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C/o P.O. Box 97,
JOHANNESBURG.

REPORT OF THE DELEGATION APPOINTED BY THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE OF SOUTH AFRICAN MEMBER CHURCHES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TO MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

The members of the delegation met the Executive Committee of the Christian Council of South Africa on Tuesday, May 8th, in Bloemfontein. The following members of the delegation were present:- The Right Rev. B.B. Burnett, the Reverends V.E. Miller, B.N.B. Ngidi, D.J. Williams and B. Orr. They had previously been provided with the following documents:-

- a) "Memorandum on the re-organization of the Christian Council - February 1962."
- b) Addendum to memorandum on the re-organization of the Christian Council - March 1962.
- c) Confidential minute of a special meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Christian Council 15th March, 1962.

In the light of both of these documents and of the thorough and frank discussion with the Executive Committee of the Council, your delegation reports as follows:-
(Refer to the Provisional Committee's minutes of 14th February, 1962, page 4, where are set out the points on which clarification was desired.)

- (1) The Christian Council is in the process of a thorough revision and reform of its purpose and function.
- (2) The Council plans to set up a series of divisions which reflect fairly closely the concerns of the divisions and departments of the World Council of Churches.
- (3) The Executive Committee of the Council has accepted the principle of a programme of inter-church aid, the details of which still have to be considered.
- (4) The Council already has an organic relationship with the World Council of Churches, through its Division of World Mission and Evangelism, but it has now decided to apply to become a Council in direct association with the World Council of Churches.
- (5) An earnest desire exists among Council members for direct and intimate contact with the Dutch Reformed Churches and particularly the N.G.K. It has decided that official approaches should, on the advice of certain members of the N.C.K., be deferred until the union of the five provincial synods of that church has been consummated, but informal, personal contacts have been made and information exchanged on an unofficial basis. The Council is looking forward to the time when the English and Afrikaans-speaking churches can work together in the fullest possible harmony, and the Council intends its new division on Ecumenical Relationships to encourage and develop this liaison at all possible levels.

- (6) The tasks entrusted to a "Conference of World Council of Churches Member Churches" by the Cottesloe Consultation will fall within the purview of one or other of the Council's new divisions. Thus:
- a. "a constructive approach to separatist movements", by the Division of Ecumenical Relationships.
 - b. "the education of the Bantu" by the Division of Christian Education.
 - c. "the training of non-White leaders for positions of responsibility in all spheres of life" by the Division of National and Inter-racial Affairs.
 - d. "African literacy and the provision of Christian literature" by the Divisions of Christian Education and of Mission and Evangelism.
 - e. "the concept of responsible Christian society etc." by the Divisions of Ecumenical Studies and of National and Inter-racial Affairs.
 - f. "the impact of Islam" by the Division of Mission and Evangelism.
- (7) Your delegation wishes to emphasise the following factors:
- i. The Christian Council now enjoys, for the first time, the services of a full-time paid secretary.
 - ii. The Council will now be directly linked with the World Council of Churches, as an associated Council, and will receive encouragement, advice, and literature from this source.
 - iii. The reformulation of the Council's aims and the re-organization of its structure justify the expectation that it will become an effective Council of Churches, and an instrument for the expression of the unity and the Mission of the Church.
- (8) Your delegation therefore considers that:-
- i. The only useful characteristic of a South African Conference of World Council of Churches would be its inclusion of the Dutch Reformed Churches, but that this condition cannot now be fulfilled on account of the withdrawal of these churches from the World Council of Churches.
 - ii. No point would now be served, therefore, by setting up such a Conference.
 - iii. The Christian Council is, in fact, the only organization in South Africa which can (even if only partially) fulfil the hopes expressed at Cottesloe Consultation (See p. 84 Report of Cottesloe Consultation). Moreover these hopes will be more readily realised as the Member Churches of the Christian Council work together to make it an effective instrument in the service of the Kingdom of God.

- iv. In the light of these observations it would appear that no good purpose would be served by further meetings of the Provisional Committee of the Member Churches of the World Council of Churches in South Africa, and it should therefore be disbanded.

Signed

+ Bendyshe Bloemfontein.
Bishop of Bloemfontein.

11.5.62.

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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