

ADDRESSES AND OTHER RECORDS

Report of the
JERUSALEM MEETING
of the
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
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THE HISTORY OF THE JERUSALEM MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

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THE Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council can be most fully understood and its value estimated by reference to the series of international missionary meetings of which it is the latest. Our record of these may begin with the meetings held in 1854 in both America and Great Britain, under the leadership of Dr Alexander Duff; the meeting at Liverpool in 1860; the meeting at Mildmay Park in London in 1878, at which thirty-four missionary societies were represented, eleven of them non-British; and the more important conference in 1888 held in Exeter Hall, with sixty-seven American societies, fifty-three British, eighteen Continental and two from the Colonies represented. In 1900 there was held a large conference styled the 'Ecumenical' Conference in New York, composed of about fifteen hundred delegates appointed by the American and Canadian societies, together with about two hundred delegates from British, Continental and other foreign societies and six hundred foreign missionaries. After the New York conference of 1900 plans were made for another missionary conference to be held after an interval of ten years, and in June 1910 the World Missionary Conference met at Edinburgh, attended by 1356 delegates, of whom 594

came from the United States and Canada, 560 from Great Britain, 175 from the Continent of Europe, 27 from the British Dominions. Of the whole number ten were nationals of the countries of the mission field.

The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh took one step of great practical importance in creating a Continuation Committee to carry on the work which it had begun. This committee, with Dr John R. Mott as its chairman, and Mr J. H. Oldham as its secretary, continued to operate until the outbreak of the war, when it was temporarily replaced by an Emergency Committee of Co-operating Missions, full international co-operation being impossible under war conditions.

With the close of the war and the resumption of international missionary relationships, it became clear that a 'continuation' of the Edinburgh conference was no longer a possible basis for permanent international co-operation. The Edinburgh memories necessarily receded further into the background with each passing year, and the Continuation Committee was not formed on a representative basis. Negotiations were therefore set on foot with a view to the establishment of a representative and international missionary organization. A preliminary conference was held at Crans in Switzerland in 1919, and came to an agreement that a new and truly representative organization of international character should be created. As a result the International Missionary Council was officially constituted at a meeting held at Lake Mohonk, in New York State, from 1st to 6th October 1921. The second meeting was held in England at Oxford, from 9th to 16th July 1923, and the Committee of the Council met in England at Canterbury

in 1922, in the United States at Atlantic City in 1925,
in Sweden, at Rättvik in 1926.

It was one of the terms of reference of the Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, that it was 'to consider when a further world missionary conference is desirable, and to make the initial preparations. There had been in many minds the idea that just as ten years had elapsed between the New York conference of 1900 and the Edinburgh conference of 1910 another large world missionary gathering might be held at a similar interval. The universal dislocation caused by the war made this impossible, but the idea of a world gathering was never abandoned. The American missionary societies endeavoured to achieve some part of the work which such a world gathering might accomplish by holding at Washington, in December 1924, a large missionary conference attended by numerous delegates from the mission field and from countries other than those of North America.

Very full consideration was given to the subject of holding another world conference at the meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Atlantic City in America in January 1925.¹ The Committee first considered the great tasks confronting the missionary movement of the Christian Church—the problems of religious liberty and of the freedom of missionary preaching and education, of racial relationships within and without the Church, of the independent and spiritual vitality and efficiency of the indigenous churches, of the relation of the great modern student migrations to the missionary

¹ See Minute 30 of the Atlantic City Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council, Jan. 11-15, 1925.

