (...) [B]ut for the last ten years I have been speaking and writing on this subject in a variety of quarters”.

McCosh was elected the first president of the Alliance in London, 1875. His article is quoted by W.G. Blaikie, “Introductory Narrative”. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877*, p.2-3 (see below document 9).

**6** **“Origin of the Movement in America”**. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh*

*July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World.* Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.378.

The resolution adopted by the Presbyterians of the North of the USA in Baltimore, May 1873, on promoting the formation of a Presbyterian Alliance. A committee is to be appointed “...to correspond with sister churches holding by the Westminster standards, with the view of bringing about an Œcumenical Council of such Churches to consider subjects of common interest to all, and especially to promote harmony of action in the mission fields at home and abroad.” (p. 378)

## **7** Ross, Hastings. “**An Ecumenical Council of Congregational Churches**”. *The Congregational Quarterly* [USA], 1874.

Copies of this article that launches the idea of an International Congregational Council were also circulated in England and Canada. See below: Mackennal, Alex. “Preface”. *The International Congregational Council - London 1891. Authorised Record of Proceedings.* London, James Clark & Co., 1891, p.xxiii-xxv.

## **8** “**First Constitution of The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System**”. In Blaikie, W. G. “Introductory Narrative”. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World.* Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p. 9.

“It is agreed to form a Presbyterian Alliance to meet in General Council from time to time in order to confer upon matters of common interest, and to further the ends for which the Church has been constituted by her Divine Lord and only King”. “In

forming this Alliance, the Presbyterian Churches do not mean to change their fraternal relations with other Churches...” The council “shall not interfere with the existing creed or constitution of any Church in the Alliance, or with its internal order or external relations”. Article II, on Membership: “Any Church organised on Presbyterian principles which holds the supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in matters of faith and morals, and whose creed is in harmony with the consensus of the Reformed Confessions...” Objects of the Council: consider questions of general interest; seek the welfare of Churches, especially such as are weak or persecuted; gather and disseminate information concerning the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world; commend the Presbyterian system; entertain all subjects directly connected with the work of evangelisation such as the combination of Church energies, the religious instruction of the young, and “the best methods of opposing infidelity and Romanism.” (p.9)

9 Blaikie, W. G. **“Introductory Narrative”**. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World*. Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.1-17.

A detailed account of the origins of the Alliance and preparations leading to its first general council by the Alliance’s future president, then professor at New College, Edinburgh. Quotes:

“The idea of an Alliance, Council, or Confederation of the Reformed Churches had a prominent place in the minds of the Reformers and has seldom been overlooked by those whose minds have been impressed with the unity of the church. In 1561, Beza, at a Conference at St. Germain, urged the necessity of such a council. The following passage from a letter of Calvin’s to Archbishop Cranmer in 1552...” (p.1).

“It is very important, however, to remark that in approving of the proposal of a general Council, it was understood among all, and expressly stated by some, that the Council was not to be an authoritative body, that it was to have no jurisdiction even over the Churches represented in it, and that it was to exercise only a moral influence

upon them. It may appear as if this reservation destroyed the chief ground on which such a Council had a claim to exist in the Presbyterian system. If the system demands a General Council to complete it, ought not that Council to possess the same sort of authority and jurisdiction as the other Assemblies or Synods of the several Churches? Logically, this may be correct; but the case is one of many in which the conclusions of logic require to be modified by practical considerations. An authoritative Council, ruling and controlling all the Churches represented in it, is an obvious impossibility in present circumstances. The variety of language and race, the distance of Churches from one another, the diversity of historical traditions among them, the ignorance prevailing of one another's ways, would make a supreme authoritative Assembly an impossibility, at least for the present" (p.7).

"After much consideration it was agreed that at present the Prussian Church could not be expected to send representatives to the Council, but that members might attend in their individual capacity, and perhaps such adjustments might be made in our title or otherwise as would allow the Church to send representatives afterwards. The new constitution of the Church, which is hardly yet in working order, is Presbyterian." (p. 11)

"Our mission formally was only to the 'Reformed' Churches technically so called. But often, especially in Germany, Hungary, and France, we were asked whether we excluded the Lutherans. It was represented to us that the government of the Lutheran Church was substantially Presbyterian, and we had good cause to know that in some Lutheran Churches, that of Württemberg especially, there is no small measure of evangelical life and unction. Our reply was that the Council itself must decide that question, but we encouraged the visit of Lutherans who were in sympathy with our movement generally, that they might become acquainted with it more fully, and that thus the question might be ripened." (p. 11-12).



## II. The Presbyterian Alliance, the Congregational Council and Christian Unity (1877-1910)

*During the years covered by this second section the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists hold their respective first general council or assembly. The Presbyterian Alliance in particular has to clarify its confessional self-understanding (which is the confessional and the polity profile of the churches eligible for membership?) and at the same time address the issues of common interest of its member churches listed in the constitutional aims of its general council.*

*The texts gathered in this section deal, therefore, with issues such as the consensus of the Reformed confessions, government in Reformed and Presbyterian churches, the unity and catholicity of the church, and the substantial unity of Reformed and Presbyterian churches. Matters of common interest in this period include cooperation and union of agencies and churches in the common mission fields and what the Alliance's constitution of 1875 calls "the best methods of opposing infidelity and Romanism".*

*The existence of Christian organisations that cross denominational borders - such as the World's Evangelical Alliance, the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, the World Sunday School Association, the World Young Women's Christian Association, and the World Student Christian Federation - as well as the world missionary conferences (like the one held in New York in 1900) have not yet engaged the dynamics which progressively leads different ecumenical actors to seek growing cooperation and finally place their ecumenical initiatives under the leadership of a fellowship of Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Churches: the World Council of Churches.*



- 1** Flint, Robert. “**Opening Sermon (John 17.20-21)**”. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World*. Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p. 18.

According to the *Report of Proceedings* “the discourse was an earnest plea for unity of spirit and purpose and counsel in advancing the kingdom of Christ in the world, especially among those who have the same name and belong to the same family of Churches”. Extracts of the sermon were not published until 1927, by the time the First World Conference on Faith and Order was held in Lausanne, Switzerland.

“I trust that Protestants will never think slight the differences which separate them from the Church of Rome; and yet I hesitate not to say that when Protestants in general are clearly able to discern the oneness even beneath these differences, and cordially to love whatever is of Christ and His Holy Spirit, even when it appears in the Church of Rome, a greater step will have been taken towards the attainment of Christian unity than would be the mere external union of all the denominations of Protestantism. (...)”

All the differences of principle which separate most at least of our Christian denominations might redound to their common honour, and reveal rather than conceal their common unity, had their members and spokesmen only a little more justice, generosity, and love - a little more grace and virtue - a little more of the spirit of that kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. They might set a high value on their distinctive principles and yet rejoice that what they held apart was so small a portion of the truth in comparison with what they enjoyed in common.” (*The Quarterly Register*, XIII(11), August 1927, p. 260-261).

- 2** Schaff, P. “**The Consensus of the Reformed Confessions**”. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World*. Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.27-38.

Contents: Cranmer's Proposal of a Reformed Consensus. The Reformed Confessions. The Harmony of the Reformed Confessions. The Theological Revolution. The Revival of Evangelical Theology. The Relation of Modern Evangelical Theology to the Reformed Confessions. The Reformed Consensus and the Presbyterian Alliance. According to Schaff "The Reformed Confessions present the same system of Christian doctrine. They are variations of one theme. There is fully as much harmony between them as between the six symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, or between the Tridentine and Vatican decrees of Rome. The difference is confined to minor details, and to the extent to which the Augustinian and Calvinistic principles are carried out; in other words, the difference is theological, not religious, and logical rather than theological. The Reformed confessions are Protestant in bibliology, oecumenical or old catholic in theology and Christology, Augustinian in anthropology and the doctrine of predestination, evangelical in soteriology, Calvinistic in ecclesiology and sacramentology, and anti-papal in eschatology. Let us briefly explain this." (p.28-29)

**3** Godet, F. "**The Consensus of the Reformed Confessions**". *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World.* Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.38-40.

"...The main point of our profession in the present century should be the real, personal, pre-existential divinity of our Lord and Saviour..." (p. 38). "What is, in our day, the main point of evangelical truth, to the service of which our Synods ought, before all else, to devote the authority which the Church confers upon them, our schools of theology their science, and our preachers the energy of their testimony?" In the 16th century it was justification by faith. But this is not the whole of Apostolic teaching. Paul spoke of a higher Christian teaching, a wisdom which he preached to the perfect. This includes the person of Christ in his pre-existence, the beauty of the Church and Christ's union with the Church for ever. (p. 38-39)

- 4 Kraft, W. **“The Consensus of the Reformed Confessions”**. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World*. Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.41-48.

“Apart from some older compositions of a mosaic description, nothing has been attempted in more recent times in the way of formulating a Consensus of the Reformed Confessions. And yet such a Consensus is possible.” (p. 41) Contents: The Three groups of symbols. Attempt at a Consensus of the Reformed Confessions in 31 articles based on the historic confessions.

- 5 Mitchell, A. F. **“The Harmony Between the Bibliology of the Westminster Confession and That of the Earlier Reformed Confessions”**. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World*. Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.371-377.

This is a table in which the 19th century historian and editor of the Westminster standards shows in detail “the coincidences in thought and expression” between the Westminster theology of Scriptures “and the corresponding chapters of earlier Reformed Confessions, particularly those of France and Holland, as well as those Irish Articles to which the framers of the Confession so closely adhered, and on which their work generally is more immediately dependent.” (p. 371)

- 6 Herdman, J.C. **“Co-Operation in Missions”**. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World*. Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.154-156.

“Let it not be supposed that there is a want of brotherliness among evangelical missionaries. (...) Were half the charity shown in the Churches at home that manifested for the most part by their agents abroad, our divisions would rarely be a hindrance to the gospel. (...) Be it recognised, that we do not crave increased Presbyterian co-operation at the expense of that which is wider and more catholic. We are above all things *Christian* ; ‘Presbyterian’ only at a secondary rate : and I hope we shall be agreed to seek no closer bonds among ourselves in the foreign field, which would tend to separate us from others whom we acknowledge (and ought to love) as equally loyal to the Crucified-Risen Redeemer” (p.154).

- 7** Thomson, J. “**Co-operation in Missions**”. *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council - Convened at Edinburgh July 1877. With Relative Documents Bearing on the Affairs of the Council, and the State of the Presbyterian Churches Throughout the World.* Edinburgh, Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877, p.156-158.

“It is believed that co-operation of this kind is not only practicable, but unspeakably desirable. It places the whole enterprise upon a platform eminently catholic and Christ-like, and is therefore in perfect accord with the controlling spirit that has called into being this grand Council. For though we are all Presbyterians, and cherish the belief that Presbyterianism, rightly understood and administered, contains the essential elements of the ecclesiastical order and constitution of the Church of the future and of the world, yet we should hasten to say, and take every proper occasion to repeat, that there is nothing in Presbyterianism exclusive or antagonistic as regards Christian Churches differently constituted from our own” (p.156-157).

- 8** Hitchcock, R.D. “**The Ceremonial, the Moral and the Emotional in Christian Life and Worship**”. *Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance - Convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880.* Philadelphia, Presbyterian Journal Company, and J. C. McCurdy & Co., 1880, p.71-77.

“This our Presbyterian Alliance of course emphasizes Presbyterianism ; but in no hard, narrow, narrowing way. It looks out in all directions, and is actually leading out, into wider fellowships. Its next logical consequent had already in fact preceded it : I mean the ecumenic *Protestant Alliance*, Evangelical we call it, which, in 1552, John Calvin, as he wrote to Cranmer, would have crossed ten seas to assist in consummating. In time we shall see that still better ecumenic *Christian Alliance*, of which there is scarcely a sign as yet. And then at last, in God’s own time, far down the horizon now, we shall have not union only, but unity, the real unity, for which our Lord prayed, and the ages wait” (p.71-72).

**9** McVicar, D.H. “**Presbyterian Catholicity**”. *Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance - Convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880*. Philadelphia, Presbyterian Journal Company, and J. C. McCurdy & Co., 1880, p.344-353.

What is catholicity? It is not to ignore the Church of God; it does not require us “to indorse indiscriminately all forms of religion or of Church government as equally true”; we are not required to abandon “definite theological opinions or to cease to formulate such.” (p. 344-345)

True catholicity forbids the attempt at “forcible fusion of all Churches into one visible mass, but binds us to seek the union of all on the terms revealed in God’s word”. Both Romish and Anglican Episcopacy “have signally failed to gather all Christendom into their fold... We are also unable to see how the opposite extreme, Congregationalism, with its want for organized unity and inadequate executive power for purpose of discipline, can hope to become universal. But it is otherwise with Presbyterianism.” True catholicity must be regulated “by a supreme regard to the honor and glory of our divine Savior, as well as a tender concern for the members of his body” (p. 346).

Presbyterian catholicity is the legitimate outcome: of Presbyterian views of the plan of redemption; of Christ’s great redemptive work; of the office of the Holy Ghost in salvation (Roman Catholics and Protestant Ritualists “have presumed to teach that the efficacy of grace is tied to their own ordinances.” They therefore “narrow

down the organization and life of the Church of God to their own sect, and do not hesitate theoretically and practically to unchurch and excommunicate all others because they lack this imaginary succession.” (p. 346-349) We should insist upon “the unity of the Church under Christ”; be careful “to vindicate our system of Church courts, as rising naturally out of this principle of unity”; to insist upon “the official equality of all the ordained teachers and rulers of the Church...”; to give prominence to the facts that “the purity of the Church is secured, and that the rights and liberties of the people are guaranteed by Presbyterianism.” (p. 350-352)

**10** Campbell, W. H. “**Presbyterian Catholicity**”. *Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance - Convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880*. Philadelphia, Presbyterian Journal Company, and J. C. McCurdy & Co., 1880, p.354-355.

Christian unity “is the unity of the Spirit”. The Holy Spirit makes it. We must “keep it in the bond of peace”. The first step in keeping unity is “to recognise the work of the Spirit”. The Presbyterian family, for ages substantially one in faith, discipline, and worship “has now for the first, in this Alliance, a historical oneness, a visible Presbyterian Catholic Church.” (p. 354) Should this second general council “not declare itself to the whole world as being what it is - the Presbyterian Catholic Church?”

The work that awaits us is fivefold: “(1.) To keep the Church fully informed about every branch of the Presbyterian family. (2.) Sympathy, counsel and help are to be always and promptly given, wherever and whenever the need of the family demands. (3.) Counsel and co-operation against the enemies of the kingdom of Christ. (4.) Preaching the gospel to every creature on earth. (5.) Ever watchful care lest we sin against the unity of the Spirit, by entering into fields of labor, either in Christian or heathen lands, already fully occupied by some branch of the Presbyterian family, or by an evangelical Church.” (p. 354-355) “Presbyterian Catholicity, taught by the Spirit, will have for its maxim, *Helpful to all God’s people in doing God’s work, and a hindrance to none.*” (p. 355)

**11** **“Creeds and Confessions”**. *Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance - Convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880*. Philadelphia, Presbyterian Journal Company, and J. C. McCurdy & Co., 1880, p.379-395.

Interventions by: J.R.W. Sloane, T. Neilson, W. Murkland, D. Macrea, R.F. Burns, H. Calderwood, W. Reid, W. Neely, T.H. Skinner, D.A. Wallace. P. Schaff on “defining the consensus”: “The revision of an existing confession of faith is exclusively the business of the Church or Churches which hold that confession. But the defining of the several confessions, on which this Council is professedly based, is altogether within the province of the Council” (p.394).

**12** **“The Creeds”**. *Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance - Convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880*. Philadelphia, Presbyterian Journal Company, and J. C. McCurdy & Co., 1880, p.965-1123.

This rather extensive and detailed report, prepared at the request of the 1877 Edinburgh general council, includes data on creeds, confessions and formulas in use in the various Presbyterian and Reformed churches in Scotland, England, Ireland, the British colonies, Canada, United States, France, Switzerland, Bohemia and Moravia, Hungary, Spain; Foreign Missions, including India, Mexico, Brazil, Italy, Greece, China.

The following questions were raised to the committee in charge of this survey: “What are the existing Creeds or Confessions of churches composing this Alliance, and what have been their previous Creeds and Confessions, with any modification of these, and the dates and occasions of the same, from the Reformation to the present day”; “What are the existing Formulas of Subscription, if any, and what have been the previous formulas of subscription used in these Churches in connection with their Creeds and Confessions; and “How far has individual adherence to these Creeds by subscription, or otherwise, been required from ministers, elders, or other office-bearers respectively, and also from the private members of the same” (p. 965).

**13 “Report of the Committee on the Formulating of the Consensus”.** *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Third General Council, Belfast, 1884.* Belfast/Edinburgh/London, Assembly’s Offices/Tract and Book Society/Presbyterian Publication Office, 1884, p.31-36 (Discussion: p. 36-48).

Conclusions: “It is not indispensable for the Alliance, as an organisation, that the Consensus should at present be further defined. II. The Committee fully grants that there are advantages which the defining of the Consensus would secure, as working out the ends for which the organization exists. III. The advantages which might arise from a satisfactory definition of the Consensus seem to the Committee, for the present, outweighed by its risks and difficulties”. Schaff: “I admit that it is perfectly useless to enter into such a solemn and difficult business without substantial unity” (p.44). H. Story: “We cannot, as the General Council of the Reformed Churches, adopt or bind ourselves by any formulas which are not to be binding upon us as members of these individual Churches (...). ...It would have no legal authority or force whatever...” (p.47).

G. D. Mathews, editor of the *Proceedings*: the constitution speaks of the “Consensus of the Reformed Confessions”. “As the definition of the Consensus could not be said to be a necessity, it was deemed best to let things remain for the present as they are.” (“Introduction”, p.iv)

**14 Junkin, W.F. “The Substantial Unity of the Reformed Churches and the Sympathy for Each Other that Should Pervade Them”.** *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Third General Council, Belfast, 1884.* Belfast/Edinburgh/London, Assembly’s Offices/Tract and Book Society/Presbyterian Publication Office, 1884, p.101-107.

Leading features of the substantial unity: 1. The supreme authority of the Word of God. 2. The inseparable union between religion and morals. 3. The high estimate set upon education under Christian control. 4. The maintenance of the spiritual character of the Church. 5. The principles of religious and civil liberty.



- 15** Morris, E.D. **“The Substantial Unity of the Reformed Churches and the Sympathy for Each Other that Should Pervade Them”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Third General Council, Belfast, 1884*. Belfast/Edinburgh/London, Assembly’s Office/Tract and Book Society/Presbyterian Publication Office, 1884, p.107-111.

“It is here, in what we thus are, as one great company of those who have passed through especial discipline and have received a special character and mission, that our deepest unity lies. And if we ever forget this spiritual fact, if we devote ourselves rather to the attaining or the cultivating of an outward unity only, we shall in the end gain nothing but a dead or destructive uniformity, void of grace or power...” (p.109). “...The actual unifying of Presbyterian belief and polity and worship throughout the world...” (p.110).

- 16** de Felice, P. **“The Substantial Unity of the Reformed Churches and the Sympathy for Each Other that Should Pervade Them”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Third General Council, Belfast, 1884*. Belfast/Edinburgh/London, Assembly’s Office/Tract and Book Society/Presbyterian Publication Office, 1884, p.112-117.

“...The substantial unity of the Presbyterian descent, resides in their reverence for God, in their reverence for His Word, to which nothing is to be added, from which nothing is to be taken away; in their reverence for man, and especially to the place given to laymen in our ecclesiastical organisation.” (p.116-117).

- 17** Pomeroy, C.S. **“Romanism in the United States”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Third General Council, Belfast, 1884*. Belfast/Edinburgh/London, Assembly’s Office/Tract and Book Society/Presbyterian Publication Office, 1884, p.343-352.

“This fact is memorable, that no country, in modern or ancient times, has ever matched the increase of population enjoyed by the United States during the present century. (...) *But Romanism has done far more than that*” (p.344). “On the whole, we feel that our country and any country, is imperilled by every advance of Romanism. Our Washington was not blind when he solemnly warned us against it” (p.350). “Facts disprove the common impression that effort is wasted upon Romanists. Reception of converts from their ranks to our Churches is becoming a common occurrence.” (p.351)

**18** Burns, R.F. **“Romanism in Canada”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Third General Council, Belfast, 1884*. Belfast-Edinburgh-London, Assembly’s Offices-Tract and Book Society-Presbyterian Publication Office, 1884, p.352-357.

“Romanism in Canada includes 4 archbishops, over a score of bishops, 1,500 priests and a million and three-quarters of the people. It is a solid, compact body, of vast resources. It has had the French Canadians under its exclusive keeping for between two and three centuries. And what has it made of them? (...) The work of the Priest and the Puritan how opposite!” (p.355)

**19** Blaikie, W.G. **“Introduction”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Fourth General Council, London, 1888*. London, Presbyterian Alliance Office, 1889, p.xi-xvi.

“We note, with great satisfaction, the remarkable progress which this volume records in measures for securing co-operation, and, in some cases, more than co-operation, in Foreign Missions. This is one of the most substantive achievements of the Alliance...” (p.xiv).

“One word as to the contact of the Lambeth Conference and the Presbyterian Council. The Lambeth Conference did not appear to much advantage in connection with that contact. The very fact of their having found it desirable to frame a resolution

declining to answer memorials or letters addressed to them was, to outsiders at least, a token of weakness.” (p.xvi)

**20** Hoge, Moses D. **“Christ’s Method of Reconciling the Antagonisms of Society”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Fourth General Council, London, 1888*. London, Presbyterian Alliance Office, 1889, p.151-160.

“There is not only a growing realisation of the essential unity of all who constitute the true indivisible Church, but a growing manifestation of that unity (...) “[I]t is the true, rational, Scriptural toleration of men who have positive convictions of their own, and the courage to defend them, yet who believe those who differ from them may be equally loyal to the truth, equally honest in striving to discover it, equally conscientious in maintaining it, equally sincere in propagating it...” (p.154-155).

**21** **“Conflict with Rome”** [a plenary discussion]. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Minutes and Proceedings of the Fourth General Council, London, 1888*. London, Presbyterian Alliance Office, 1889, p.328-332.

Interventions by G. Sutherland (“My object is to call attention to the great power of the Papacy and to its operations.”, p. 328), Magee, (“As an ecclesiastical system it was a despotism, and of the most perfect type ever designed...”, p.330), J. McDonald (“I regard the Popish system as the masterpiece of Satan, and I believe its dogmas to be soul-destroying.”, p.330) and J. Hall (“Take the matter of justification by faith. You can find a statement of that in the deliverances of Rome in words that an average Protestant would accept; but you can find added conditions and definitions that completely nullify the former statement”, p.332).

- 22** Mackennal, Alex. **“Preface”**. *The International Congregational Council - London 1891. Authorised Record of Proceedings*. London, James Clark & Co., 1891, p. xxiii-xxv.

“The First International Congregational Council (...) originated in a suggestion made in the city of Melbourne, at one of the meetings held to commemorate the Jubilee of Congregationalism in the colony of Victoria, Australia, in 1888” (p.xxiii).

- 23** Allon, Henry. **“The Unity of the Church”**. *The International Congregational Council - London 1891. Authorised Record of Proceedings*. London, James Clark & Co., 1891, p.245-249.

Papers presented in the morning session of July 20 1891 sought to respond to two questions: 1. How far does the desire to discover some means of outwardly expressing this unity prevail? 2. How far is it possible to gratify the desire, especially in co-operative work? According to Allon, “it is not only fitting, it is imperative that this congress should affirm the relations of Congregational churches to all other Churches of Jesus Christ. Silence concerning our common relations to the Divine Head of the churches would be an indication of culpable indifference to the intense and persistent sentiment of Christian unity, and of yearnings for its manifestation, which have characterized all ages” (p.245). Main topics of the paper: Hindrances to unity; The claim to exclusive authority; Christ’s teaching on the Church; Our conception of Christian Unity; Is uniformity the way to unity? A fatal obstacle - not a help; Who is the schismatic? “If, again, there be one lesson that Church history teaches more emphatically than another, it is that the invariable practical result of acquiescent uniformity is religious formality, decadence, and barrenness.” (p.248)

- 24** Taylor, Wm. M. **“The Unity of the Church”**. *The International Congregational Council - London 1891. Authorised Record of Proceedings*. London, James Clark & Co., 1891, p.249-251.

Papers presented in the morning session of July 20 1891 sought to respond to

two questions: 1. How far does the desire to discover some means of outwardly expressing this unity prevail? 2. How far is it possible to gratify the desire, especially in co-operative work? Main topics of Taylor's paper: Divisions have had their blessings; How to realize the Christian ideal; Secure a loftier and nobler Christianity; Co-operation; Distinguish the essential from the non-essential; What should prevent the free Churches? "...The divisions existing between the various Protestant denominations have not been unmitigated evils... all is not union that seems to be union... (p. 249). "What, again, should prevent the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians from joining in one alliance? They have been shoulder to shoulder in many an earnest struggle for truth and liberty in the past..." (p.251).

