

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

William Adams Brown Ecumenical Archives Group

Finding Aid for

Robert C. Dodds Papers, 1962 – 1974



Robert C. Dodds, AP Wirephoto, *Watertown Daily Times*, 24 March 1969, 8.

Finding Aid prepared by: Kristen Leigh Southworth, February 2012
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Robert C. Dodds, 1919 – 1989
Title: Robert C. Dodds Papers
Inclusive dates: 1962 – 1974
Bulk dates: 1965 – 1970
Abstract: Robert C. Dodds was a United Church of Christ minister who served as the General Director of Planning, Associate Secretary, and Director of Ecumenical Affairs for the National Council of Churches. Part of the Consultation on Church Union; sent as a delegate to the Fourth Session of the Second Vatican Council. Papers consist of official documents, reports, bulletins, articles and newspaper clippings, personal accounts, and conference notes from his participation in these organizations and events.
Size: 2 boxes, 1.00 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:** The collection was donated by Robert C. Dodds to Union Theological Seminary in 1974 upon selling his New York apartment and moving to Boston. The records were accessioned to the Burke Library's William Adams Brown Ecumenical Archives.
- 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, William Adams Brown Ecumenical Archives: Robert C. Dodds Papers, series # box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Reverend Robert C. Dodds was born in 1919. He was a graduate of Columbia College and Harvard Divinity School, and served as a minister in the United Church of Christ to congregations in Dennis, MA, Waterbury, CT, and Wantagh, NY. He was also a psychologist and a marriage counselor, and was a founding member of the Couples Institute of New England, as well as president of the Northeast Seminary for Transactional Analysis. Dodds is famously quoted as saying that "the goal in marriage is not to think alike but to think together."

Dodds' passion and skill for building relationships beyond differences also manifested in his dedicated and influential involvement with the ecumenical movement of the 1960's and early 1970's. In October 1961 Dodds was appointed General Director of Planning of the National Council of Churches (NCC), an ecumenical partnership between thirty-seven denominations. Dodds served in this capacity until 1965, when he went on to serve as Associate Secretary and Director of Ecumenical Affairs until May 1970.

Dodds wrote a number of articles and papers on the subjects of marriage counseling and ecumenism. During his involvement with the National Council of Churches he was a vocal supporter of the notion of general church membership and full intercommunion between Christian denominations. Toward that end, he was a part of the ninth meeting of the Consultation on Church Union held in St. Louis, MO in 1970, which sought to envision a new church that was "truly catholic and truly reformed." He was also invited as a delegate to the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, where he participated as both an observer and a dialogue partner with Roman Catholic clergy.

Dodds died in 1989 at seventy years old in Montpelier, VT after a long illness and was survived by his wife Elisabeth, his daughter Margaret Bulow, his two sons Paul and Andrew, his brother Joseph, his sister Alice, and two grandchildren.

Sources:

From the materials in the collection, as well as:

“Church Participation Urged Across Denomination Lines,” *The Blade*, 10 August 1968, pg. 8.
Accessed February 15, 2012,

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1350&dat=19680809&id=uCZPAAAIAIAJ&sjid=oQEEAAAIAIAJ&pg=3079,7103965>

Dodds, Robert, C., “Book Review: Living in Step.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 15 (1976): pg. 301.

Quote Times. “Robert C. Dodds.”

<http://www.quotetimes.com/seed/show/show.action?seedId=23118> (Accessed 15 February 2012).

Obituaries. “Robert C. Dodds, 70, Cleric and Counselor.” *New York Times*, 25 March 1989,
<http://www.nytimes.com/1989/03/25/obituaries/robert-c-dodds-70-cleric-and-counselor.html> (Accessed 15 February 2012).

Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection contains official documents, reports, bulletins, articles and newspaper clippings, personal accounts, speeches, conference notes, strategic plans, correspondence, and other papers from Robert C. Dodds’ participation in the National Council of Churches, the Fourth Session of the Second Vatican Council, and the ninth meeting of the Consultation on Church Union. The materials have been organized under four headings that relate to their content and are organized alphabetically.

