

**THE CHURCHES OF THE FEDERAL
COUNCIL; THEIR HISTORY,
ORGANIZATION AND
DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS, AND A
STATEMENT OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL**

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CHARLES S. MACFARLAND

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DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS, AND A
STATEMENT OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL**

The Churches of the Federal Council

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Their History, Organization and Distinctive Characteristics and a Statement of the Development of the Federal Council

EDITED BY

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Foreword

THIS volume has been prepared in response to a large and increasing demand for such information as it contains in brief and simple form. The federation of thirty Christian denominations naturally raises the inquiry as to their points of likeness and diversity.

Such a volume necessitated composite authorship, because each denomination should be portrayed by one of its own representatives, with freedom of expression in setting forth the values of each.

It also appears that in each of the statements contained herein certain distinct characteristics are set forth which, as a matter of fact, are found to be more or less common to other denominations. The prevailing sense in all is that of a unity far greater than the diversity, and thus we find in these statements themselves an exhibit of the need and practicability of the federation of these bodies for the multitude of tasks which can be done better by coöperation than in separation.

Each chapter, again, sets forth, as a more or less distinct trait of the denomination described, the desire to realize the Kingdom of God rather than to build up a denomination, and while each emphasizes the peculiar contributions of the denomination described, these thirty sketches constitute a more or less sustained argument for coöperation. One can see clearly the possible adjustment of autonomy and corporate action, individuality and social solidarity, liberty and social adaptation.

These bodies have all federated fully and officially in the Federal Council, with the exception of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in which there still obtains some difference of opinion relative to Christian federation, which it is believed does not

indicate an essential difference of general view regarding the spirit of fraternity and fellowship. At the last General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church this division of view-point was indicated by the fact that the House of Deputies voted by a large majority for full relationship with the Federal Council, on which action, however, the House of Bishops was divided or doubtful, and in which it failed to concur. The final action of the General Convention was as follows :

“ Resolved, That the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church hereby records its gratitude to Almighty God for the growing sympathy and closer relations between bodies of Christians, as evidenced by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America ; but the strong conviction of this Church is that the ideal of our Lord for His people is organized unity in one body ; realizing, however, the desirability of Christian coöperation, where practicable, without the sacrifice of principle, this Convention expresses the opinion that the Commissions on Christian Unity and on Social Service may appoint representatives to take part in the Federal Council.”

It should be said, in this connection, that so far as the practical aspects of the matter are concerned, the relationship is little different from that of the other Christian bodies, and the Federal Council has received delegates from the Protestant Episcopal Commissions upon the same basis as the delegates from its other constituent bodies, and has received from them the same loyal service. This is also true of the federative movement in general, the difference in relationship being largely determined by locality and individual preference on the part of pastors and churches.

The various chapters were prepared by the following contributors :

The Baptist Churches, North, Rev. Albert G. Lawson,

Chairman of the Baptist Delegation of the Federal Council. The National Baptist Convention (Colored), Rev. Henry K. Carroll, Associate Secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The General Conference of Free Baptists, Rev. James E. Howe, former Dean of Cobb Divinity School. The Seventh Day Baptists, Rev. Arthur E. Main, Dean and Professor of Theology, Alfred Theological Seminary. The Congregational Churches, Rev. Charles Sumner Nash, President Pacific Theological Seminary. Disciples of Christ, Rev. Peter Ainslie, President Commission on Christian Union, and former President of the National Convention. The Christian Church, Rev. Milo True Morrill, Secretary for Foreign Missions. The Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. Edward S. Lewis, Associate Editor of Sunday School Publications of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Rev. Wilbur F. Tillett, Dean of the Biblical Department of Vanderbilt University. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. John T. Jenifer, Historian of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Bishop Alexander Walters, member of the Executive Committee of the Federal Council. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America, Rev. James Arthur Martin, Secretary of the South Georgia Annual Conference. The Methodist Protestant Church, Rev. Lyman Edwyn Davis, President of the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., Rev. William H. Roberts, Stated Clerk and former Moderator of the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S., Rev. R. C. Reed, Professor of Church History in Columbia Theological Seminary. The United Presbyterian Church of North America, Rev. John McNaugher, President of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The Reformed Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., Professor Frank A. Jurkat, Professor of Hebrew and Church History in the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary, Cedarville,

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It should be borne in mind that these contributors do not present these sketches as official representatives. Men were selected simply because of their familiarity with the history and life of their denomination. Therefore it is altogether probable