

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

William Adams Brown Ecumenical Archives Group

Finding Aid for

World Council of Churches Records, 1893–1997



<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/wcc-logo.html>

Finding Aid prepared by: Amy Meverden and Brigette C. Kamsler, September 2012; updated
December 2014

With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: World Council of Churches
Title: World Council of Churches Records
Inclusive dates: 1893–1997
Bulk dates: 1935–1970
Abstract: World Council of Churches (WCC) Records comprise materials documenting inception and institutional proceedings of organization. Established to create dialogue between various Christian expressions of faith through publications, action committees, and assemblies. Collection contains materials such as correspondence, records, pamphlets, audio and video tapes, and photographs.
Size: 117 boxes, 58.50 linear feet
Storage: **Offsite storage**, except Series 4 Box AV115 and Series 5 Box OS110
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The papers are part of the William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives, which was founded in 1945 by the Union Theological Seminary Board of Directors. This collection includes materials that focus on the global ecumenical movement. Additional mainly photographic material was donated in 2005 by Dr. William J. Schmidt. An addition was made to the collection from a group of unprocessed records in 2014.
- 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. Please note that certain materials are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying. Please note that boxes held in Offsite storage will require 48 hours' notice in response to a weekday request for retrieval.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library Archives: World Council of Churches Records, Series #, Box #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an inter-church organization that was founded in 1948 and arose out of the ecumenical movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The success of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 led to the merger of the Faith and Order Movement and the Life and Work Movement to establish the WCC in 1937–1938. The official establishment of the movement did not take place until August 23, 1948, on account of World War Two. The first WCC conference was held in Amsterdam in 1948. The WCC merged with both the International Missionary Council in 1961 and the World Council of Christian Education in 1971.

The WCC is comprised of 349 churches, denominations, and fellowships including most Orthodox churches, the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed and Independent, Pentecostal, and Old Catholic churches in more than 110 countries around the world. The Roman Catholic Church, though it sends accredited observers, is not an official member of the WCC. The WCC describes its institutional vision as a community of churches seeking visible unity and one faith expressed by the Christian worship of Jesus Christ.

The WCC, still in existence, holds assemblies around the world at least once a decade. The following is a list of the assembly locations and dates included in this collection:

- First Assembly, Amsterdam, Netherlands, August 22–September 4, 1948;
- Second Assembly, Evanston, Illinois, United States, August 15–31, 1954;
- Third Assembly, New Delhi, India, November 19–December 5, 1961;
- Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, Sweden, July 4–20, 1968.

Sources:

World Council of Churches. "WCC History." Accessed June 18, 2012.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/background/history.html?print=1%3Fprint>.

Hopkins, C. Howard. John R. Mott, 1865–1955: A Biography. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The records of the World Council of Churches serve to document the movement and creation of the WCC and its relationship with Union Theological Seminary. The collection is divided into six series; it is arranged by topic and then by media. At the end of the collection is a box of oversize materials set aside from previous series. Included in oversize are posters, newspapers, and photographs. The last series includes letters and photographs of WCC member Dr. William J. Schmidt.

- **Series 1: Assemblies, 1923–1968 (41 boxes, 19.25 linear feet)**
This series contains conference papers, order of worship for assembly mass/services, reports, press releases, correspondence, pamphlets, bulletins, and other general documents relating to the WCC's committee-specific and decennial assemblies. Arrangement of the material is in two subseries: the committee-specific assemblies, and the decennial assemblies, which are both listed in chronological order.
 - **Subseries 1A: Conferences and Committees, 1923–1952**
Subseries 1A focuses on the conferences and committees which were the precursors for the World Council of Churches. Many of the members of WCC were active in these committees and conferences. This series also specifically illustrates the merger and progression of various organizations which eventually formed WCC in 1948.
 - **Subseries 1B: WCC Assemblies, 1947–1968**
The decennial assemblies' records can be found in this subseries.
- **Series 2: Departments and Committees, 1933–1975 (59 boxes, 27.25 linear feet)**
This series contains conference papers, reports, press releases, correspondence, pamphlets, bulletins, and other general documents relating to committees specific to the WCC that convene outside of the decennial assemblies. Certain materials relate to the larger assemblies, but are ordered and housed within the specific committee originating the related material. Arrangement of the material is by alphabetical order, according to the committee name, then chronological order within each respective box.
- **Series 3: Pamphlets and Printed Materials, 1900–1975 (5 boxes, 4 linear feet)**
This series contains WCC publications, such as books, pamphlets, brochures, worship bulletins, and publications used as source material. Some pamphlets are still housed within other series, and were not removed as the publications are specific to the materials

housed therein. Arrangement of the material is first by departments and committees, and then by assemblies.