**25 Stark, James. "The Unity of the Church". *The International Congregational Council - London 1891. Authorised Record of Proceedings*. London, James Clark & Co., 1891, p.251-255.**

Papers presented in the morning session of July 20 1891 sought to respond to two questions: 1. How far does the desire to discover some means of outwardly expressing this unity prevail? 2. How far is it possible to gratify the desire, especially in co-operative work? Main topics: Causes of the approach of union; Religion is becoming more practical; Prospects of union in Scotland; How union may be promoted; Use existing institutions; Interest in each other's work; A true conception of church prosperity; be willing, if need be, to retire. "But because the union of crude, carnal ecclesiasticism, which is grounded, not upon inward affinity, but external ritual or order, is to be shunned as a counterfeit, it does not follow that we should not aspire to translate our spiritual unity, to a greater extent, into helpful union. The Erastian and the Sacerdotalist do not hold our ideals; but neither do the Pietists, who think they do homage to the *inward* by sacrificing the *outward* in religion" (p.255).

**26 Handley, S. B. "The Unity of the Church". *The International Congregational Council - London 1891. Authorised Record of Proceedings*. London, James Clark & Co., 1891, p.256-260.**

Papers presented in the morning session of July 20 1891 sought to respond to two questions: 1. How far does the desire to discover some means of outwardly expressing this unity prevail? 2. How far is it possible to gratify the desire, especially in co-operative work? Main topics: The disastrous consequences of sectarian competition; Loving emulation not sectarian competition; The existing state of things; A few typical specimens; Wales as well as England; The disastrous results; Federation, Fraternisation, Fusion. "In the light of these considerations, not Christian charity alone, but Christian intelligence as well, will surely lead us to assign to each of the denominations that divide Christendom, if only they are reverently anxious to ascertain and to set forth 'the mind of Christ', a place of honour, and to deny to none of them either the realization of the presence of their common Lord, or the enjoyment of His rich grace and blessing" (p.256). "In matter of ecclesiastical development and of Church life, Christian union, federation, fraternization, fusion, as contradistinguished from unChristian comprehension, compromise, and absorption, are clearly the watchwords of the immediate future" (p.260).

**27** Mathews, G.D. "**Introduction**". *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto, 1892*. London, Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1892, p.vii-xii.

"There is, however, a region into which the Council has entered, and with no insignificant results - that, namely, of practical Church-works. Foremost among these is that of Foreign Missions; and in this matter its influence has been very marked. Every successive Council has spoken out more and more distinctively in favour of Co-operation and Church Union on the Foreign field, thus encouraging the missionaries of all the Churches, in their efforts for the establishing of self-supporting, native Churches." ( p.x) "Neither can we forget the pleasant interludes of the visits from the Delegation of the Methodist Church, and of the representatives of the Baptist communion, and also, the telegram from our brethren of the Church of England in Canada." (p.xi)

- 28** Gibson, J.M. **“The Strength and Weakness of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto, 1892*. London, Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1892, p.77-85.

“This leads me to speak of our general position in the matter of Unity. We believe in the Church Catholic, and we have far more right to the adjective than those who claim it as their own. The high Anglican excludes from his conception of the Church millions of Christians whom Christ acknowledges; and the Romanist not only bars out the same vast multitude but all the Anglicans besides. These Churches, therefore, are not Catholic. But ours is. We acknowledge one Holy Catholic Church, embracing in its wide extended arms all of every race and tongue who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and our Church polity, based as it is on principles laid down in the Catholic Scriptures (...), is such as to admit of the union of all in one visible Church. For, while we provide for agreement in things essential by the rules laid down for admission to the office in the Church, we can and do allow of latitude, wide as the Church itself, in the largest sense in the admission of members. The administration of the Church is, of course, always Presbyterian ; but all that is required of the membership is that it be Christian. Thus we are in the fullest sense Catholic.” (p.83-84)

- 29** Choisy, E. **“On Roman Catholicism in Switzerland”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto, 1892*. London, Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1892, p. 386-392.

Data on Catholicism in Switzerland. Catholicism is a Church. “Let us love and respect the true believers which she has produced, the earnest and sincere Christians who belong to her. Let us even go further. Let us learn from her...” Catholicism as a State must be resisted.: “We must remember that the Church of Rome does not approve of modern liberties...” (p.391).

- 30** Laing, J. **“Romanism in Canada”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto, 1892*. London, Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1892, p. 396-402.

“Now let me speak, as far as time will permit, of what the Churches are trying to do for our French Roman Catholic brethren. The field to be occupied is large and widespread.” (p. 400)

- 31** Bushnell, D.E. **“Romanism in North and South America”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto, 1892*. London, Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1892, p.402-409.

Historical and contemporary data and general aspects of “Romanism” in North and South America. “The present aspect of Romanism puts upon us great responsibility. Romanism is losing ground slowly but surely in all the Americas. But the rebound from Romanism is not always to Protestantism. (...) With the Republican form of government, and her Conservative theology, Presbyterianism has a special call of Providence into this vast field.” (p. 409)

- 32** Underwood. **“Romanism in the Foreign Mission Field”**. *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System. Proceedings of the Fifth General Council, Toronto, 1892*. London, Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1892, p. 409-415.

“As with Rome in her conversion of pagan Europe, so in all her foreign Mission work, there is an attempt to adapt her truths to the form of heathenism that she meets. In India she is Brahmin; In China, Confucian; in Japan and Korea, Buddhistic. This principle is carried out more thoroughly by the Jesuit than by any other Romish sect...” (p. 410). Quotes from Jesuit missionary rules. Main focus on Korea.



- 33** Mathews, G.D. **“Preface”**. *Proceedings of the Sixth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Glasgow 1896*. London-New York and Chicago, James Nisbet & Co. and Fleming H. Revell, 1896, p. v-ix.

“The Council has, as is known, no legislative power. It is forbidden to interfere with ‘the existing creed or constitution of any Church in the Alliance, or with its internal order or external relations’. Hence its sphere is generally, *the intellectual and spiritual life-current of the Churches*. This it touches by means of prepared papers whose reading is followed by free discussion. (...) Men are lifted out of their provincialism, out of an unreasonable notion of the importance of their particular Church, and enabled to see that each particular Church is, after all, but a single element in a world-wide organisation, and that, - The Presbyterian Church. The Council, thus widening men’s horizons, leads to their forming correct views respecting their own Church, and yet of it as but a part of the Presbyterian Church as a whole, and of it as but a part of the true City of God, the very Church and Body of our Lord Himself.” (p. viii)

- 34** Mathews, G.D. **“Preface”**. *Proceedings of the Seventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Washington, D.C., 1899*. London-Washington, Office of the Alliance and McGill and Wallace, 1899, p. v-viii.

“The project of a world-wide visible Church organization has never been countenanced by the Alliance. On the contrary, this has always maintained that spiritual unity is quite compatible with visible separation, and has confined itself to promoting among its members a more distinct consciousness of the unity already existing (...) A visible and universal Church organization can never be regarded as the only or even the best method for manifesting to the world the true oneness of the believers in Christ Jesus. (...) The method adopted by the Alliance is one wholly different. On every side this sees numerous branches of the Christian Church, many of which have existed for lengthened periods...” (p. v).

- 35** Mathews, G.D. **“The Work of the Alliance for the First Quarter Century”**. *Proceedings of the Seventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Washington, D.C., 1899*. London-Washington, Office of the Alliance and McGill and Wallace, 1899, p. 47-53.

“Mission work must be so conducted that the Churches in heathendom shall be gathered and organized and administered so that there will be in a given land but one Native Church rather than so many fragments and sections, corresponding to the divisions among the Churches in the home lands. (...) The Alliance began its work by recommending division of territory and separation of fields. Has not the time come for changing this into *co-operation on every field*, that the Body of Christ may be no longer divided?” (p. 52).

- 36** Roberts, W.H. **“History and Work of the Alliance for the First Quarter Century in its Western or American Division”**. *Proceedings of the Seventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Washington, D.C., 1899*. London-Washington, Office of the Alliance and McGill and Wallace, 1899, p. 365-370.

“One of the notable results has been the conferences for consultation, with a view to better work on the part of the Mission Boards of many denominations, which was originated at Toronto, and which has culminated in the appointment of an ecumenical conference of Missions in New York City in April 1900. (...) Another feature of the work of the Alliance is the bringing of Churches into such relations, each with the other, that where the times are ripe, *union* may be brought about between separate denominations” (p. 367).

- 37** Mathews, G.D. **“Preface”**. *Proceedings of the Eighth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Liverpool, 1904*. Liverpool-London, Philip, Son & Nephew-Office of the Alliance, 1904, p. v-vii.

“Hence we have on this earth many times more of independent Churches than we have of separate Nations. The spectacle is a sad one, but it exists, and our Polity contains no provision for avoiding or removing it. Now just at this point the Council presents itself as an informal and unofficial Common Centre or General Assembly of all our Churches, in itself making for, and an expression of, their co-operative unity”. (...) The unity of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches “is shown by an Alliance based on adherence to a common system of Doctrine and of Polity, the former leading men to desire co-operation and fellowship with one another, and the latter enabling them to have such” (p. vi).

**38** Landon, W.H. **“Union of Mission Agencies on Common Fields”**. *Proceedings of the Eighth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Liverpool, 1904*. Liverpool-London, Philip, Son & Nephew-Office of the Alliance, 1904, p. 189-195.

“The spirit of union and co-operation in our Foreign Missionary work was quite marked twenty years ago, and it has been developing since. Though this desire can hardly be claimed as a legitimate child of the Alliance, yet it has certainly been nourished and strengthened by it” (p. 190). “While there are difficulties in the way of uniting mission agencies yet to be overcome and many mission agencies yet to be united, there is a steadily intensified feeling that to perpetuate denominational differences on the foreign field is neither necessary nor wise” (p. 191). Landon quotes the 1884 and 1888 General Councils on this issue.

Arguments in favour of union in mission: 1. “the desire for it of the missionaries on the field, there being a remarkable consensus of opinion among these as to the desirableness of co-operation”; 2. “because it is necessary to the formation of a Native Church”; 3. “in the interest of economy”; 4. “there is no real necessity of such divisions in foreign lands”; 5. “for the sake of presenting a united front to the heathen world...” (p. 192-194)

- 39** Caven, W. **“The Service of the Alliance to Christian Doctrine and Fellowship”**. *Proceedings of the Eighth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Liverpool, 1904*. Liverpool-London, Philip, Son & Nephew-Office of the Alliance, 1904, p. 22-31.

“The Reformed Church has been called to oppose sacerdotalism not only in Rome, but also, alas, in Churches which withdrew with it from the Roman obedience. On ground once redeemed from Romish error, sacerdotalism has, in our day, reached a development almost as complete as that witnessed in its original home” (p. 26). “The Alliance was not organized to promote *organic union* among the Churches which form it, or even of those of them which are found on the same territory. Refraining from all express efforts on behalf of union does not however imply indifference towards a *more perfect manifestation of the unity of His disciples for which the Redeemer prayed*, nor to acquiescence in the view that the spiritual unity of Christians is all that the Lord desires, and that their visible union in Church fellowship is of little account” (p. 27). “When false and pernicious views are abroad - more widely perhaps than since the Reformation - on the doctrine of the Church, and, by consequence, false conceptions of the way in which the divisions of Christendom must be healed, it behoves us to testify as emphatically as possible to the teaching of Scripture respecting the unity in the Lord of all believers, and the duty and privilege of unreserved mutual recognition on the part of the Churches” (p. 29).

- 40** Forsyth, P. T. **“Forgiveness through Atonement - the Essential of Evangelical Christianity”**. *Volume of Proceedings of the Third International Congregational Council held in the United Free Church Assembly Hall, Edinburgh June 30-July 9, 1908*. London, Congregational Union of England and Wales Memorial Hall, 1908, p. 28-54.

“By the atonement, therefore, is meant that action of Christ’s death which has a prime regard to God’s holiness, has it for its first charge and finds man’s reconciliation impossible except as that holiness is divinely satisfied once for all on the cross. Such an atonement is the key to the incarnation.” (p. 29)

Main topics: The atonement is central: I. To the New Testament Gospel (Harnack); II. To the leading figures of modern thought; III. To Christian experience.

“Congregationalism, as an evangelical body, has stood, and stands, not only for the supreme value of Christ’s death, but for its prime value as atonement to a holy God, and as the only atonement whereby man is just with God. The atonement which raises that death above the greatest martyrdom, or the greatest witness to God’s love, is for us no piece of Paulinism.” (p. 30)

**41** Henderson, F.H. **“Church Union”**. *Proceedings; Ninth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at New York, 1909*. London, Office of the Alliance, 1909, p. 393-397.

“One of the most remarkable signs of the times in which we live is the desire which is felt for Church Union, a desire that finds in almost every quarter earnest and frequent expression” (p. 393). Its roots and causes: the modern spirit of toleration; “the churches are feeling their impotency in a separated and divided state”. “The Union to which Christ alludes is often regarded as a spiritual rather than a corporate unity; but, apart from the fact that spiritual without corporate union in those who are bidden to live a corporate life is not clear enough to the mind to be intelligible, it is not easy to see how the unity of Christians is fitted to have the effect desired by our Lord in His prayer, that, viz., of winning the world to Christ, unless it be a union that is not merely spiritual, like that of the union of the Father and the Son, but both corporate and spiritual, “that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”” (p. 395)

**42** Roberts, W.H. **“Church Federation”**. *Proceedings; Ninth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at New York, 1909*. London, Office of the Alliance, 1909, p. 398-402.

“Federation and Union are in the air both in America and Europe. Christians in all the Churches are realizing with increasing clearness their unity in Jesus Christ...”

(p.398). On the origin, organization and objects of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (founded in 1908). Preamble to the Federation Plan: “Whereas, in the Providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and co-operation among them, the following Plan of Federation is adopted.” (p. 400)

**43** Stevenson, R. “**Christian Fellowship and Future Opportunities**”. *Proceedings; Ninth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at New York, 1909*. London, Office of the Alliance, 1909, p. 403-406.

“The ideal Christian fellowship, spiritual in its character and universal in its sweep, is a thing of the future, which we must with patience wait for, pray for, labor for. Councils such as this one, Ecumenical Conferences, Interdenominational Conventions, Missionary Congresses, the interchange of Fraternal Delegates, and the occasional union of two or more Denominations, are the first-fruits of the harvest” (p. 403). “Thus, as the Churches come to know each other better, trust takes the place of doubt or suspicion; fellowship, of isolation and separation; love asserts itself; and those who are rooted and grounded in love begin to comprehend with all saints that love of Christ which cannot be apprehended in its breadth by any one section of the Church” (p. 405). “In my judgment, one of the greatest achievements of this Alliance has been the unification of the Foreign missionary work of its Churches in India, China, and other countries, and a plan of co-operation in Home missionary work, and this is but a step towards that wider unity which is being everywhere demanded, and which received such emphatic endorsement at the Shanghai Conference” (p. 405).



### III. The Presbyterian Alliance, the Congregational Council and the Ecumenical Movement (1910-1933)

*The search for growing cooperation among Christians separated by denominational boundaries that marks the work of missionaries, mission societies and “lay” organisations mentioned in the introduction to the previous chapter, gains a new urgency following the 1910 World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland. The conference is followed by the launching of the Faith and Order Movement (whose first World Conference will take place in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1927), the creation of the International Missionary Council in 1921, and by peace and justice initiatives towards a Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work (following World War I), held for the first time in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1925.*

*The landscape of international church conciliarity - marked so far primarily by confessional organisations such as the Presbyterian Alliance (1875), the International Congregational Council (1891), the Baptist World Alliance (1905) or the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops (1867) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Eastern Orthodox Churches - begins therefore to change considerably as new international ecumenical actors emerge. The constituencies of the Christian world communions begin to relate to new international forms of fellowship that signalise the overcoming of confessional and denominational boundaries. By the same token, fundamental questions begin to be raised.*

*Which are the essentials of Reformed faith and order to be considered in church union negotiations? What is Presbyterian catholicity today? How to respond to the 1920 Anglican Lambeth Appeal to all Christian people? How to respond to church union initiatives in the mission fields and to the message of the first World Conference on Faith and Order? Should the Presbyterian Alliance try once again to formulate a common statement of faith? The texts gathered in this third section wrestle with these issues.*

- 1** Fleming, R. **“Presbyterian Catholicity”**. *Proceedings of the Tenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Aberdeen, 1913*. Edinburgh, [Office of the Alliance,] 1913, p. 133-138.

“Presbyterianism is Catholic not only in its interpretation of the relation of man to God, but also in its interpretation of the relation of man to man. Presbyterianism is Catholic in that it is fitted to be the rallying-point of other systems” (p. 135). “Catholic is our idea of the Church”. “Presbyterianism is Catholic in its policy”. “It is Catholic in its co-operation with evangelical Churches of every name”. “We are Catholic in education”. “...A true Christianity may exist where there is little outward uniformity, and that this unity not only may, but also *does* and *must* exist among those whose lives are hid with Christ in God” (p. 137).

- 2** Richards, G.W. [**“The Unity of the Church”**]. *Proceedings of the Eleventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Pittsburgh 1921*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1922, p. 78-80.

“It is because we are gripped anew by the conception of unity in diversity that we would like to permeate Catholic uniformity and Protestant division by a larger spirit which would include the essence of Catholicism and the essence of Protestantism in the larger Church, and more nearly embody the ideals of the Gospel of Jesus Christ than was ever reached in the nineteenth century.” (p. 79)

- 3** Burrel, D.J. **“The Unity of the Church”**. *Proceedings of the Eleventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Pittsburgh 1921*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1922, p. 80-86.

“The air is vibrant with calls for the tearing down of denominational fences and the getting together of all divisions of the Protestant Church. This is my warrant for asking calm consideration of the arguments for and against that view.” (p. 80-81)



Like everything else, the Church must conform to certain fixed and universal laws: The first of these laws is Unity. Each natural kingdom (matter, life, spirit) has its own unifying principle. The second principle is Diversity in Unity. “Man aims at uniformity; God at diversity in unity.” (p. 81) The third is Natural Selection. “All things in nature incline to group themselves by sympathetic attraction.” (p. 82) Follows the application of this to the current proposals of Church Union. “No end of time and energy is wasted in dreaming of an ultimate getting together of all sorts and shades of believers and unbelievers in a sentimental parliament of saints. This is beating the air.”(p. 85)

- 4** Simpson, C. **“The Concept of the Ministry in Relation to the Church (With Special Reference to Reunion)”**. *Proceedings of the Eleventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Pittsburgh 1921*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1922, p. 87-93.

The Lambeth Appeal to all Christian People (August 1920) as the starting point. “I close with the moral for the subject of Reunion. If we start by making the ministry the primary issue and if we say we cannot recognize the Church standing of communions which have not ministerial order as we hold it, the Reunion has no future. That is the wrong way of beginning. It is untrue to New Testament precedent, inadequate to the facts of Christendom, unsupported by any witness of the Holy Spirit, and, finally, fatal to reunion. There is no hope of progress from this position” (p. 93).

- 5** **“Report on Lambeth Proposals of August, 1920”**. *Proceedings of the Eleventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Pittsburgh 1921*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1922. *Reports Submitted to Eleventh General Council*, p. 24-26. On the “Appeal to All Christian People” issued by the Lambeth Council in August 1920 and backed in General Council by Bishop Charles H. Brent (*Proceedings*, p. 305-310). “In view of these elements in the Appeal, the members of this Council regard it as embodying not an ultimatum but a suggestion

of open and unreserved conference through which the problems connected with faith and order and comprehensive unity shall be explored without any question of ‘the spiritual reality of the ministries of those communions which do not possess the Episcopate’” (p. 25).

**6 “Report of Committee on Lambeth Proposals - Western Section”.** *Proceedings of the Eleventh General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Pittsburgh 1921.* Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1922. *Reports Submitted to Eleventh General Council*, p. 98-100.

On the “Appeal to All Christian People” issued by the Lambeth Council in August 1920 and backed in General Council by Bishop Charles H. Brent (*Proceedings*, p. 305-310). “We believe further that this fellowship thus manifested would give to the world a most practical and convincing proof of the unity of the Church, without the necessity of gathering all branches of the Church Universal into one ecclesiastical organisation with a visible head.” (p. 98)

**7 Fleming, J.R. “The Founding and Achievements of the Alliance”.** *Proceedings of the Twelfth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System Held at Cardiff 1925.* Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1926, p. 40-48.

The first 50 years of the Alliance in connection with Unity, Testimony, Helpfulness and Reconciliation by its then General Secretary. “We are surprised to-day at the wisdom of those who, instead of propounding a new doctrinal formula or attempting to define rigidly a common system of polity, were content to rear their structure on the supreme authority of Holy Scripture in matters of faith, on adherence to the consensus of the Reformed confessions and on a general acknowledgement of Presbyterian principles.” (p. 41-42) “Two tendencies have always been at work in the Presbyterian system - to divisiveness and unity. Prior to 1875 I venture to say that the divisive tendency was stronger and to some extent it had served a good purpose. A full testimony to the content of Reformed Church principles had to be borne, and it

could only be borne at the cost of division and temporary separation. Nor have our past divisions been altogether unhappy. Secessions, disruptions, Free Church movements are not to be reckoned to our shame. They have largely been our glory. There was a providential reason for most of them. But men began to feel fifty years ago that this tendency was in danger of being carried to extremes, that distinctive testimony - to part of the truth - was not everything, that catholic testimony - to the whole of the truth - was a worthier ideal. So the Presbyterian Alliance began to preach the more excellent way." (p. 43)

**8** Martin, A. **"Is a Common Statement of the Faith (Creed or Confession) Desirable and Practicable for the Presbyterian World?"** Proceedings of the Twelfth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System Held at Cardiff 1925. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1926, p. 107-117.

"In answer to the question proposed, I wish to suggest at once that much is to be said for the position that a common Statement of Faith is not practicable in view of the variety of theological standpoint and outlook represented by nearly five score Churches, at all stages of development, scattered over Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas and Australasia; and scarcely to be desired, even though proved to be practicable, since to the extent to which such a Statement should be effective for its purpose, there is at least the danger that it should tend to a severance of these Churches from other kindred Communion, which should both be regrettable in itself and run counter to the unifying purpose characteristic of the whole scope and current of God's working and guidance in the life of Christendom at this hour." (p. 107-108) To illustrate the first assertion Martin recalls the 1880 debate. On the undesirability: theology is not revealed. "It is only to put this differently to say that, for the modern mind, the oneness of the discipleship is not to be expressed, in the first instance, doctrinally." (p. 114) "The unity of the Church may persist through doctrinal divergence; and again it may have disappeared even where doctrinal uniformity is still preserved. It lies in the region of the soul's converse with God, the region of penitence and surrender, of praise and meditation and prayer (...), in short, the true unity and continuity of the Christian Church realizes itself and is maintained from age to age." (p. 115)

**9 Shaw, J.M. “Is a Common Statement of the Faith (Creed or Confession) Desirable and Practicable for the Presbyterian World?”** *Proceedings of the Twelfth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System Held at Cardiff 1925*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1926, p. 117-128.

The common Statement of Faith is desirable and practicable. “The unfortunate thing about our present Creeds and Confessions is that in them such emphasis is laid upon intellectual or ‘notional’ assent to certain doctrinal affirmations or assertions, that they are apt both to include and to exclude from Church membership the wrong kind of people. They include those who may very facilely profess assent to certain truths or doctrines, truths even about Jesus Christ, and yet deny the Spirit of Christ in their daily conduct, by living self-centred, self-regarding lives, ‘Just as if Jesus had never lived, As if He had never died.’ On the other hand they are apt to exclude from the fellowship of the Church those whose loyalty to Christ and to the Spirit of Christ in their lives is unquestioned, who yet have difficulty in conscientiously assenting to the Church’s doctrinal or intellectual formulations about Christ’s person and work.” (p. 126)

The main guiding principles of such a new Common Statement of faith are: 1. It should be a properly religious statement, consisting of a series of fundamental spiritual affirmations; 2. This would ensure its practical or dynamic saving character, “keeping close the bond between faith and life, and emphasizing the fact that the Confession of the Church is no mere assent to truths, but consent to a way of life” (p. 125) and 3. It would be a flag for the Presbyterian Church “which would emphasize her essential unity with all other Protestant Churches...” (p. 127) The author suggests a tentative form of Statement.

**10 Barth, K. “Is a Common Statement of the Faith (Creed or Confession) Desirable and Practicable for the Presbyterian World?”** *Proceedings of the Twelfth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System Held at Cardiff 1925*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1926, p. 128-143.

The original title of the English version of this text was “The Idea of a Reformed Confession of Faith”. Parts II and III were published in the Proceedings of the 1925 General Council. Part I was published as follows: “The Idea of a Reformed Confession of Faith - I”, *The Quarterly Register*, XIII(5), February 1926, p. 100-103. Part II was also published as “The Idea of a Reformed Confession of Faith - II”, *The Quarterly Register*, XIII(6), p. 125-128.

The real question Barth raises to the Alliance is “whether there is that grasp of God’s revelation and degree of fellowship among the member churches which would make the devising and articulating of a confession general and not simply a formal act”. Then the question would arise: “What is to be said? What has happened in theology or in the world to constrain the Alliance to confess its faith? He seriously questioned whether the theologians of many countries were in any position to articulate a common confession, and whether the ‘ethical aimlessness’ in the evangelical church would permit a clear prophetic word”. (from Alan P.F. Sell, *A Reformed, Evangelical, Catholic Theology - the Contribution of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1875-1982*. Grand Rapids (USA), W. B. Eerdmans, 1991, p. 74).

