World Conference on Faith and Order

THE LAUSANNE MOVEMENT

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The Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order (Lausanne 1927), at its meeting at High Leigh, near London, August 18-21, 1931, voted to convene a second World Conference at Lausanne in August 1937. It was decided to send a communication to the Churches, inviting them as soon as might be to appoint members to attend that gathering and to collaborate in the preparations for it.

What follows is an unofficial account of this movement, designed to accompany that invitation.

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WORLD CONFERENCE ON
FAITH AND ORDER

The Faith and Order Movement is now twenty-one years of age; its history has passed through two stages, and the task of the third lies plainly before it.

I. FROM CINCINNATI 1910 TO GENEVA 1920.

It was in October 1910, after the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, that the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, at Cincinnati, appointed a Joint Commission to bring about a Conference, following the general method of the World Missionary Conference, for the consideration of questions pertaining to the Faith and Order of the Church of Christ. In appointing this Commission the General Convention was moved by the conviction that such a Conference for the purpose of study and discussion, without power to legislate or to adopt resolutions, was the next step to unity. The invitation was extended to all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.

The first task was the world-wide dissemination of the project and the securing of the adhesion of the Churches.* The leading spirit in this work was Robert Hallowell Gardiner, Secretary of the Commission, who gave his whole heart to its prosecution and served it devotedly up to the day of his lamented death in 1924. Much was done through the circulation of pamphlets, and still more through ceaseless correspondence and the journeys

* The fullest record of this first stage is preserved in the German official Report of the Lausanne Conference, edited by Pastor Hermann Sasse.
of delegations to many countries. Visits were paid to episcopal and non-episcopal Churches in the British Isles; after the War a deputation visited Europe and the East, securing the cordial coöperation of the Orthodox Eastern Churches, and meeting with kindness and courtesy though without affirmative results, at the Vatican.

As an outcome of these activities, 69 Commissions having been appointed by Churches prepared to coöperate, it was possible to assemble a preliminary Conference at Geneva in 1920. At that meeting forty nations and seventy autonomous Churches were represented; that is to say, about five and a half years of preparation had made it possible, despite the interruption and the countless difficulties created by the War, to summon a gathering sufficiently comprehensive to justify the bold venture of its promoters.

The Geneva Conference met under the presidency of Bishop Brent, that great-hearted leader whose gracious personality has left its mark upon many high causes. Upon none of them did he spend his powers of sympathy and understanding more freely than on this; and no one man did more than he to uphold the cardinal idea of the Conference as a focus for the consideration of those things in which we agree, and those in which we differ.

II. FROM GENEVA 1920 TO LAUSANNE 1927.

The chief result of this preliminary meeting was to make it clear that a task had been undertaken which must be carried further, and also that a period of intensive preparation was essential in which the main problems to be considered at a full Conference should be articulated and reduced to order. The Continuation Committee appointed at Geneva entrusted the guidance of this work to a Subjects Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. E. J. Palmer, then Bishop of Bombay. During the succeeding years this Committee endeavoured, with some success, to secure the widespread study of five sets of questions. It issued summaries of the responses received from study groups, and with these as a basis prepared a draft programme for the Conference. This draft came before the Contin-
uation Committee at Stockholm in 1925 and at Berne in 1926, and ultimately formed part of the material provided for the use of the Conference in 1927.

The Berne meeting finally determined the general procedure of the Conference. It was to consider seven main subjects, namely, I. The Call to Unity; II. The Church's Message to the World—the Gospel; III. The Nature of the Church; IV. The Church's Common Confession of Faith; V. The Church's Ministry; VI. The Sacraments; and VII. The Unity of Christendom and the relation thereto of existing Churches. These subjects were to be introduced by selected speakers, whose discourses were to be printed and circulated, with translations, as a basis for further discussion. After a period of general discussion each subject was to be remitted for consideration to a section of the Conference, which should then submit a report on it to the Conference as a whole.

Meanwhile vigorous efforts had been made to secure an adequate representation of the Churches. In most cases the cooperating Churches were asked to send two representatives each (or one, in the case of some smaller bodies), and more than two, but not more than ten were allotted to some larger bodies: while places not exceeding 10 per cent. of the total number of delegates were reserved for persons whose presence would be for special reasons desirable and who might not be appointed by the Churches.