- **Series 4: Audio-Visual Material, 1929–1997 (2 boxes, 1.00 linear feet)**

This series contains photographs, with one oversized photo housed in the OS box. Arrangement of the material is chronological. The photographs are of various WCC committees, assemblies, and photos highlighting Union Theological Seminary's WCC participation. Many of the photos are labeled and dated.

This series also contains audio tapes and video tapes of the WCC activities.

- **Series 5: General, 1893–1975 (9 boxes, 6.75 linear feet)**

This series contains reports, documents, correspondence, pamphlets, bulletins, and other general documents relating to the WCC, its various committees, and assemblies. Arrangement of the material is largely chronological and follows the manner in which the materials were received. Much of the material was found within a large amount of unprocessed documents housed by the Burke Library Archives, and relates to the material housed in the first two series of this collection but does not directly fit within.

- **Series 6: William J. Schmidt Personal Papers and Photographs, 1931–1971 (1 box, 0.25 linear feet)**

This series contains the personal photographs and correspondence of Dr. William J. Schmidt which document the early years of the WCC. Photographs dating from 1937–1971 depict specific individuals such as Henry Smith Leiper. There are also many photographs which document assemblies, such as: Oxford, 1937; Geneva, 1946; Amsterdam, 1948; Evanston, 1949 and 1954; Munich, 1959; New Delhi, 1961; and Rochester, 1963. The majority of photographs are dated and identified.

Correspondence by people such as W. A. Visser't Hooft, and Henry Smith Leiper date to the years 1937–1939.

Processing

Select items had metal clips and staples removed. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Photographs were placed in Mylar sleeves. Material that did not directly relate to the first two series was kept in the general series.

Oversize items were opened as much as possible, flattened, and removed from their original place in the collection to flat box storage. Their original position in the collection is marked with yellow highlighting and [OS].

Processing was completed following the “more product less process” method. Much of the material was found within a large amount of unprocessed documents housed by the Burke Library Archives. Further additions are possible but not expected.

An addition was made in 2014 which added boxes 112-117. The boxes are placed in order within the contents list, but the box numbers were kept in their continuous numbering sequence.

Related Sources

The Burke Library Archives contains many collections which relate to those found in the WCC records, such as [MRL12: International Missionary Council Records](#), [WAB: National Council of Churches Records](#) and [MRL12: World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910](#). For more information on these collections, please visit the Burke Library Archives website at <http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives.html> or contact archives staff by phone, fax or email burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, as far in advance as possible.

The World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland is currently working on their archival collections. Further information on what is available at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva can be located through their website at <http://library.oikoumene.org>.

Contents List

Series 1: Conferences and Assemblies, 1923–1968

Subseries 1A: Conferences and Committees, 1923–1952

Series	Box	Contents
		Pre-WCC World Conference on Faith and Order, 1923–1939
1A	1	World Conference on Faith and Order, 1923–1939 Life and Work, Stockholm, 1925 Pre-WCC, Lusanne, 1927
		World Conference on Church, Community, and State (WCCCS), Oxford, 1927–1939
1A	2	Pamphlets, Life and Work Continuation Committee, 1927–1930 Life and Work Continuation Committee, 1930–1934 Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937 Christian Unity Fund, 1938–1939
1A	3	Life and Work Continuation Committee, 1930–1934 Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, 1932–1938
1A	4	Preliminary Papers, WCCCS, 1935–1937 Conference Papers, WCCCS, 1935–1937
1A	5	Correspondence Regarding Conference Papers, WCCCS, 1935–1937 Conference Papers, WCCCS, 1935–1937
1A	6	Correspondence Regarding Conference Papers, WCCCS, 1935–1937
1A	7	World Conference on Christian Life and Work, 1935–1937 Pamphlets, World Conference on Christian Life and Work, 1935–1937
1A	8	Correspondence Regarding Conference Papers, 1935–1937 General Documents and Correspondence, 1935–1937
1A	9	General Documents and Correspondence, 1935–1937 Church, Community, and State Conference, 1935–1937
1A	10	Universal Christian Council for Life and Work (UCCCLW), 1936–1937
		World Conference of Christian Youth, Faith and Order, 1928–1939
1A	11	Faith and Order, 1928–1939
1A	12	Faith and Order, 1937–1939 World Conference of Christian Youth, Amsterdam, 1939
		Provisional Committee, 1938–1948
1A	13	Provisional Committee, 1938–1948 H.P. Van Dusen Copies of Provisional Committee Publications, 1946
		Ecumenical Study Project, 1938–1941
1A	14	Ecumenical Study Project, 1938–1944
		National Council of Churches, 1951–1952
1A	15	National Council of Churches, 1951–1952