**11** Laws, Robert. “**Problems of Church Union in the Foreign Field**”. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Boston, Massachusetts 1929*. Edinburgh, 1929, p. 51-58.

The problems are: 1. The refusal of intercommunion on one side or on the part of both of the home churches; 2. differences in doctrine; 3. differences in Church policy; 4. overlapping in the mission fields; 5. different methods of dealing with native social problems (esp. polygamy); 6. different attitudes of churches or missions towards questions of education and devolution of church government from European missionaries to native churches. What to do? 1. to get the authorities of the home churches and missions to sanction intercommunion between themselves at home; 2. to adopt in the different mission fields a common standard of training for the native ministry. The author was known as “the apostle and pioneer of Central Africa”.

**12** Warnshuis, A.L. **“Problems of Church Union in the Foreign Field”**. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Boston, Massachusetts 1929*. Edinburgh, 1929, p. 58-72.

The author prepared a list of 26 churches in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific “with which two or more Mission Boards or societies of the Churches in Europe and America co-operate”. However he limits his discussion of the theme “to those of the churches to which our own Missions are related...” It may be noted that “wherever the Missions of the Churches represented in this Alliance have found themselves in close proximity to one another, they have, with few exceptions, co-operated in organizing a united Church” (p. 59). In the churches of this Alliance “the plan of building a world-wide denomination has never been adopted, and there is general agreement in favour of the policy of aiding in the development of national Churches, which in due time will doubtless share in international unions or federations” (p. 60).

**13** Mudge, Lewis S. **“The Reformed Churches and the Lausanne Message”**. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Boston, Massachusetts 1929*. Edinburgh, 1929, p. 259-263.

The world conference on Faith and Order held in Lausanne 1927 has a message for us because 1. it was Christian in its character; 2. it was ecumenical; 3. it was able; 4. it was thorough; 5. it was courageous; 6. the spirit which pervaded it; 7. 92 out of a total of 399 delegates “represented officially, or by co-option, Churches of this fellowship” (p. 260).

What is the Lausanne message? 1. every churchman should be deeply and prayerfully interested in the reunion of Christendom; 2. every churchman should be actively engaged in the promotion of the reunion of Christendom; 3. a great step forward in the reunion of Christendom will be the reunion in every land of the Reformed Churches there located which hold the Presbyterian system. “Why, then, should not the reunion, nationally, of the Reformed Church be considered our

immediate duty?” (p. 262). 4. we are, “next after the Roman Institution, the most numerous Christian communion, scattered abroad throughout the earth, we have under our general direction a great and varied missionary work, we occupy a mediating position among Protestant communions on Church, sacraments and the ministry; 5. “...the Lausanne message reminds us that the family of churches to which we belong has always been, as a whole, profoundly interested in, and gladly responsive to, the call of unity. A survey of the Church at home and on mission fields will reveal that we have been foremost among those who have not only talked unity, but enacted unity. In every great union movement of the present generation we have been a leading factor” (p. 262).

- 14** Robertson, I. J. **“The Reformed Churches and the Lausanne Message”**. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Boston, Massachusetts 1929*. Edinburgh, 1929, p. 263-271.

Three problems Lausanne seems to set before Presbyterianism: 1. What is the real Presbyterian theory of the Christian ministry? To me “our theory and practice of Presbyterianism seem both badly confused” (p. 266) 2. What is the Presbyterian attitude to be towards the Episcopal form of government? “A whole presbytery is unlikely to become the exceedingly bad egg certain bishops undoubtedly have been... But a constitutional Episcopacy, a more or less permanent Chairman of the Court of Presbytery, seems at times almost a temptation” (p. 267-268); 3. What value exactly do we as Presbyterians set on the Sacraments, especially on what the New Testament calls the Lord’s Table? “Must we not take our stand as a Church emphasizing ethical values primarily, and purely spiritual avenues that are essential, such as repentance, above the material channels of the Spirit given us in the Sacraments? (p. 270).

- 15** Henderson, G.D. **“Essentials of the Reformed Faith and System to be conserved in Church Unions”**. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Boston, Massachusetts 1929*. Edinburgh, 1929, p.271-279.

“I am trying to emphasize two things at once - width of comprehensiveness and maintenance of principles. I think Churches not prepared to combine these should not attempt Church unions. They are complementary attitudes” (p. 276).

**16** Richards, G.W. **“Essentials of the Reformed Faith and System to be conserved in Church Unions”**. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held at Boston, Massachusetts 1929*. Edinburgh, 1929, p. 279-291.

After an introduction dedicated to the 1927 Faith and Order Conference - “The Lausanne conference was clearly not a hastily invented device of the present generation, but a somewhat belated answer to the prayers and purposes of the Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” (p.281), President Richards’ paper underlines I. the importance of following the spirit rather than the letter of the Reformers. II. According to Richards “the reason for the distinctive faith and order of the various Churches is the *difference in their idea of God*, His relation to the world, the way of imparting and appropriating and applying the blessings of salvation”. The God of Catholicism is conceived “after the analogy of a Byzantine monarch” (283-284). The Reformers had a new vision of God. “They rediscovered grace and truth as revealed in Jesus Christ, and a new way of access through Him to God” (284), but they divided “on their definitions of the blessings of redemption” (284). III. All religions and each of the Churches believe that God is Sovereign. But “who or what is their sovereign God?” Reformed Churches have found it “solely in the Word of God”. They regard the ministry “as an ordinance of God prescribed in the New Testament” and declare it to be “one order and not three orders - one office with diverse functions” (289). IV. We must guard against “unions by compromise” and fear “ways of reunion that are too easy” like confirmation and ordination by bishops in apostolic succession.

**17** **“Joint Report of the Eastern and Western Sections on a Common Statement of Faith”**. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding*



*the Presbyterian System held at Boston, Massachusetts 1929.*  
Edinburgh, 1929, p. 387-388.

“The Committees having acquainted their respective Sections with the negative issue of the effort at casting a ‘Common Statement of Faith’ for the Alliance, the two Sections unite in presenting this brief Joint Report to the Boston Council, and in recommending that the Council take no further steps in the matter.” (p. 388) The Alliance sets aside the project of a consensus of the Reformed confessions or a common statement of faith.

**18** Bartlet, Vernon. “**The Living Church: Its Unity**”. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congregational Council - Bournemouth, July 1st-8th, 1930*. London, Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1930, p. 153-159.

The theme of the council was “The Living Church”. Excerpts: “It remains still to mention one other outcome of all this, perhaps the most important of all for the basis of Church unity: I mean reverence for Christian conscience touching God’s will in Christ. This rules out all coercion by the Church, of conscience in its members, whether severally or in organized groups, as a method for attaining unity. This principle was first set forth by St. Paul in his classic plea for mutual consideration of conscience in Rom. xiv. Christians in saving relation to the Church’s Head are to be ‘received’ in full communion, apart from differing views as to such applications of that relation in practice as are not made clear by the Word of His gospel” (p. 154). “Need I say that the episcopate which I contemplate, and ask you to contemplate, as likely to be one day a great co-ordinating and unifying factor in a Living Church of the future more adequate than it is now, (...) is not the historic episcopate just as it is or as it has been for most of its long history? Rather is it one modified as regards its self-sufficiency, and too often autocracy, by the complementary forms of Church organisation for which Presbyterianism and Congregationalism have stood historically, and the value of which is recognized in the Lambeth Appeal.” (p. 159)

- 19** Barton, William. **“The Living Church: Its Unity - ‘Let Those Unite Who Will Unite’”**. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congregational Council - Bournemouth, July 1st-8th, 1930*. London, Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1930, p. 160-169.

The theme of the council was “The Living Church”. Excerpts: “The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, if it had been as generously interpreted as it was nobly devised, and if it had been ungrudgingly adhered to, might have carried a divided Christendom far toward union” (p. 161). “I mention Lausanne, not to discuss it, but to pay a tribute of honest praise to the Anglican Church for its initiation and accomplishment, and to record that in the judgement of eminent leaders in that Communion Lausanne disclosed the inability of the Anglican Communion to lead further because of its internal divisions” (p. 163). “Let us not wait for the hesitant and improbable action of those whose faces are toward past sunsets, but take counsel of those who have courage to face the dawn. We hold the Greek Church in honour, but its hour has not yet come. We wish the Roman Catholic Church well, but it is not minded toward any union that can be of any help to us. We honour and love our brethren of the Episcopal Church, but those Episcopalians who know best declare that they are too badly divided themselves to go fast toward any union that will be possible during the life-time of any Episcopalian now living. We are to say and do nothing to offend any of these, but we cannot wait for them.” (p. 166)

- 20** Parry, K.L. **“The Living Church: Its Unity - The Relationship of the Congregational Church to Other Christian Churches”**. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congregational Council - Bournemouth, July 1st-8th, 1930*. London, Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1930, p. 170-177.

The theme of the council was “The Living Church”. Excerpts: “The suggestion I want to make to you is this - that the difference between the Independency of the seventeenth century and the Congregationalism of to-day lies not so much in theory but in the entirely different circumstances under which we live. (...) In a word, the Congregationalists of this country are becoming conscious of themselves as a body,

as an intimate fellowship, in a way that was never before possible. Now one reason why our fathers laid such stress upon the local fellowship was precisely because it made possible an intimacy of contact and communion". (...) Has not the gathered church of an earlier day become the denomination of to-day? (p. 172). Is organic unity necessarily organized unity? What is the unity we wish to make visible? Is it not our unity with the whole company of the redeemed in heaven and on earth? Is it not our unity with all who share with us the 'life which is hidden with Christ in God'? Its essential note must be inclusion, not exclusion. Brethren, the Roman Catholic Church has many claims to our admiration and homage. But one accusation we do in all charity make against her. She is a standing offence against the unity of the fellowship of all believers" (p. 173).

**21** Parker, George. **"Unity in the Mission Field"**. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congregational Council - Bournemouth, July 1st-8th, 1930*. London, Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1930, p. 211-218.

The theme of the council was "The Living Church". On church union in South India initiated by Congregationalists and Presbyterians (in the beginning of the 20th century) and pursued by the Anglican and Wesleyan Methodist churches. Main sections: *The Need and the Desire for Union in South India* - "The Missions, with the exception of a few, such as the Salvation Army and the Lutherans, have discouraged overlapping. This has not only been an act of comity or generosity, but it is based upon the recognition that the work of every mission is the same - the preaching of the gospel..." (p. 212). "But the most serious aspect of denominationalism in India is the danger that it may become associated with caste, and caste in India has always destroyed the power of any Church which has admitted it" (p. 213). *Union already effected and the Beginning of the Present Movement* - "It is significant of the change which went on in India in the first twenty years of this century that the union which began in 1901 was begun by missionaries, and the movement which began in 1919 was begun by Indians" (p. 214). *Points in the scheme*: I. The proposed union is a union by comprehension; II. Episcopacy ("Secondly there is the natural Indian desire for the

Guru or spiritual teacher touched with an authority inherent in his position”, p. 217);  
III. Open church.

**22** Chelliah, J.V. “**Church Union in South India**”. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congregational Council - Bournemouth, July 1st-8th, 1930*. London, Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1930, p. 219- 223.

The theme of the council was “The Living Church”. Some important aspects of the scheme of union: 1) it is a scheme of comprehension, and not one of absorption. It combines the best elements in the three forms of Church government: Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational. “There will be Bishops, but these will act according to a constitution, and will be elected and controlled by Synods and Assemblies. In other words, there will be a combination of Episcopal and Presbyterian principles. The Congregational principle will be apparent in the freedom accorded to individual churches to order their own forms of worship and other matters that are purely local (p. 219-220). 2) The ministers of the uniting churches shall be acknowledged as ministers of the Word and the sacraments in the United Church. 3) No attempt has been made to arrive at a complete agreement on all points. “Unity cannot be attained by theological controversies. Controversy drives people further and further apart, leaving truth in the middle. If some people are opposed to the union, it is because they have not had an opportunity to live together and learn to appreciate the other’s point of view” (p. 221). Three reasons why union is desired: 1. The rising tide of nationalism: “Indians have begun to feel that they could no more be in the leading-strings of the West...”; 2. Our differences are largely due to accident and not to conviction; 3. To remove the discredit to the Christian name.



## IV. The Presbyterian Alliance and the Congregational Council in the Ecumenical Movement (1933-1970)

*Following the first crisis of the ecumenical movement and the beginning of the Church struggle (Kirchenkampf) in Nazi Germany, the constellation of movements with a clear concern for Christian unity starts to take steps to anchor the movement on a more solid ecclesial and ecclesiastic basis.*

*This culminates in the decision to create a World Council of Churches (1937) whose first assembly takes place soon after World War II, in 1948. The foundation of the WCC, the growing involvement of the Orthodox churches in the ecumenical movement, the increasingly challenging role played by the so-called younger churches from the southern hemisphere, the Roman Catholic decision to move from the 1928 encyclical *Mortalium Animus* to the Vatican II decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, from a negative to a more positive view of the ecumenical movement, as well as developments towards the Concord of Leuenberg: all these factors contribute to the creation of a unique ecumenical climate in which church unity and Christian unity seem, for many, irresistibly tied to the sense of history.*

*Confessional or ecumenical? What does it mean to be a Christian world communion in the ecumenical age of the global village? Does it make sense at all? Should not Christian world communions serve more intentionally the unity of all in each place and cooperate with the ecumenical movement in general and the World Council of Churches in particular? Why not bear witness to the visible expression of the unity given in Christ through the Spirit by merging the two sister CWCs, namely the Presbyterian Alliance and The International Congregational Council? This fourth section includes texts and documents which address these questions clearly and concretely.*

- 1 Keller, A. **“Present-Day Menaces to European Protestantism”**. *Proceedings of the Fourteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Belfast, Northern Ireland 1933*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1933, p. 161-171.

First menace: political nationalism, particularly in Germany: “How is the menace of this new religion of blood and race felt in the hearts of those who still cling to our Lord Jesus Christ and who are represented among us? Some of them may not be aware of the danger in its whole extent. They try to combine the virile ideas of the old Germanic religion with the religion of love and mercy (...). Such a synthesis is a greater menace to the Protestant spirit than open hostility.” (p. 164)

Second menace: materialism, particularly communism: “The second menace is quite as mystical as that which I spoke. It is a spirit from below rising from the depth of human nature and whispering at the ear of men *Eritis sicut Deus*: You are God-like, you will create in your own right, by your own will, a new society...” (p. 165).

Third and fourth menaces: “I can be shorter in pointing out the third and fourth dangers which are menacing our Christian faith and life - the Christian *isolationism* and the *denominational self-sufficiency* which is paralleling political nationalism in so many countries.” (p. 168)

- 2 Curtis, W.A. **“The Present Need for Protestant Solidarity”**. *Proceedings of the Fourteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Belfast, Northern Ireland 1933*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1933, p. 171-179.

In response to a paper by Adolf Keller on “Present-Day Menaces to European Protestantism” (“The most dangerous menace for the Christian is to see that earthly powers seem to be more successful and powerful than the spiritual power...”, for instance: the idea of the nation, p. 162), Curtis underlines the importance of Lutheran-Reformed solidarity and Anglican-Protestant solidarity.

“Apart from Britain and America the Protestant forces of the European Continent

fall mainly into two divisions, the Lutheran or Evangelical and the Reformed or Presbyterian. Other elements, such as the Baptist, we may for the moment leave out of our reckoning. The problem is, How are the traditions which derive under God from the great names of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, to be related to each other in the common defence and furtherance of a Christianity which bases itself on New Testament foundations? The first need is to harmonize and co-ordinate the immense resources and potentialities of these traditions. Failing this new alignment we have grave reason to be anxious about the future. If we can secure it in this generation a new hope will animate our cause. Let us plead and work and pray for its realization. The difficulties have sensibly lessened in our time.” (p. 177)

**3** **“Manifesto and Appeal On Public Questions in Religion and Moral”**. *Proceedings of the Fourteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Belfast, Northern Ireland 1933*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1933, p. 236-240.

“The Fourteenth Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System, meeting at Belfast in June 1933, makes the following Declaration on outstanding matters of religious and public moment: I. *Christian Unity*. - While loyally adhering to the principles and the tradition of the Presbyterian Churches, the Alliance is in cordial sympathy with the world-wide aspirations and movements towards reunion in Christendom and rejoices in their progress. It believes that the sacred end in view will be best promoted through the attainment of a common understanding of the nature of the Christian Church, the Christian Ministry, the Christian Sacraments, and the Christian Message, based upon the inspired teaching of the Scriptures interpreted in the Creeds of the Ancient Church and in the standards of the Reformed Faith.” (p. 236)

**4** D’Aubigné, Charles Merle. **“Responsibilities of the Present-day Church in Ecumenical Movements”**. *Proceedings of the Fourteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches*

*holding the Presbyterian System held at Belfast, Northern Ireland 1933.* Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1933, p. 285-295.

On the attitude Reformed and Presbyterian churches should take towards the movement of Faith and Order. I. Ecumenical Movements of the Past and Present: Contacts among the Reformation churches in the 16th and in the early 20th century. II. The non-Roman Catholic churches: the Catholic churches of the East, the Anglican communion, the Old Catholic churches. III. Our attitude towards the non-Roman Catholic churches: In the present world “every church challenges the position of every church” (p.290). It is therefore a necessity to take part “in these ecumenical movements”. Secondly, “we can reap from that intercourse and participation a real benefit” (290).

IV. What should we do in the ecumenical movements? 1. to create an atmosphere “of mutual comprehension of respect and of brotherly love”; 2. to make use “of the utmost frankness and straightforward boldness”; 3. to re-examine their position on points such as the theory of the church, tradition, the doctrine of sacraments. 4. to put a certain number of questions to our friends “on the other side” such as the confusion between the body of Christ and the visible church; the magic element in the sacraments, the continuous incarnation of the Son of God in the church; finally, the point “which represents the fundamental principle of our Reformed faith”, namely, “the absolute sovereignty and sanctity of God”(294).

**5** Hamilton, W.H. **“Preface”**. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System Held at Montreal, Canada 1937.* Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1937, p. 5-6.

From a paragraph on the Alliance after the Faith and Order and Life and Work great conferences of 1937, by its general secretary: “If we are to be caught up in a great movement towards the reunion of Christendom, it is imperative that such an agency should exist to advance and demonstrate unitedly that share of good which our Presbyterianism may rightfully hope and claim to contribute to the common treasury of the future” (p.5).



- 6** **“Pronouncement on Matters of Faith and Life”**. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System Held at Montreal, Canada 1937*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1937, p. 219-227.

“II.The Church and Unity. - (...) The unity of the Church is spiritual, but it needs to be made visible to the world . The witness of the Church has been gravely hindered by persistent divisions. (...) [W]e believe that God is ever calling us to seek ways of reconciliation within the essential unity of the Church. (...) [W]e gladly acknowledge the duty laid upon us to promote, in accordance with the Word of God, unity both within our own Presbyterian order and with Churches of other traditions and government” (p. 221).

- 7** Keller, Adolf. **“The Church’s Responsibility for Developing the International Mind”**. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System Held at Montreal, Canada 1937*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1937, p. 246-251.

Why have large international organisations “failed hitherto to develop a truly international mind in the peoples?” Those who believe in the power of Christ’s spirit “oppose to these disintegrating nationalistic and imperialistic tendencies our belief in the *Una Sancta* and our confidence in the Holy Spirit which creates unity” (p. 248). The Church has therefore three tasks in the present world: 1. to express much more powerfully than hitherto our belief not in the churches, but in the church. 2. to make a greater effort than hitherto to know each other. 3. to try to hold together in spite of our diversities.

- 8** Cockburn, J.H. **“Presbyterianism and the Present Ecumenical Situation”**. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Geneva, Switzerland 1948*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1949, p. 92-110.

What contribution can Presbyterianism make to the present expressions of ecumenicity? The noblest contribution “is, of course, its doctrine” (p. 98): the sovereignty of God, the application of Christian truth to the burning questions of our day in all human affairs and the doctrine of grace. There are possible contributions along the following two lines: Presbyterian churches can contribute “their solidarity, their tradition of four hundred years of Christian witness and labour...”, despite the fact that “in general there is little significant union” among Presbyterians, or a Presbyterian bloc would stand, within the World Council of Churches, for the things held dear. But this “would end in stratification of the Council into a federation of confessional organizations” (p. 100). Four lines suggested by the author: 1. Presbyterianism as a policy of the *bene esse* for certain times and circumstances in connection with Presbyterian-Episcopal union conversations in the USA and the formation of the Church of South India; 2. the conception of the sacraments embodied in the open table; 3. liturgical freedom; 4. the place given to “laymen” in the church.

**9** Mackay, J.A. **“The Reformed Churches and the Ecumenical Situation”**. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Geneva, Switzerland 1948*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1949, p. 110-112.

I. The ecumenical situation: the church has become ecumenical in a geographical sense. There is a centripetal trend among non-Roman Catholic churches. On the other hand, certain denominations constitute “ecumenical denominations or confessional blocks”. II. The actual relations of the Reformed churches to the ecumenical movement: they have been “very cooperative” (p. 110): church federations, united missionary efforts, organic relations. They have played “a leading part in determining the thought and in shaping the policy of the contemporary ecumenical movement”. They occupy “a strategic mediating position in the ecumenical movement of today”. Some Reformed churches take no part in the ecumenical movement. III. Elements (theological, historical and ecclesiastical) in the Reformed tradition, which have a bearing on the attitude which the Reformed churches should adopt towards the ecumenical movement: Calvin was “the most truly ecumenical figure of his time”.

His doctrine of the church and the Reformed doctrine of the communion of saints “produce naturally a spirit of friendly relationship towards all Christian churches...” Presbyterianism, when true to itself, “is naturally ecumenical” (p.111). Reformed churches, compared to other communions, have not worked out a Reformed doctrine of the church. Reformed churches should achieve closer solidarity in their relations and achieve unity in a given country. Among the contributions which the Reformed traditions can make to the ecumenical movement is “the affirmation that Jesus Christ is the sole Head of the Church, as an antidote to any trend to Romanize Protestantism.” (p. 112)

- 10** (Study Group No. 3) - **“The Reformed Churches and the Present Ecumenical Situation”** (Resolution 1). *Proceedings of the Sixteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Geneva, Switzerland 1948*. Edinburgh, Office of the Alliance, 1949, p. 209-210.

The Alliance “welcomes as a manifestation of the spirit and will of Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, the prospective formation of a World Council of Churches.” (p. 210)

- 11** Watts, Sidney M. **“The Place of Congregationalism in the Universal Church”**. *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congregational Council - Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, U.S.A. - June 17th-24th, 1949*. Boston-London, Pilgrim Press-Independent Press, 1949, p. 84-92.

The theme of the council was “Freedom and Fellowship through Christ”. Excerpts: “In my country we have been forced to recognize that the Church of England is a sect. It has its authorities, its canon law, its rules and regulations. What it calls its catholicism is used to exclude Christians who have not passed through a certain initiation. It debars from its sacrament people whom it recognizes to be Christians. And it perpetuates its character as a sect in other lands, as, for example, the Church of England in Canada. Thus its sacrament becomes the sacrament of the Lord Jesus

Christ on an Anglican altar; but that is something different from the sacrament of the Catholic Church. It is a matter of submitting to the rules, in addition to the spiritual requirements of penitence and faith. Now Congregationalism is not a sect..." (p. 84-85). "...it is our conviction that the World Council of Churches cannot function except by the congregational principle. Ultimately the churches must come together in the same way that our congregations have come together." (p. 90)

**12** **“Constitution of the International Congregational Council”.** *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congregational Council - Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, U.S.A. - June 17th-24th, 1949.* Boston-London, Pilgrim Press-Independent Press, 1949, p. 200-201.

II. Purpose: “The purpose of this International Congregational Council is to promote regular consultation and effective co-operation among its constituent churches; to devise measures and maintain agencies for the advancement of their common witness; and to strengthen the Congregational contribution to the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement generally”.

**13** Mackay, J. **“Problems of the Missionary Movement and of the Younger Churches as related to the Alliance”.** *Minutes of the Executive Committee held at Westminster College, Cambridge, England July 4th to 6th 1949,* p. 10-11.

An oral address by the future WARC President. According to Mackay it is important for the Alliance to keep in close touch with the missionary movement. The Alliance “should not imitate the Lutherans and promote Missions as an Alliance. The Lutheran World Federation has decided to assume administrative responsibility for some Missions.” (p. 10) If this happens “it will give a new character to international denominationalism” (p. 10). The Alliance should promote “fraternal cooperation” in the field of foreign missions. Speaking of the younger churches, Mackay mentioned those which were autonomous and those which had become part of united churches.

The main issue for Mackay was as follows: “Is Presbyterianism, in its international aspect, going to be a narrow Presbyterianism, which would soon become sectarian; or is it going to pursue an ecumenical policy, true to the spirit of Calvin, and encourage Younger Churches to take the lead in the formation of United Churches?” (p. 11) If a certain trend in the confessional missionary movement develops, concluded Mackay, “it will break the ecumenical movement. It would tend to crystallize for the future the ecclesiastical traditions of the past. That would be a tragedy.” (p. 11) Mackay’s understanding of the close connection between foreign mission and Christian unity, on the one hand, and the ecumenical task of the World Alliance, on the other hand, shaped the WARC ecumenical profile in the following years.