movement, of Christian education in Africa and China, of the changed situation in the Moslem world, of the clear affirmation and demonstration of the sufficiency of Christ to meet the needs of the world, and of the fuller discernment by the Church of the true character and applications of the Christian Gospel and her fuller acceptance of her missionary duty. The Committee recommended that the next meeting of the International Missionary Council be held in late September or early October 1927; that the purpose of the meeting be to consider in a humble and prayerful dependence upon God and in a larger and richer international fellowship the implications and claims of those questions already mentioned as engaging the attention of the Committee, in order that through such consideration the larger Will of God for the witness and service of the Church in relation to the whole world might be more clearly discerned, and more adequately interpreted to the whole body of Christian people; that in view of the importance of the meeting the national missionary organizations be invited to appoint besides the members of the International Missionary Council additional representatives on a basis corresponding generally to three times their present representation on the Council; that, with a view to the adequate representation of the mission field, and of those specially qualified in the subjects that would come before the meeting, provision be made for the nomination by the Committee of members not exceeding one-fifth of the whole membership of the Council; that the total attendance of the meeting should not exceed 400; that serious consideration should be given to the possibility of holding the meeting of the Council in 1927 at Jerusalem; that it be made clear to all

concerned that the purpose of the meeting is deliberative, and that it is intended to have the same character as the ordinary meeting of the International Missionary Council, the increased membership on this occasion being recommended in order to make possible the contribution of a wider and richer variety of experience to the subjects under consideration; and that in the event of the presence at the Council of any individual representatives from the mission field being deemed desirable, in view of their special knowledge of any of the subjects to be discussed, efforts should be made to secure their attendance.

When the Committee met at Rättvik in Sweden in July 1926 the members had before them the reports of discussions held by the chairman, Dr John R. Mott, with all the national missionary organizations and Christian councils in the countries round the Pacific Basin in 1926, as well as earlier with similar bodies in Europe and North America. It was found that the suggestion made at Atlantic City that the next meeting of the International Missionary Council should be held in Jerusalem had been received with sympathy by the majority of bodies consulted, both by reason of the sacred associations of the Holy City, and also because Jerusalem would be conveniently reached both from the countries of the Far West and those of the Far East. The view expressed at the Atlantic City Committee that the meeting should be a deliberative meeting of the Council and not an *ad hoc* conference was reiterated, but considerations of expense made it appear undesirable to enlarge the meeting to the full extent of 400 as proposed at Atlantic City. The most important change made by the Rättvik Committee in the Atlantic Committee

proposals was in the decision to make the Jerusalem meeting representative in approximately equal numbers of the missionary organizations of the 'sending' countries, and of the Christian councils and missionary organizations on the mission field, not less than two-thirds of the delegates from the latter regions being nationals of the countries they represented. These proposals, before action was taken upon them, were submitted to the national missionary organizations which compose the International Missionary Council, and generally ratified by them.

The chairman of the Council, Dr John R. Mott, published a letter accompanied by a leaflet outlining the subjects to which it was proposed that attention should be directed at the Jerusalem meeting of the Council, subjects which world-wide enquiry had revealed as generally desired; and in this letter pleaded that prayer should everywhere be offered for the proposed meeting, and invited the recipients of the letter to join in definite intercession for the objectives agreed upon at the meeting of the Committee at Rättvik (and subsequently reaffirmed at the close of the Jerusalem meeting itself). This initial act of the issue of a Call to Prayer was the keynote of the whole of the preparations, and the officers of the Council looking back from the Jerusalem meeting over the months that preceded it acknowledge with gratitude to God the wonderful upholding of the whole of the plans and organization by the prayers of innumerable men and women in all parts of the world.

Thorough preparations were made for the discussion of the chosen subjects: **The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems of Life**

