

1742. Unitarian Universalist Association (Formed in 1961 by the Merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America)

a. Unitarian Churches

SOURCE: *CRB, 1936, Vol. 2, part 2, pp. 1622, 1623.*

[p. 1622] *History.* Unitarianism may be defined in the most general terms as the religious doctrine of those holding belief in one God in one person (as distinguished from the Trinitarian belief in one God in three persons) and the related belief in the strict humanity of Jesus (as contrasted with the belief in His deity). While Unitarians assert that these beliefs were held in the first Christian centuries, before ever the Trinitarian dogmas were developed, yet the Unitarianism of today originated historically in the first half century of the Protestant Reformation. In one form or another it was espoused in the sixteenth century by a number of Anabaptist leaders and by numerous independent thinkers in Italy or Switzerland. Its most influential leaders on the Continent, where it was variously known as Arianism, Socinianism, or Unitarianism, were Michael Servetus in Switzerland, Faustus Socinus in Poland, and Francis David in Transylvania.

In England Unitarianism gradually developed during the eighteenth century, largely under Socinian influences, and chiefly among the Presbyterian churches, though there were also important accessions from other religious bodies. While such men as Newton, Locke, Milton, and Penn in the seventeenth century are known to have held Unitarian views, no movement toward a distinct denomination began till late in the eighteenth century; and the most distinguished leaders of Unitarianism since its separate organization have been Joseph Priestly, Theophilus Lindsey, and James Martineau.

In America Unitarianism developed out of New England Congregationalism, whose churches had, as a rule, unwittingly left the way open for doctrinal changes, by requiring members upon joining the church simply to join in a covenant, rather than to subscribe to a creed. Thus many of the Congregational churches of eastern Massachusetts, including nearly all the oldest and most important ones, gradually moved far toward Unitarian beliefs in the second half of the eighteenth century, though the first church distinctly to avow such beliefs was the Episcopal King's Chapel at Boston, in 1785. These churches preferred to call themselves simply Liberal Christians, and the name Unitarian was only slowly and reluctantly accepted. The first church to take the name "Unitarian" was the First Church in Philadelphia, founded in 1796.

The formation of a new denomination out of the liberal wing of the Congregational Church was a gradual process, which went on in one congregation after another. The cleavage was hastened by the election of Henry Ware, a liberal, as professor of theology at Harvard University in 1805, in spite of orthodox protests, and by the fastening of the name Unitarian upon the liberals by the conservatives in 1815, after which the former were more and more refused religious fellowship by the latter, who desired thus to exclude them from the denomination. At length, in 1819, William Ellery Channing, of Boston, acknowledged leader of the liberals, preached at Baltimore an ordination sermon which defined and defended the views held by Unitarians and was thenceforth accepted by them as their platform.

In 1825 the American Unitarian Association was formed to do aggressive missionary work and to promote the interests of the churches concerned, and thus the new denomination became organized separately. The Unitarians of this period were much

averse to fostering sectarian spirit. They had been only loosely welded together, and their own fundamental principles were not clearly settled; so that for nearly 40 years the denomination was stagnant and was divided and weakened by internal controversy centering mainly about the question of miracles. But by the end of the Civil War this controversy had been largely outgrown; a national conference was organized in 1865, and a period of rapid extension and of aggressive denominational life ensued, which has continued down to the present time. For a generation past emphasis has been laid much less upon doctrinal points than upon personal religion, moral advancement, and civic and social reform.

Doctrine. The Unitarians have never adopted a creed and do not require of members or ministers profession of a particular doctrine.

[p. 1623] In general, Unitarians accept the religion of Jesus. The declared purpose of the American Unitarian Association, as stated in its bylaws, is “to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure religion which, in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, is summed up in love to God and love to man.” The covenant most generally used in local churches reads: “In the love of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.”

The most distinguishing marks of Unitarianism today are its insistence upon absolute freedom in belief, its reliance upon the supreme guidance of reason, its tolerance of difference in religious opinion, its devotion to education and philanthropy, and its emphasis upon character, as the principles of fundamental importance in religion. There is, however, a general consensus upon the unipersonality of God, the strict humanity of Jesus, the essential dignity and perfectibility of human nature, the natural character of the Bible, and the hope for the ultimate salvation of all souls, in distinction from the views traditionally taught on these points.

