



ArchivesSpace

a community served by †Lyrasis

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America records4492697

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 14, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

appm

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

burke@library.columbia.edu

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

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Summary Information | 3 |
| Biographical / Historical | 3 |
| Scope and Contents | 5 |
| Arrangement | 5 |
| Administrative Information | 6 |
| Controlled Access Headings | 7 |
| Burke Library record group: | 7 |
| Collection Inventory | 7 |
| Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America records | 7 |

Summary Information

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Repository: | Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary |
| Creator: | Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America |
| Title: | Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America records |
| ID: | 4492697 |
| Date [inclusive]: | 1905 -- 1971 |
| Physical Description: | 1.5 linear feet 1.5 linear feet; 3 boxes |
| Language of the Material: | English . |
| Abstract: | The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (FCC), officially founded in 1908, differed from other Christian Unity movements due to its emphasis on cooperation between denominations through service rather than an attempt to unite upon definitions of theology and polity. In 1950 the FCC was integrated into the National Council of Churches. This collection contains newspaper and magazine articles, journals, pamphlets, booklets, correspondence, minutes, reports, and position papers. |

Preferred Citation

Item description, WAB: Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America Records, 1905-1971, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

At the Interchurch Conference on Federation held at Carnegie Hall, New York City, in 1905, thirty Protestant denominations met and adopted the Constitution of the Federal Council. By 1908 the Constitution was approved and ratified thus forming the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. According to the constitution the FCC was formed to express fellowship and catholic unity, bring Christian bodies of America into united service, encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning spiritual life and religious activities of the churches, secure a larger influence in matters affecting the moral and social condition of

the people, and assist in the organization of local branches of the FCC. As summarized in the pamphlet, A Statement of Its Plan, Purpose and Work, "The difference between the Federal Council and the previous movements is that it is not an individual or voluntary agency...but is an officially and ecclesiastically constituted body...[established for] the co-operation of the various denominations for service..." Important members of the FCC include: National Secretary Rev. Charles S. Macfarland, Chairman of the Administrative Committee Rev. William I. Haven, and Commission on Church and Social Service Chairman Dr. Josiah Strong. Rev. Charles Macfarland served as the unofficial secretary of the FCC until 1914 when he was officially appointed as the General Secretary of the Executive Committee. He was appointed as secretary to the Social Services Commission, which was formed by the FCC to survey the labor issues and economic causes of the Bethlehem Steel Strike of 1910. This Commission was unique in that its mission was the first investigation of its kind ever undertaken by a church body. As secretary of the Social Services Commission he spent his time visiting other national and state denominational assemblies "arousing the churches as to their duty toward the great social, industrial and national wrongs." He authored the "Social Creed of the Churches" used by the FCC to define the mission of the Commission on Church and Social Service, as well as numerous books and articles on other religious topics. During his long service in the FCC he was not only the member of many committees, but accepted other responsibilities as well, such as his appointment as secretary of the Commission on Relations with Religious bodies in Europe in 1920. Rev. William Haven was the Chairman of the Administrative Committee, which until it was abolished in 1932 served as the policy making body of the FCC. He was an active and fully involved member of the FCC and was appointed to serve on many different commissions and committees, including the Commission on Relations with the Orient, Committee on the Panama Exposition, and various committees for European Relief. He was also active in other religious organizations like the American Bible Society, where he served as secretary. Dr. Josiah Strong was a Congregational minister and social reformer. He authored eleven books and published numerous sermons, articles and speeches, including Our Country and The New Era and the monthly periodical entitled The Gospel of the Kingdom. He was an early proponent of the social gospel (Christian Socialism) and endorsed institutional churches, social settlement houses, and civic reform legislation. His work in the American Evangelical Alliance and the League for Social Service, led him to eventually help in the founding of the FCC. He was the Chairman of the Social Services Commission and worked with Macfarland on the survey of the Bethlehem Steel Strike. He was "one of the first American church leaders concerned with the problems of the cities. He was a pioneer in analyzing social problems and in articulating ways the churches could solve them." Upon its official creation in 1908 "the Federal Council focused much of its efforts on labor rights," with the formation of its first department, the Commission on Church and Social Service. "The Commission did not engage in social work itself but coordinated the social service departments of various denominations, made contacts for the churches with national social agencies and movements, organized relations of the churches with labor and industry, assisted local councils of churches in their social work, and conducted social and industrial conferences." This is evident from the pronounced effort of the Commission during the 1910 Bethlehem Steel Strike in encouraging all Christian denominations to advocate for a higher living wage, passage of Sunday labor laws, reduction of the hours of labor, safe working conditions, an end to child labor, and provision for the old age of workers and those incapacitated by injury. The FCC not only attempted to "create goodwill among the various racial groups in America," through its Department of Race Relations it "also worked in the international arena" using the Commission