Series 1: Assemblies (Cont'd)**Subseries 1B: WCC Assemblies, 1947–1968**

Series	Box	Contents
		First Assembly, Amsterdam, 1947–1949
1B	16	General Materials, First Assembly, 1947–1949 [OS] First Assembly Poster, 1948 Speeches, First Assembly, 1948 Study Department Papers, First Assembly, 1948
1B	17	Study Department, First Assembly, 1948
1B	18	Publicity Materials, First Assembly, 1948 Delegates Reports, First Assembly, 1948 Plans for Procedure, First Assembly, 1948 Study Department, First Assembly, 1948
1B	19	Study Department, First Assembly, 1948
1B	20	Newspaper Clippings, First Assembly, 1948 Articles, First Assembly, 1948
		Second Assembly, Evanston, 1952–1961
1B	21	Advisory Commission, Second Assembly, 1952–1954
1B	22	Advisory Commission, Second Assembly, 1952–1954 Tickets and Bookmarks, Second Assembly, 1954 Study Department, Second Assembly, 1954
1B	23	Press Releases, 1954
1B	24	General Documents, 1954 Information Sheets, 1954–1961
1B	25	Press Releases, Second Assembly, 1954
1B	26	General Publications, Second Assembly, 1954 General Materials, Second Assembly, 1954
1B	27	Study Department, Second Assembly, 1954 Advisory Commission, Second Assembly, 1954 Press Releases, Second Assembly, 1954
1B	28	Working Committee, Second Assembly, 1954 General Materials, Second Assembly, 1954 Press Releases, Second Assembly, 1954
1B	29	General Materials, Second Assembly, 1954
1B	30	General Materials, Second Assembly, 1954
1B	112	Official Files, Volumes 1-2, 1954 Official Files, Volume 3, 1954
1B	113	Official Files, Volume 4, 1954 Official Files, Volume 5, 1954 Press Directory Press Releases
		Third Assembly, New Delhi, 1961
1B	31	Press Releases, Third Assembly, 1961

Series 1: Assemblies (Cont'd)**Subseries 1B: WCC Specific (Cont'd)**

Series	Box	Contents
1B	31	Third Assembly, New Delhi, 1961 (cont'd) Working Committee, Department on Church and Society, Third Assembly, 1961
1B	32	Press Releases, Third Assembly, 1961
1B	33	Press Releases, Third Assembly, 1961
1B	34	Press Releases, Third Assembly, 1961 General Materials, Third Assembly, 1961 Brochures and Newspaper Clippings, Third Assembly, 1961
		Fourth Assembly, Uppsala, 1968
1B	35	Press Releases, Fourth Assembly, 1968 General Materials, Fourth Assembly, 1968
1B	36	General Materials, Fourth Assembly, 1968
1B	37	General Materials, Fourth Assembly, 1968 Division of World Mission and Evangelism, Fourth Assembly, 1968 Division of Ecumenical Action, Fourth Assembly, 1968 Assembly and Business Committee, Fourth Assembly, 1968
1B	38	Speeches, Fourth Assembly, 1968 General Materials, Fourth Assembly, 1968
1B	39	General Materials, Fourth Assembly, 1968

Series 2: Departments and Committees, 1933–1975

		Central Committee, 1948–1971
2	40	General Materials, Central Committee, 1948–1952 Lucknow Assembly, Central Committee, 1952–1953 Programme to Combat Racism, Central Committee, 1971
2	41	General Secretariat, Central Committee 1949–1951 Press Releases, Central Committee, 1961
2	42	Executive Committee, Central Committee, 1949–1953 Rochester Meeting, Central Committee, 1954–1963 [OS] Democrat and Chronicle newspaper, September 3, 1963
2	43	Budgets, Central Committee, 1950–1967
2	44	Press Releases, Central Committee, 1953–1967 Budgets, Central Committee, 1953–1967
2	45	Press Releases, Central Committee, 1958–1961
		Church and Society, 1950–1968
2	46	General Materials, Church and Society, 1950–1968 Project Papers, Church and Society, 1954–1958
2	47	General Materials, Church and Society, 1963–1966
2	48	General Materials, Church and Society, 1964–1967

