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Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 12

Finding Aid for

International Missionary Council Records, 1913 – 1962



Mount of Olives, Jerusalem Conference, 1928; Credit to MRL 12: International Missionary Council Records, series 4, box 5, folder 1, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, September 2011; updated December 2014
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: International Missionary Council
Title: International Missionary Council Records
Dates: 1913 – 1962
Abstract: International Missionary Council was established in 1921. It linked missionary councils to discuss issues such as the missionary obligation of the church, theological education, and the ecumenical movement. Associated with the World Council of Churches in 1939, in 1961, it was integrated with WCC as its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. Collection contains documents, correspondence, pamphlets and photographs relating to the formation and development of the organization.
Size: 12 boxes, 5.75 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 12: International Missionary Council Records, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The first World Missionary Conference was held in Edinburgh in 1910. This conference was concerned with such ideas as evangelization, mission churches, cooperation and unity. The conference concluded it necessary to create an international committee to “serve as a medium of communication between all missionary societies.” The Edinburgh Continuation Committee was formed, which would become the International Missionary Council (IMC). The IMC came into corporate existence at the Lake Mohonk Conference in October 1921.

In the beginning, some early functions of the IMC were to study mission problems and disseminate information; to coordinate missionary activities; to unite Christian forces; and to organize area and world mission conferences. These missionary conferences were utilized to stimulate missionary thinking, missionary cooperation and missionary advance. Four notable world conferences were in Jerusalem (1928); Madras, India (1938); Whitby, Canada (1947); and Willingen, Germany (1952).

The IMC was sustained through thirty-five constituent bodies, which were of two kinds: National Christian Councils on the various mission fields of the world and the National Missionary Councils in the west. In addition to the thirty-five constituents, the IMC remained in contact with over twenty other councils and committees on mission fields.

The International Missionary Council was associated with the World Council of Churches early, beginning in the 1930s. A discussion started in 1956 for integration, which came to fruition in 1961. The IMC thus became the World Council of Churches’ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

Sources:

From the materials in the collection as well as the World Council of Churches website, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/home.html> [accessed August 30, 2011].

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection is organized in six series:

- **Series 1: Foundational Documents, 1944 – 1957 (1 box, 0.25 lin. ft.)**
This series contains documents relating to the establishment and organization of the International Missionary Council (IMC). Included are the constitution and bylaws as well as final financial reports.
- **Series 2: Board Records, 1913 – 1962 (3 boxes, 1.00 lin. ft.)**
This series consists of committee and administrative records. The Committees have to do with the general meetings, as well as how the organization was to evolve throughout its tenure, and discuss significant issues.
- **Series 3: Correspondence, 1920 – 1959 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**
This series contains correspondence for the IMC, as well as specific correspondence for Lawrence J. MacGregor and John W. Decker during their tenures as treasurer and secretary of the organization.
- **Series 4: Conferences, 1921 – 1958 (5 boxes, 2.50 lin. ft.)**
The IMC held conferences, also called meetings, to discuss topics related to missionaries and ecumenism throughout the world. For example, the Jerusalem Meeting in 1921 discussed the relationship of missionary societies and churches. The Willingen Meeting in 1958 discussed the missionary obligation of the church. This series is arranged chronologically and contains studies leading up to each conference; images; documents from the gathering themselves; and subsequent reactions.

Official Dates of Conferences:

Lake Mohonk, New York, U. S. A.: September 30 – October 6, 1921

Oxford: July 9 – 17, 1923

Jerusalem: March 24 – April 8, 1928

Herrnhut, Germany: June 23 – July 4, 1932

Madras: December 12 – December 29, 1938

Geneva, Switzerland *Ad Interim* Meeting: February 16 – February 19, 1946

Whitby, Ontario, Canada Meeting: July 5 – July 18, 1947

Toronto, Ontario, Canada Study Conference: January 7 – January 8, 1952

Willingen, Germany: July 5 – July 17, 1952

Staten Island, New York, U. S. A. *Ad Interim* Meeting: July 15 – July 24, 1954

Accra, Ghana: December 28, 1957 – January 8, 1958

- **Series 5: Organizations, 1922 – 1956 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**

This series contains materials from the IMC's association with the National Christian Council of China when the NCC was studying the IMC for questions such as missionary training on the field and if IMC could hold a conference in China. It also consists of materials relating to the World Council of Churches, including the serious discussion of integration between the IMC and WCC which began in 1956. Other items show the relationship between the IMC and WCC, such as the joint meeting held in Bangkok.