Organization. The Unitarians are congregational in polity, each congregation being entirely independent of all the others. But for purposes of fellowship, mutual counsel, and the promotion of common ends, they unite in district, State, and regional conferences, in the American Unitarian Association and in an international association.

b. Universalist Church of America

SOURCE: *CRB, 1936, Vol. 2, part 2, pp. 1656–1659.*

[p. 1656] *History.* A distinction should be made between Universalism and the Universalist denomination.

Universalism has been defined as the doctrine or belief that it is the purpose of God through the grace revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ to save every member of the human race from sin. In a more general way, it has been described as the belief that what ought to be will be; that in a sane and beneficent universe the primacy belongs to Truth, Right, Love—the supreme powers; that the logic of this conception of the natural and moral order imperiously compels the conclusion that although all things are not yet under the sway of the Prince of Peace, the definite plan set forth in Him is evident, and the consummation which He embodies and predicts cannot be doubted.

Universalism, it is claimed, is thus as old as Christianity; it was taught in the schools of the second and third centuries at Alexandria, Nisibis, Edessa, and Antioch; and it was accepted by many of the apostolic and church fathers, as Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, and probably Chrysostom and Jerome.

[p. 1657] Those members of the Christian family in whom this thought has become predominant and who hold to the idea that there is a divine order and that it contemplates

the final triumph of good over evil in human society, as a whole, and in the history of each individual, are considered Universalists.

The Universalist denomination, however, is of modern origin, is confined mostly to the American continent, and it embraces but a portion of those who hold the Universalist belief. It dates from the arrival of Rev. John Murray, of London, in Good Luck, N. J., in September 1770, although there were some preachers of the doctrine in the country before that time. Mr. Murray preached at various places in New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, and societies sprang up in all these States as a result of his ministry. His first regular settlement was at Gloucester, Mass., where a church was built in 1780, but he afterwards removed to Boston.

The earliest movement for denominational organization was made at Oxford, Mass., in 1785, but accomplished little more than to emphasize the need and value of fellowship, although it approved the name selected by the Universalists of Gloucester for their church, "The Independent Christian Society, commonly called 'Universalists,'" and approved also the Charter of Compact as the form of organization for all societies. The second convention, held at Philadelphia in 1790, drew up and published the first Universalist profession of faith, consisting of five articles, outlined a plan of church organization, and declared itself to be in favor of the congregational form of polity. Another convention, at Oxford in 1793, subsequently developed into the Convention of the New England States, then into the Convention of New England and New York, and finally into the present organization, the General Convention.

Among the younger men at the second Oxford convention was Hosea Ballou, who soon became the recognized leader of the movement, and for half a century was its most honored and influential exponent. During his ministry, extending from 1796 to 1852, the 20 or 30 churches increased to 500, distributed over New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, although the greater part were found in New England. It was, however, the era of the propagation of the doctrine and of the controversies to which that gave rise, and little attention was paid to organization.

The same antagonistic tendencies are noticeable, in the history of the Universalist churches, that appear in others holding to the congregational principle; on the one hand, an impulse toward liberty, opposition to ecclesiastical tyranny, jealousy of freedom, and suspicion of authority; on the other hand, appreciation of the value of centralized authority as against a crude, chaotic condition, and the realization that in order to efficiently carry out important ends in the denomination there must be some definite church organization with powers that are restricted, indeed, but still real.

About 1860 agitation began for a more coherent organization and a polity better correlated than the spontaneous congregationalism which had developed during the earlier period, and the result was that at the centennial convention of 1870 a plan of organization and a manual of administration and a manual of administration were adopted under which the denomination has since been conducted.