At Stockholm in 1925 it was decided to hold the World Conference in August 1927 at Lausanne. This decision was made possible by the generosity of the authorities of the Canton of Vaud, who placed the University Buildings in the Palais de Rumine at the disposal of the Conference. Thereafter, alike from the Municipality of Lausanne, the local Comité de Réception, and the Association des Hôteliers Lausannois, the Continuation Committee received such cordial kindness and constant help as will not quickly be forgotten.

After a memorable service in the Cathedral of Lausanne, on August 3, 1927, at which Bishop Brent was the preacher, the sessions of the first World Conference on Faith and Order began.
Its members and staff numbered 409, and 110 Churches were represented in its membership. Bishop Brent was unanimously chosen President and, at his desire, Dr. Alfred E. Garvie was elected as Deputy Chairman, so as to relieve the President by taking his place at meetings for discussion; while at the morning sessions the chairmanship was allotted to Vice Presidents and eminent members.

The first four main subjects were presented for general discussion on successive days, after which subjects II, III and IV were remitted for three days' consideration by sections. These sections having presented the first draft of their reports, the full Conference passed on August 12 to the remaining three subjects, but owing to pressure of time the sectional consideration of these topics overlapped with their presentation in full session. From August 17 to 20 the Conference was coping with all seven reports in various stages, while divers groups within the Conference declared their particular points of view. In the end, a Preamble and Report I on the Call to Unity were unanimously adopted by the full Conference. The final Reports on II. The Church's Message to the World—the Gospel, III. The Nature of the Church, IV. The Church's Common Confession of Faith, V. The Ministry of the Church, and VI. The Sacraments, were received by the full Conference nem. con. for transmission to the Churches. The Report on VII., The Unity of Christendom and the relation thereto of existing Churches, was also received by the Conference, but on the understanding that it should be referred to the Continuation Committee for further consideration. As subsequently revised by a special committee it was afterwards included in the Reports transmitted to the Churches.

During the sessions of the Conference four public meetings were held, and were addressed by various leaders on the necessity of Christian Unity for Christian fellowship and cooperation, for the presentation of Christian truth, for the missionary enterprise of the Church, and for its social function. A service of penitence and intercession was also conducted on Sunday, August 14, in the Cathedral by Bishop Brent, Pastor Merle d'Aubigné and Pastor Sandegren, a form of prayer having been prepared by Canon Woods.
Such is the bare record of the eventful period which closed on August 21, 1927. The days of the Conference were full of stress, over-full perhaps of labour, and not free from anxiety. Yet throughout them all, even at the hardest moments, there was a constant sense that the work was being sustained, and our fellowship kept unbroken; by a power altogether beyond ourselves. Those who were present at Lausanne will find in the memory of that over-ruling guidance, rather than in any concrete results, the reason why the work of 1927 must be continued.

III. SINCE THE FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE.

The task of preparing official Reports in book-form was taken in hand at once by the Very Rev. H. N. Bate, M. A., Editor in chief, and his associates. The English volume (*Faith and Order, Lausanne 1927*, Student Christian Movement) was published before the end of the year; a French edition, slightly more complete (*Foi et Constitution*, Paris, Victor Attinger), edited by Pastor Jézéquel, appeared in the following year, and the German volume (*Die Weltkonferenz für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung*, Berlin, Furche-Verlag), still ampler and more fully documented, the work of Pastor Sasse, in 1929.

Meanwhile the Reports of the Conference had been transmitted to the Churches, and it became the business of the Continuation Committee, appointed at Lausanne, to provide for the study of the Reports and to arrange for the circulation and consideration of the responses from the Churches when they should be received.