- **Series 6: General (2 boxes, 1.00 lin. ft.)**

Within this series are general materials from the IMC. Included in the papers is a list of archival items in Geneva, published Bulletins, other press releases and funds from the IMC.

Processing

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. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes.

Further Sources

There are many collections available at the Burke Library which are connected to the International Missionary Council, either by the various committees and events or by shared members. For more information, please see the Burke Library Archives website at: <http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives.html> or by contacting archives staff at burkearchives@library.columbia.edu.

Contents list

Series 1: Foundational Documents, 1944 – 1957

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	Constitution and Bylaws, 1952-1954
1	1	2	Financial Reports, Final, 1953-1957
1	1	3	Histories
1	1	4	Reports, 1944; 1954

Series 2: Board Records, 1913 – 1960

2	1	5	Ad Interim Committee, 1913; 1955-1956
2	1	6	Administrative Committee, 1958
2	1	7	Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, 1945-1948
2	1	8	Committee on Christian Literature, 1956
2	1	9	Committee on the Church in the Mission Field – Younger Churches, 1935-1955
2	1	10	Committee of the Department of Missionary Studies, 1955-1956
2	1	11	Finance Committee – General, 1952-1955
2	1	12	Finance Committee – London Section, 1949-1956
2	1	13	Finance Committee – New York Section, 1949-1960
2	1	14	Joint Committee – IMC and the World Council of Churches, 1946-1957
2	1	15	Nomination Committee, 1956
2	1	16	North American Advisory Committee, 1954-1955
2	1	17	Progress Report, Counselor's Meeting, 1944
2	1	18	Officers and Staff Minutes, 1954-1958
2	10	1-2	Christian Approach to the Jews, 1931-1933
2	10	3	Minutes [192?]
2	10	4	Committee Meeting, 1935
2	10	5	Committee Papers, 1936-1947
2	10	6	Administrative Committee Minutes, 1959-1962
2	10	7	Missions to the Jewish People, 1948-1949
2	10	8	Committees, 1948-1951
2	10	9	Committees [196?]
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Series 3: Correspondence, 1920 – 1959

3	2	1-3	1920s – 1950s
3	2	4-9	MacGregor and Decker, 1950 – 1959
3	2	10	Correspondence, 1933-1947

Series 4: Conferences, 1921 – 1958

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4	3	2-3	Lake Mohonk, NY, USA Minutes and Session Schedules, 1921
4	3	4	Lake Mohonk, NY, USA Newspaper Reports, 1921
4	3	5	Lake Mohonk, NY, USA Memorandums, Recommendations and Restrictions
4	3	6	Oxford Meeting Materials, 1923
4	3	7	Jerusalem Agenda and Preparatory Papers, 1928
4	3	8	Jerusalem Preparatory Pamphlets, 1928
4	3	9	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets, I: The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems, 1928
4	3	10	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets, II: Religious Education, 1928
4	3	11	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets, III: The Relation between the Younger and the Older Churches, 1928
4	3	12	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets IV: The Christian Mission in the Light of Race Conflict, 1928
4	4	1	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets, V: Christianity and the Growth of Industrialism in Asia and Africa, 1928
4	4	2	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets, VI: The Christian Mission in Relation to Rural Problems, 1928
4	4	3	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets, VII: The Future of International Missionary Cooperation, 1928
4	4	4	Jerusalem Preliminary Draft Pamphlets, VIII: The Unfinished Evangelistic Task, 1928
4	4	5	Jerusalem Addresses from Meeting [from Mott files], 1928
4	4	6	Jerusalem Minutes, 1928
4	4	7	Jerusalem General Reports from Jerusalem Commission, 1928
4	4	8-9	Jerusalem Reports and Findings, 1928
4	4	10	Jerusalem Translated Newspaper Reports [from Mott files], 1928
4	4	11	Jerusalem Reports and Editorials in Publications, 1928
4	5	1	Jerusalem Photographs, 1928
4	5	2	Jerusalem Muslim Response to Conference, 1924 – 1928
4	5	3	Herrnhut, Germany Minutes, 1932
4	5	4-5	Madras Preliminary Meeting Materials, 1938
4	5	6	Madras Reports and Findings, 1938
4	5	7	Geneva, Switzerland <i>Ad Interim</i> Minutes, 1946
4	5	8	Whitby, Ontario, Canada Quarry Material Concerning Enlarged Meeting, 1947
4	5	9	Toronto, Ontario, Canada Missionary Obligation Study Conference Materials, 1952
4	5	10	Whitby, Ontario – Meeting Notes and Photographs, 1947