**14 “The Alliance and the World Council of Churches”. *Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee held at Westminster College, Cambridge, England, July 4th to 6th 1949*, p. 9-10.**

According to this very short statement, “We want to work in an ecumenical spirit and are not ready to follow other confessional groups in what we believe to be narrow and dangerous confessionalism”; in foreign missions “we work for union with other Protestant forces” (p. 9). On the WCC: “while we want to be true to our Reformed and Presbyterian convictions, we are glad to be in the larger body of the World Council of Churches. We want to take our full share in the building of the ‘Una Sancta’”.

**15 “The World Presbyterian Alliance in the Present Ecumenical Situation”, *Minutes of the Executive Committee*, Basel, 1951. See also *The Presbyterian World*, XXI(3), September 1951, p. 98-102; *The Reformed and Presbyterian World*, XXVII(1), March 1962, p. 11-14.**

Summary of this seminal statement: 1. Protestant Churches today are marked by three different ecumenical trends, namely, ecumenical unity, ecumenical sectarianism and ecumenical confessionalism. 2. The Reformed tradition being by nature related

to ecumenical unity, the purpose of the Alliance is not to promote world Presbyterianism as an end in itself. 3. The Alliance needs to be strengthened to promote solidarity among Reformed churches in order “to emphasize aspects of the Reformation heritage which are of permanent significance for the Christian Church”, particularly among the younger Churches, and by resisting to ecumenical sectarianism. 4. To pursue denominational preeminence and make of great world bodies ends in themselves is to betray Jesus Christ.

- 16** Cooke, Leslie E. “**Congregationalism and Catholicity**”. *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congregational Council - St. Andrews University, Scotland - 20-29th June 1953*. Chicago-London, Pilgrim Press-Independent Press, 1953, p. 79-87.

The theme of the council was “Congregational Churchmanship”. “The sharpest paradox of our faith and order I have left until last. We have claimed that the principle for which we stand, our doctrine of Grace, our doctrine of the Church, our confidence in the guidance of the Holy Spirit are necessary ingredients of a true catholicity, yet in order to bear witness to them we are confronted with the necessity of maintaining denominational life. That is the paradox, a paradox which will only be ultimately solved if we ourselves hold to these principles and best witness to them in such a temper that we are not fighting for survival but fighting to the death, that is for our death as a sect as a denomination, at the very moment when what we stand for has been built into a truly catholic Church. To persist in separation one moment beyond that would be to deny all to which our history has borne testimony, and all that God has been pleased to reveal to us” (p. 87).

- 17** Leiper, Henry Smith. “**Congregationalism and Christian Unity**”. *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congregational Council - St. Andrews University, Scotland - 20-29th June 1953*. Chicago-London, Pilgrim Press-Independent Press, 1953, p. 88-98.

The theme of the council was “Congregational Churchmanship”. Twelve

propositions on the ecumenical movement inspired by d'Aubigné's idea that "the Catholicity of Protestantism is a noble feature of its character". Leiper is concerned with mission and unity in times marked by "the dangers of a totalitarian revival of such would-be universal state religions as Russian Communism..." (p. 88).

- 18** Visser't Hooft, W.A. "**The Work of the World Council of Churches**". *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congregational Council - St. Andrews University, Scotland - 20-29th June 1953*. Chicago-London, Pilgrim Press-Independent Press, 1953, p. 129-132 (summary only from shorthand notes). The theme of the council was "Congregational Churchmanship".

"Let us recollect the origins of the World Council of Churches. It grew out of a spirit of repentance and was set in motion by people who were deeply ashamed about the distance between the picture of the Church as it is and the Church as it should be, by people who were shocked when they considered what the ecclesia of the New Testament really means. It was not a denominational discovery but one made by the churches together, that in some way together they should show the unity that is in Christ. Then people began to worry very much about the fact that we had become so separated from each other and were in fact almost the opposite of what the ecclesia claimed to be. We had a feeling that was a movement of repentance. The World Council grew out of that constraint towards the true ecclesia" (p. 130).

- 19** Horton, Douglas. "**The Broadcast Sermon**". *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congregational Council - St. Andrews University, Scotland - 20-29th June 1953*. Chicago-London, Pilgrim Press-Independent Press, 1953, p. 145-149.

The theme of the council was "Congregational Churchmanship". Excerpt: "But it is just at this point that Congregationalism discloses its particular catholicity. It not only believes that non-Congregational Christians are members of the greater Church but it designs its whole structure and procedures to witness to this truth. It

does not merely say that members of other communions are of the true Church: it admits them freely to its communion tables. Believing that the Lord of the Communion Table is Jesus Christ and no one else, not even the Church or its office-bearers, it welcomes to that table all who call Jesus Christ Lord and have declared His Lordship by uniting with some Christian Church of some denomination somewhere. Congregationalism accepts members from other Churches without re-confirming them, ministers without re-ordaining them, and if needed them it would gladly accept bishops without re-consecrating them” (p. 147).

**20** *“Constitution of the Alliance - as adopted by the 17th General Council, 1954”. Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954. Geneva, World Alliance, 1954, p. 55-58.*

Article II - Membership: “Any Church which accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, which holds the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the supreme authority in matters of faith and life, whose doctrinal position is in harmony with the consensus of the Reformed Confessions, and whose polity is in accord with the Presbyterian order, shall be eligible for admission to the Alliance.

United Churches which have retained in their faith, life and government a sufficient and substantial part of the Reformed heritage, and Reformed bodies within an association of Churches formed on interconfessional lines, may likewise be eligible for admission.

Membership in the Alliance does not restrict the relationship of any Church with other Churches or with other interchurch bodies.”

Article III - Purposes: “(8) to study what unions or reunions of the constituent Churches of the Alliance, with each other or with other Churches, appears to be according to the will of God, to make recommendations growing out of such study, and to give such help as may be desirable;”



- 21** Mackay, J.A. **“The Witness of the Reformed Churches in the World Today”**. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954*. Geneva, World Alliance, 1954, p.109-120.

The ecumenical movement is marked by two trends: 1.towards world-wide unity among the churches and 2.towards confessional unity. It is urgent to think through the problem of the new confessionalism. Against this background Mackay proposes five statements concerning the ecumenical witness of the Alliance: 1. “we are not, and we should never become, an ecclesiastical power block” (p. 115); 2. we are loyally committed to Christ’s Church Universal; 3. we emphasize the place of the local in the sphere of the ecumenical; 4. we stress the importance of theology; 5. we proclaim that a Church is validated not by its organised structure, but by its missionary action.

- 22** Hromadka, J.L. **“The Reformed Witness in the Present Ecumenical Situation”**. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954*. Geneva, World Alliance, 1954, p. 121-126.

The world in which the ecumenical movement was born was the world of “Christian civilisation, Christian Europe”. Its historical structure is now in disintegration. The centre of gravity is shifting to the non-Christian nations. In such a context, three motives of the Reformed heritage are important: 1. its radical recourse to the prophetic and apostolic witness; 2. its peculiar openness towards all the living voices of the reformation; 3. it upholds the biblical motifs of the Church being a combination of Israel delivered from the Egyptian bondage and walking without any external security to the land of promise. The church lives only as a congregation.

- 23** D’Espine, Henri. **“The Reformed Churches and the Ecumenical Movement”**. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of*

*the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954.* Geneva, World Alliance, 1954, p. 171-174.

Main points: 1. the kind of unity to which the ecumenical effort should be directed. The Alliance's 1951 statement says nothing on this point; the preliminary study group distinguishes between spiritual unity and organic unity; 2. If unity is more than a federation or a fraternal association, then the interpretation of Paul in the Preamble of the 1875 constitution is at stake; the idea of setting up a distinct and permanent confessional church was completely foreign to Calvin; 3. in these days of hardening confessionalism, a confessional Alliance such as ours should strive to become superfluous. Three suggestions in response to proposals on strengthening the Alliance: 1. we should resist the temptation to become a confessional block; 2. we should encourage Reformed churches to participate in unions with other churches; 3. we should try to define what is involved in faithfulness to biblical truth.

**24** Baillie, J. **“The Reformed Churches and the Ecumenical Movement”**. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954.* Geneva, World Alliance, 1954, p. 175-179.

Those of us who are attending this general council and the WCC assembly are confronted not with a conflict of loyalties but with “a certain problem in the adjustment of our loyalties” (p.175). We are all loyal Presbyterians. But we can bear witness to it without ceasing to be ecumenically-minded. On the other hand the coming together of the differing traditions requires the recognition of their partial nature. Our loyalty to Presbyterian principles cannot be of the same rigid kind as that of our fathers. On the other hand “it is certain that there has been in more than one quarter something of a hardening of denominational loyalty, a heightening confessional self-consciousness...” (p. 176). To many of us, therefore, “the new confessional movement appears to be far from an unmixed blessing” (p. 176) as it entrenches itself “along the old lines of battle”.

This “renewed confessionalist consciousness” bears something of nationalism. This is more than an analogy. Our religious loyalties “have often something of a nationalist strain in them”. This is one of the important non-theological factors in Christian disunity. They must be isolated first when they are of such kind “as to be only sectionally represented within the life of a single people and second in our relations with Christians in other countries. Missionary lands challenge our denominational loyalties. Very few missionaries are narrow-minded denominationalists. United young churches introduce “a new era in the history of Protestantism”. They suggest a new understanding of the gospel.

**25** Van Dusen, H.P. **“The Relation of Princeton and Evanston Main Themes”**. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954*. Geneva, World Alliance, 1954, p. 146-160.

Main Sections: I. The Reformed Churches in the Ecumenical Movement: the major contribution of the Reformed churches lies in the fact that within the total ecumenical fellowship they happen to occupy a place which is close to the centre; II. The Reformed Conception of Christian Unity: organic church union was far removed from the ideal of unity for which Calvin strove. His conception of unity, which would leave room for denominational variety, may be described as a Protestant federation. III. The Reformed Witness Concerning Christian Hope: Reformed theology and the Evanston theme - Christ the hope of the world.

**26** Visser't Hooft, W.A. **“The World Council of Churches”**. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954*. Geneva, World Alliance, 1954, p. 161-170.

“I have read in one of your preparatory documents that the ecumenical idea is not to be equated with outward union or organisational fusion, although in some cases this may be involved, but that in essence it is a spiritual matter. This is a very dangerous and misleading sentence. (...) If we really begin to see the Church again in the light of the future, when we see it again (...) that the Church is the first realization of the life of God’s Kingdom on earth, then we cannot get away with saying we only need something ‘spiritual’ in the realm of Christian unity. Then we understand that the New Testament when it talks about unity always talks about *manifest* unity. (...) We are believers in the Incarnation, and we believe that the Churches are in this world in order that the powers of the age to come may break into this world. That means that Church unity must become tangible in this world and that we cannot get away with saying that as long as we work for some spiritual unity we have done enough.” (p. 169)

**27 “The Reformed Churches and the Ecumenical Movement”,**  
*Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N.J., U.S.A. 1954.* Geneva, Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order, 1954, p. 73-79.

Report of the Study Section I as adopted by the General Council. Main sections:

I. The Attitude of the Reformed Churches toward the ecumenical movement: 1. The ecumenical movement “is of God, not men, a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit” (p. 73). 2. The Alliance can and must “provide the opportunity and the means for furthering the ecumenical reality of the Church” (p. 73). 3. The reformers never intended to create a new church. 4. The unity of the church is a gift to the church in Jesus Christ. 5. Though different, the visible structure and the unity of the church cannot be separated. Difficulties arise “where the institutional and administrative structures of the Church are not regarded as under the judgement of Christ”(p. 75). 6. The Alliance member churches recognise “the ministry, sacraments and membership of all churches, which according to the Bible, confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour”. Their members are invited to the table of the

Lord. 7. Calvin's doctrine of the true Church "enables the Reformed Churches to stand at the centre of the ecumenical movement", (p. 75). 8. Reformed churches do not consider Presbyterian order (nor any other form) as "the one indispensable governmental structure of the Church" (p.76).

II. The Role of the Alliance in the Present Ecumenical Situation: it desires to collaborate closely with the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Three reasons call for a "strong and active" Presbyterian and Reformed Alliance: 1. The need for bearing witness to the basic doctrinal position of the Reformed churches; 2. The need for emphasising the fundamentals of our Presbyterian polity; 3. The need for rendering certain practical services to members of the Presbyterian and Reformed family.

**28** Mackay, J. **"The Confessional Resurgence and the Ecumenical Movement with Special Reference to the Role and Development of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches"**. *Minutes of the Executive Committee, Prague, Czechoslovakia, August 7-11, 1956*, p. 35-40.

According to the President of the Alliance, "in the last thirty years three significant developments have taken place in non-Roman Christianity." (p. 35) The first is "a reborn sense of the Church", the second is the emergence of the ecumenical movement and the third is "the resurgence of confessionalism". The future relationship of these two movements "is one of the most crucial questions confronting Protestant Christianity in our time. For the plain truth is this. The Confessional Movement could develop in such a way as to wreck the Ecumenical Movement or at least reduce the World Council of Churches to a venerated ecclesiastical façade." (p. 37)

It is within this dual context of the ecumenical and the confessional that "we must consider the rôle and development of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches" (p. 38). The Alliance "is loyally committed to the Church Universal of Jesus Christ whose interests it exists to promote. It does not regard itself as existing to promote World Presbyterianism but rather to strengthen the Holy Catholic Church throughout the Presbyterian witness" (p. 38).

President Mackay makes several proposals in connection with his analysis. The last one (“let us make arrangements for an informal meeting to take place between leaders of the several confessional organisations”) is the first step towards the creation in Yale, USA, 1957, of the annual conference of officers (now secretaries) of the Christian world communions.

**29** “**Statement on the Conference of World Confessional Bodies**”. *Minutes of the Executive Committee, Stony Point, New York, U.S.A. August 8-13, 1957*, p. 19-20.

“Such a conference as it is here proposed should engage in frank and friendly discussion of the place of confessionalism in the ecumenical movement; the contributions which resurgent confessionalism can make to the enrichment of that movement, and the point at which, if any, confessionalism becomes a threat to that growing oneness in Christ which the ecumenical movement seeks; and ways in which the commitment of the churches to the ecumenical movement presupposes some restraint on the consciousness and practice of mission on the part of the confessional groups with reference to each other” (p. 20).

**30** Watts, S. Maurice. “**Moderator’s Address**”. *Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Hartford, Conn., U.S.A. - 2-10 July, 1958*. London, Independent Press, 1958, p. 23-31.

The theme of the Assembly was “God speaks to our World”. On the future of the ecumenical movement: “Looking into the long future, what are the possibilities of such Churches gathering together? It might be possible for the united Churches to get together and form a union of united Churches, but I would not look hopefully in that direction. It might be possible to look forward to a world union of Protestant Churches. That would be something different from the World Council of Churches. (...) My thought is whether my grandchildren might hope to see a United Protestant Church in which ministers are accepted and the sacraments fully shared. Thirdly, it

might be possible to envisage the I.C.C. revealing what I would regard as true Christian Catholicity; that is, a world Church for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, for all who do not make sectarian beliefs and practices exclusive. I do not find that difficult to practice” (p. 27-28).

**31** Cooke, Leslie E. **“The Significance of the World Council of Churches for the Member Churches”**. *Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Hartford, Conn., U.S.A. - 2-10 July, 1958*. London, Independent Press, 1958, p. 69-78.

The theme of the Assembly was “God speaks to our World”. For Congregational Churches, membership in the WCC “means that they, no more than any other Church, can never have any rest from the continual challenge of Christian unity. The fact of the World Council of Churches is a double-edged fact. It means that the Churches have found a certain unity, that they have acknowledged underlying koinonia in Christ, but it means so long as it exists that the Churches have not fully realized and manifested that unity which is their Lord’s Will that they should have.” (p. 73)

**32** Brown, Basil H. M. **“Light and Dark in Africa”**. *Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Hartford, Conn., U.S.A. - 2-10 July, 1958*. London, Independent Press, 1958, p. 91-97.

The theme of the Assembly was “God speaks to our World”. On apartheid: “there can be no question whatever that those in power in South Africa today are seriously convinced that this policy which they advocate is the right answer to the country’s complex problems. Many of them believe quite sincerely that they have been divinely appointed to meet a crisis in the country’s history. There is almost a sense of messianic mission in the way their leaders are propagating the gospel of apartheid and applying it to every little department of life. We, who think differently, and who shudder at these claims of divine authority, realize that

we are face to face with a political ideology which claims to be Christian and national but which in fact and in practice is neither, for it limits the term 'Christian' to a narrow Calvinism, and the term 'national' to an exclusive and permanently superior white group" (p. 92).

**33** Mudge, Lewis S. **"Report of the Theological Secretary"**. *Minutes of the Executive Committee, Jardim das Oliveiras, São Paulo, Brazil, July 24-25, 1959*. The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order, Geneva, 1959, appendix II, p. 9-12.

A very important opportunity lies at our doorstep, writes the theological secretary. Confessional alliances such as ours "will play an increasingly important part in the total work of the ecumenical movement" (p. 11). There are two technical reasons and one fundamental one for this: 1) it is impossible for the World Council of Churches "to enter creatively and directly into theological questions that involve Protestants alone". 2) Ecumenical theology "cannot have its proper impact on church life unless the various confessional theologies make their response to it" (p. 11). The fundamental reason: "it is entirely certain that theology is something we cannot delegate to others but must do ourselves, even when it is theology with an ecumenical purpose. It is vitally important that all the confessional organisations lead their member churches to take active part in the theological work of ecumenism." (p. 11)

**34** **"Confessional groups and the ecumenical movement"** (Section of the general secretary report). *São Paulo Story - The Eighteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order*. Geneva, The Alliance Offices, 1960 p. 188-190).

"The considerable growth of world confessional groups at the very time that the ecumenical movement is recalling Christendom to the necessity of restoring unity in the body of Christ has raised certain serious problems. The leaders of the Alliance are not unaware of these problems..." (p. 188).



**35 “The Alliance and Other World Confessional Bodies”.** *São Paulo Story - The Eighteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order.* Geneva, The Alliance Offices, 1960 p. 221.

The general council “approves and encourages the Executive Committee and the General Secretary in carrying forward the decision taken by the Executive Committee at Prague in 1956 to seek consultations between appropriate representatives of all confessional groups, looking toward exchange of definition of their respective characters and objectives...” The 1956 decision lies at the origin of the annual Conference of Secretaries of the Christian world communions.

**36 “Address to our fellow Christians after 400 years”.** *São Paulo Story - The Eighteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order.* Geneva, The Alliance Offices, 1960 p. 176-180.

This message, on the occasion of several Reformation anniversaries, includes a section on “ecumenical conviction”. “For too long Churches within the Reformed family have been unaware of, or neglectful of, each other. Churches in official communion, sharing one tradition, and whose leaders are in regular association, do not know each other. If separation from Christians with whom we disagree be sin, what shall we call our ignorance of and unconcern for Christians of our own family?” (p. 178-179)

**37 “The International Congregational Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”.** *São Paulo Story - The Eighteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order.* Geneva, The Alliance Offices, 1960 p. 193-194.

Preliminary statement of accord drafted in Oxford, England, in January 1959. These are the initial steps towards a unique ecumenical event in the 20th century:

the merger between two Christian world communions, successfully completed in 1970.

**38** Stafford, Russell H. **“The Moderator’s Address”**. *Proceedings of the Ninth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Rotterdam, The Netherlands 4-12 July, 1962*. London, Independent Press, 1962 p. 22-28.

The Assembly’s theme was “Essentials of Faith”. Excerpts on the ecumenical movement: “The emergence, though not as yet of the whole, of a vast section of organized Christianity from a chaos of companies wilfully isolated and competitive into a growing orderliness of mutual regard and co-operation, within the World Council of Churches, is a proof of progress (...). Yet there are dangers even in this connection. (...) I. There is the danger of too much stress on the organisation, and its over-development in consequence. (...) II. There is danger of confusing uniformity with unity. (p. 24) III. And in the coming together of as many Christian divisions as can be persuaded to join into one world organisation there is danger that barriers may be set up for its safeguarding...” (p. 25).

**39** Minear, Paul. **“The Meeting Place”**. *Proceedings of the Ninth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Rotterdam, The Netherlands 4-12 July, 1962*. London, Independent Press, 1962, p. 54-61.

The Assembly’s theme was “Essentials of Faith”. On the catholicity of the church: “To be sure, our world and our church are filled with advertisements of the false gods. And these gods appeal to false conceptions of universality and of catholicity. Just as they accord greater significance to decisions taken in Washington or London than to decisions taken in town meetings or village councils, so they tempt us to suppose that a congregation moves toward greater catholicity by its link to the denomination, and the denomination by its link to an international council. (...) Our hunger for catholicity is not satisfied by endless

journeys outward from the self, away from its involvement with other selves in the primary community or family..." (p. 59)

- 40** **"Ecumenical Problems"** (Section of the general secretary report, by Marcel Pradervand). *Frankfurt 1964 - Proceedings of the Nineteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order*. Geneva, Offices of the Alliance, 1964, p. 64-68.

Divided into two sections, "Relations with the Roman Catholic Church" and "Relations with other Churches", it deals once again with the issue of the relations between the world confessional organisations and the ecumenical movement, particularly in connection with the "younger churches" in Asia. "Clearly the world confessional organisations have no right whatever to hinder the Younger Churches in their search for a unity which will enable them to bear a truer and more effective witness. I believe it can truthfully be said that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has never exerted pressure on the Younger Churches (or for that matter on the older Churches) to prevent them from adopting union plans of which they approved" (p. 67).

- 41** Hwang, C. H. (Shoki Coe). **"Come, Creator Spirit! For the Calling of the Churches Together"**. *Frankfurt 1964 - Proceedings of the Nineteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order*. Geneva, Offices of the Alliance, 1964, p. 174-188.

"It is because of Christ's mission, in which we are called to share by the Spirit, that the unity of the Church is not only a given gift but also a *sacred task*" (p. 180). "Why are we in the Younger Churches so insistent on this issue of unity? Because there is no choice for us but to be in the missionary situation. For us it is either to be a religious ghetto or to be the community of the first-fruits of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. We are constrained by the love of Christ to resist the confessionalism

or any other kind of -ism which, willy-nilly, *absolutizes itself* and so divides us as one people of God with one mission, His mission of reconciliation. (...) Our plea is that confession be restored to this missionary dimension” (p. 181-182). “I believe that one of the urgent problems in our ecumenical movement is to see the true significance of ‘locality’ for unity, mission, and catholicity; for only thus will ecumenical renewal reach the grass roots, namely, the local Church, which is one of the decisive fronts.” (p. 184)

**42 “Come, Creator Spirit, For the Calling of the Churches Together”.** *Frankfurt 1964 - Proceedings of the Nineteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order.* Geneva, Offices of the Alliance, 1964, p. 220-225. (Report of section III of the General Council).

The value of the Reformation Principle: The renewal of the Church by a new understanding of the Word of God at the Reformation “was a renewal within the ongoing life of the Church, a life continuing from the days of the Apostles” (p. 220). The Reformer recognised that “there is only one Church extended throughout the world” (p. 221). The present disunited state of the Church “is sinful in that it obscures this truth and our reconciliation with one another in Christ” (p. 221). The Church Universal (The Catholicity of the Church): The church is catholic because “it has a complete Gospel for all sorts and conditions of men” (p. 222). We recognise catholicity “in those Churches also which are divided from us, in that they too bear witness to the one Lord and the one faith” (p. 222). The Church in each place (locality): The unity of the church “must be expressed in each place in which Christians live and work” (p. 222).

The role of a confessional body in promoting unity: A confessional body “is by its very nature a provisional body” (p. 223). Its role includes “helping the Churches of each place to become one in the truth and love of God in Christ, in the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace” (p. 223). The Alliance 1. helps to bring all its constituent churches into a worldwide fellowship, thus preparing them for other ecumenical contacts”; 2. it supports minority churches; 3. it should continue to encourage its

constituent churches “to seek or continue union negotiations with a sense of urgency” (p. 224). “It is here that the Alliance must safeguard the most precious insight of the Reformation, namely this, that the Church must be free in the Spirit to obey the Word of God in the changing situations of history.” (p. 224)

**43 “Report of the Standing Committee on Ecumenical Policy”.**  
*Frankfurt 1964 - Proceedings of the Nineteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order.* Geneva, Offices of the Alliance, 1964, p. 235-237.

This report is a short statement on the Alliance’s ecumenical policy that mirrors at the same time the ecumenical developments related to the 1961 WCC assembly, the “new climate” within the Roman Catholic Church created by Vatican II, the Alliance’s study on catholicity, the 1964 General Council theme “Come, Creator Spirit, for the renewal of the Church” as well as previous statements on ecumenical policy such as Basel 1951, Princeton 1954 and São Paulo 1959. The statement recognises as a sign of the Holy Spirit “the insistence by many of the ‘Younger Churches’, and by such bodies as the East Asia Christian Conference, that the role of the world confessional bodies be re-examined” (p. 235).

