

Interchurch World Movement

January 1919–April 1921

The Interchurch World Movement was an early 20th century effort in ecumenical cooperation. Stimulated in part by hopes of a better world, following the ravages of World War I, its originating call came from the Foreign Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church South, and its focus throughout its short life remained on mission, broadly conceived to include evangelization, education, and social betterment. Probably its two most lasting achievements were the World Survey Conference of January 1920, held in Atlantic City, N.J., and the *Report on the Steel Strike of 1919*. The World Survey Conference was a massive effort to present cross-denominational missions needs worldwide, and to translate the need into budget lines. The budgetary projections became the basis for a grand stewardship campaign. The conference inspired survey work that continued beyond the demise of the Movement. The *Report on the Steel Strike of 1919* was a product of a special Commission on Inquiry, appointed by the Movement. In 1919, steel workers struck for a reduction of their long 12-hour day and seven-day week. The Movement's report was one of the few expressions of sympathy for the workers, coming from a major organization. It successfully countered pro-management, anti-union propaganda, and helped move public opinion and government towards mandating the now standard eight-hour workday. The Report is judged a highpoint in the history of American church-labor relations.

In other respects, the Movement was not as successful. Its campaign to raise the funds for its missionary outreach rested on substantial bank loans guaranteed by diverse boards within the supporting Protestant denominations. When it became clear, by the spring of 1920, that there were insufficient funds to sustain the movement, the denominational boards had to pay back the loans, which came to over 6 million dollars. One difficulty the Movement faced throughout was justifying its existence alongside the already established Federal Council of Churches, founded in 1908, which promoted similar ecumenical ventures. For historian Robert Miller, the Movement was "nobly motivated but premature and grandiose." The Movement appointed a Committee on Reorganization to oversee its own demise and discharge its accumulated debt. The end of the Movement may be dated to April 8, 1921, when the Committee completed its work and officially disbanded. It was not until the 1950s that the broadly inter-denominational, inter-agency, multi-purposed organization the Interchurch World Movement wanted to be, successfully materialized in the National Council of Churches.

The Ecumenical Library's archival holdings relating to the Interchurch World Movement comprise 5 acid-free boxes of manuscript and printed material (mostly pamphlets and some fragile newsletters). The *Bulletin* and *Newsletter* of the Movement are on microfilm that can be accessed at Union Theological Seminary's Burke Library. Union Theological Seminary holds, in addition, a file of official documents from the Movement, cataloged as part of its William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Collection. Yale Divinity School holds in its archives seven folders of records from the Movement. A hand-written note

found with the records cites an anonymous, unpublished two-volume typescript, entitled *History of the Interchurch World Movement*, held by the New York Public Library.

Box #1: Manuscript material [contained in 12 folders]

1. Organization [includes charts and personnel directory]
2. Minutes from the General Committee, Executive Committee, and Cabinet, Feb. 5-6, 1919 through July 14, 1920. [includes 3 hand-written notes on index cards, citing location of other archival material relating to the Movement].
3. Material relating to the Industrial Relations Dept. [includes Minutes from the Dept.'s Executive Committee meeting, Jan. 20, 1920; correspondence with F. Ernest Johnson; a report on the National Industrial Conference of Christian Representatives, at the Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, Oct. 2-3, 1919, "with an especial eye upon the Steel Strike"; an approval of the Movement's report on the steel strike, from the Unitarian Conference; a response to the Ohio Manufacturers' Association charge of anarchism in the Interchurch World Movement.]
4. Material relating to the Survey Dept. [includes Final Report on Status of City Survey, Nov. 1 - July 1, 1920, submitted by Merely Higley, Aug. 1, 1920; Country Church Talks #1, by Edmund deS Brunner; A Survey of Denominational Sunday School Boards and Societies, from the American Religious Educational Division of the Survey Dept.; The Study of Foreign Fields: Preliminary Studies, by Wallace Lodge; [Foreign missions survey questionnaire], from the Foreign Division of the Survey Dept.]
5. Material relating to other departments ["While I was Busy," by Theodore S. Henderson, Director of Evangelistic Campaign; letter from Cornelia Shaw of the Research and Library Dept. to the Federal Council of Churches]
6. Correspondence with Charles S. MacFarland, of the Federal Council of Churches, or with his office.
7. Correspondence with Worth M. Tippy, of the Federal Council of Churches, including "Outlines for Possible Cooperation between the Industrial Relations Dept. of the Interchurch World Movement and the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of Churches" and "Suggestions for the Enlargement of the Program of the United Industrial Relations Dept. and the Commission on the Church and Social Service."
8. Miscellaneous correspondence with the FCC
9. "Relation of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America through its Commission upon Interchurch Federations to the Interchurch World Movement" [typescript, several copies]
10. "The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Interchurch World Movement" [typescript, several copies]
11. Material relating to the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
12. Material relating to the dissolution of the Movement [including reports from the Reorganization Committee and the Business Men's Committee]