Series 2: Departments and Committees (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Contents
		Cooperation of Men and Women, 1950–1963
2	49	Cooperation of Men and Women, 1950–1963
		Ecumenical Institute, 1949–1973
2	50	General Materials, Ecumenical Institute, 1949–1967 Ecumenical Libraries Questionnaire, 1970
2	51	General Materials, Ecumenical Institute, 1949–1956 [OS] History of the Ecumenical Idea, Ecumenical Institute, 1952
2	52	General Materials, Ecumenical Institute, 1950–1973
2	53	General Materials, Ecumenical Institute, 1952–1956
2	54	Ecumenical Institute, 1954–1965
		Faith and Order, 1951–1966
2	55	General Materials, Faith and Order, 1951–1952
2	56	General Materials, Faith and Order, 1953–1961 Yale Conference, Faith and Order, 1957
2	57	General Materials, Faith and Order, 1958–1966
		International Missionary Council, 1933–1972
2	58	International Christian Press and Information Service, 1933–1936 Ecumenical Commission on European Cooperation, 1934–1952 Documentation Service on Development, 1970–1972
2	59	American Advisory Committee for the WCC, 1937–1951 Pamphlets, North American Faith and Order Study Conference, 1957 Newspaper Clippings, 1957
2	60	Pamphlets, 1938–1961 Short Biographies, Ecumenical Movement, 1950–1965 General Ecumenical Materials, 1955–1968
2	61	Study Department Materials, 1942–1953 Committee on Society, Development, and Peace, 1950–1971
2	62	Department on Evangelism, 1946–1958 Study Department, Christian Action in Society, 1947–1953 Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 1953–1968
2	63	Committee on the History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1948–1951
2	64	USA Member Churches, 1949–1960 Pamphlets, USA Member Churches, 1953–1955
2	65	Committee on the History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1950–1951 Book Proof, A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1953
2	66	International Missionary Council, 1950–1957
2	67	Ecumenical Institute, 1951–1962 Youth Department, 1956–1960 Department on Church and Society, 1958 The Greek Team Committee Meetings, 1958 Cooperation of Men and Women in Church and Society, 1958–1959

Series 2: Departments and Committees (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Contents
		International Missionary Council (cont'd)
2	67	List of WCC Publications, 1961 The Church and the Jewish People, 1971–1972
		Laymen's Work, 1947–1962
2	68	General Materials, Laymen's Work, 1947–1962
		Service to Refugees, 1942–1975
2	69	Reconstruction, Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1947–1953
2	70	Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, 1942–1947 Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1957–1970
2	71	Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1942–1953
2	72	Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, 1944–1954
2	73	Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, 1946–1949
2	74	Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, 1946–1949
2	75	Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1947–1954
2	76	Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1947–1959 Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1948–1952
2	77	Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1946–1953 Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1948–1953
2	78	Pamphlets, Division of Studies, 1950–1972 Consultation Digest, Inter-Church Aid Service to Refugees, 1958–1963 General WCC, 1961–1973
2	79	Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 1951–1957 Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1954–1957
2	80	[OS] Pamphlets, Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1953–1975
2	81	Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1954–1957
2	82	Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1955–1956
2	83	Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, 1955–1958
		Study Commission on Education, 1963–1971
2	84	World Council of Churches/World Council of Christian Education Joint Study Commission on Education, 1963–1971
		Study Department, 1938–1970
2	85	General Materials, Study Department, 1938–1943
2	86	General Materials, Study Department, 1939–1954
2	87	General Materials, Study Department, 1939–1970
2	88	General Materials, Study Department, 1940–1944
2	89	General Materials, Study Department, 1942–1952
2	90	General Materials, Study Department, 1946–1948
2	91	General Materials, Study Department, 1946–1952
2	92	General Materials, Study Department, 1948–1958

Series 2: Departments and Committees (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Contents
		Youth Department, 1947–1968
2	93	Travel Reports, Youth Department, 1947–1953 Newsheets, Youth Department, 1950–1964 Ecumenical Work Camps, Youth Department, 1957 Church and Rural Youth Packet, Youth Department, 1948–1953 The Christian and His Daily Work Packet, Youth Department, 1946–1953
2	94	General Materials, Youth Department, 1947–1968 Ecumenical Youth News, Youth Department, 1959–1965
2	95	General Materials, Youth Department, 1948–1953
2	96	General Materials, Youth Department, 1948–1956
2	97	Ecumenical Youth Work, Youth Department, 1949–1958
2	114	General Committees Rural Churches, 1937-1939