**44 “Report of the Standing Committee on Roman Catholicism”.**  
*Frankfurt 1964 - Proceedings of the Nineteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order.* Geneva, Offices of the Alliance, 1964, p. 242-246.

I. The “new climate” and its consequences: new relationships of goodwill and opportunities for dialogue, cooperation and the search for solutions in areas of difficulties such as mixed marriages, proselytism and re-baptism. II. The concern for ecumenicity and unity: on the significance of the invitation to send observers from other Christian churches; observers from the RCC to the 1964 general council. III. Some considerations: how the Alliance can assist its member churches to understand

and share in the dialogue. "Some of our Churches still suffer because of limitations which have been imposed upon them in the past and which continue to be imposed on them in the present. These Churches cannot easily forget the sufferings and injustices which they have known and which some of them continue to know." (p. 245)

**45** **"Report on the Future Programme of the Alliance"**. *Frankfurt 1964 - Proceedings of the Nineteenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order*. Geneva, Offices of the Alliance, 1964, p. 260-264.

Main topics: the modern ecumenical movement "is probably the most significant development in 20th century Christianity". This situation "requires the Alliance to integrate all its study and action in the ecumenical movement in general and in the work of the World Council in particular. This policy has emerged in all the recent General Councils but its practical implications have to be continually reviewed" (p. 260). Other topics: the operational consequences of the Alliance's association with the World Council of Churches; finances; religious freedom; tasks of the Department of Theology; the Church and Israel; Reformed churches in Latin America; Reformation anniversaries; the Alliance's organised areas; relations with non-member churches; women's work; youth work.

**46** Long, Ernest E. **"The Council and the Alliance"** [The International Congregational Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches]. *Proceedings of the Tenth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Swansea, South Wales, 7-11 July 1966*. London, Independent Press Ltd, 1966, p. 38-42.

The theme of the ICC 10th assembly was "A Reformed Church in a New Age - Reformed Faith and Congregational Churchmanship in an Ecumenical Era". According to Long, from the United Church of Canada, "We have set ourselves to the task of dealing drastically and definitively with the confessional movement, and our own

particular within it, and I am convinced that we must follow this action through to its proper conclusion. There is no denying that the confessional movement is at a crossroads, and that, in particular, the International Congregational Council is at a place of decision. The decision we make as to whether or not we shall become partners with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in a new confessional movement will, I am sure, have a great influence upon the whole future of confessionalism and of the ecumenical movement.” (p. 38)

**47** Caird, George B. **“The Second Vatican Council”**. *Proceedings of the Tenth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Swansea, South Wales, 7-11 July 1966*. London, Independent Press Ltd, 1966, p. 43-50.

The theme of the ICC 10th assembly was “A Reformed Church in a New Age - Reformed Faith and Congregational Churchmanship in an Ecumenical Era”. According to Caird “the most momentous decision of the Council occurred (...) when they decided to give to the second chapter of *De Ecclesia* the title *De Populo Dei*. (...) On the other hand to call the Church a sacrament is to direct attention to its spiritual nature, yet without doing violence to its humanity. (...) This double shift on emphasis has had five consequences, which have been evident throughout the debate on all the subjects in the agenda of the Council. There has been: (1) a new confidence that it is possible to change without being unfaithful to oneself and one’s tradition; (2) a strong move towards decentralization; (3) a new emphasis on mission; (4) a revolt against legalism; and (5) a willingness to live with uncertainty” (p. 45). The paper unpacks these five points.

**48** **“Report of the Joint Committee on Relations between the International Congregational Council and the Alliance of Reformed Churches Throughout the World holding the Presbyterian Order”**. *Proceedings of the Tenth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Swansea, South Wales, 7-11 July 1966*. London, Independent Press Ltd, 1966, p. 82-83.

Recommends the adoption of the “Proposals” (see the following document) which look towards the merger of the two Christian world communions in 1970.

**49 “Proposals regarding relations between the International Congregational Council and the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian Order”.** *Proceedings of the Tenth Assembly of the International Congregational Council - Swansea, South Wales, 7-11 July 1966.* London, Independent Press Ltd, 1966, p. 83-84.

“In mutual obedience to our common Lord, in repentance for past failures and offences, and in witness to our common faith, we make the following proposals ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him’. In doing this we recognise that we are all under constant need of renewal and reformation by the Holy Spirit, and acknowledge that what we here propose can only be in partial fulfilment of God’s will for the whole of Christ’s Church in this world. *Be it RESOLVED:* (1) that the two organisations now known as the International Congregational Council and the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian Order shall unite.” (p. 83)





# V. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches in the Ecumenical Movement (1970-2004)

*A significant portion of the ecumenical work accomplished by WARC in the past 35 years has taken the shape of bilateral dialogues. These are official conversations between two churches or families of churches aimed at overcoming inherited divergences often related to doctrine and church order that separate them.*

*Theological dialogue within the modern ecumenical movement was for decades essentially multilateral, carried out through the movement of Faith and Order, later on the WCC Commission on Faith and Order. Following Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church initiated a series of bilateral conversations with different Christian world communions. This initiative has proved to respond to existing ecumenical needs since all major Christian world communions engaged, in the following years, in bilateral dialogues with different partners (see the two volumes of dialogue reports called “Growth in Agreement” often quoted hereafter).*

*The last section of this bibliography includes reports of theological dialogues between the Alliance and the following churches, church representatives or communions: Lutheran World Federation, Roman Catholic Church, Baptist World Alliance, Anglican Consultative Council, Mennonite World Conference, Disciples of Christ Consultative Council, representatives of churches related to the so-called First and Radical Reformations, World Methodist Council, Orthodox Churches in communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Oriental Orthodox Churches, Classical Pentecostal leaders and representatives, Organisation of African Instituted Churches, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reformed Ecumenical Council.*

**1** **“The Function and Purpose of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”.** *God Reconciles and Makes Free - Workbook for delegates.* Geneva, Offices of the Alliance, 1970, p. 36-37.

Statement adopted by the Administrative Committee of the European Area, Vienna, 1969, for presentation to the 1970 Uniting General Council. From several sides “the question is posed as to the function and purpose of the WARC alongside those of the other world confessional organisations”. The Alliance does not wish “to fulfil a competitive function”. Presbyterian and Reformed church life “is successfully coexistent with other forms of church life”. The most important task of WARC “should be seen in the light of its theological and ecclesiological functions”. The ecumenical idea “is best served by the specific theological and ecclesiological reflection within the WARC” (p. 36). WARC is convinced that “in church life one should not strive after shallow uniformity but after a distinct pluriformity which must be seen as the rich colour-scale of the *Una-Sancta*. It is important, especially in these days of generalisation, that the characteristic value of distinctive forms of church life should be made to serve the purposes mentioned above” (p. 37). “Alongside the large organisation of the WCC with its great responsibility for many churches of a very diverse character, and with the LWF with its large financial resources, there is every reason to support, materially and spiritually, the WARC which has hitherto done its work with great modesty and a minimum of resources” (p. 37). “The voice of the Reformed Churches should not fall silent as the life of the *Una Sancta* in its God-given pluriformity, is built up” (p. 37).

**2** **“Act of Union”.** *Nairobi 1970 Proceedings of the Uniting General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) held at Nairobi, Kenya, August 20-30, 1970,* p. 39-40.

The union between the Alliance of Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian Order and The International Congregational Council “is implemented not only in order to carry out the major aims for which both organisations have existed separately, but above all in order better to serve the whole

of Christ's Church, by examining together the traditions of faith and practice within the Reformed family, by supporting one another within the tremendous scope of mission to which Christ is calling all his people in our time and by working together for the unity of all men in Christ, but especially for the unity of all who now call upon the name of the Lord." (p. 39)

**3** **“Constitution”**. *Nairobi 1970 Proceedings of the Uniting General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) held at Nairobi, Kenya, August 20-30, 1970*, p. 40-42.

Article II - Membership: “Any Church which accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour ; holds the Word of God given in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the supreme authority in matters of faith and life ; acknowledges the need for the continuing reformation of the Church catholic ; whose position in faith and evangelism is in general agreement with that of the historic Reformed confessions, recognising that the Reformed tradition is a biblical, evangelical, and doctrinal ethos, rather than any narrow and exclusive definition of faith and order, shall be eligible for membership.

United Churches which share this understanding of the nature and calling of the Church shall be eligible for membership.

Membership in the Alliance does not restrict the relationship of any Church with other Churches or with other inter-church bodies.”

Article III - Purposes: “9. To facilitate the contribution to the ecumenical movement of the experiences and insights which Churches within this Alliance have been given in their history, and to share with churches of other traditions within that movement, and particularly in the World Council of Churches, in the discovery of forms of church life and practice which will enable the people of God more fully to understand and express God's will for his people.”

**4** **“Report of the Committee on Theology”**. *Nairobi 1970 Proceedings of the Uniting General Council of the World Alliance*

*of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) held at Nairobi, Kenya, August 20-30, 1970, p. 165-172.*

Main topics: World confessional families and the WCC; church union issues; world confessional families and a genuinely universal council; Reformed-Lutheran relations, Relations with the Roman Catholic Church and with Orthodoxy.

**5** **“Report on the Study of Episkope”.** *Nairobi 1970 Proceedings of the Uniting General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) held at Nairobi, Kenya, August 20-30, 1970, p. 184-195.*

Mandated by the 1964 General Council, this study followed the studies on “Ordination and Ministry” and “Catholicity”. It proposes 19 theses “commended as a guide to Reformed churches engaged in conversation especially with episcopally ordered Churches” (p. 195). Thesis number 11: “It is not possible to permit in a united Church the incorporation of an understanding of episcopacy as necessary and required, which regards it as of divine authority and as an indispensable means of grace. Such an understanding has no foundation in Scripture, obscures the sovereignty of Christ’s *episkope*, and denies the instrumental and therefore secondary and alterable character of every human expression of *episkope*” (p. 188).

**6** **“Report of the Lutheran/Reformed Joint Committee”** - Geneva, 28-29 January, 1970. *Nairobi 1970 Proceedings of the Uniting General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) held at Nairobi, Kenya, August 20-30, 1970, p. 196-203.*

A. The continuation of the dialogue: “...committed dialogue must continue looking towards the unity of these two great branches of the church of the Reformation” (p. 197); the draft report of the concord of Leuenberg. B. The practical implications of a theological consensus: “...despite the mutually recognised principle that agreement

on the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments is sufficient for church unity, the transition from this theological consensus to the accomplishment of church fellowship often encounters, for various reasons, considerable difficulties.” (p. 199). C. The role of the two world organisations in the life of the younger churches: “It was noted that in the past considerable criticism of the allegedly negative role of the World Confessional Families (WCF) with regard to the church union question has been expressed by younger churches, in particular by the EACC. This in turn has produced a new awareness on the part of the WCF of the problems and situations of the younger churches involved in local and regional union negotiations” (p. 201). D. Closer working relationship. Recommendations include “that in the future the LWF and WARC work together when planning their assemblies” (p. 202).

**7 “Preparation for dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches” - Report of consultations between the representatives of WARC and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, held in 1968 and 1969. *Nairobi 1970 Proceedings of the Uniting General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) held at Nairobi, Kenya, August 20-30, 1970, p. 204-210.***

The subject “The Presence of Christ in Church and World” had been selected by the Geneva meeting as the most suitable theme for the Vogelenzang meeting because it seemed to have a bearing not only on the ultimate salvation of man but also on his life and happiness here and now. It was also expected that the discussion on the presence of Christ in Church and world, especially the meaning of his saving humanity, would tend to bring to light the differences between the two communions...” (p. 205-206). The discussion gave expression to remarkable convergence with regard to three subjects: christology, ecclesiology and witness. These three subjects provided the themes for the three phases of this dialogue, held between 1970 and 2004.

**8 “Discussion Paper on the Ecumenical Role of the World Confessional Families in the One Ecumenical Movement” (1974). *Minutes of the WARC Executive Committee - Cartigny, Geneva, Switzerland February 23 to 28 1975.* Geneva, WARC, 1975, p. 37-49.**

Main topics: I. The New Situation; II. Definitions and Differences; III. In the Fellowship of the Spirit; IV. Confessional Identity and Reconciled Diversity; V. Reconciled Diversity and Church Unity; VI. One Ecumenical Movement - A) Ecumenical Commitment; B) The Future of the Bilaterals and the Bilaterals of the Future.

This was the first formulation in ecumenical discussion of “unity in reconciled diversity” as one of the concepts of church unity. It contends that confessional diversity can lose its exclusiveness and become legitimate diversity and therefore part of the true unity of the church. The Lutheran World Federation supported the notion of “unity in reconciled diversity” in 1977. WARC never did it officially.

**9 “Report of the Department of Theology”. *Minutes of the WARC Executive Committee - Cartigny, Geneva, Switzerland February 23 to 28 1975.* Geneva, WARC, 1975, appendix 8, p. 93-104.**

In response to the 1974 document “Discussion Paper on the Ecumenical Roles of the World Confessional Families in the Ecumenical Movement” the Executive Committee recognises the need to reach greater clarity on the definition of the ecumenical task together and on agreed ways to implement that task. It also welcomes the proposal for an Advisory Group for the bilateral dialogues. (p. 97)

**10 “The Theology of Marriage and the Problem of Mixed Marriages - Final Report of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran-Reformed Study Commission on ‘The Theology of Marriage and the Problem of Mixed Marriages’ 1976”. Geneva-Vatican City, LWF-WARC-SPCU, 1977, 35 p. See also H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds.), *Growth in Agreement*, New York-Geneva, Paulist-WCC, 1984, p. 279-306. Deutsch: H. Meyer et al. (eds). *Dokumente wachsender***

*Übereinstimmung*, Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1983, p. 358-387. ISBN 3-87088300-6. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological: Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Roman Catholic-Lutheran. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

Main sections: I. Crisis and Challenges; II. General Aspects of Marriage; III. The Relation of Christ to Marriage; IV. Marriage for life; V. Pastoral Care; VI. Statement and Discussion of the Norms of the Catholic Church Regarding Mixed Marriage.

**11 “Theological Basis of Human Rights”.** Geneva, WARC, 1976, 18p.

“It is the task of Christians in the existing world conflicts in which they live, to proclaim the Gospel of justification, to live the liberating faith, to exercise the ministry of reconciliation and to give in their congregations a demonstration of a reconciled humanity in the fellowship of men and women, Jews and gentiles, slaves and freemen (Gal. 3: 28).” (p. 15)

**12 “Report of the Theological Conversations Sponsored by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Baptist World Alliance, 1973-1977”.** Geneva-Washington DC, WARC-BWA, 1977, 21 p. *Baptists and Reformed in Dialogue* - Documents from the conversations Sponsored by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Baptist World Alliance. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1983. 56 p. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 4, p. 6-28. See also H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds.). *Growth in Agreement*, New York-Geneva, Paulist-WCC, 1984, p. 132-151. Excerpts: *Reformed World* 35(1), March 1978, p. 23-30; *Reformed World*, 35(2), June 1978, p. 75-80; *Reformed World*, 35(3), September 1978, p. 114-119; *Reformed World*, 35(4), December 1978, p. 159-163. Deutsch: H: Meyer et al. (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung*, Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1983, p. 102-122. ISBN 3-

87088300-6. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological: Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Baptist. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

Main Sections: The Centrality of Scripture - The biblical revelation as the normative source (*norma normans*), The interpretation of the Bible and of history in grappling with today's problems. Reconsideration of Classical Reformed and Baptist Approaches - Mutual questioning of our ecclesiologies, Mutual questioning of our baptismal teachings, The relationship between mission, church and baptism. Mission, church and baptism - The church in the world today, Mission and baptism, Christ and his church, Baptism: act of God and act of man, Church and baptism, Baptism and faith, Baptismal practice in the future. Theses - The Holy Spirit, Baptism and Membership in the Church of Christ.

**13** “**Interconfessional Dialogues**”. *Reformed World*, 34(7-8), September-December 1977, p. 320-324. The 1977 consultation held in Saint Andrews, Scotland, to celebrate the WARC Centennial included a statement on the Reformed ecumenical motivation.

“There must be a doctrinal basis for *koinonia*, but the *koinonia* can survive and transcend doctrinal differences. There is clearly a problem here: How much is indispensable basis and how much variable difference that can be transcended? So stated, the problem may be insoluble, and it may be that the more fruitful approach is to say that doctrine ought to be, not primarily propositional, but doxological, that it should also be penitential (Lord I believe : help thou mine unbelief), and that it ought to be eschatological (it is in process towards the fullness of the truth embodied in Jesus Christ). Given this conception, mutual correction within reconciled diversity becomes a live possibility; and further the function of dogmatic definition becomes more clearly positive, i.e., not to exclude the heretic but to establish and strengthen the faithful.” (p. 322)

“We had to face the question, why the WARC is engaged in the ecumenical movement at all. (...) Further, the Church's existence in its plurality of visible churches



is inseparable from its mission to the whole world; and a mission which is expressed in a conflict or competition of voices is not true mission. This is not just the psychological point that the world is not likely to be impressed by a divided witness. It is the theological point that the witness and those engaged in it have lost their integrity if they contend with such a divided witness. The commissioning of the Church includes not only the command to proclaim the Gospel, but the promise of Christ's presence in all generations; and we may not seek to obey his command without seeking the fullness of his presence." (p. 322)

- 14** **“The Presence of Christ in Church and World - Final Report of the Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity 1970-1977”**. Geneva-The Vatican, WARC-SPCU, 1978, 39p. See also: *Reformed World*, 35(1), March 1978, p. 16-23; *Reformed World* 35(2), June 1978, p. 71-75; *Reformed World*, 35(3), September 1978, p. 106-113; *Reformed World* 35(4), December 1978, p. 152-158. See also H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds.), *Growth in Agreement*, New York-Geneva, Paulist-WCC, 1984, p. 434-463. ISBN: 2-8254-0679-1. Deutsch: H.Meyer et al. (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung*, Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1983, p. 487-517. ISBN 3-8708600-6. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : International Theological Dialogues (Reformed Ecumenical Library > Roman Catholic 1977; see also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology.

Main Content: Introduction (the choice of the topic, method); Christ's Relationship to the Church; The Teaching Authority of the Church (Holy Scripture, Canon, Confessions, Infallibility); The Presence of Christ in the World (Creation and redemption, Church and world, The Church as the effective sign of Christ's presence in the world); The Eucharist (The biblical basis; The paschal mystery of Christ and the eucharist, The presence of Christ in the Lord's supper; The eucharist and the Church: Christ, the Church and the eucharist; The eucharist and the renewal of the Church; Eucharist, liturgy and dogma; The eucharist and Church organisation); On ministry (Apostolicity,

Special ministry, Apostolic succession, Episcopè and collegiality, Different emphases within both traditions; Open questions).

**15 “A Brief Summary of Successive Mandates and Major Recommendations - Lutheran Reformed Joint Committee 1968-1979”.** *WARC Executive Committee Minutes '79.* Geneva, WARC, 1979, p. 154-158.

1968 themes: the continuation of theological dialogue, the practical implications of theological consensus, the role of the two world organisations in the life of the younger churches, the interpretation of “a closer relationship”; the 1970 mandate included the mutual understanding of the ecumenical commitment of the LWF and WARC and their role in the future development of the ecumenical movement. Attention was given in the following years “to the relationship between the gospel of the Christ event as justification and the social commission of the church” (p. 155), the question of a universal council, the 1973 Leuenberg Agreement, similar developments in North America, the planning of future world assemblies, cooperation in theological studies, the role of the two world families in the life of the third world churches. “The WARC Executive Committee also asked its Department of Theology to explore with the LWF the possibility of planning future dialogue with a view to extending the involvement to a third partner” (p. 156).

**16 “Report of the Lutheran/Reformed ad hoc committee”.** *WARC Executive Committee Minutes '81.* Geneva, WARC, 1981, p. 49-51.

Main topics: The meaning of the 1973 Leuenberg Agreement; ecumenical implications for Lutheran and Reformed churches. Among the recommendations: “That the bilateral conversations with other confessional communities should be carried on through both the LWF and the WARC together” (p. 50).

- 17** Jenkins, Daniel. **“Reformation and Catholicity”**. *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory - Study Guide for Delegates* (to the WARC 1982 General Council). Geneva, WARC, 1982, p. 30-35.

The Catholicity of the church “is to be found where there is faithfulness to the apostolic testimony to Christ”. Because that testimony insists that Christ is not to be identified with the Church, “faithfulness finds expression in self-criticism”. Catholicity “has to be discovered more in relation to the church’s present calling and future destiny than to her historical origins and traditions”. The fullness of the church is to be discovered “as she grows in maturity, a maturity which is never more than partially realised on this earth”. Catholicity “is therefore more a matter of aspiration than of achievement” (p. 30). A church aspiring to catholicity “will always strive to maintain a balance between the elements of memory and hope” (p. 31). Maintaining the balance between memory and hope can affect important areas of church life today such as discussions about reunion. “It is significant that several early ecumenists were Reformed theologians who emphasised the tension between the coming kingdom and empirical churches. They saw the ecumenical movement as essentially a step towards catholicity, in our sense of growth towards maturity, with memory and hope held in balance” (p. 33). The marks of catholicity as they relate to the ministry of the Word and sacraments are likely to be the opposite of those churches which lay claim to exclusive catholicity held to be essential” (p. 34).

- 18** Perret, Edmond. **“The Alliance: facing the future expectantly - Report of the General Secretary Edmond Perret”**. *Reformed World*, 37(1), March 1982, special issue on “To Ottawa 1982 and Onwards”, p. 3-62.

Section 4, on “the ecumenical scene”, deals with the “abiding characteristics of the ecumenical movement” (Vissert Hooft): the whole gospel, the whole world and the whole church and goes on to reflect on WARC and the World Council of Churches: the need to respect the so-called Lund principle; the need for a greater coordination of the work within the controlling organs of the WCC itself; the role of a confessional family on the ecumenical scene.

- 19** Smith, Richmond. **“Theological Perspectives - Report of the Secretary of the Department of Theology”**. *Reformed World*, 37(1), March 1982, special issue on “To Ottawa 1982 and Onwards”, p. 63-99.

A comprehensive and detailed overview of the ecumenical work accomplished by the Alliance between 1970 and 1982. Main sections: interconfessional world-level dialogues - the 1977 statement of motivation, dialogues with Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Anglicans, Orthodox (Moscow Patriarchate and Ecumenical Patriarchate), interconfessional relations in general, church union, relations WARC-WCC.

- 20** Perret, Edmond, **“General Secretary’s Address”**. *Ottawa 82 - Proceedings of the 21st General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) Held at Ottawa, Canada, August 17-27, 1982*. Geneva, Offices of the Alliance. 1983, p. 94-111.

Especially section 3 (pages 101-106) - “The Responsibility of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in the One Church of Jesus Christ” - where Edmond Perret addresses two questions: the significance of the membership of 16 united churches and relations with the Roman Catholic Church.

- 21** **“Report on the Department of Theology as approved by the General Council”**. *Ottawa 82 - Proceedings of the 21st General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) Held at Ottawa, Canada, August 17-27, 1982*. Geneva, Offices of the Alliance. 1983, p. 159-168.

Main topics: Interconfessional dialogues (affirmation of the 1977 theological statement on motivation approved by the Centennial Consultation, interconfessional dialogues with Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Anglicans and Orthodox, church union and the witness of united and uniting churches and relations between the Alliance and the WCC.

**22 “Declaration of 10 South African Delegates”.** *Ottawa 82 - Proceedings of the 21st General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) Held at Ottawa, Canada, August 17-27, 1982.* Geneva, Offices of the Alliance. 1983, p. 55.

Following their abstention from holy communion at the opening service of the 1982 General Council (full text):

“Dear Sisters and Brothers,

There are some South Africans who have participated with pain up to this point in the Service, and who now feel constrained not to take part in the Lord’s Supper, which is the essence of Christian fellowship (Matt. 5: 23-24). The reasons for this refusal are threefold:

1. In our country, by custom and by church decision which are defended theologically, Black people are not permitted to partake of the Lord’s Supper in the N.G.K. and the N.H.K.

2. The theological heresy which undergirds apartheid racism finds its origin in separate communion. Our refusal to participate is a choice for righteousness and a refusal to reinforce the Christian roots of our oppression.

These churches, which are members of the WARC have consistently refused to have genuine reconciliation with us Black Christians, through a confrontation with the evil of apartheid and by participating in the search for justice and peace and true humanity. To share communion with those who represent this disobedience to the Gospel would mean eating and drinking judgement upon ourselves. “For if he does not recognise the meaning of the Lord’s body when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgement upon himself as he eats and drinks.” (I Cor. II. 29).

3. Our refusal to participate, anticipates the day of our freedom when we shall - Black and White - drink from one cup and eat from one loaf.”

**23 “Resolution on Racism and South Africa”.** *Ottawa 82 - Proceedings of the 21st General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) Held at Ottawa, Canada, August 17-27, 1982.* Geneva, Offices of the Alliance. 1983, p. 176-180.