Box #2: Newsletters and Bulletins

1. *The Interchurch Bulletin*: vol. 1, no. 1 (1-3-20); vol. 1, no. 5 (1-17-20) [2 copies]; vol. 1, no. 13 (3-13-20) [one complete copy; one half-copy]. [All copies are in fragile condition]
2. *The Interchurch Newsletter*: vol. 1, no. 6 (11-6-19); series II, no. 1 (6-17-20)
3. Buffalo Federation of Churches. *Inter-Church Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Apr. 1920)
4. Chicago Church Federation. *Inter-Church Bulletin*, no. 19 (Oct. 1919)

Box #3: Pamphlets introducing the Movement; Reports of meetings

The pamphlet literature includes self-introductory material published by the Movement itself; "Official statements of the Inter-Church World Movement of North America"; The "Interchurch World Movement number" of *The Missionary Review of the World* (43:3, March 1920).

The published reports of meetings include the following:

Report of the Committee of Twenty, Jan. 1919

Committee of One Hundred, Wallace Lodge, Yonkers NY, Feb. 5-6 1919

Facts and Figures, from the Massachusetts Federation of Churches, reporting on the New England Regional Conf., Boston, March 24 and 25, 1919

Pastors' Conference, Pittsburgh Pa., Apr. 23 & 24, 1919: Reports, Addresses Interchurch World Movement of North America ... Regional Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 13, 1919.

Report of the Executive Committee to the 131st Session of the General Assembly of the PCUSA, in session at St. Louis Mo., May 21, 1919 on the Inter-Church World Movement [report on Interchurch World Movement Joint Conference, Cleveland, May 16, 1919]

Findings of the Cleveland conference [undated]

Conference Textbook [National Leaders' Training Conf., Nov. 5-8, 1919, Atlantic City, N.J.]

New York Metropolitan District Training Conference, Dec. 3-5, 1919, N.Y.C.

Box #4: Pamphlets from the World Survey Conference, Atlantic City, Jan 1920

World Survey: Preliminary Statement

Preliminary Grand General Summary of all Budget Statements by Denominations

Preliminary Summary and Budget Tables of the Foreign Survey...

A Statistical Mirror

The Findings of the World Survey Conference [2 copies]

Preliminary Statement and Budget for: Africa [2 copies], *American Education, American Hospitals and Homes, American Ministerial Support and Relief, American Religious Education, China, Europe* [2 copies], *Home Missions* [2 copies]; *India and Central Asia, Japanese Empire, Latin-America, Near East, Southeastern Asia and the Philippines.*

Box #5: Pamphlets from the Movement's departments

Literature from the Survey Dept. [including *The Mexican in Los Angeles:
Los Angeles City Survey*]

Literature from the Stewardship Dept.

Literature from the Missionary Education Dept.

Literature from the Spiritual Resources Dept.

Literature from the Life Work Dept.

Miscellaneous literature