and Thought ; Religious Education ; The Relation of the Older and Younger Churches ; The Christian Mission and Race Relationships ; The Christian Mission and the Growth of Industrialism in the Mission Field ; The Christian Mission and Rural Problems ; and The Future of International Missionary Co-operation. Preliminary papers were written in one or two cases several months before the meeting, in others only shortly before it, and every effort was made to secure the study, and where possible, the corporate discussion of these papers by individuals and groups, both in the countries of the West and in the different mission lands. The chosen delegates came to the meeting at Jerusalem having studied a large amount of common material, and being, therefore, in spite of diversity of the interests they represented and of their experience and knowledge, conscious of the urgency of certain issues, and aware of what was being done in different parts of the world to meet them. The preliminary papers were offered to the delegates as informative material ; they were not submitted to the Council for approval, and they have been printed in the volumes of this Report after revision in order that the whole range of material in view of which the Council meeting took its decisions may be fully understood by the Christian public. One piece of preparation to which especial reference should be made was the meeting of the majority of the Continental delegates in Cairo shortly before the assembling of the Council at Jerusalem. This meeting gave the opportunity to those delegates, to some of whom lengthy discussions in English must needs be a heavy burden, to acquaint themselves intimately with the subjects to be discussed, and to express their mind upon them before

joining in the larger meeting at Jerusalem. It was noticeable in the Jerusalem discussions that this preliminary Cairo meeting had been of real value in assisting in the elucidation of the important Continental point of view on certain of the major issues.

Very careful attention was given by the officers of the Council and by the Committee at its meeting on Friday, 23rd March, to the mode of procedure which should be adopted to secure the best results from the meeting of the Council. The method finally adopted was this. Each of the main subjects on which preparation had been carried out during the preceding months was opened up in plenary session of the entire Council by some delegate chosen for his particular knowledge of that subject. The opening speech (or in one or two cases, speeches) was then followed by open discussion, members sending their names to the chairman, and being chosen to speak in such order as might seem good to him, due reference being had to the representation in the discussion of the different countries or different points of view. In the case of the principal subject, *The Christian Message*, two full mornings were devoted to discussion in plenary session, in the case of the other subjects, one. The subject of *Industrialism in Relation to the Christian Mission* was not discussed in plenary session, but opened in an evening meeting by two speakers, Mr R. H. Tawney and Bishop F. J. McConnell.

After these discussions in plenary session the entire Council divided into groups, meeting in the afternoon, to discuss the subject in detail under headings designated by the Committee. In the case of the *Christian Message* the Council divided itself into a consideration of the different religions in relation to Christianity; in the case of *Religious Education* and of the *Relation*

of the Younger and Older Churches they divided, not geographically, but in relation to certain specific topics. When the time arrived for the discussion of Racial Relationships, Industrialism and Rural Problems, the Council divided into three parts, one of which addressed itself to each of these topics.

The whole of this group work having been done, each subject, together with the subjects of the support of missionary enterprise in the Churches of the West (briefly referred to as the Home Base), Jewish Missions, Medical Missions and Co-operation in the National Christian Councils were referred to smaller groups, which acted as drafting committees and worked until they had produced a statement which they were unanimous in wishing to lay before the entire Council. These statements were then adopted in the plenary session, and either accepted or remitted for further consideration before being finally approved. By this method it was secured that each subject was brought effectively before each member of the Council, and so far as possible the experience and knowledge of each country was brought to bear upon each subject. Both general discussion and thorough detailed consideration had their place, and the resultant declarations of the Council had behind them an immense amount of the most thorough work by groups not too large for effective corporate thinking.

The remainder of the programme was given to addresses on general subjects related to the programme of the meeting, and these addresses appear in the present volume, together with the opening and closing speeches of the chairman, and the sermons and addresses given on the Sundays, 25th March, 1st April and 8th April. It may be added that the interest of the public in Jerusalem was to some extent met

by the holding of three meetings on 2nd, 3rd and 4th April in St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, addressed by Miss Helen Kim of Korea, Dr F. C. M. Wei of China, the Rev. S. K. Chatterji and the Rev. K. A. Karunakar of India, Prof. D. D. T. Jabavu of South Africa and Principal John Mackenzie of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission in India.

This historical sketch is not the place in which any general impressions of the meeting should be recorded. They have been very amply expressed in countless articles in the press of all countries, and not least notably by Mr Basil Mathews in his book *Roads to the City of God*. The present writer may perhaps be allowed to record four facts that seem to him and to many of overwhelming importance.