On apartheid in South Africa: “Therefore, the General Council declares that this situation constitutes a *status confessionis* for our churches, which means that we regard this as an issue on which it is not possible to differ without seriously jeopardizing the integrity of our common confession as Reformed churches. We declare, with Black Reformed Christians of South Africa that apartheid (‘Separate Development’) is a sin, and that the moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the Gospel, and in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy.” (p. 177-178).

**24 “God’s Reign and Our Unity” - The Report of the Anglican-Reformed International Commission 1981-1984.** London/Edinburgh, SPCK/Saint Andrews, 1984. 90 p. See also J. Gros *et al.*, *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998.* Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 114-154. Deutsch: Gottes Herrschaft und unsere Einheit. Bericht der Anglikanisch/Reformierten Internationalen Kommission 1984. H. Meyer et al. (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung*, Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1992, p. 133-188 ISBN 3-87088675-7. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological: Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Anglican. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

From the outset, write Bishop John Tinsley and Roy Wilson, the two co-chairpersons, “we sought to go behind the historical and traditional problems which have divided us since Reformation times and to put our quest for unity in new perspectives. We sought to do this by enquiring into the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God, the priority of grace, the trinitarian and christological basis of ministry, the mission of the church”. We were fortunate, they go on to say, “in having in our membership representatives from Africa and Latin America and in being reminded by them that the divisions and differences that stemmed from the Reformation are not felt to be as important in many regions of the world as the divisions between rich and poor, black and white, men and women” (p. v).

Main sections: Introduction: What keeps Anglicans and Reformed apart? Christian unity and human unity, A wider perspective; The Church: God's Apostolic people - Debtors to grace, First-fruits of a new creation, Sent to all nations; Life in the Church - Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis, Baptism, The Eucharist; Ministry in the Church - Ministry of the Church and in the Church, Ordination, authority, continuity, Patterns of ministry, Women and the ordained ministry; Our Goal - The form of unity, Practical suggestions, Expectations of the present report. Recommendations.

**25** Vischer, Lukas. **“Unity Among Reformed Churches”**. *WARC Executive Committee - Minutes '84*, Annex III to the “Report of the Department of Theology as Adopted”, p. 132-133.

Three main types of division or separation among Reformed Churches: 1. doctrine, witness or order; 2. missionary work; 3. Presbyterian/Reformed and Congregationalists still live side by side.

**26** **“Unity and Union as a Challenge to the Reformed Family - Report of a Consultation held in New Delhi from October 8-11, 1985”**. *WARC Executive Committee - Minutes '85*, Appendix 7, p. 92-102. See also *Reformed World*, 39(3), September 1986, p. 582-588.

Content: I. The United Churches and the Reformed Family; II. Divisive Factors and Impediments to Union within the Reformed Family (theological, missiological, structural, cultural, political and ethical factors); III. Unity and Union: The Role of the Alliance: to facilitate contacts and conversations among Reformed churches; to provide resources to aid churches on the issues related to union; to respond as the Alliance to particular situations where the possibility of union or problems of division are present; to assist through the special service fund member churches seeking union.

Together in God's Grace - report of the International Reformed/Methodist Consultation held at Cambridge, United Kingdom, July 23-27, 1987. *Reformed World*, 39(8), p. 823-829. See also *Reformed and Methodists in Dialogue*. Geneva, World

Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1988. 16 p. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 12. See also “Together in God’s Grace”, in J. Gros *et al.* (eds). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*. Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 270-274. Deutsch: H. Meyer *et al.* (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung*, Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1992, p. 308-315. ISBN 3-87088675-7. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological: Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Methodist. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

Main sections: Affirmation; Explication - The tradition and the traditions, Grace, The church as covenant community, Church and state, Perfect salvation.

## **27 “The Filioque Clause”** (Questions raised by member churches - attempt at an answer). *Reformed World* 39(8), p. 842-852.

A very short WARC Department of Theology statement on this important ecumenical matter followed by a paper by Alasdair Heron explaining the background and implications of the issue. “There seems to be, in principle, nothing to prevent any church from returning to the original wording and affirming in the Creed simply that the Spirit ‘proceeds from the Father’” (par. 1).

Main sections of Alasdair Heron’s paper: I. The inclusion of the Clause in the Nicene Creed; II. Three Central Issues (the Filioque and Scripture, the expansion of the Creed, the Filioque and the doctrine of the Trinity); III. The Modern Discussion.

## **28 Towards Closer Fellowship (No Doctrinal Obstacles)** - Report of the Dialogue between Reformed and Disciples of Christ. Geneva, WARC 1988. 16 p. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 11. See also: *Reformed World*, XXXIX(8), December 1987, p. 829-41; *Mid-Stream*, April 1988 and J. Gros *et al.* (eds). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*. Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 178-186. Deutsch: H. Meyer *et al.* (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung*, Paderborn-



Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1992, p. 218-230. ISBN 3-87088675-7. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Disciples of Christ. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

Main sections: I. Introduction; II. Our Common Faith - A community living by God's word in Holy Scripture; A community in Reformation; A community visibly united in the faith and service of Jesus Christ; Lord's Supper. III. Issues We face Together - The nature of the Church, Baptism, Ministry.

**29 Toward Church Fellowship - Report of the Joint Commission of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1989).** Geneva, Lutheran World Federation and World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1989. 72 p. Also published in J. Gros *et al.* (eds.). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998.* Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 233-247. Deutsch: *Auf dem Weg zur Kirchengemeinschaft.* H: Meyer *et al.* (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung,* Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1992, p. 274-293. ISBN 3-87088675-7. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Lutheran 1989. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

Main content: I. Our Common Faith. II. On The Way to Church Fellowship: the 1973 Leuenberg Agreement, Union Churches, Churches in Dialogue: Indonesia, United States. III. Unity in Diversity: Word and Sacrament; Church and Ministry; Witness and Service in this World; Language, Ethnicity and Sectarianism. IV. Recommendations, preceded by the following statement: "In light of the discovery that nothing stands in the way of church fellowship, we urge Lutheran and Reformed churches throughout the world who are members of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to declare full communion with one another" (par. 79).

**30** **Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite Traditions.** R. Bender and A. Sell (eds.). *Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite Traditions.* Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991, p. 233-239.

Second round of conversations between The Reformed and the Mennonite. Main sections: Baptism, Peace and the State, Recommendations. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Mennonite. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

**31** **“Mission and Unity”.** *Mission and Unity - Discussion Paper and other Reading Materials - 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, August 15-27, 1989, Seoul, Korea.* Geneva, WARC, 1989, p. 7-37.

Report of a consultation on Mission and Unity organised by the Department of Theology in collaboration with the John Knox Center, August 1988. Outline: 1. A variety of missionary situations (voices from Brazil, Korea, Indonesia, South Africa, United States, France and the German Democratic Republic); 2. Biblical and theological considerations on communicating the gospel by attraction, by challenging the existing order, by radiance, by founding new congregations, by dialogue; a Trinitarian approach to mission; mission to the glory of the triune God; 3. Nine basic affirmations on mission; 4. Rethinking the Reformed tradition (order, stability and justice; the individual and the community of faith; a fellowship in six continents; millennial expectations and eschatology); 5. The unity we seek; 6. Recommendations include the need “to halt the fragmentation of the Reformed churches, to heal the existing divisions and to take steps to prevent further ruptures” (p. 34). The WARC General Council should “call on the Alliance and its member churches to make issues arising from the theme ‘mission and unity’ a major priority in the coming years.” (p. 34)

**32** **“A Call to Unity within the Reformed Family”**. *Mission and Unity - Discussion Paper and other Reading Materials - 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, August 15-27, 1989, Seoul, Korea*. Geneva, WARC, 1989, p. 38-56.

One of the three results of a consultation held by the WARC Department of Theology in Bossey, near Geneva, July 11 to 15, 1988. Outline: 1. Sources of disunity among Reformed churches (several ecclesiastical forms, migrations and missions, doctrinal controversies, revivalist movements, social classes, political and social issues, the ecumenical movement); 2. Roots of disunity in Reformed theology (the impulse to make idols of the Bible and the confessions, the disdain for the fellowship of the Church and the continuation of the tradition, underestimation of the communion of the church, the church understood as an elected company superior to the world, the local/national church closed to the universal fellowship, controversies over the church's public and personal witness); 3. How to overcome and heal divisions? “...The disunity the Reformed churches are facing today forces them to rethink their heritage in the perspective of God's call to unity” (52). 4. The Role of the Alliance (more exchange between member churches on fundamental issues of witness today, common reflection on their participation in the ecumenical movement, to rely more on the solidarity of sister churches, need for people who commit themselves to the service of unity among the Reformed churches, the importance of a network of multilateral relationships).

**33** **“The Role of the Reformed Churches in the Ecumenical Movement”**. *Mission and Unity - Discussion Paper and other Reading Materials - 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, August 15-27, 1989, Seoul, Korea*. Geneva, WARC, 1989, p. 58-68.

One of the three results of a consultation held by the WARC Department of Theology in Bossey, near Geneva, July 11 to 15, 1988. Outline: 1. The Reformation as a Renewal Movement (“the Reformed tradition began as a movement of reform within the Church. It was not the Reformers' intention to found a new Church”, p. 58);

2. Unity as God's Gift; 3. God gathers, protects and upholds the church; 4. The open Lord's Supper; 5. Key points in the ecumenical movement ("Important as this mutual comprehension through dialogue undoubtedly is, however, it is not in itself the goal of the Reformed churches in the ecumenical movement. However determined their efforts to establish a new relationship between previously divided partners may be, their attention will be focused primarily on the common task which Jesus Christ has entrusted to His church and summons it to perform today", p. 63); 6. Emphasis on the fellowship in each place; 7. Models of unity (all in each place brought into one fully committed fellowship, conciliar fellowship); 8. The role of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

**34 "The World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Ecumenical Dialogue".** *Mission and Unity - Discussion Paper and other Reading Materials - 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, August 15-27, 1989, Seoul, Korea.* Geneva, WARC, 1989, p. 69-83.

One of the three results of a consultation held by the WARC Department of Theology in Bossey, near Geneva, July 11 to 15, 1988. Outline: The decision to engage the Alliance in conversations with other churches and confessional families was taken "because it had become apparent that dialogues of this level would be a valuable supplement and stimulus to ecumenical exchange, both for the Alliance and for its partners. The aim was to strengthen the theological and ecumenical work of the Alliance as a whole and to provide further input for that work at every level" (69). 1. The purpose and value of bilateral dialogues; 2. Some central issues in the dialogues (confessing the faith today, the authority and interpretation of Scripture, baptism, Lord's Supper, the understanding of ministry); 3. Proposals and recommendations resulting from the dialogues.

**35 "Department of Theology".** *From Ottawa to Seoul - A Report of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1982-1989.* Geneva, WARC, 1989, p. 59-74.

Among the main topics of this seven-year overview of the work accomplished by the WARC Department of Theology : WARC and unity among the Reformed churches: the “Called to Witness” study, the 1984 Cairo consultation, the 1985 New Delhi consultation on “Unity and Union in the Reformed Family”, the 1987 prayer leaflet *Send Forth Your Light and Your Truth*, “the first attempt ever to draw up a complete list of the Reformed churches throughout the world” (p.63). “In close cooperation with the John Knox Centre, the Department of Theology organized a larger consultation on the theme of ‘Mission and Unity’...1988”, p. 64; Dialogues with churches of other confessional traditions (Anglicans, Baptists, Mennonites, Disciples of Christ, Methodists, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Orthodox) and relationship to Judaism and to Islam.

**36 “Report on Dialogues with Other Confessional Traditions”.** *Seoul 1989 - Proceedings of the 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) held at Seoul, Republic of Korea, August 15-27, 1989.* Geneva, WARC, 1990, p. 227-232.

Main topics of the report adopted by the General Council: Relations with Reformation traditions (Anglicans, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, Mennonites, Methodists, Moravians); dialogue with the Orthodox Church; relations with the Roman Catholic Church; Relations with Evangelical Movements and Groups; Relations with the WCC; Themes for reflection and further work arising from the dialogues (the Trinitarian faith, confessions and confessing, understanding of Scripture in different cultural contexts, the understanding of the Church, baptism, eucharist, ministry, in particular the ministry of elders and the ordination of women).

**37 “Statement of the 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches on relations with the Disciples of Christ”.** *Seoul 1989 - Proceedings of the 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational).* Geneva, 1990, p. 27-28.

The General Council “instructs the Executive Committee to pursue the dialogue with the aim of a) deepening the mutual understanding; and b) finding ways of implementing the consensus and giving fuller expression to the communion existing between the two churches” (p. 27-28). The report of the WARC-Disciples of Christ bilateral dialogue “mentions areas which require further clarification, e.g., the place of the creed in the life of the church, the nature of the church, baptism, and the ministry, especially the ministry of elders” (p. 28).

**38 “Report of Section II - ‘Mission and Unity’ - As Adopted by the General Council”. *Seoul 1989 - Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational)*. Geneva, 1990, p. 207-217.**

Main Sections: I. Toward a Deeper Understanding of Mission (“...the good news of Jesus Christ is never concrete apart from the experience of the people within the setting of their own culture...the purpose of the mission of the Church is not enlarging membership registers in competition with other churches... mission consists of all aspects of the Church’s ministry...p.208); II. Divisions in the Reformed Family (“The Alliance has a duty to use its good offices to promote contact and dialogue, especially on a regional basis, among Reformed bodies, both within and outside its membership”, p. 210; “The section also discussed a concept which some thought potentially useful for the needed dialogue: the notion that there are distinct ways of thinking theologically within the Reformed context (...). Would it not be illuminating to open conversations among the Reformed churches with the assumption that each theological style has a validity which needs to be appreciated by others as well as shortcomings which others can point out? We do not think that such an approach would dissolve actual doctrinal differences or lead to relativism.”, p. 210-211); III. The Role of the Reformed Churches in the Ecumenical Movement, including interfaith dialogues. The Report includes an “open letter” to WARC member churches “in order to share with you some affirmations and concerns and to request your continued co-operation in making Mission and Unity a fundamental characteristic of your church’s programme” (p. 215-217).

- 39** **“Towards a Common Understanding of the Church - Reformed/Roman Catholic International Dialogue: Second Phase - 1984-1990”**. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1991. 62 p. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 21. Also published in J. Gros *et al.* (eds.). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*. Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 780-818. Deutsch: H. Meyer *et al.* (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung*, Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 1992, p. 623-673. ISBN 3-87088675-7. [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Roman Catholic 1990. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

Main Sections: Chapter I: Toward a Reconciliation of Memories - Whence Have We Come? A Reformed Perspective, A Roman Catholic Perspective. Chapter 2: Our Common Confession of Faith - Our Lord Jesus Christ: The Only Mediator Between God and Humankind; Justification by Grace, through Faith; The Calling of the Church: Its role in Justification by Grace Through Faith. Chapter 3: The Church We Confess and Our Divisions in History - Two Conceptions of the Church; The Continuity of the Church Throughout the Ages; The Visibility of the Ministerial Order of the Church; The Mutual Challenge. Chapter 4: The Way Forward - The Diversity of Situations; Steps Along the Way to Unity; Toward the Reconciliation of Memories; Common Witness in the World of Today; What Kind of Unity Do We Seek?

- 40** **“Report of the Bilateral Consultations, 1992” and “Report from the Regional Meetings”**. Henry Wilson (ed.), *Bilateral Dialogues*, Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1993, p. 59-76. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 24.

“The Executive Committee of WARC which met in 1992 authorized holding a consultation on bilateral dialogues completed to date to evaluate how we who belong to the Reformed tradition have represented ourselves in various bilateral dialogues,

how theological statements agreed upon in bilateral dialogues comport with the theological positions we take (...). Another reason for this consultation is to adhere to the decision of the General Council in Seoul (1989) to bring greater participation of the member churches from the South and their theological and ecclesiastical issues to the programmes of the Department” (p. 59).

Main sections: General Considerations (“The WARC should be able to be a reliable dialogue partner on behalf of the Reformed churches. This raises the issue of the ecclesial character of the WARC”, p. 60); Updates on the Bilateral Dialogues - General Recommendations; Bilateral Dialogues: The present position with specific recommendations: A. Dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches; B. Dialogues with the Churches of the Reformation. Conclusion: Reformed Self-understanding/Identity.

The report is followed by a “Report from the Regional Meetings” (p. 70-76). “Africans felt that the dialogues presently going on within the context of WARC are inter-European” (p.70). “Bilateral dialogues in the Middle East are to some extent similar to those of Europe and North America” (p.72). “It was also the general feeling of the group that in contexts like that of Asia and Africa, bilateral dialogue may not be the starting point for the ecumenical venture” (p. 72). “The bilateral dialogues under consideration are of great importance for the Reformed churches in Europe...” (p. 73). “It is vital for the success of these dialogues to have as an important base for discussion in our day by day reality as people. In our situation as Latin Americans our reality is one of poverty, exploitation and discrimination” (p. 74). “The North American Group is grateful for the accomplishment of the dialogues we have been considering...” (p. 75).

#### **41** “**Report of the General Secretary**”. *Executive Committee Minutes* '95. Geneva, WARC, 1995, p. 34-60.

It includes the report “**Towards a Renewed Dialogue**” of the Prague IV consultation (Geneva, November 1994), a multilateral forum that gathers together representatives of churches related to the so-called “First” and “Radical” Reformations. The report summarises the papers presented on the following topics: the first and



radical Reformations and their relation with the magisterial Reformation; the difference between Luther's Reformation and Radical Reformation; Comenius as an example of dialogue between the two Reformations; The Sermon on the Mount in Radical Reformation traditions; The Golden Rule as the summary of the Sermon on the Mount in the Reformed and Lutheran traditions; The Sermon on the Mount in present biblical scholarship; the link between the living legacy of the Reformation and the ongoing ecumenical work. "We desire another gathering, with continued emphasis on Reformation as the Church's response to God's living presence in each age and place. We suggest focusing on questions around God's acceptance of us and human transformation. Avoiding technical theological language, we might ask how we talk about what God is doing among us in the whole created order, among humankind, in the church, and in personal lives. Or, how we discern and embody marks of the church amid the challenges of our society". [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Prague Consultations 1994. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

**42 "Department of Theology".** *From Seoul to Debrecen*. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1997, p. 34-46.

Section B of this eight-year report submitted by the Department of Theology to the 1997 General Council deals with the WARC bilateral dialogues. While the 1992 review of bilateral dialogues "reaffirmed the significance, place and role of bilateral dialogues, it also pointed out that Reformed dialogue teams should be more representative (women, people from the southern hemisphere) in order to ensure the input and reflect the concerns of the wider Reformed family. For greater effectiveness, promotion of regional and local dialogues was also stressed" (p. 40). It includes overviews of the dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches, Oriental Orthodox Churches, Pentecostals, and the Anglican Church.

**43** **“Reformed Faith and the Search for Unity”**. *Break the Chains of Injustice - Study Texts for the Sections and Sub-sections of the 23<sup>rd</sup> General Council - Debrecen, Hungary 8-20 August 1997*. Geneva, WARC, 1997, p. 5-39.

Preparatory material for the 1997 General Council's Section 1 based on the work accomplished by the Department of Theology. Main sections: 1. Who Are We Called To Be? Reformed Self-Understanding (Our heritage, Reformed affirmations, living out our heritage in today's world, questions); 2. Gospel and Cultures (Understanding Gospel and culture, authentic witness within each culture, local congregations within pluralistic societies, empowerment of identities in community by the Gospel, one Gospel - many expressions); 3. Witnessing Together in Context (Proclamation as witness, community as witness, service as witness, text (Scripture)-context-contextualisation, characteristics of contextualisation, *Semper Reformanda*).

**44** **“Reformed Faith and the Search for Unity”**. *Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches*. Geneva, WARC, 1997, p. 183-191.

The 1997 General Council recommendations related to the ecumenical work accomplished by the Warc Department of Theology were part of the recommendations related to the study on “Who Are We Called To Be? Reformed Self-Understanding” (p. 183-186). They encourage the Alliance “to continue ongoing conversations with Pentecostals” (p. 185) and member churches “to be open to listening to what other people have heard from the Word of God” (p. 185) and “to initiate or improve dialogue with our sisters and brothers in other Christian communities” (p. 190).

**45** **“Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity”**. L. Vischer (ed). *Agreed Statements from the Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue*. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1998, p. 12-17. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 38. See also: J. Gros *et al.* (eds). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*. Geneva-

Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 280-284. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Orthodox 1992. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology. [Deutsch: *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung - Sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene - Band II*. Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, p. 321-330].

The “Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity” was adopted in 1992. Main sections: The self-revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Three divine persons; Eternal relations in God; The order of divine persons in the Trinity; Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, the One Monarchy; Perichoresis: the Mutual Indwelling of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; One Being, Three Persons; The Apostolic and Catholic Faith

- 46 Significant Features - A Common Reflection on the Agreed Statement.** L. Vischer (ed.). *Agreed Statements from the Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue*. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1998. p. 18-20. Edited by Lukas Vischer. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 38. See also: J. Gros et al. (eds). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*. Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 285-287. [Deutsch: H. Meyer et al. (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung - Sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene - Band III*. Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 2003, p. 152-154].

The text on the “Significant Features” was adopted in 1992. Sections: Trinitarian Language; The Monarchy; Ecumenical Significance.

- 47 “Agreed Statement on Christology”.** L. Vischer (ed.). *Agreed Statements from the Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue*. Geneva, World

Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1998. p. 21-24. Series “Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches”, n. 38. See also: J. Gros *et al.* (eds). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*. Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 288-290. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Orthodox 1994. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology. [Deutsch: H. Meyer et al. (eds), *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung - Sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene - Band III*. Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, p. 155-158.

Excerpts: “In accordance with the Nicene Creed we affirm the basic interconnection between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ. (...) As regards the connection between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation, Orthodox and Reformed seem to follow two different kinds of approach which, however, are not incompatible. (...) The Incarnate Son is the manifestation of the Holy Trinity in the sphere of earthly human history. (...) Creation and incarnation, then, belong together to God’s original plan. (...) Jesus acts both as divine and as human, exercising both kinds of properties as appropriate in communion with each other. In this sense there is a ‘communication of attributes’ within the hypostatic union (...). Reformed theology shares this understanding but avoids the language of *theosis*. It treats the theme more in terms of *sanctification* of human nature in Christ (...). Speaking of the union of natures in the person of Jesus Christ is normative for both the Orthodox and Reformed traditions. (...) The hypostatic union is worked out in the economy of salvation. The New Testament presents this economy in terms of the three offices (*triplex munus*) (...). The understanding common to Orthodox and Reformed of the revelation of the three persons of the Trinity makes them crucially aware of the connection between Christology and Pneumatology (...).”

**48** Song, Choan-Seng. “**Come, Let Us Renew Life and Faith Together**” (Address of the President). *Executive Committee Minutes 1998*, Geneva, WARC, p. 27-31.

“The Alliance played a significant role in the ecumenical movement that later came to be represented by the World Council of Churches. The Alliance even kept itself small in order for the World Council of Churches to grow big. The World Council of Churches did grow big, pioneered many fresh theological ideas, undertook many exciting adventures of faith, broke many new grounds in prophetic witness to the gospel, and engaged itself in the painstaking process of church unity. The ecumenical movement, directed by the World Council of Churches, with active participation of many leaders of the Alliance, will be remembered as the most significant event in the history of Protestant Christianity in the second part of the twentieth century.

But despite our active involvement in the world, our prophetic insight into the meaning of history, we were not prepared for the changes happening in the world of nations and peoples and for the reorientation taking place deep in people’s religious consciousness. The world has become globalized, but people’s concerns and interests have become localized. Furthermore, globalization has been a tool used by developed nations to advance their economic and political enterprises. The financial crisis in Asia in recent months is one of the examples.

The ecumenical movement represented by ecumenical bodies based in Geneva cannot be an exception to this world trend, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches included. The distance between ecumenical concerns and issues and local concerns and issues has increased over the years. Local churches and Christians have become more and more absorbed in their own interests at the expense of ecumenical interests. The same thing happens between denominational headquarters and local congregations. This partly results in decrease in financial contributions to the national church headquarters. This in turn creates funding problems for ecumenical organizations.

The chain reactions thus happen both ways. The Alliance, for instance, asks its member churches to pay their dues to keep its operation going. Member churches turn to their local congregations for sources of funding. This is from the top to bottom approach that worked in the good old days. But the attention and enthusiasm of local congregations for national church bodies and for ecumenical institutions have dwindled and then shifted. What follows is inevitable: funding for national and ecumenical causes has been reduced. And here we are in Geneva constantly worrying

about our financial well-being. Unless this trend is reversed, the future of ecumenical institutions, including our own, will be in question.” (p. 29)

**49** “**Report of the General Secretary**”. *Executive Committee Minutes 1998*. Geneva, WARC, 1998, p. 32-51.

This report, by Milan Opocensky, includes the two-page working paper adopted by **Prague V** (held in Geneva, February 1998), the fifth of a series of multilateral conversations gathering representatives of churches related to the so-called “First”, “Radical” and “Magisterial” Reformations. The focus of Prague V was “Justification and Sanctification”, “a theme which has been in the forefront of Lutheran-Reformed discussion in recent decades, leading to the Leuenberg Agreement (1973) and the Formula of Agreement (1997-8) (...). The recent Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1997) issued by the LWF and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and now in process of reception by the Lutheran and Roman Catholic communions was received with great interest by participants and recognised as having significant implications.” [Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Prague Consultations 1998. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology].