- **Vatican II Source Documents**

This section contains documents collected by Dodds during his participation as an observer at the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, including a copy of the *Directorium Oecumenicum*, addresses given by the pope and council observers, a list of invited delegates and observers to the council, liturgical materials, official Vatican news bulletins and press documents, newspaper clippings, and Vatican maps.

- **Post-Vatican II Conferences**

This section contains material that relates to Dodds’ involvement in conferences and other efforts after Vatican II to further the ecumenical mission of the council and move towards the goal of Christian unity. This includes papers from the “Dialogue on Post-Council Themes” held in Rome directly after the council in 1965, Dodds’ prospectus for a television series documenting reactions from the delegate of observers to the council, materials from the Notre Dame International Conference on “Theological Issues of Vatican II” held in 1966, the agenda for a meeting held between the National Council of Churches and the Vatican Secretary for Christian Unity in 1969, and reports on the National Council of Churches delegation to the Vatican, which document the relationship between the National Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

- **National Council of Churches**

This section contains papers and conference notes that relate to Dodds' involvement in the National Council of Churches, including a paper written by Dodds on race relations and the civil rights movement within the church, a consultation with *Daedalus Quarterly* to discuss the possibility of publishing an ecumenical journal, planning documents, and a copy of the Plan of Union distributed during the ninth meeting of the Consultation on Church Union in 1970.

- **Personal Archives**

This section contains Dodds' personal correspondence primarily during his participation at and after Vatican II, as well as his personal notes and diary from his time in Rome. Additionally, there is a folder of articles, both those written by Dodds as well as published materials that he collected. The items in this folder have been kept in their original order.

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

The University of Southern Mississippi contains a copy of a letter written by Will D. Campbell, addressed November 8, 1962, in response to a memo sent by Robert C. Dodds regarding changes in the National Council of Churches relating to the issue of race. The letter is located in the M341 Campbell (Will D.) Papers, Box 3, Folder 1, and can also be accessed online through their digital collections at

<http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/manu/id/2597>.

The Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, PA holds a collection of the National Council of the Churches of Christ Office of Planning and Program Records from 1943-1973. Series II of this collection contains further papers from Robert C. Dodds relating to his tenure as General Director of Planning. The finding aid to Record Group 14, Call Number NCC RG14 can be accessed online at http://history.pcusa.org/collections/findingaids/fa.cfm?record_id=NCC14.

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
		Vatican II Source Documents
1	1	Directorium Oecumenicum, 1965
1	2	Ecumenical Council Documents, 1964 – 1965
1	3	Fourth Session Addresses by Pope Paul VI, 1965
1	4	Fourth Session Delegation of Observers Guest Lists, 1965 – 1966
1	5	Fourth Session Documentation Centre Conference, November 10, 1965
1	6	Fourth Session Liturgical Materials, 1965
1	7	Fourth Session News Bulletins 2 – 20, 1965
1	8	Fourth Session News Bulletins 21 – 41 [27 and 33 missing], 1965
1	9	Fourth Session Speeches on Behalf of Observers, 1965
1	10	Official Press Documents from the Centrum Coordinationis Communicationum de Concilio, 1965-1967
1	11	Newspaper Clippings Photocopied, 1965
1	12	[Restricted] Newspaper Clippings Originals, 1965
1	13	Vatican Maps, 1965
		Post-Vatican II Conferences
2	1	Conversations between National Council of Churches and the Vatican Secretary for Christian Unity, March 27 – 28, 1969
2	2	Dialogue on Post-Council Themes: How to Implement the Vatican Council, October 30-November 10, 1965
2	3	Notre Dame University International Conference, 1966
2	4	Prospectus for a Television Series, 1965
2	5 – 7	Reports on NCC Delegation to the Vatican, 1965 – 1969
		National Council of Churches
2	8 – 9	Consultation on Church Union, 9 th meeting, St. Louis, MO, 1970
2	10	Daedalus Quarterly Journal Consultation, December 18, 1964
2	11	Planning Committee Planning Process, 1962
2	12	Position Paper “Long Range Strategy and Race,” 1963
		Personal Archives
2	13	Articles and Reprints, 1964 – 1970
2	14	Correspondence, 1965 – 1966
2	15	Correspondence, 1965 – 1974
2	16	Personal Diary and Notes, October 14 – November 16, 1965