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American Bilateral Conversations records4492686

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Description is written in: English.

appm

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

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URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Title:	American Bilateral Conversations records
ID:	4492686
Date [inclusive]:	1932 -- 1975
Physical Description:	3 linear feet 3 linear feet; 6 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection details conversations discussing topics such as unity, baptism, women in the Church, the Eucharist and intercommunion, mixed or intermarriage, the nature of sin, and the purpose and role of the Church, and includes papers written by experts of all faiths including Peter Day, an ecumenical officer for the Episcopal Church, Bishop Arthur A. Vogel of the Anglican Church, Bishop Charles H. Helmsing of the Roman Catholic Church, and Robert T. Handy, a Baptist pastor and Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary. The collection also contains records of minutes, reports, correspondence, position papers, and books and news statements drafted at bilateral meetings of the Roman Catholic Church and various Protestant churches.

Preferred Citation

Item description, WAB: American Bilateral Conversations Records, series #, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Biographical / Historical

According to Catholicism and the Ecumenical Movement, in attendance at the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh was an American Episcopalian, Bishop Brent, who

decided to organize what would be known as the Lausanne Conference (1927) for Christian Churches. The purpose was to "thrash out their mutual difference and oppositions to each other... [Bishop Brent] hoped that...what was held in common would be more powerful than that which separated one body from another and that it would lead to a firm intention to work for the rebirth of a single Christian body." Catholics were forbidden to attend the conference due to its insistence that the One Church was something that would exist in the future; this is in direct opposition to the Catholic Church's doctrine that they are the One Church. The Catholic Church's decision to not participate in the conference influenced the ecumenical movement by helping to refine and clarify the movement's basic mission. Pope John XXIII convened the second Vatican council (1962-1965) and with its Decree of Ecumenism the Roman Catholic Church was pitched into full involvement in the ecumenical movement. The Decree pointed to "dialogue between competent experts from different Churches and Communities," as the main component to ecumenism. "Bilateral dialogue became an important ecumenical instrument for the churches in the second half of this century of ecumenism and a prominent feature of the Catholic Church's ecumenical activity." Bilateral conversations in the early 1960s were focused on the church as a universal body of Christ. By the late 1960s discussions emphasized "... the Trinitarian nature of God...and the humanity of Christ, including his suffering and solidarity with those who live on the margins of history..." according to *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*. John A. Radano points out that "the start of formal dialogues represented a major step in that new relationship [between the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches], a mutual determination to deal with theological issues over which they are divided." He also recommends that "more analysis of these dialogue reports, and accounts of what they have achieved are needed..." These national bilateral conversations in some instances precluded and may have encouraged international bilateral conversations. Some of these dialogues produced quick results while others took many years before progressing to second stage talks. Since Vatican II new international conversations have begun in each new decade with more and more Protestant and Orthodox faiths, including dialogues with the Pentecostals in 1972, Evangelicals in 1977, Mennonites in 1998, and Oriental Orthodox in 2003. Although the international ecumenical movement through the World Council of Churches (WCC) has grown from an initial 147 member churches to over 350 member churches today, Radano continues that there is still a need to find an "effective way of bringing the benefits of bilateral conversation to the wider search within the multilateral conversation." There is a need for a wider "ecumenical Forum" that would include churches not yet in membership with WCC, such as the Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches within its ranks.

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Summary

Includes conversations between Lutheran and Episcopalian, Lutheran and Reformed, Orthodox Eastern Churches and Anglican, Orthodox Eastern Churches and Reformed, Roman Catholic

and American Baptist Convention, Roman Catholic and Anglican/Episcopalian, Roman Catholic and Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Methodist, and Roman Catholic and Presbyterian.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains an account of the Roman Catholic bilateral conversations with Christian Churches in the United States from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. The Churches involved in the conversations include the American Baptist Convention, Anglican, Disciples of Christ, Lutheran, Methodist, Eastern Orthodox, Presbyterian, and Southern Baptist. Some of the papers and official statements included in the collection are drafts and have revision notes and marginalia. Several contain anthologies that cover multiple years. There is a minimal amount of correspondence; a few letters detail the agreements and disagreements that occurred during the conversations. This collection also contains a small collection of conversations between Protestant faiths from the United States as well as abroad, which include a few booklets outlining bilateral discussion in the 1930s and 1950s. Of interest are the four folders containing documents that date far earlier than the majority of the documents, dealing mainly with bilateral conversations between Anglicans and the Orthodox Church. The 1932 booklet covering the Joint Doctrinal Commission between the Anglican and the Eastern Orthodox Church is a report of the conference which was appointed under resolutions made at the Lambeth Conference of 1932. The collection also contains a report of the bilateral conference between the Rumanian Commission [sic] on relations with the Church of England in June of 1935, a 1958 report of the Joint Commission on the Assistance to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and a 1959 paper by Professor Vasil T. Istavridis on Orthodoxy and Anglicanism in the Twentieth Century.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series: Series 1: Roman Catholic Conversations; and Series 2: Protestant Conversations.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2023-04-10

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The exact provenance of this collection is unknown. Many of the materials are stamped by the Department of Faith and Order National Council of Churches, indicating that these materials may have at one point been part of their collection.