**50** “**Report of the Department of Theology**”. *Executive Committee Minutes 1998*. Geneva, WARC, 1998, p. 52-71.

It includes the document “**Mission in Unity - Going Beyond Generalities: Report of the Consultation on Mission in Unity - John Knox Reformed Centre, Geneva - 19 to 23 April 1998**” which led to the launching of the John Knox-WARC jointly sponsored “Mission in Unity Project”. The report asks at the outset: “How can Reformed churches credibly communicate God’s gift of reconciliation in Christ? How can they overcome their present divisions and strengthen their common witness in today’s world?” It goes on to state that “what is urgently needed is a movement or process through which Reformed churches can find their way to a new common commitment in unity” (p. 56). Main sections: The need for a mission in unity

movement; The nature and forms of the unity we seek; Mission unity and diversity; The role of mission bodies in promoting unity; Moving into action; Related decisions to facilitate mission in unity. The report includes appendices on Korea and South Africa.

**51** Song, Choan-Seng. “**Signs and Realities of Our Time - The World Alliance of Reformed Churches into the Twenty-First Century**” (Address of the President). *Executive Committee Minutes 1999*. Geneva, WARC, 1999, p. 20-27.

“In August 1996 I found myself called back to the ecumenical stage in the capacity of the president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. After the excitement of the General Council at Debrecen, Hungary, subsided, and after having reacquainted myself with the latest mind sets, thought models, and work styles of the ecumenical establishments, including the Alliance, I had to ask myself a question: Is the Alliance working? And I had reasons to become first worried, then alarmed. I became worried because some basic assumptions held by the ecumenical institutions had become obsolete, if not entirely wrong. I became alarmed because if this trend were to continue, the ecumenical movement that revitalized the history of Christianity in the post World War II world would become a historical memory and merely a subject of doctoral dissertations. As a matter of fact, it has almost ceased to be the Christian spiritual force to be taken seriously by the world. Am I totally wrong in my assessment? I wish I were.” (p. 21)

“In study sessions the church members who care enough to be present are not asking what the ecumenical movement is doing, how union negotiations are working or not working. The fact that they no longer ask such questions does not mean that these questions are not important. The prevailing reality is that these ecumenical concerns, if ever they existed among local Christians, are hardly present in their consciousness. This is particularly true with the Christians who belong to the two thirds of the Alliance’s member churches. They are preoccupied with problems of life such as birth, aging, illness and death. What they are looking for is spiritual strength to cope with the meaning of this transient life. Have we as the Alliance done anything to wrestle with them as they strive to gain spiritual strength to cope with such realities?

My own limited experience tells me that the questions local pastors and Christians ask, and the concerns they have, are very different from the purposes and causes of the Alliance. I am not saying that their questions and concerns are all that should preoccupy the Alliance. But unless the Alliance is also able to address itself to their questions and concerns, it would not be easy for the Alliance to promote its own causes and purposes, not to say gaining financial support for what it seeks to do.

After all, the Alliance does not exist for itself. It exists for its member churches and particularly Christians of these member churches. If this is the case, we as the Alliance must first try to address their questions and concerns before we can invite them to become active participants in the Alliance's causes and purposes. Is this not a chicken and egg proposition? No, it is not. It is the question of what the priorities of the Alliance must be in the coming years." (p.23-24)

**52 “Report on the Activities of the Department of Theology”.** *Executive Committee Minutes 2000*. Geneva, WARC, 2000, p. 61-69. This report includes a two-page “working report” on Prague VI entitled “New Life in Christ”. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Prague Consultations 2000. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology.

The sixth of this series of conferences on the contemporary relevance and ecumenical significance of the so-called “First” and “Radical” Reformations, started in 1986, was held in Strasbourg, February 2000. Prague VI continued the theological explorations on Justification and Sanctification started by Prague V, held in 1998. “We have learned through Christian history, in particular again during the bloody 20th century, that life in Christ involves costly grace, and that the challenge to faithful discipleship continues. We should make greater efforts to tell the stories of such discipleship expressed in human lives, recognizing in them authentic Christian witness that points to the reason for doctrinal confession”.



- 53** “**Word and Spirit, Church and World - The Final Report of the International Dialogue between the Representatives of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders (1996-2000)**”. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2001. 26 p. (brochure, standard version). See also *Reformed World*, 50(3), September 2000, p. 128-156. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Pentecostal. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology. [Deutsch: H. Meyer et alii (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung - Sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene - Band III 1990-2001*. Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 2003, p. 184-210, ISBN 3-89710-256-0].

Main content: I Spirit and Word - The Spirit and the Word in the context of the Trinity: The Spirit and the Word in Creation and Culture; Spirit, proclamation, and spiritual discernment; II The Holy Spirit and the Church: The Church is the creature of the Word and Spirit; The Church is the community of the Holy Spirit's leading; The Church is the community of the Spirit's Gifts; The Church is *in* but not *of* the world; III The Holy Spirit and mission: Holy Spirit and *Missio Dei*; Holy Spirit and culture; The multifaceted mission; service to the world; IV Spirit and Kingdom: Working definition of the kingdom; Spirit, kingdom and eschatology; Spirit, kingdom, creation; Spirit, kingdom, world.

- 54** “**Report of the International Theological Dialogue between the Oriental Orthodox Family of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1993-2001)**”. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2001. 20 p. (brochure, standard version). *Reformed World* 55(1), March 2005. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Oriental Orthodox. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology. [Deutsch: H. Meyer et alii (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung - Sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte*

interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene - Band III 1990-2001. Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 2003, p. 162-182, ISBN 3-89710-256-0]. (For the “Agreed Statement on Christology” see also H. Wilson (ed.) *Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue - The First Four Sessions*, Geneva, WARC, 1998, p. 31-32).

Main content: II Agreed Statement on Christology (1994); III Convergences and divergences on tradition and holy Scripture, theology, Church and mission, priesthood/ministry and sacraments. Includes a list of papers presented in the seven annual sessions and a list of participants.

**55 “Report of the International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (2001)”**. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2001. 11 p. (brochure, standard version). *Reformed World*, 55(1), March 2005. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > Adventist. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology. [Deutsch: H. Meyer et alii (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung - Sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene - Band III 1990-2001*. Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 2003, p. 140-150, ISBN 3-89710-256-0].

General theme: “The Church in the Setting of the Reformation Heritage: its Mission in a World of Widespread Injustice and Ecological Destruction”. I. Preamble: Brief introduction to the churches of the Reformed tradition and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. II. Common Ground: what Adventists and Reformed hold in common; III. Mutual Misunderstandings and Clarifications; IV. Mission: socio-economic injustice (poverty, HIV/AIDS, violence); ecological destruction; Prejudices (religious freedom, gender biases). Includes a list of papers presented and participants.

**56 “Report of the Department of Theology”.** *Executive Committee Minutes 2001.* Geneva, WARC, 2001, p. 79-94.

It includes progress reports of bilateral dialogues (Roman Catholic-Reformed, Oriental Orthodox-Reformed, Eastern Orthodox-Reformed, African Instituted Churches-Reformed, Seventh-day Adventist-Reformed and Pentecostal Reformed) an information about the Vatican-LWF-WARC consultation on Indulgences, held in Rome, February 2001.

**57 “Consultation between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council”.** *Executive Committee Minutes 2002.* Geneva, WARC, 2003, p. 36.

Having studied “the reports produced in 1984 and 1986” and in view of “recognition by both parties of one another as visible expressions of the church of Christ”, participants in this consultation affirmed that the goal of relations between WARC and DECC should now be “the development of comprehensive partnership in pursuit of the vision of the two eventually becoming one” and submitted to their respective governing bodies, to that effect, 12 recommendations.

**58** Song, Choan-Seng. **“The Ecumenical Tide has changed”** (Address of the President). *Executive Committee Minutes 2002.* Geneva, 2002, p. 13-15.

“As the world evolves out of the West and moves to the rest of the world, as the Alliance seeks to relate itself more closely and deeply to member churches and especially to member Christians, we cannot help but ask one question: Does it make any sense for the Alliance to continue to operate out of Geneva situated in the heart of Europe shaped by Christianity?

I should stress that I raise this question not just for financial reasons, although we know how expensive it is to live and work in Geneva. I ask the question primarily because I have seen how history has shifted its course and because I have experienced

personally how the ecumenical tide has changed its direction. **Geneva no longer has the centripetal force it believed it had.** It has lost its luster for the great majority of Christians living outside the West. It no longer ignites their religious imagination. It has ceased to be a lively, dynamic and challenging center of Christian spiritual movements. I am not saying that the Spirit has abandoned Geneva. The Spirit, if it is the true Spirit of the Creator God, will not abandon any place, including Geneva. But the fact is that Geneva does not command the spiritual imagination of most Christians any more, not only Christians beyond the West but also many Christians in the West itself. If this is the reality we are facing today, does it make sense to continue to conduct the Alliance's business out of Geneva? Do we have to get stuck in Geneva, thus resisting the Spirit's call to move to places where human physical and spiritual needs and longings are most acute?

You may say this is not a new question. It has been raised in the ecumenical circles from time to time and provoked passionate debates with no conclusion. I know this is not a new question, but I am raising it not in an old way but in the light of my perception that the ecumenical tide has changed. I have to raise it now particularly as we move to the General Council in 2004, and as we, in what we say and profess, are determined to take seriously what our member churches and Christians are seeking to do in their own situations. In this brief presentation all I can do is to point to some basic factors, hoping to get the process of thinking and discussion started in the coming years." (p. 13-14).

**59 "Christianity in the African Context. Report of the International Theological Dialogue between the Organisation of African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches [1998-2002]".** WARC, Geneva, 2003, 16 p (brochure). *Reformed World* 55(1), March 2005. Web: [www.warc.ch/dt](http://www.warc.ch/dt) : Theological Dialogues > Reformed Ecumenical Library > African Instituted. See also [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net) : English > WARC/Information > Department of Theology > Ecumenical Reformed Theology.

Main content: Introduction: Dialogue between two Christian families; The beginnings

of the Church in Africa; African Independent Churches - a new Christian phenomenon; The Organisation of African Instituted Churches; The Reformed Churches; Planning of the dialogue; The nature of the process; I. African Christian Identity: The Kigali Statement (1999); II. Reconciling identities: The Lagos Communiqué (2001); III. Moving towards common witness: hermeneutics, sacraments, the role of women in the church, the way forward. The report includes a list of papers presented in the three sessions and a list of participants.

**60** Song, Choan-Seng. **“Reshaping the World Alliance of Reformed Churches for a people’s ecumenical movement”** (Address of the President). *Executive Committee Minutes 2003*. Geneva, WARC, 2004, p. 18-25.

“In the midst of all this, the Alliance has been a faithful, if not a creative, player, in the ecumenical movement, almost to a fault. In the past fifty years what has underlain its theological ethos and organizational rationale as a team-player in the ecumenical movement through the World Council of Churches is, to paraphrase the famous words of John the Baptist at the appearance of Jesus: “The World Council of Churches must increase, but the Alliance must decrease” (see John 3.30). The result, as far as the Alliance is concerned, is a minimalist approach in terms of staff, organization and budget. I do not know whether those of you who have been involved in the Alliance much longer than I have agree with my observation. But when the World Council of Churches decreased in recent years not only by force of circumstance but lost the opportunity to transform itself into a new ecumenical instrument, a fact lamented even by some veteran leaders within the World Council of Churches, what are we as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to do? I believe the Alliance can no longer evade the question.” (p. 19)

“What can the Alliance learn from these historical ups and downs of the ecumenical movement institutionalized in the World Council of Churches? How should the Alliance reshape itself in this globalized world to be of better service to its member churches and Christians? There is a Chinese saying that “the stones of those hills may be used to polish gems” (*t’a shan chi shih kho I kong yu*). It teaches the

importance of learning a lesson from the experience of others. This brings us to the heart of my address: Reshaping the Alliance of Reformed Churches for a people's ecumenical movement." (p. 21)

**61** "Report of the WARC-REC Meetings 1998-2002". *Executive Committee Minutes 2003*. Geneva, WARC, 2004, p. 40-43.

Report of three meetings held between the Reformed Ecumenical Council and WARC "to assess their current relationship and consider the possibilities of common actions of cooperation". Main sections: 2.Identity and Ethos; 3.Converging Interests in Programmes; 4.Common member churches' points of view; 5.Recommendations. From section 2 on Identity and ethos:

*"Theology and biblical interpretation*

From recent documents and actions, REC articulates a traditional Reformed stance but with a positive attitude toward contextuality as providing a good contribution to the understanding of scripture. Interpretation of scripture is generally Christocentric. Scripture is deemed to provide sufficient knowledge for salvation. Interpretation should be within the fellowship of believers and under the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

WARC in its recent documents and actions affirms a traditional Reformed stance and puts much emphasis on the context (for example apartheid, economic justice, etc.). In this way WARC focuses on applying theological reflections on the sociopolitical situations faced by its members and the cultural and religious contexts in which we live. As a result of its ecumenical engagements, bilateral theological dialogues have been important. In recent years, there has been a call for interreligious dialogue in the face of our contextual challenges. Current critical issues of discussion for WARC include Reformed identity, spirituality (including worship and liturgy) and spiritual renewal. In its reflections WARC recently engaged in a process of searching for the meaning of being reformed, and the meaning of mission and evangelism in our contexts today.

These demonstrate some points of convergence as well as differences in emphases. The question of Reformed identity was a deep one, which affected the study of spirituality, especially in the face of challenges from the Pentecostal churches. WARC

and REC may need to look together at the meaning of Reformed identity. In this venture, WARC may start from culture and then look for scriptural insight, while REC will begin from scripture and seek cultural applications. Such a study could be at the heart of both organizations and could promote and strengthen Reformed unity.” (p.40-41)

**62 “Report and Recommendation Consultation between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council - Westminster College, UK, March 24-26, 2003”, *Executive Committee Minutes 2003*. Geneva, WARC, 2004, p. 43-45.**

Recommendations:

“1. To accept the change in wording as suggested by DECC to read as *“the goal of this relationship between WARC and DECC should now be the development of comprehensive partnership in pursuit of the visible unity of the church”*. 2. To reaffirm the recommendation of including a brief statement on our history in the preparatory documents for WARC 24th general council in 2004 and the Disciples international conference in 2004 in the UK. These brief statements (3-4 pages) should be submitted by the end of 2003. 3. A team from each body should be invited as participating observers to each other’s general council and international conference. 4. A small group of participants should be invited to study and compare the documents of each other’s results from the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church in order to identify the commonality and differences and to make recommendations for the future. This future may include cross-representation on future bilateral dialogues. 5. To support the suggestion of the 7th International Consultation of United and Uniting Churches that the Christian World Communions should reflect on questions raised by the United and Uniting Churches (IV C last paragraph) and to identify the values and burden to churches in their participation in CWCs. 6. To endorse initiation of interfaith dialogue, whenever possible, taking special care to avoid competition and repetition. 7. To encourage DECC to utilize WARC resources produced in preparation for the general council. 8. To encourage DECC to utilize WARC resources, such as

the gender manual and economic justice material, and to share the information about the dialogues with the local churches. 9. To convene a follow up meeting of this dialogue group after Summer 2005.” (p. 44-45).

**63 “Report of the Department of Theology”. *Executive Committee Minutes 2002*. Geneva, WARC, 2002, p. 74-93.**

This report includes among its appendices (p. 82-87) the report of a joint LWF-WARC consultation on “United Churches in their relationship to the LWF and WARC” held in Geneva, October 2001. Main sections: The experience of the united churches represented; The LWF and WARC; We are all heirs of the Reformation; Actualizing our confession; The way forward. It also includes three documents on the Vatican-LWF sponsored consultation on the ecumenical aspects of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification held in Columbus, USA, November 2001: the communiqué, the report and a report of the Reformed participants.

**64 “Called to Communion and Common Witness - Report of the Joint Working Group of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1999-2001)”. Geneva, LWF-WARC, 2002, 53 p. ISBN 3-906706-93-1. [Deutsch: *Zur Gemeinschaft und zum gemeinsamen Zeugnis berufen - Bericht der Gemeinsamen Arbeitsgruppe zwischen dem Lutherischen Weltbund und dem Reformierten Weltbund (1999-2002)*, Genf, LWF-RW, 2002, 61 p.; H. Meyer et alii (eds). *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung - Sämtliche Berichte und Konsentexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene - Band III 1990-2001*. Paderborn-Frankfurt, Bonifatius-Otto Lembeck, 2003, p.111-130 ISBN 3-89710-256-0].**

The Joint Working Group was appointed in 1999 to review Lutheran-Reformed relations, to assess the implications of regional developments for the global relationship, to identify other possible forms of cooperation and to consider whether it would be helpful to begin a new full round of international dialogue.



Structure of the report: I. Lutheran-Reformed developments in recent years (USA, Indonesia, the Leuenberg Fellowship, the Meissen Agreement, The Reuilly Common Statement, Churches Uniting in Christ); II. Developing Visible Structures of Communion (Satis est, proclamation and communion, communion and commitment to justice, local-universal, diverse bilateral ecumenical commitments, oversight, the World Council of Churches); III. Present State of Collaboration between the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Cooperation between the two secretariats in Geneva, joint studies and consultations, human rights); IV. LWF-WARC Relations: New Steps in Deepening Communion (Declaring mutual commitment, their role in promoting relationships, study project on structures of communion, the history of Lutheran-Reformed relationships, the role of united churches in the LWF and WARC, collaboration at the level of governing bodies; towards a Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission).

**65 “The Background, Content and Significance of the 2002 Review of Bilateral Dialogues”** (paper by the Theological Secretary submitted to the 2003 meeting of the WARC Department of Theology, unpublished).

Sections: I. Towards the 2002 review of the WARC ecumenical dialogues; II. Reviewing the ecumenical engagement of the Alliance and its member churches today; III. Reviewing the bilateral dialogues co-sponsored by the Alliance; IV. Helping WARC to shape its ecumenical engagement beyond 2004; V. On the final report of the Beirut meeting; VI. The Review of bilateral dialogues and the WARC ecumenical engagement beyond 2004.

**66 “Report of the Department of Theology”.** *Executive Committee Minutes 2003.* Geneva, WARC, 2004.

The 2003 report announces that the third phase of the Roman Catholic-Reformed dialogue on “The Church as Community of common Witness to the Kingdom of God” is likely to be completed next year. It includes the report of the third evaluation

of WARC bilateral dialogues, held in Beirut, Lebanon, November 2002.

**67 “Prague VII Consultation - the Significance of Reforming and Prophetic Movements for Church and Society”** (Communiqué, 2 pages).

The seventh of this series of conferences on the contemporary relevance and ecumenical significance of the so-called “First” and “Radical” Reformations, started in 1986, was held in Prague, Czech Republic, November 28 to December 2, 2003. Its communiqué summarises the papers presented. They focused primarily on the origins of the Waldensian movement, on Methodists and Franciscans, on the Taborite part of the Hussite movement, on the Historic Peace Churches in the 20th century as well as on the Lutheran and Catholic churches. It appears, says the communiqué, “that as a coherent series with a continuity of participants, the Prague Consultations have come to completion”.

**68 “The Alliance Today and Tomorrow - Towards Accra and Beyond”**. Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2004. 95 pp.

The report “From Debrecen to Accra” offers in its chapter 3 - **“Promoting a wider ecumenism”** - a succinct account of the ecumenical work accomplished between 1997 and 2004, including bilateral dialogues with Catholics, Adventists, Orthodox, Pentecostals and African Independent as well as relations with the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation. The document “The Alliance beyond 2004”, in its second part, includes a section on the WARC ecumenical self-understanding and the challenges it faces in 2004.

**69 “Together in mission - A letter on mission renewal addressed to all member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed**

**Churches and to all women and men from churches around the world who are gathered in Accra, Ghana, in July-August 2004".** *Reformed World*, 54(1), March 2004, p. 5-11.

*"6.How are we to overcome the many conflicts and divisions within the Reformed family that separate us from one another, sap our energies and blight our witness to God's reconciling love?"*

This requires joint reflection on our understanding of the nature of the church, the authority of Scripture and the work of the Spirit, in the light of the Reformed heritage and the insights of other confessional traditions; theological education and formation that nurtures a vision of 'my church as one part of the body of Christ', and 'my truth as partial and in need of the truths of other parts of the body', and most critically, the transformation of inherited north-south relations so that they foster rather than hinder creative, united and authentic witness." (p. 10)

**70** Song, Choan-seng. **"From the ends of the earth"**. The presidential address to the 2004 WARC General Council (document GC 05-e). *Reformed World*, 54(3-4), September-December 2004, pp. 146-154.

The tide of history in our times "has changed its course dramatically", writes the Asian theologian C. S. Song. The centre of gravity of Christianity "has shifted to the continents of the world outside the West". How can the World Alliance of Reformed Churches be God's instrument in today's world? According to Song, WARC's president between 1997 and 2004, the answer lies in the work of the Holy Spirit in the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. A WARC in the power of the Spirit should engage in community rebuilding, strive for open communities, change its ecumenical agenda and "work with its member churches and Christians to equip them as healing communities".

"The World Alliance of Reformed Churches should reformulate its 'ecumenical' agenda. Open community needs a different 'ecumenical' agenda. The 'ecumenical' agenda defined by the churches in the West fifty years ago is no longer the 'ecumenical' agenda of the churches in the rest of the world today.

The ‘ecumenical’ agenda, concerns and issues for the churches and Christians from the ends of the earth, have changed. And for this we, the ecumenically committed mainline churches, have to be thankful to the charismatic movements that continue to arouse passion and exert influence in most parts of the world.”

The charismatic communities “are able to respond to the restlessness of the human spirit and the vulnerability of human life in today’s world. Do we not have to admit that we too, churches and Christians of the Reformed family, are also confronted with restlessness deep in our spirits and with vulnerability in our lives? These are the ‘ecumenical’ agenda, concerns and issues of most Christians today...” (p. 151).

**71 “Mission Section Plenary Report”.** Report of the 2004 WARC General Council section on mission (document GC 19-e). *Reformed World*, 54(3-4), September-December 2004, p. 165-168.

Main sections: 1.Mission in the context of globalisation; 2.Mission in the fullness of life: towards new missiologies of life; 3.Mission in the life of the Spirit: engagement with Pentecost and Pentecostalism; 4.Engagement with other religious communities; 5.Towards a fellowship of Reformed churches covenanting together in mission.

“5.1 We are called to proclaim the Good News in a time in which the historical challenges seem overwhelming to our churches. Our common calling moves us to pray and grow into fuller communion with one another, and the wider ecumenical family, in obedience to the God who calls us to be in mission.”

“Hearing the cry for life in our joy and our pain”. Report of the 2004 WARC General Council section on spirituality (document GC 18-e). *Reformed World* 54(3-4), September-December 2004, p. 175-180.

Recommendations: “WARC remind member churches of the need to dialogue across theological divides within faith traditions and between them, if we are to enrich our spiritualities and our sense of Christ’s Spirit at work amongst us.” (p. 180).

**72 The Accra Confession** – “Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth”. Report of the 2004 WARC General Council section on Covenanting (document GC 23-e). *Reformed World*, 54(3-4), September-December 2004, p. 172-174.

“16. Speaking from our Reformed tradition and having read the signs of the times, the general council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches affirms that global economic justice is essential to the integrity of our faith in God and our discipleship as Christians. We believe that the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization and therefore **we confess** before God and one another.

30. **We believe** that God calls men, women and children from every place together, rich and poor, to uphold the unity of the Church and its mission, so that the reconciliation to which Christ calls can become visible.

31. **Therefore we reject** any attempt in the life of the church to separate justice and unity.

34. (...) We confess our sin that our disunity within the Reformed family has impaired our ability to serve God’s mission in fullness.”

**73 “Report of the Policy Committee”**. 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Accra, Ghana, July 30 to August 12, 2004 (document GC 26-e).

“Recommendations on ecumenism:

1. We recommend that WARC, as it engages in bilateral and multilateral dialogues, take fully into consideration the new contextual ecumenical experiences and needs of its member churches, so that the results of ecumenical dialogues be relevant to a wider portion of its constituency. WARC should also explore new forms of ecumenical engagement as a service to its member churches.” (...)

“3. We recommend that WARC consider the celebrations that will take place in 2009 (Calvin’s 500th birthday), 2010 (centennial of the Edinburgh missionary conference) and 2017 (500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation) as opportunities for studies and programmes related to our self-understanding and for

ecumenical engagement that affirm our commitment to reconciliation and that are held intercontextually.”

**74 “The Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God - Report of the International Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches - 1997-2004”.** Report to be published in 2005/2006.

Main Sections: 1.Witnessing to the Kingdom: Narratives from the Catholic Church and the Reformed Churches in Canada, South Africa and Northern Ireland; 2. The Kingdom of God in Scripture, Tradition and Ecumenical Dialogues; 3.The Kingdom of God and the Church; 4.The Church and the Discernment of God’s Will in the Service of the Kingdom; 5.Communion and Common Witness.