First, the unity that was given to the meeting by the grace of God in its consideration of the Christian Message; this was the foundation of all else that followed.

The second was the fact of the universality of the Christian fellowship throughout the world revealed as probably never before, at least to any of those present, by the presence of Christian men and women from all parts of the world of an almost infinite diversity of tradition, united in an endeavour to follow out the will of Christ.

The third was the unhesitating inclusion within the orbit of missionary work of some of the most urgent issues in social and national life. The balance between the insistence on personal evangelism and the insistence on the redemption of the social order represented one of the achievements of the Jerusalem meeting.

Fourth, the way in which prayers were answered by the breaking forth of the spirit of prayer in the

Council itself was never to be forgotten. As the days went by, the life of the Council became more and more a life in prayer, and there are many to whom it came with the force of a new discovery that the intensest intellectual activity and almost intolerable strain of work were compatible with an earnestness of prayer such as was new to them. It was in no formal manner that the Council as its closing act issued its 'Call to Prayer.'

A CALL TO PRAYER

THE International Missionary Council, meeting on the Mount of Olives from 24th March to 8th April 1928, in a specially enlarged session, has been brought to a deep and fresh realization of the place of prayer in accomplishing its essentially spiritual task, and the definite challenge with which it is faced.

It has been encouraged by the movement of prayer which to some extent sprang out of gatherings held in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey in 1925 and 1926. It has been inspired by the response to the action of its Committee at Rättvik, in September 1926, and the very wide use made of the leaflet then issued, entitled *Prayer for Spiritual Revival*.

The Council recognizes that the Kingdom is the gift of God, that activities to spread the Kingdom and to extend the Gospel reach full significance only when they are a kind of 'acted prayer,' that 'we have to struggle not with blood and flesh, but with . . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly sphere.'

The Council has also come to realize that it faces

a definite challenge. It has seen some of the implications of the Christian mission and realizes how pitifully short its achievement has fallen, but the challenge of Christ still holds, 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father.'

Throughout the fortnight's meeting the Council has been led to place its chief emphasis on a central daily act of united intercession; and day by day its work has been prefaced by groups which met for prayer, or for the celebration of the Holy Communion, and by a quiet period for private and individual meditation and prayer.

In the findings and reports which have come from the varying sections and committees into which the Council has divided, requests for prayer have found a frequent place, and as these give to the following eight objectives for prayer adopted at Rättvik a new urgency and a fuller content, and also provide ground for thanksgiving for answers already received, the Council has felt it to be its duty to ask its members, and any Christian people in all lands who are led to unite with them, to continue in meditation upon the example and the teaching of the Lord Jesus in regard to prayer, and to make definite supplication:

1. *For a Missionary Spirit.*—That the Church may see the whole world's need of Christ, and may be ready for any sacrifice in order to make Him known to all mankind.

2. *For a Spirit of Prayer.*—That Christian people may learn to pray as Christ prayed and taught His disciples to pray; and that an ever-increasing number of interceders may be raised up until the whole Church is awakened to prayer.

3. *For a Spirit of Sacrifice.*—That the Church may be willing at whatever cost to follow and to bear witness to the way of Christ as she sees it.

4. *For a Spirit of Unity.*—That the whole Church of Christ may desire and experience a new unity in Christ.

5. *For the Gift of Interpretation.*—That the Church may learn to preach the eternal Gospel by word and life in terms that the men and women of this age will understand.

6. *For Courageous Witness in Moral Questions.*—That the witness of the Church in the moral questions of our day may truly reflect the mind of God and may be known and felt throughout the world.

7. *For a Spirit of Service.*—That a great number of men and women may offer themselves unreservedly to do Christ's work at home and abroad in our generation.

8. *For the Completion of our own Conversion.*—For the removal of all hindrances in our own lives to the manifestation of God's redeeming love and power.