Series 4: Conferences (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
4	6	1	Willingen, Germany Conference North American Working Groups/Commission on the Obligation Correspondence, 1949 – 1952
4	6	2	Willingen, Germany Study of the Missionary Obligation of the Church, Preliminary Information, 1952 AIM I: The Missionary Obligation of the Church (The Theological Basis of the Mission)
4	6	3	Willingen Pre-Conference Preparatory Studies 1 – 3
4	6	4	Willingen Pre-Conference Preparatory Studies 4 – 9
4	6	5	Willingen Pre-Conference Preparatory Studies 10 – 16, Appendices A – B AIM II: Missionary Vocation and Training
4	6	6	Willingen Pre-Conference Minutes and Preparatory Studies 1 – 13 AIM III: The Role of the Missionary Society
4	6	7	Willingen Pre-Conference Preparatory Studies 1 – 13 AIM IV and V: Reshaping the Pattern of Missionary Activity
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4	7	1	Willingen, Germany Agenda and Preparatory Papers, 1952
4	7	2	Willingen, Germany Preparatory Papers, 1952
4	7	3	Willingen, Germany Minutes, 1952
4	7	4	Willingen, Germany Photographs, 1952
4	7	5	Willingen, Germany Results, 1952
4	7	6	Willingen, Germany The Report of the Methodist Conference Commission Booklet, 1953
4	7	7	Staten Island, NY, USA Pre-Conference Memorandums, 1954
4	7	8	Staten Island, NY, USA Correspondence, 1954
4	7	9	Staten Island, NY, USA Minutes, 1954
4	7	10	Staten Island, NY, USA Results, 1954
4	7	11	Accra, Ghana Preparatory Papers, 1958
4	7	12	Accra, Ghana Reports and Addresses: Freytag; MacKay; Nkrumah; Robertson; U Kyaw Than, 1958
4	7	13	Accra, Ghana Reports, 1958
4	7	14	Accra, Ghana Photographs, 1958

Series 5: Organizations, 1922 – 1936; 1950 – 1956

5	8	1-2	National Christian Council of China Minutes and Reports, 1922 – 1936
5	8	3	WCC Bangkok Consultation, 1956
5	8	4	WCC Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees WCC Directors Report, 1954 – 1955
5	8	5	WCC Integration of World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council

Series 5: Organizations (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
5	8	6	WCC Official Handbook, Second Assembly of World Council of Churches, 1954
5	8	7	WCC Survey of Training of Ministry of Africa, Part 1 Report 1950

Series 6: General

6	9	1	Addresses
6	9	2	Archives Item List Removed from Edinburgh House to World Council of Churches Library, Geneva, Switzerland
6	9	3	Bulletins
6	9	4	Department of Social and Economic Research and Counsel
6	9	5	Film Production, Censorship and the Cinema
6	9	6	General Reports
6	9	7	National Council of Churches Book Lists Published 1938 – 1952, list printed 1952
6	9	8	News Clippings
6	9	9	Orphaned Missions Fund
6	9	10	Photographs and Postcards, Retiro Evangelico, Caxambu, Brazil
6	9	11	Place of Women in Church on Mission Field
6	9	12	Press Releases
6	9	13	Publications
6	9	14	Supplemental Information – China
6	12	1	Orphaned Missions and Missions in India [194?]
6	12	2	Far Eastern Office IMC, 1939-1940
6	12	3	Orphaned Missions, 1942-1944
6	12	4	Pamphlets, 1932-1953
6	12	5	Bulletins, 1945-1947
6	12	6-7	Reports on Missions in Asia, 1931-1947
6	12	8	Future of Missionaries, 1938
6	12	9	Jewish Refugee Doctors in China and China Missions, 1939
6	12	10	Conference on Missionary Cooperation in China and Japan, 1935
6	12	11	Mandatory System and Dependent Areas and Peoples [193?]