

THE OHIO CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Ecumenical Commission

Presented 10/5/89 to the Ecumenical Partnership Committee by Thomas Dipko.

Background information* on the relationships between the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ concerning possible union between the two Churches.

- 1946 The International Convention of the Disciples of Christ resolves that unity conversations between the Disciples and the Congregational Christian Churches be initiated.
- 1947 A similar resolution by the Disciples of Christ that unity conversations be held between the Disciples and both the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches. Leaders in the latter two Churches advise against such conversations because the birth of the United Church of Christ seemed imminent.
- 1949 The Disciples of Christ resolve that unity conversations with the United Church of Christ be opened as soon as "feasible" after the new Church is formed.
- 1956 The Disciples of Christ reiterate their desire "to share in this (i.e. the United Church of Christ) growing body of unity."
- 1956 Eugene Carson Blake addresses the Evangelical and Reformed Church's Synod, and urges that after the UCC is born and his own denomination's union in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is accomplished, that the two new Churches pursue unity conversations.
- 1957 The Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches invite the Disciples of Christ to attend the United General Synod, and welcome interest in further unity when the United Church of Christ reaches "stability."
- 1960 In June, at a meeting of the N.C.C., Blake (U.P.C.U.S.A.), Jarman (Disciples of Christ), and Wagner (UCC), agree that in December of 1960 they will talk informally about the possibility of three-way unity conversations.
- 1960 The General Assembly of the U.P.C.U.S.A. resolves to pursue unity conversations with the U.C.C. and "others."
- 1960 December 4th, Blake delivers his famous sermon at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. The Blake-Pike proposal

calls for the four-way talks concerning union among the Episcopal Church, The United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the Methodist Church, and the United Church of Christ. (The Disciples of Christ were not included!)

- 1961 General Synod III of the U.C.C. urges conversations between the Disciples of Christ and the U.C.C. "at the earliest mutually convenient time." Jarman, of the Disciples, responds at the Synod and a date is set for September 1961, to set up the process.
- 1961 The Preliminary meeting of the Consultation on Church Union (C.O.C.U.) is held. David Colwell of the U.C.C. tries unsuccessfully to have the Disciples of Christ invited as the fifth partner to the Consultation.
- 1962 In February, the first full meeting of the appointed bodies representing the Disciples of Christ and the U.C.C. is held (for the Disciples, the Council on Christian Unity; for the U.C.C.S., the Commission on Christian Unity, Ecumenical Study and Service). The inauguration of C.O.C.U. and internal concerns of the U.C.C. served to cool the enthusiasm of the meeting.
- 1963 U.C.C. General Synod IV urges that Conversations be pursued with "all diligence."
- 1963 U.C.C. (C.C.U.E.S.S.) at a joint meeting with the Disciples of Christ (C.C.U.) refers to U.C.C./Disciples talks as "supplementary" to C.O.C.U.
- 1964 The U.C.C./Disciples representatives in joint meeting agree to ask for authorization from the two denominations to develop a "Plan of Union."
- 1966 U.C.C./Disciples joint meeting cancelled because C.O.C.U. decided to request permission from its parent bodies to draft a Plan of Union.
- 1969 U.C.C./Disciples of Christ joint meeting postponed.
- 1971 Disciples of Christ ask that the U.C.C./Disciples conversations be resumed, but that C.O.C.U. be given priority attention.
- 1975 At the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the United Church of Canada, Robert Moss raises the issue of union talks with Paul Crow of the Disciples of Christ. The Disciples' Council on Christian Unity and the U.C.C. Council for Ecumenism are asked to consider the

possibility.

- 1977 U.C.C. General Synod XI and the Disciples of Christ General Assembly approve "Conversations" between the two Churches, with a report due in 1979.
- 1979 U.C.C. General Synod XII and the Disciples of Christ General Assembly approve a six-year Covenant for Study, and request a report due in 1985.

* This chronology is based on files gathered by Robert Moss and others, and shared with members of the Council for Ecumenism.

- 1985 U.C.C. General Synod XV and the Disciples of Christ General Assembly approve a "Declaration of Ecumenical Partnership" marked by 1) commitment to respond together to the mission God has entrusted to the church; 2) theological work to equip our churches as they grow toward full communion; and 3) common worship with frequent and intentional sharing in the Lord's Supper/Holy Communion.
- 1987 U.C.C. General Synod XV and the Disciples of Christ General Assembly celebrate a new Order for Word and Sacrament and invite all local churches to use it on May 1, 1988.
- 1989 Full Communion Resolution passed by the UCC General Synod and the Disciples General Assembly.