It was with this work, arising directly out of Lausanne, that the third stage of the Faith and Order Movement began. Since 1927, the Continuation Committee has held four annual meetings, at Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1928, at Maloja and Mürren, Switzerland, in 1929 and 1930, and at High Leigh, England, in 1931. At Prague, a Committee of Reference was appointed, with Dean Bate as Secretary and Convener, to which all the subject-matter of the Lausanne Conference was referred, together with replies from the Churches to the Reports of the
Lausanne Conference. This Committee at once took in hand the task of preparing material for the use of small discussion-groups upon the subjects studied at Lausanne. In the course of this work, an attempt was made to facilitate the study of all the Lausanne Reports by means of Questions for Study issued by the Secretariat in 1929 and 1930 (Pamphlets Nos. 61 and 62). The Committee also prepared a Summary of the Responses from the Churches, which was presented to the Continuation Committee at Mürren in 1930, and in 1931 it issued the first draft of a Bibliography of Literature dealing with the subjects with which the Faith and Order Movement is concerned. Further, in 1929 it suggested that selected crucial questions should be referred to a small committee of scholars; and in pursuance of this suggestion, a Theological Committee was appointed, with the Bishop of Gloucester as Chairman, which has given careful study to the problem of Grace.

At Maloja in 1929, the Continuation Committee took the important step of electing a new Chairman in succession to Bishop Brent. That beloved leader, who even beyond the limit of his physical strength carried the load of responsibility at Lausanne, had passed away on March 27th, 1929. The first act of the Committee at Maloja was to pay its tribute of loving remembrance at a memorial service. The vacant chair was then filled by the unanimous election of the Most Rev. William Temple, D.D., Archbishop of York; while Dr. Garvie was asked by acclamation to continue his invaluable service as Vice Chairman. In the following year at Mürren, as at High Leigh in 1931, Dr. Temple presided, and since his election he has kept in close touch both with the Continuation Committee and the Committee of Reference.

The meetings of the Continuation Committee have grown steadily in interest and importance. It was determined at Maloja to take steps to secure the interest of younger men and women in the Movement, and thus, at Mürren and at High Leigh, thanks to Canon Tatlow, groups of younger people have been present, whose keen and critical attention has been greatly valued. Through contact with them the Movement has a fine opportunity of securing the adhesion of the younger generation. At the same time, the Committee has kept itself informed of
contemporary movements towards unity within the Churches and, by gathering testimony as to the vital spiritual experience of the Churches, strives to avert the risk of merely academic discussion.

It has been the concern of the Committee to see that the movement shall proceed in real continuity with the work of Lausanne. With this purpose in view it has given special thought to the Responses from the Churches to the Lausanne Reports. The summary of those Responses presented at Mürren is now to be followed by the publication of the Responses in their entirety. The preparation of this volume has already begun. Due opportunity being given to Churches which have not responded to send in their answers, it is hoped that the book will be ready by the summer of 1932.

At the same time the Committee has necessarily looked forward to the future. One part of its work consists in the promotion of careful study by the best minds available. Its Theological Committee, working upon the doctrine of Grace, presented an interim Report at High Leigh, and will now publish a volume containing the full results of its studies, as worked over during a fortnight's session at Gloucester in the summer of 1931.

IV. LAUSANNE 1937.

The time has now come when all the thoughts of the Committee are turning to the next Conference, concerning which it has already reached important decisions. The date has been determined as August 1937. As to place, after careful consideration of all possibilities, it has been decided to accept with gratitude a most cordial invitation from Lausanne. Thus, while it is possible that changes in that city will provide accommodations even more suitable than in 1927, the second World Conference will have no need to change its name, but will be a Lausanne Conference once more.

The main subject of the next Conference emerges directly from a study of the Responses from the Churches to the 1927 Reports. The Committee has no doubt that the problems next arising out of those Responses are rightly summed up in the main
heading *The Church in the Purpose of God.* At Mürren it accepted provisionally, certain themes as articulating this main idea. *But at High Leigh the important decision was reached that the Churches invited to coöperate in 1937 should have the fullest opportunity of assisting in the determination of the subjects which are to be discussed. It is therefore hoped that they will proceed at an early date to the appointment of representatives who will be able to coöperate with the Continuation Committee in preparatory work, so that the full programme, when drafted, shall in largest measure emerge from the desires and suggestions of the participating bodies and their appointees.

