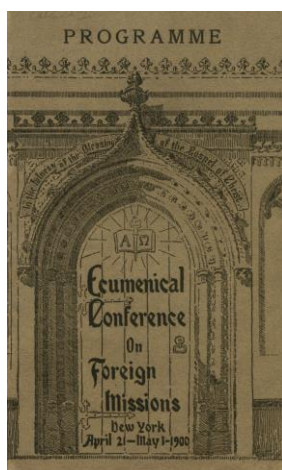


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,  
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 12

Finding Aid for

**Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions, New York City, 1900**



Credit to MRL 12: Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions Records, Box 1, Folder 1,  
The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Virginia Pastor and Brigette C. Kamsler, June 2013  
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

**Summary Information**

Creator: Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions  
Title: Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions Records  
Dates: 1900  
Abstract: Records from an international ecumenical conference of Protestant missionaries held in New York City, April 21 – May 1, 1900 providing a forum for missionaries to discuss topics including geographical surveys of missionary work, medicine, education, evangelism, literature, and women's work. Collection contains Conference program and register, minutes, stenographic reports, presented papers and reports, and a special issue of *The New York Tribune*.  
Size: 5 boxes, 1 OS rolled box, 4.50 linear feet  
Storage: Onsite storage  
Repository: The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Email: [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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: Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions, NYC, 1900, box # and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### History

The Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions was held in Carnegie Hall and several other local churches in New York City from April 21 to May 1, 1900. The Conference developed out of a growing sense that the responsibility for grappling with the problems related to the world's evangelization should not be placed wholly upon administrative boards and missionaries but on the Church as a whole. Thus, the Conference sought to amass the "united thought of Christendom" by convening thoughtful Christian men and women from all over the world who had been engaged in the study of such problems, so that they might relate their findings to the world-wide missionary movement.

Inspiration for the Conference was drawn from the work of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (FMCNA) and the International Missionary Council (IMC), as well as two previous gatherings that had taken place in London: the 1878 Conference on Foreign Missions and the Centenary Missions Conference held a decade later in 1888. During a 1896 meeting of the FMCNA, Rev. F. F. Eillinwood expressed his "hope that in the year 1898, ten years from the great London Conference, we might invite our brethren from all lands to a great Ecumenical Conference on Missions." In response to this suggestion, a committee of five was appointed to begin the work of convening such a conference. For this task, Eillinwood was joined by Judson Smith, A. B. Leonard, S. W. Duncan, and William S. Langford.

Although only Protestant denominations were represented at the Conference, Rev. William R. Huntington of Grace Church in New York assured that it was to be considered 'ecumenical' "not because all portions of the Christian Church are to be represented in it by delegates, but because the plan of campaign which it proposes covers the whole area of the inhabited globe." President William McKinley presided over the Conference's opening ceremonies, and participants included former president Benjamin Harrison, New York Governor Theodore

Roosevelt, and Seth Low, president of Columbia University, who spoke these words of inspiration:

This is a time in which all the nations of the earth are coming to know more of each other than they have ever known before....With all this growing intimacy and acquaintance, I think men have also grown to realize that God has not left Himself without witnesses, even in lands that we are accustomed to think of as heathen lands. And yet, what can Christians do better, in such a time as this, than to bear their unshaken testimony to their belief that there is no other Name under heaven, whereby men must be saved, but the Name of Jesus Christ?

Official delegates were numbered at 2,500 (including more than 600 foreign missionaries from fifty countries), and total attendance at the Conference was estimated to have been between 160,000 and 200,000, making it the largest sustained formal religious event in the history of the United States, and the largest international missionary conference ever. Over 500 addresses were given on a variety of topics during the 10-day conference including: “the missionary idea” – asserting the claims of the Great Commission; the economics of missions and the organization, location, and strength of stations; departments of work – literary, evangelistic, medical, educational, industrial, women’s work, and special classes; home administration and means of enlisting the Church; and geographical surveys of the missionary efforts and current conditions in various parts of the world. Particular emphasis was given to the increasing number of female missionaries, and a variety of sessions were planned under the heading of “Women’s Work” including: evangelism, education, giving, medicine, and literature. Additionally, April 26 was designated as “Woman’s Day,” which included reports from Women’s Work sectional meetings that had already taken place at the Conference, as well as a Mass Meeting for the female delegates at Carnegie Hall.

Though there was some discussion concerning a higher level of collaboration among missionary societies, with an unofficial post-Conference recommendation for a permanent international committee, nothing official was resolved at the 1900 Conference. However, the issues raised in 1900 returned in 1910, along with at least 125 delegates from New York’s Ecumenical Conference of Foreign Missions, at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland.