Custodial History

For a list of items separated from the collection but available for viewing through Columbia Libraries' Online catalog (CLIO), please see the legacy finding aid by contacting Burke staff.

Custodial History

The papers are part of the William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives, which was founded in 1945 by the Union Theological Seminary Board of Directors.

Processing Information

Some records were cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-08-05. Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Published books and journal issues which were transferred from the archival collection to library stacks are listed below with links to Columbia Libraries'

Online catalog (CLIO). The finding aid was created by BreeAnn Midavaine in 2012 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2023.

Conditions Governing Use

Some material in this collection may be protected by copyright and other rights. Information concerning copyright, fair use, and reproduction requests can be consulted at Columbia's Copyright Advisory Office.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

WAB: National Council of Churches Records, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Related Materials

WAB: World Council of Churches (WCC) Records, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Related Materials

World Council of Churches Records (RG 162), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library. <https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/4/resources/117>

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Controlled Access Headings

- Lutheran Church -- Relations -- Episcopal Church
- Lutheran Church -- Relations -- Reformed Church
- Christian union conversations
- United States -- Religious life and customs
- Orthodox Eastern Church -- : Relations -- : Anglican Communion
- Orthodox Eastern Church -- : Relations -- : Reformed Church
- Catholic Church -- : Relations -- : American Baptist Convention
- Catholic Church -- : Relations -- : Anglican Communion

- Catholic Church -- : Relations -- : Lutheran Church
- Catholic Church -- : Relations -- : Methodist Church
- Catholic Church -- : Relations -- : Presbyterian Church

Burke Library record group:

William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: Roman Catholic Conversations, 1964 -- 1975

Physical Description: 2.5 linear feet 2.5 linear feet; 5 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically according to the Christian church the Catholics were in conversations with, then chronologically according to the date of each meeting.

Scope and Contents

This series contains an account of the Roman Catholic bilateral conversations with Christian Churches in the United States from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. The Churches involved in the conversations include the American Baptist Convention, Anglican, Disciples of Christ, Lutheran, Methodist, Eastern Orthodox, Presbyterian, and Southern Baptist. Some of the papers and official statements included in the collection are drafts and have revision notes and marginalia. Several contain anthologies that cover multiple years. There is a minimal amount of correspondence; a few letters detail the agreements and disagreements that occurred during the conversations. An example of this is contained in a copy of the letter between Athenagoras Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to Reverend Iakovos Archbishop of North and South America, which details a plea for the correction of a misconception held by Orthodox Christians that due to ecumenical conversations they could now confess and receive communion from Roman Catholic priests. Intercommunion between the Orthodox and other churches did not exist at this time. A booklet about these initial attempts at ecumenism is also in the collection and documents the nullification of the anathema (excommunication) of 1054, which was necessary in order to begin bilateral conversation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. The arrangement of the material is alphabetical according to the Christian church the Catholics were in conversations with, then chronologically according to the date of each meeting.

Title/Description	Instances	
Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, List of Consultations, 1965 -- 1969	box 1	folder 1

RC-American Baptist Convention, 1967 -- 1972	box 1	folder 2-8
Scope and Contents		
First through Sixth meetings; "Report on Roman Catholic-American Baptist Dialogues," by Robert G. Middleton		
RC-Anglican, 1964 -- 1970	box 1	folder 9-17
Scope and Contents		
Anglican-Roman Relations, by Bernard C. Pawley; "Guidelines for Relations with the Roman Church", by The Committee for Relations with the Roman Catholic Church of The Joint Commission on Ecumenical Relations; Second through Eighth meetings		
RC-Anglican, 1971 -- 1974	box 2	folder 1-7
Scope and Contents		
Ninth through Fifteenth meetings		
RC-Disciples of Christ, 1967 -- 1970	box 2	folder 8-13
Scope and Contents		
Second through Sixth meetings; Mid-stream: Council on Christian Unity, Volume VII, Number 2		
RC-Disciples of Christ, 1971 -- 1974	box 3	folder 1-5
Scope and Contents		
Seventh through Tenth meetings; Mid-stream: Council on Christian Unity, Volume XII, Numbers 2-4		
RC-Lutheran, 1965 -- 1974	box 3	folder 6-13
Scope and Contents		
First through Tenth meetings		
RC-Methodist, 1966 -- 1975	box 4	folder 1-8
Scope and Contents		
Second through Sixth and unknown meetings		
RC-Orthodox, 1966 -- 1969	box 4	folder 9-12
Scope and Contents		
"...Be Reconciled to Your Brother" The Lifting of the Anathema of 1054 as a Step Toward Reconciliation; Second through Fourth meetings		
RC-Presbyterian-Reformed, 1965 -- 1967	box 4	folder 13-19