We are thus in full view of the task of preparation for 1937. With this in mind, the Continuation Committee has taken certain measures of organisation in hand. It is clear that for adequate preparation there must be regional centres from which the movement can be propagated and directed. Three such centres are now being developed, one in Great Britain, one on the Continent of Europe, and one for the United States and Canada. The creation of this third centre involves important changes which were effected at High Leigh. Hitherto a Business Committee in New York has fulfilled all the functions of the Continuation Committee except during its annual sessions. This arrangement, already crossed to some extent by the functions assigned to the Committee of Reference, is now superseded in three ways:

(1) An Executive Committee, consisting at present of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and the other Officers of the

*Preliminary Draft of a Programme for the Second World Conference on Faith and Order.*

**General subject:** *The Church in the Purpose of God.*

1. The Church and the Word.
2. The Church and the World.
3. The Meaning of Grace:
   (a) Grace and the Church.
   (b) Grace and the Ministry.
   (c) Grace and the Sacraments.
4. The Church's fellowship in life and worship:
   (a) The life of the Church as expressed in the Holy Communion.
   (b) The Communion of Saints.
   (c) The Church and the Churches: including such questions as those affecting Intercommunion, Federation, etc.

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Movement, has been appointed to do whatever may be necessary or desirable in order to give effect to the resolutions of the Continuation Committee.

(2) The American members of the Continuation Committee have been empowered and requested to appoint a Treasurer and a Finance Committee of the Movement as a whole. This provision requires a word of comment and remembrance. From the earliest days of the movement its Treasurership has been held by Mr. George Zabriskie. To his fidelity and perfect courtesy, as well as to his wisdom and ability, the Movement owes an incalculable debt. In recent years his health failed so that at High Leigh the Committee was informed that it must take steps to provide a successor; and now the news has been received that his illness came to an end October 4th, 1931. He will be remembered by all connected with the Movement with sincere affection and gratitude.

(3) The members of the Business Committee have been asked to serve as the Executive Committee of the American Group until the Group shall make other arrangements; and the work of preparation on that side of the Atlantic will be in their hands.

One further arrangement links on to these. Since 1928 the General Secretary has found it serviceable to spend a large part of each year in Geneva. The headquarters of the Movement remain at Boston, economies being effected in office space. But since the General Secretary will be stationed for the most part in Europe, the Rev. Floyd W. Tomkins, Jr., has kindly consented, at the request of the Continuation Committee, to act as Associate Secretary for America.¹

It is not the purpose of this pamphlet to deal directly with questions of finance. But it should be said that at High Leigh

¹ Letters for the General Secretary should be addressed to Ralph W. Brown, 57 rue de Lausanne, Geneva, Switzerland. Correspondence sent to the Secretariat, P.O. Box 226, Boston, Mass., U.S.A., will receive attention in Boston or will be duly forwarded. The Rev. Floyd W. Tomkins, Jr., 217 South 20th Street, Philadelphia, Pa., receives correspondence relating to the work in the U.S.A. and Canada.
the whole financial position was carefully reviewed, and it was agreed

(1) That at least $21,000 be the amount fixed for the budget for the next year, this amount being the minimum required to carry on the present work.

(2) That there shall be regional treasurers (e.g. in Great Britain and for the Continent) whose functions shall be to receive contributions from their areas on behalf of the Treasurer, and to assist in securing official contributions from the Churches in their areas, and also individual gifts for the support of the work.

(3) that a letter, similar to the one sent last year, be sent to all the cooperating Churches in the name of the Continuation Committee by the Chairman and officers, expressing gratification at the increased amount year by year of the official contributions from the Churches, and asking that every Church make an earnest effort to send during the coming year as generous a contribution as possible.

A study of the Treasurer’s Report, printed in the High Leigh Records, will be found to justify and reinforce this appeal.

The problems of unity are more and more clearly seen to be vital. The readiness of Christians to confront them increases. The Faith and Order Movement, world-wide in the range of its contacts and its accumulated experience, affords an opportunity unique in Christendom for the common consideration, in the spirit of mutual understanding and by the method of conference, of those things in which we agree and those in which we differ. But that opportunity requires more than the efforts of committees and conferences. It needs the prayers and understanding of the rank and file of Christian people everywhere. It is our hope that the Churches accepting the invitation for 1937 will endeavour, in the period of preparation, to secure for the undertaking the interest and the goodwill of their general membership. If in that large sense the cooperation of the Churches be assured, the Lausanne Movement may face the tasks ahead with firm and humble hope.