#### Sources:

Askew, Thomas A., “The New York 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference: A Centennial Reflection,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24, no. 4 (Oct 2000): 146-154, Accessed 29 Apr 2013 at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+New+York+1900+Ecumenical+Missionary+ConferencC%3A+A.+Centennial...-a068157992>.

Ecumenical Missionary Conference New York, *Report of the Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions Held in Carnegie Hall and Neighboring Churches April 21 to May 1, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition*, Vols. 1-2, New York: American Tract Society, 1900.

**Collection Scope and Content Note**

The records of the Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions consist of minutes, reports, presented essays, and related administrative records.

The bulk of the collection consists of stenographic reports from general and sectional meetings from April 23 through the end of the Conference on May 1, as well as copies of essays and reports that were presented during sectional meetings. The stenographic reports are transcriptions that document the entirety of the Conference's meetings and sessions with the exception of papers that were presented. These conference papers are separate from the stenographic reports and include both original and photocopied versions of essays presented at the Conference. The collection also includes the Conference programme, a register documenting attendees, and an oversize negative photographic copy of a special issue of the *New York Tribune*, May 2, 1900.

Stenographic reports and minutes are arranged by day according to general and sectional meetings, and Conference papers are arranged alphabetically by the author according to the date they were presented at the Conference. For most dates of the Conference, male and female authored papers are interfiled, with the exception those presented on April 24, a day of the conference that heavily featured sectional meetings devoted to "Women's Work."

**Processing**

An attempt has been made to maintain the original order of the collection as it was received by the Burke Library Archives. At this time, the records from April 21-April 22 and conference papers from April 26, 27, and 29 are missing.

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Individual papers and reports 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. Preservation photocopies have been made for newsprint and material that was pinned together. The conference register was wrapped in acid-free tissue and tied with cotton tying tape.

**Further Sources**

There are several collections available at the Burke Library related to the 1900 Ecumenical Conference. Please see MRL 12: Foreign Missions Conference of North America (FMCNA) Records, 1894-1968 and MRL 12: International Missionary Council (IMC) Records, 1913-1960. Further material can also be found in the World Missionary Conference Records, a conference that was modeled after the 1900 Ecumenical Conference. The finding aids for these collections can be accessed through the Burke Library Archives website:  
<http://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke/archives.html>.

Additional records can be found in the Records of the Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions at the Yale University Divinity School Library in New Haven, CT, which consists of two folders containing a schedule of meetings, personnel, reports, and a preliminary conference

address. The catalog record can be accessed online at  
<http://orbexpress.library.yale.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=4226507>.

**Contents list**

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Programme
1	2	Register
		<b>Stenographic Reports</b>
1	3	April 23, "A Century of Missions"
1	4	April 24, Morning, Afternoon, and Evening Sessions
1	5	April 24, Women's Work – Literature Session
1	6	Minutes – April 24, Women's Work – Literature Session
1	7	April 24, Women's Work Sectional Meetings – Work for Young Women and Children, Women's Evangelistic Work
1	8	April 24, Women's Work Sectional Meetings –Medical Work by Women, Higher Education for Women
1	9	April 24, Sectional Meetings on Missionary Staff and Native Agency
1	10	April 25, Morning and Evening Sessions
1	11	April 25, Afternoon Session
2	1	April 25, Sectional Meetings
2	2	April 25, Sectional Meeting – Vernacular Literature
2	3	Presentations – April 25 Session on Normal Training
2	4	April 26, Morning, Evening, and Sectional Meetings
2	5	Minutes – April 27, Morning and Afternoon Sessions
2	6	April 27 Conference Presentations on Self-Support
2	7	Presentations – April 28, Devotional Meeting and Non-Christian Religions Sectional Meeting
2	8	April 29, Famine Meeting
2	9	April 30, Morning and Afternoon Sessions
2	10	April 30, Sectional Meeting on Literary Work
2	11	May 1, Devotional Services and Morning Session
2	12	May 1, Sectional Meetings
2	13	May 1, Conference Closing Meeting
		<b>Conference Papers</b>
3	1-14	April 23, Conference Papers – A-V
4	1-8	April 24, Women's Conference Papers – A-W
4	9-14	April 24, Men's Conference Papers – A-R
5	1-9	April 25, Conference Papers – A-W
5	10	April 28, Conference Papers
5	11	April 30, Conference Papers
5	12-17	May 1, Conference Papers – A-W
5	18	May 1, Conference Paper – "Scotland and Bible Diffusion, 1860-1900"
5	19	May 1, Conference Paper – "Notes on Some Recent Developments in Bible Society Methods"
5	20	General Conference Papers

Box	Folder	Contents
6 OS		Special issue of <i>New York Tribune</i> , Wednesday May 2, 1900, in rolled full size negative photographic copy.