Scope and Contents

Conversations with Roman Catholics on the Nature of the Church and Ecumenism; Third through Sixth meetings; Presbyterian Office of Information: News Bulletin, July 1965-November 1967

RC-Presbyterian-Reformed, 1968 -- 1974	box 5	folder 1-10
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Scope and Contents

Seventh through Tenth and unknown meetings; 183rd General Assembly: Columbus, Ohio, May 1971; Ministry in the Church and Women in the Church

RC-Southern Baptist: First Meeting: Daytona Beach, Florida, February 1971; Issues and Answers, 1971	box 5	folder 11
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Series 2: Protestant Conversations, 1932 -- 1972

Physical Description: 0.5 linear feet 0.5 linear feet; 1 box

Conditions Governing Access:
Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically according to which Church was leading the discussion and then chronologically according to the date of each meeting.

Scope and Contents

This series contains a small collection of conversations between Protestant faiths from the United States as well as abroad, which include a few booklets outlining bilateral discussion in the 1930s and 1950s. Of interest are the four folders containing documents that date far earlier than the majority of the documents, dealing mainly with bilateral conversations between Anglicans and the Orthodox Church. The 1932 booklet covering the Joint Doctrinal Commission between the Anglican and the Eastern Orthodox Church is a report of the conference which was appointed under resolutions made at the Lambeth Conference of 1932. The collection also contains a report of the bilateral conference between the Rumanian Commission [sic] on relations with the Church of England in June of 1935, a 1958 report of the Joint Commission on the Assistance to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and a 1959 paper by Professor Vasil T. Istavridis on Orthodoxy and Anglicanism in the Twentieth Century.

Title/Description	Instances
American Baptist Convention-Church of the Brethren, circa 1932 -- 1972	box 6 folder 1

Scope and Contents

Conversations

Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Report of the Joint Doctrinal Commission appointed by the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Canterbury for consultation on the points of agreement and difference between the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox churches, London, 1932	box 6	folder 2
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Report: Joint Commission on Assistance to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, 1958	box 6	folder 3
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Orthodoxy and Anglicanism in the Twentieth Century by Vasil T. Istavridis, 1959	box 6	folder 4
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Report: Joint Commission on Co-operation with the Eastern and Old Catholic Churches, 1964	box 6	folder 5
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: "The Goal of Our Discussions" by Peter Day, circa 1965	box 6	folder 6
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Third-Sixth Meetings: Various locations, 1963 -- 1965	box 6	folder 7
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Seventh-Tenth Meetings: Various locations, 1965 -- 1968	box 6	folder 8
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Anglican-Eastern Orthodox, 1968	box 6	folder 9
Anglican-Eastern Orthodox: Consultation: New York, New York, 1970	box 6	folder 10
French Lutheran-Reformed, 1970: "Signs of Unity Hailed by French Lutherans, Reformed", 1970	box 6	folder 11
Lutheran-Episcopalian (Anglican): "The Meaning and Authority of Scripture in the Life of the Church" by Robert W. Jensen, circa 1960 -- 1969	box 6	folder 12
Lutheran-Episcopalian (Anglican): [Fourth Meeting]: "The Meaning and Authority of the Bible" by Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr., 1969	box 6	folder 13
Lutheran-Episcopalian (Anglican): Fifth and Sixth Meetings: New York, New York, 1971 -- 1972	box 6	folder 14
Lutheran-Reformed and Orthodox-Reformed: Bulletin of the Department of Theology of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches & The World Presbyterian Alliance, Volume 9, Number 2, 1968 -- 1969	box 6	folder 15
Lutheran-Reformed: Preliminary-Second Meetings: New York, New York, 1972	box 6	folder 16
Rumanian Church-Church of England (Orthodox-Anglican): Report of the Conference at Bucarest [sic] from June 1st to June 8th, 1935, Rumanian [sic] Commission on Relations	box 6	folder 17

with the Anglican Communion and the Church of England
Delegation appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury,
London, 1936

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