Series 3: Pamphlets, 1900–1975

3	98	General WCC Pamphlets, 1913–1965 Faith and Order Pamphlets, 1910–1939
3	99	Faith and Order Pamphlets, 1920–1939 World Conference of Christian Youth, Pamphlets, 1939
3	100	General WCC Pamphlets, 1900–1975 Faith and Order, 1937–1952 Ecumenical Institute, 1946–1954 World Conference of Christian Youth, 1947 Youth Department, 1955–1959 Service Programme, 1969
3	101	H.P. Van Dusen Pamphlets, 1939–1943 First Assembly, 1936–1948 Second Assembly, 1954 Third Assembly, 1961 Fourth Assembly, 1968
3	102	General WCC Pamphlets, 1937–1974

Series 4: Audio-Visual Material, 1910–1997

4	103	[Photographs] World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910 Formation of Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work, 1925 Pre-WCC, Lausanne, 1927 International Missionary Council, Jerusalem, 1928 Continuation Committee, World Conference on Faith and Order, 1929 Oxford and Edinburgh, 1935–1937 WCC in Progress of Formation, Utrecht to Amsterdam, 1938–1948 Youth Conference Assembly Meeting, Oslo, 1947
---	-----	--

Series 4: Audio-Visual Material (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Contents
		First Assembly, Amsterdam, 1948
		WCC, UTS, and the Ecumenical Movement, 1948–1966
		Pre-Evanston Meetings, 1948–1957
		WCC General, 1949–1952
		Advisory Commission on Main Theme of the Evanston Assembly [195?]
		Faith and Order, Third World Conference, Lund, Sweden, 1952
		Inter-Church Aid/Ecumenical Work Camps, 1954
		Second Assembly, Evanston, 1954
		[OS] Fourth Assembly Uppsala, 1968
		Bruno Kroker and John Taylor Photo Book
4	115	Audio Tapes:
		Musical Highlights, Sixth Assembly, Vancouver, 1983
		Gathering for Christ in Vancouver
		Voice from Namibia [2 copies]
		Lima Liturgy, Seventh Assembly, Canberra, 1991 [2 copies]
		Theme Presentation by Professor Chung Hyun Kyung, Seventh Assembly, Canberra, 1991
		Six Audio-Visual Prayers: Text and Music (19 Minutes) [4 copies]
		WCC in the Ecumenical Movement (28 minutes) Chicago, 1995 [3 copies],
		WCC Christmas Message, 1997, Konrad Reiser (3 minutes)
		Video Tape: "From Amsterdam to the Harare – Snapshots of the Dream"

Series 5: General, 1893–1975

5	104	General Materials, 1893–1973
		Worship Bulletins, 1934–1956
5	105	The Church and the Unemployment Problem, 1932
		Publications, 1934–1958
		Reports and Brochures, 1936–1955
		Brochures, Reports, Correspondence, 1954–1966
5	106	Reports, 1933–1948
		World Alliance Reports, 1935
5	107	General Materials, 1938–1972
		Newspaper Clippings, 1948–1960
		Correspondence, 1951–1952
5	108	Reports, 1955–1975
5	109	General Materials, 1956–1973
		Curriculum [19??]
		Reports, 1960–1966
		General Materials, 1968–1975
5	OS 110	Oversize Materials removed from Previous Series, 1925–1975
		Oversize Newspapers, Posters, and One Photograph
5	116	Correspondence, Biggest Issue facing WCC, 1966

Series 5: General (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Contents
5	116	WAB Library related WCC material News Clippings
5	117	Ecumenical Matters, some Faith and Order

Series 6: William J. Schmidt Personal Papers and Photographs, 1931–1971

6	111	Correspondence Regarding Founding of WCC, 1937–1938 Correspondence, Henry Smith Leiper and W. A. Visser't Hooft, October 1938–September 1939 Photographs: Assemblies, 1931–1937 Photographs: Assemblies, 1949–1963 Photographs: Henry Smith Leiper, 1937–1971 Photographs: Amsterdam and Pre-Amsterdam, 1948 Photographs: Schmidt's Personal and WCC, 1949–1959
---	-----	---