on International Justice and Goodwill to promote peaceful relations among the nations of the world. "Whenever possible the FCC lobbied for peaceful negotiations to end international disputes and worked for arms reduction to check the expanding war machines of the world powers. In the midst of World War II, the FCC formed the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace – a group of Christian clergy and laymen who were one of the first organizations to call for the creation of a body like the United Nations." In response to the increasing threat of war the FCC recognized the need for greater unity among the churches and religious organizations of America, which lead to conferences such as the Greenwich Conference for Church Union (1946-1959) and eventually to working with several interdenominational councils such as the United Stewardship Council to create the National Council of Churches. "The Federal Council ceased operations on December 31, 1950, when it officially became part of the National council."

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection contains records of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, including member's papers; records of commissions, committees, and departments; and conference and meeting records. The majority of the member's papers contain newspaper and magazine clippings regarding church unity, FCC organizational history, and correspondence. Some of these papers originally belonged to Rev. Rockland T. Homans, former student of Union Theological Seminary, rector of Grace Church in Queens, Canon of the Cathedral of Incarnation, founder of the Christian Unity Foundation and chairman of the board of Christian Social Service. The folder on the Bethlehem Steel Strike (1910) includes correspondence between Rev. Francis S. Hort and other local church leaders with men such as John A. Fitch, author of *The Steel Workers*, as well as Josiah Strong, chairman of the Social Services Commission. Conferences of note include the Greenwich Conference on Church Union and the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, commonly referred to as "The Inquiry," which sought to foster discussion on "industrial, racial, and international problems in the hope of discovering whether there is a modern Christian way of living...." The majority of the papers in this section are comprised of minutes, reports and position papers.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is organized in one series arranged roughly alphabetically by material type.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

burke@library.columbia.edu

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

Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2022-02-21

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The exact provenance of this collection is unknown.

Custodial History

This collection is part of the William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives, which was founded in 1945 by the Union Theological Seminary Board of Directors.

Processing Information

Material was cataloged by Lynn A. Grove on 1988-08-08. Metal pins and clips 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. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes. The finding aid was created by BreeAnn Midavaine in 2012 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2022.

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Christian union -- United States -- Societies, etc
- Interdenominational cooperation -- United States

Burke Library record group:

William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America records, 1905 -- 1971

Physical Description: 1.5 linear feet 1.5 linear feet; 3 boxes

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

This series is open for research.

Arrangement

This series is arranged roughly alphabetically by material type.

Scope and Contents

This series contains records of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, including member's papers; records of commissions, committees, and departments; and conference and meeting records. The majority of the member's papers contain newspaper and magazine clippings regarding church unity, FCC organizational history, and correspondence. Some of these papers originally belonged to Rev. Rockland T. Homans, former student of Union Theological Seminary, rector of Grace Church in Queens, Canon of the Cathedral of Incarnation, founder of the Christian Unity Foundation and chairman

of the board of Christian Social Service. The folder on the Bethlehem Steel Strike (1910) includes correspondence between Rev. Francis S. Hort and other local church leaders with men such as John A. Fitch, author of *The Steel Workers*, as well as Josiah Strong, chairman of the Social Services Commission. Conferences of note include the Greenwich Conference on Church Union and the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, commonly referred to as "The Inquiry," which sought to foster discussion on "industrial, racial, and international problems in the hope of discovering whether there is a modern Christian way of living...." The majority of the papers in this section are comprised of minutes, reports and position papers.