# Appendices

# Two Statements on the Alliance and the Ecumenical Movement

The Basle 1951 Statement and the 1954 Princeton Statement shaped the ecumenical profile exhibited by the Alliance during the second part of the 20th century. Both criticise Protestant Christian world communions which are not clearly committed to church union ventures. Both affirm the importance of a Reformed Christian world communion in ways in which its existence is understood as a service rather than an obstacle to church union. The Basle Statement and the Princeton Statement carry the hallmarks of John Mackay's interpretation of the ecumenical movement in the years leading to and following the creation of the World Council of churches as well as of the role that a Presbyterian and Reformed world body should play in it<sup>1</sup>.

## I. Basle 1951: Against Protestant Confessionalism

“The historic Basle statement” .... In these terms Marcel Pradervand, the Alliance's general secretary from 1948 to 1970, once described a short statement (about 1,500 words) on the Presbyterian Alliance “in the present ecumenical situation”, adopted by its Executive Committee in Basel, 1951. According to the Basle Statement, the life of Protestant churches is marked by three main trends: a potent movement towards ecumenical understanding and unity, a movement towards the world unity of sectarian groups, and ecumenical denominationalism, which represents “the desire on the part of each major Protestant communion to rediscover and purify its own religious heritage and to unite the churches which belong to it in a denominational world fellowship”. In view of this, the Alliance should define “its significance and objectives”<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Odair P. Mateus, “The Alliance, the Christian world communions and the ecumenical movement”, *Reformed World*, 54(1), June 2004, pp. 91-106.

<sup>2</sup> “The World Presbyterian Alliance in the Present Ecumenical Situation”, *Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System - Missionshaus, Basle (Switzerland), August 13-15, 1951*, p. 25.



The Reformed tradition in post-Reformation Christianity is “by nature ecumenical”. It is committed “to the pursuit of Christian unity upon the basis of loyal commitment to the essential verities of the Christian faith”. The Church is an instrument of God’s glory. In the same way it is the true nature of Presbyterianism “never to be merely an end in itself, but to serve the Church Universal of Jesus Christ”. The highest glory of the Reformed tradition is “to maintain the vision and viewpoint of the Church Universal, seeking continually its welfare and unity...”<sup>3</sup>

These considerations lead the Basle Statement to affirm the need “to increase solidarity among the members of the Reformed family” and to advocate “a strengthening of the Alliance of Reformed Churches...”. The promotion of solidarity among Reformed Churches “would help to emphasize aspects of the Reformation heritage which are of permanent significance for the Christian Church and the secular order at the present time”. The younger Presbyterian Churches would then be led “to understand that it is the true glory of this tradition to seek and promote Christian solidarity and also church union where the local or national situation demands it”. Membership in the Alliance is also important for those Reformed churches which are not part of the “ecumenical movement for Christian unity”. It strengthens them “against schismatic elements in their own ranks” and prevents them “from giving their adhesion to any organisation designed to disrupt ecumenical unity and to thwart Presbyterian solidarity”<sup>4</sup>.

The Executive Committee of the Alliance, concludes the Basle Statement, “is acutely aware” of the perils represented by “ecumenical denominationalism”. The Alliance “would never desire to be a party to preventing the incorporation of one of its member churches into wider ecclesiastical relationships...” Presbyterianism, on the other hand, is called to see to it “that the resurgence of denominationalism, which is manifest around the globe, shall not become sectarian, but shall remain ecumenical in character”. According to the Alliance’s Executive Committee, “if the great world denominations, the Reformed Churches among them, pursue denominational preeminence and make their great world bodies ends in themselves, they will betray Jesus Christ”.

<sup>3</sup> “The World Presbyterian Alliance in the Present Ecumenical Situation”..., *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> “The World Presbyterian Alliance in the Present Ecumenical Situation”..., *op. cit.*, p. 26-27.

## II. Princeton 1954: Reformed, therefore ecumenical

According to the Princeton Statement, the Alliance's 1954 General Council feels the need to affirm "in ways that are relevant to the actual ecumenical situation" the task and contribution of Reformed churches to the search for Christian unity.

The ecumenical movement is "a singularly significant fact about the Christian Church in our time". This "deep stirring" toward the unity of the churches "is of God, not men, a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit"<sup>5</sup> in accordance "with the mind and will of Jesus Christ"<sup>6</sup>. Jesus Christ transforms us and makes us fully human in and through our fellowship with one another. He breaks down all barriers of separations. He reconciles and unites. Wherever and whenever his gathered believers preach and practise his gospel of reconciliation and communion and administer the sacraments according to his institution, there he is and *ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia*. Unity is therefore "a gift to the Church in Jesus Christ her Lord". Whenever the community of believers is divided by "the various forms of faith and life of the Church", Christ himself "calls these churches to unity and wills to accomplish it in them through his Word and Spirit". Unity is also a task: Christians are, therefore, "under a particular and pressing responsibility to give visible expression to the unity which the Lord of the Church will and works among them"<sup>7</sup>.

Because they so believed, the Reformers "never intended to create a new Church". They rather intended "to clarify and restore the faith and life of the Church in obedience to the word of God"<sup>8</sup>. Calvin's ecclesiology "enables the Reformed Churches to stand at the centre of the ecumenical movement". He severely condemned those "who encourage schism from motives other than those which proceed from absolute obedience to the word of God"<sup>9</sup>. It is therefore "urgently necessary" to resist "any increase of division in the Body of Christ and to labour to compose all differences of faith and order which are not justified by obedience to the word of God..."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "The Reformed Churches and the Ecumenical Movement". *Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian Order Held at Princeton, N. J., U.S.A. 1954*, Geneva, Office of the Alliance, 1954, p. 73.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 76.

Some kind of structure, says Princeton 1954, is necessary to the Church. However, “the visible structure of the Church is not identical with the unity of the Church”. Our adherence to the Presbyterian order “is inspired by the fact that it expresses certain fundamental aspects of the nature and life of the Church”. But we do not consider it to be “the one indispensable government structure of the Church”. Likewise we cannot regard any particular existing form of episcopacy as a “fundamental condition of the restoration of the unity of the Church”<sup>11</sup>.

Princeton goes on to state that as Reformed and Presbyterian Churches we thus “recognize the ministry, sacraments and membership of all churches, which, according to the Bible, confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour”. Their members are all invited and gladly welcome “to the Table of our common Lord”. The table is the Lord’s, say the statement, not ours. “We believe that we dare not refuse the sacrament to any baptized person who loves and confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour”. We cannot proclaim the gospel of reconciliation “without demonstrating at the Table of the Lord that we are reconciled to one another”.

What is the role of the Alliance in the present ecumenical situation? It can “provide the opportunity and the means for furthering the ecumenical reality of the Church”<sup>12</sup>; it can “give strength and living reality to every effort to express the mission and unity of the universal Church”<sup>13</sup>. The Alliance “is only an instrument in the service of more ultimate purposes” as much as it is the nature of Presbyterianism “never to be an end in itself”.

However, at least three reasons call “for a strong and active Presbyterian and Reformed confessional agency”. The first is the need for “bearing witness to the basic doctrinal position of the Reformed Churches”. The second reason is the need for emphasising “the fundamentals of our Presbyterian polity”. The third reason is the need for “rendering certain practical services to members of the Presbyterian and Reformed family”, including “the initiation of studies of union or reunions (...) of the constituent churches of the Alliance with each other or with other churches”<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

# Appendix I

## **The Basle Statement on The World Presbyterian Alliance in the Present Ecumenical Situation (1951)**

### I

Three main trends of an ecclesiastical character may be noted in the life of the Protestant Churches at the present time. Each one of these is marked by a certain “ecumenical” urge, that is, an urge to establish closer ties on a world scale between Christian denominations or groups of a specific type or which had a specific interest in common.

1. The main trend is a potent movement towards ecumenical understanding and unity. This movement has received organisational expression in the World Council of Churches, which was constituted at Amsterdam in 1948.

2. An opposite trend might be designated as a movement towards “ecumenical” sectarianism, that is the world unity of sectarian groups. This movement is inspired by two objects : (a) a desire to bear witness to essential doctrines of the Christian faith, which, it is considered, are being rejected or compromised by the traditional denominations, sometimes spoken of as “apostate”; (b) a commitment to oppose by every possible means the witness and work of the World Council of Churches.

3. The third trend is the resurgence of denominationalism. This movement might be called neo-confessionalism or “ecumenical denominationalism”. It represents the desire on the part of each major Protestant communion to rediscover and purify its own religious heritage and to unite the Churches which belong to it in a denominational world fellowship. There now exist in the Protestant world six such “ecumenical” denominations, Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian.

## II

It is important that the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System, founded in 1875, and so one of the oldest of the great confessional alliances in the Protestant world, should define its significance and objectives in the present Church situation.

In the Preamble to the Constitution of the Alliance as adopted in 1875 we read these words : “In forming this Alliance the Presbyterian Churches do not mean to change their fraternal relations with other Churches, but will be ready, as heretofore, to join with them in Christian fellowship, and in advancing the cause of the Redeemer, on the general principle maintained and taught in the Reformed Confessions that the Church of God on earth, though composed of many members, is One Body in the Communion of the Holy Ghost, of which Body Christ is the Supreme Head, and the Scriptures alone are the infallible law.”

The Reformed tradition in post-Reformation Christianity is thus by nature ecumenical, that is to say, it is committed to the pursuit of Christian unity upon the basis of loyal commitment to the essential verities of the Christian faith. It must be so if it would be loyal to its own spiritual genius and to the thinking and spirit of John Calvin. Just as it is the true nature of the Christian Church to be an instrument of God’s glory, it is the true nature of Presbyterianism never to be merely an end in itself, but to serve the Church Universal of Jesus Christ, the Church which is his Body.

In this spirit, the Executive Committee of the Alliance at its meeting in Cambridge, England, in July, 1949 affirmed that the supreme purpose of the Alliance is not to promote world Presbyterianism as an end in itself, but to make the Reformed tradition the servant of God’s redemptive purposes through the wider agency of the Church Universal. We thus confront the following paradox. There are Presbyterians today who are both more Presbyterian and less Presbyterian than ever before. They are *more* Presbyterian because they believe that in their religious heritage there are treasures of thought and life which are important for the Church Universal. They are *less* Presbyterian than ever before because they recognize that what God has said and done through the medium of other Christian Communion is also needed to enrich the Church Universal. They believe, therefore, that it is the highest glory of the

Reformed tradition to maintain the vision and viewpoint of the Church Universal, seeking continually its welfare and unity, in accordance with the mind of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and through the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells the Church.

### III

Having regard to the interests of the Church of Jesus Christ in the world of today, we believe it to be imperative that steps be taken to increase solidarity among the members of the Reformed family of Churches around the world. The following considerations lead us, therefore, to advocate a strengthening of the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System.

1. The promotion of solidarity among the Reformed Churches would help to emphasize aspects of the Reformation heritage which are of permanent significance for the Christian Church and whose presentation is of supreme importance for the Christian Church and the secular order at the present time. Such truths are the supreme authority of Holy Scripture in matters of faith and practice ; emphasis upon the sovereign grace of God ; the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Church and the World ; the reality of the new man in Christ, born of, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and relevant to every human situation ; a doctrine of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper which admits to the Lord's table communicant members of all Christian Churches ; a view of Church organisation which makes full provision both for central authority and for the freedom of the individual conscience ; and the vision of a theocratic order in history.

2. Presbyterian solidarity on a world scale would meet the contemporary needs of many persons and Churches belonging to the Reformed tradition. There are many people, especially young people, in the younger Churches, who have developed a spontaneous enthusiasm for the Presbyterian heritage. This they have done not in sectarian spirit, but rather in an ecumenical spirit. They are moved by a desire to understand thoroughly their own specific tradition and to rally enthusiasm for it, in order to be in a position to serve better the wider Christian cause. They want to bring into the common heritage of the Christian Church what God has said to, and done through, Presbyterianism in all ages. They want to bring, as their contribution to the

ecumenical movement, to the upbuilding of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout the world, and to the coming of God's everlasting Kingdom, a Presbyterianism which has been scrutinized by the eyes of Christ and purified by the Holy Spirit. The younger Presbyterian Churches would therefore greatly profit by membership in the Alliance. They would be helped to grasp the true genius of the Reformed tradition and would be led to understand that it is the true glory of this tradition to seek and promote Christian solidarity and also church union where the local or national situation demands it.

3. The third consideration relates to the role of the Alliance in forestalling the development of sectarian or schismatic movements within the Reformed family of Churches. There are Churches of the Reformed family which, for one reason or another, have conscientious scruples which prevent them from becoming a part of the Ecumenical movement for Christian unity. By becoming partners with us as members of the Alliance, they will be strengthened against schismatic elements in their own ranks and prevented from giving their adhesion to any organisation designed to disrupt ecumenical" unity and to thwart Presbyterian solidarity.

## IV

The Executive Committee of the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System is acutely aware of the perils of "ecumenical" denominationalism which can make or wreck the movement towards Christian unity in the world today. The Alliance would never desire to be a party to preventing the incorporation of one of its member Churches into wider ecclesiastical relationship when the interests of the Christian cause clearly indicated that such a consumation was desirable.

In the judgment of the Committee, Presbyterians in the world of today have a very special task. They are charged by God to see to it that the resurgence of denominationalism, which is manifest around the globe, shall not become sectarian, but shall remain ecumenical in character. If the great world denominations, the Reformed Churches among them, pursue denominational preeminence and make their great world bodies ends in themselves, they will betray Jesus Christ. But, if they desire, and succeed in their desire, to make denominational emphasis an enrichment

of the common evangelical heritage, they will, by so doing, fulfil the designs of the one Head of the Church and be true organs of the Holy Spirit. Let Presbyterians be in the best sense ecumenically minded Presbyterians. Grasped afresh by Jesus Christ Himself, let us dedicate ourselves to propagate the one holy Faith throughout the world and to seek the unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ.



# Appendix II

## **The Princeton Statement on The Reformed Churches and the Ecumenical Movement (1954)**

### **I. The Attitude of the Reformed Churches toward the Ecumenical Movement**

1. A singularly significant fact about the Christian Church in our time is the ecumenical movement. Despite the misunderstandings and divisions which still separate Christians from one another, there is a deep stirring among churches and Christian groups to surmount these barriers and to express the unity of the community of believers in accordance with the mind and will of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church which is His Body. We believe that this deep stirring toward the unity of the churches is of God, not men, a sign of the work of Holy Spirit.

2. The Reformed Churches throughout the World have taken an active part in this movement, and gladly and gratefully welcome every manifestation of ecumenical concern and cooperation. Out of this concern and cooperation, we are called upon to consider ever afresh, and to affirm in ways that are relevant to the actual ecumenical situation, the task and the contribution of the Reformed Churches to the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. The actual ecumenical situation is that there are churches and Christian groups of diverse kinds and in widely different circumstances which are endeavouring in their own way and time to express the unity of all Christians in Jesus Christ. A confessional alliance such as ours can and must provide the opportunity and the means for furthering the ecumenical reality of the Church. The isolation of individual congregations and denominations, misunderstandings among churches and Christian groups and their separation from each other, remain to be transcended and transformed by an ever enlarging ecumenical experience. In this way, the Head of the Church will be faithfully served and the unity of the Church creatively furthered. The rôle and responsibility of an autonomous confessional alliance can in these and other ways give strength and living reality to every effort to express the mission and unity of the universal Church.

3. It has not always been clearly understood by the Reformed Churches that the Reformers never intended to create a new Church but to clarify and restore the faith and life of the Church in obedience to the word of God. We are under obligation, says Calvin, to “cultivate the communion of the universal visible Church... As there is but one Head of the faithful so they ought all to be united in one Body; thus there are not several Churches, but only one which is extended throughout all the world.” Thus it is intrinsic to the convictions and the aims of the Reformers to work for “the renovation, not the disruption of the Church. (They) hoped for its reunion. They unhesitatingly accepted the ecumenical creeds, and regarded themselves as standing within the tradition of the ancient Church in which these venerable symbols were formulated” (John T. McNeill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, p. 30).

4. The unity of the Church is a gift to the Church in Jesus Christ her Lord. Whenever and wherever Jesus Christ is present and active in the community of believers so that they are transformed and made fully human in and through their fellowship with one another, there the Church is one and holy, catholic and apostolic. Jesus Christ Himself breaks down all barriers of separation and, in obedience to Him, the various forms of faith and life become means of serving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Whenever and wherever the various forms of faith and life of the Church divide the members of the household of faith from one another, Jesus Christ Himself calls these churches to unity and wills to accomplish it in them through His Word and Spirit. Christians are, therefore, under a particular and pressing responsibility to give visible expression to the unity which the Lord of the Church wills and works among them. “Where Christ is, there is the Church” (Ignatius of Antioch).

5. The visible structure of the Church is not identical with the unity of the Church. But structure and unity cannot be separated. The living relation between Christ, the Head of the Church and the members of the Body is continually and continuously expressed in the living adaptation of the structures of the Church’s faith and life to the sovereign and redemptive work of Christ in the Church and in the world. Such adaptation is more readily evident in the community of prayer and preaching, and in the works of love. But difficulties of an hitherto insuperable kind arise where the institutional and administrative structures of the Church are not regarded as under the judgment of Christ.

6. As Reformed and Presbyterian Churches we bear witness to our fellow Christians that we recognize the ministry, sacraments and membership of all churches, which, according to the Bible, confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We invite and gladly welcome the members of all such churches to the Table of our common Lord. The Church has received the sacrament of the Holy Communion from Christ and He communicates Himself in it to the believer. The Table of the Lord is His, not ours. We believe that we dare not refuse the sacrament to any baptized person who loves and confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. It is our strong conviction that unwillingness, particularly at this time, to practice such intercommunion gravely impedes the cause of unity and lends an air of unreality to much of our talk about it. We cannot proclaim the Gospel of reconciliation without demonstrating at the Table of the Lord that we are reconciled to one another. Therefore, we would welcome face to face talks with our fellow Christians in other churches looking towards the time when all sincere Christians will be welcome around a common Table.

7. Calvin's doctrine that the true Church exists "wherever we find the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ," enables the Reformed Churches to stand at the centre of the ecumenical movement. The maintenance of the unity of the Church through order and discipline was, in the eyes of Calvin, of first importance. For this reason, he severely condemned those who encourage schism from motives other than those which proceed from absolute obedience to the word of God. The tendency toward dissidence and fragmentation has unhappily developed in subsequent times not only in the Reformed Churches but in other evangelical churches as well. Especially today, there is a kind of "ecumenical sectarianism" which gravely disturbs the peace and unity of the community of believers. We do not desire to claim for ourselves, or for the ecumenical movement which we seek to further, any limitation upon the freedom and the unifying work of the Holy Spirit. It is difficult, however, to discern obedience to the word of God in any enterprise which seems to exalt schism as a good, and to express itself mainly in the disparagement of the faith and life of other believers. Thus, it is urgently necessary to resist any increase of division in the Body of Christ and to labour to compose all differences of faith and order which are not justified by obedience to the word of God and which still exist among Reformed Churches and among other evangelical bodies.

8. Some kind of *structure* is necessary to the Church. The particular forms of this structure have varied and may properly vary. Our adherence to the Presbyterian Order is inspired by the fact that it expresses certain fundamental aspects of the nature and life of the Church. The Presbyterian Order bears witness (a) to the sole Headship of Jesus Christ in and over His Church ; (b) to the Church as a community of brethren to whom manifold gifts and services have been given ; (c) to the relation between the Lord of the Church and the community of believers as a covenant relation in which men become children of God and find the way to trust one another ; (d) to the perils of any authority which could lead to tyranny and the peril of such an absence of authority which could lead to anarchy, in the household of faith ; (e) to the necessary participation of all members of the Church in the conciliar and representative government of the Church, and to the responsibility of the governing bodies within the fellowship of the Church ; (f) to the conviction that the Holy Spirit guides the Church not only in the local congregation but in the larger Councils of the Church. We believe the Presbyterian form of government is agreeable to the Word of God, but as we do not consider Presbyterian Order as the one indispensable governmental structure of the Church, neither can we regard any particular existing form of episcopacy or other form of church order as a fundamental condition of the restoration of the unity of the Church. Our urgent hope is that our fellow-Christians in other churches will press forward with us, in contrition and in all possible haste, toward the laying aside of every practice and profession which exalts the order of the Church above the obedience of believers to the will of Jesus Christ, that they may all be one.

9. The obedience of believers to the will of Jesus Christ that they may all be one involves not only the unity but also the mission of the Church. Since the last meeting of the Alliance at Geneva (1948), a notable step forward has been taken by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in discerning the double ecumenical responsibility of the Church. At its meeting in Rolle, Switzerland (1951), both mission and unity were clearly recognized as being included in the true meaning of 'ecumenical'. It has become plain that the oneness of believers in Christ is inseparable from dynamic and effective outreach of the Church into every part of the world and into every phase of the world's life. Our Lord wills the unity of His Church that the world may believe "that the Father hath sent Him" (John 17 : 21).

## II. The Role of the Alliance in the Present Ecumenical Situation

In the light of our commitment to the ecumenical cause, we recognize that any distinctively Reformed or Presbyterian agency, such as our World Alliance, is only an instrument in the service of more ultimate purposes. We reaffirm the statement of our Executive Committee at Basle in 1951 in which it said: "Just as it is the true nature of the Christian Church to be an instrument of God's glory, it is the true nature of Presbyterianism never to be merely an end in itself, but to serve the Church Universal of Jesus Christ, the Church which is His body."

In the present ecumenical situation, characterized by a potent movement toward ecumenical understanding and unity, the Alliance desires to collaborate closely with the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council as the main organizational expressions of that movement. We pray God's blessing upon the forthcoming Assembly at Evanston. Because the basis of the World Council of Churches is "a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour," the way is entirely open to all members of the Alliance to follow the lead of those who have joined the World Council of Churches. Churches which are the fruit of the missionary activity of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, and are not now members of the Alliance, should be welcomed into membership if they express a desire to join. On the other hand, such Churches should be free to enter into local or regional union with other Christian bodies if, in this way, they can bear a better witness to Christ.

There are, however, at least three reasons which call for a strong and active Presbyterian and Reformed confessional agency.

**1. The Need for Bearing Witness to the Basic Doctrinal Position of the Reformed Churches** In the conversations now going on among the churches in the ecumenical movement, the task of the Alliance is steadily to exhort the Reformed Churches to have recourse to the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice. This means, in the first place, to witness to the truths which they have discerned in the Scriptures; and then, if a renewed study of the Scriptures, pursued in common with brethren from other Confessions, should disclose aspects of truth not yet apprehended, to be ready to accept them. If, on the other hand, the Reformed Churches should become persuaded, through such a study of the Holy Scriptures, of

an error in their own doctrinal positions, they should be ready likewise to acknowledge and abandon it.

Among the truths which the Reformed Churches believe to have discerned in the Holy Scriptures, mention may be made of : the centrality of the Person of Christ crucified and risen for the redemption of the world, the doctrine of the Church as nourished by the Word and Sacraments, the participation of all its members in the new humanity of Christ which they must live out in the world under the sovereignty of God and His kingly rule over the world, and, therefore, the inescapable ethical implications of the Gospel for the individual and for society. In the spirit of the Reformers, we keep all doctrinal formulations under constant re-examination.

It is, of course, possible that the Reformed Churches acting independently of one another might exercise their doctrinal responsibility. But there are certain respects in which the aid of a confessional organization may play an important role in the contemporary ecumenical situation. This confessional organization may be the means of facilitating the continuous joint study and clarification of our basic doctrinal positions in the light of the Scriptures ; of bringing us, through these studies, to greater unanimity in regard to our basic doctrines ; and, since there are Churches, both in the World Council and out if it, which either do not insist upon or subscribe to all doctrines regarded by the Reformed Churches as central, a confessional alliance can interpret these doctrines more forcefully in ecumenical circles than would be possible were we to speak as single Churches.

## **2.The Need for Emphasizing the Fundamentals of our Presbyterian Polity**

While, as we have seen, we do not believe that any particular structure can be said to be essential to the Church, we are nevertheless committed to the principles regarding order stated earlier in this paper. The Alliance can serve as an instrument in this connection by promoting our joint study of polity, by bringing us to greater unity in our convictions regarding it, and by gaining for these convictions a hearing in ecumenical circles which no single Church could command.

## **3.The Need for Rendering Certain Practical Services to Members of the Presbyterian and Reformed Family**

Among these are the following : continued efforts, where desirable, to draw into the fellowship of the Alliance those Presbyterian

and Reformed Churches not now connected with it, as a step out of their ecclesiastical isolation ; aid to Churches of our tradition in need of physical relief and spiritual encouragement ; support in the face of ecclesiastical or political repression or persecution ; mutual encouragement and the sharing with each other of fresh discoveries in the life and work of our member churches ; the promotion of understanding and acquaintance among our constituent Churches ; the encouragement of cooperative efforts by them ; and the initiation of studies of union or reunions, whether achieved or proposed, of the constituent Churches of the Alliance with each other or with other Churches.

In carrying out the rôle herein described, the Alliance will serve the best interests both of its own confessional group and of the wider ecumenical cause to which we are committed by our Reformed heritage and called by Jesus Christ our Lord.