| Title/Description | Instances | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Organizational papers, 1905 -- 1917 | box 1 | folder 1 |
| American Council of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, 1920 | box 1 | folder 2 |
| Christian Unity Foundation, 1910 -- 1917 | box 1 | folder 3 |
| Church and Society, 1918 -- 1919 | box 1 | folder 4 |
| Greenwich Conference on Church Union, 1949 -- 1959 | box 1 | folder 5 |
| Interchurch World Movement, 1919 -- 1920 | box 1 | folder 6 |
| Rev. Rockland T. Homans: Brick Church Lectures: Christian Unity Foundation, 1920 -- 1922 | box 1 | folder 7 |
| Rev. Rockland T. Homans: Christian Unity Foundation, 1912 -- 1920 | box 1 | folder 8 |
| Rev. Rockland T. Homans: The Federation of Churches and Christian Organizations in New York City, 1905 -- 1911 | box 1 | folder 9 |
| Rev. Rockland T. Homans: Federal Council of Churches and Church Unity, circa 1905 -- 1921 | box 1 | folder 10 |
| Administrative Committee, 1924 -- 1928 | box 1 | folder 11-12 |
| Church and State Committee, 1932 -- 1934 | box 2 | folder 1 |
| Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, 1941 -- 1948 | box 2 | folder 2 |
| Commission on Church and Social Service: Bethlehem Steel Strike, 1910 -- 1971 | box 2 | folder 3 |
| Commission on Evangelism and Life Service, 1925 -- 1927 | box 2 | folder 4 |
| Commission on International Justice and Goodwill, 1922 -- 1927 | box 2 | folder 5 |
| Commission on the Ministry, 1947 | box 2 | folder 6 |
| Commission on Relations with Religious Bodies in Europe, 1926 | box 2 | folder 7 |
| Commission on Worship: "How May Protestant Worship Become Ecumenical" by Roger Hazelton, 1947 | box 2 | folder 8 |
| Committee on Direction, 1922 -- 1927 | box 2 | folder 9 |
| Committee on Education for Peace, 1926 | box 2 | folder 10 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Committee on Mexico, 1922 -- 1923 | box 2 | folder 11 |
| Committee on Relations with Eastern Churches, 1927 | box 2 | folder 12 |
| Committee on Relations with the Orient, 1925 -- 1927 | box 2 | folder 13 |
| Committee on Slavery and Labor Conditions in Africa and Elsewhere, circa 1920 -- 1927 | box 2 | folder 14 |
| Committee on Women's Work, 1925 | box 2 | folder 15 |
| Denominational Peace Committees, Agencies, 1924 -- 1925 | box 2 | folder 16 |
| Department of Race Relations, 1943 -- 1945 | box 2 | folder 17 |
| Executive Committee, 1923 -- 1937 | box 2 | folder 18 |
| United Stewardship Council, 1949 | box 2 | folder 19 |
| Religious Liberty: Joint Committee on Religious Liberty, 1930 -- 1943 | box 2 | folder 20-21 |
| Conference of Continental and American Christians, 1942 | box 3 | folder 1 |
| Conference on Religious Research, 1945 | box 3 | folder 2 |
| Greenwich Conference on Church Union, 1949 -- 1961 | box 3 | folder 3-4 |
| Unbound Greenwich Conference on Church Union, 1946 -- 1959 | box 3 | folder 5-8 |
| Meeting on "Peace Aims", 1942 | box 3 | folder 9 |
| National Conference on the Christian Way of Life: "The Inquiry", 1923 -- 1924 | box 3 | folder 10-11 |
| National Study Conference on the Churches and World Peace, circa 1923 -- 1924 | box 3 | folder 12 |
| North American Ecumenical Conference, 1941 | box 3 | folder 13 |
| Information Service, General Missions, 1947 | box 3 | folder 14 |

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)