Doctrine. The historic doctrinal symbol of the Universalist denomination is the Winchester Profession, adopted at the annual meeting of the General Convention held in Winchester, N. H., in September 1803, and is essentially the same as the first profession of faith in the five articles formulated and published by the Philadelphia convention in 1790. The convention adopting it was simply a yearly gathering of Universalists without ecclesiastical authority, and the articles were merely set forth as expressing the general

belief of the churches. They have ever since been acknowledged by the denomination at large, however, as expressing its faith. They are as follows:

We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind.

We believe that there is one God, whose nature is Love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of Grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practice good works; for these things are good and profitable unto men.

[p. 1658] At the session of the General Convention in Boston, October 1899, a still briefer Statement of Essential Principles was adopted and made the condition of fellowship, in the following terms: "The Universal Fatherhood of God; the spiritual authority and leadership of His Son, Jesus Christ; the trustworthiness of the Bible as containing a revelation from God; the certainty of just retribution for sin; the final harmony of all souls with God." However, to this statement of principles was added the so-called Liberty Clause, as follows: "The Winchester Profession is commended as containing these principles, but neither this, nor any other precise form of words, is required as a condition of fellowship provided always that the principles above stated be expressed."

At the General Convention held in Worcester, Mass., in 1933, a bond of fellowship was adopted as follows:

The bond of fellowship in this Convention shall be a common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it and to cooperate in establishing the kingdom for which He lived and died.

To that end we avow our faith in God as Eternal and All-Conquering Love, in the spiritual leadership of Jesus, in the supreme worth of every human personality, in the authority of truth known or to be known, and in the power of men of good will and sacrificial spirit to overcome all evil and progressively establish the kingdom of God. Neither this nor any other statement shall be imposed as a credal test, provided that the faith thus indicated be professed.

The theology of Universalism, while setting forth the predicates of its conclusion, that all souls are included in the gracious purpose of God to make at last a complete moral harmony, discriminates between belief in a result and faith in the forces by which the result is to be achieved. It points out and emphasizes the fact that effective faith in final universal salvation must rest on implicit belief in the value and potency of truth, righteousness, and love, witnessed by the free and steadfast use of these great and only means to the desired end. The teaching of Jesus, with which His life and works accord, is interpreted as a distinct revelation of these facts and principles, to wit, that God is the Father of all men; that all men are brethren; that life at the root is spiritual and therefore eternal; that the law of life is righteousness and its motive force is love; that human society, properly conceived, is a natural social and moral unity, or kingdom of heaven; that this life is "the suburb of the life elysian"; and that physical death is the necessary prelude to immortal life. Universalism avers that the sinner—"and no man liveth that sinneth not"—cannot escape punishment; but this is remedial and is meant both to vindicate the inflexible righteousness of God and to induce repentance and reformation in His wayward children. Throughout the history of the Universalist Church there has been a growing emphasis upon the responsibility of men as free moral agents to cooperate with God in the creation of His world. A favorite Universalist statement of today is "If all men are to be saved, then we are to save them."

The Universalist position as to the nature and place of the Christ has been stated as follows:

It is necessary to say, in view of opinions long and generally held among Christians, that Universalists are not Trinitarians. The position taken by the Unitarians of Channing's day, and held for a generation or more subsequently, would fairly represent the view that has been consistently set forth in Universalist literature and teaching. That view is that Jesus (the Christ) had the same essential spiritual and human nature as other men; but that he was chosen of God to sustain a certain unique relation, on the one hand toward God and on the other toward men, by virtue of which he was a revelation of the divine will and character and a sample of the perfected or "full-grown" man. There is, therefore, propriety and accuracy in describing this unique man as a God-man, a divine Son of God, the mediator, or way, between God and men.

Universalists, as a body, are now practically Unitarians, so far as the person, nature, and work of Christ are concerned.

As to the mode of baptism, both immersion and sprinkling are practiced, but usually in Universalist churches the candidate, whether adult or infant, is baptized by the minister placing his hand, which has been previously dipped in the font, on the head of the candidate, and repeating the baptismal formula. In Universalist parishes where a church has been organized the Lord's Supper is regularly observed, usually four times a year, and all members are expected to participate; but all others who would like thus to show their loyalty to their Master and cultivate Christian graces are cordially invited to join in the memorial.

[p. 1659] According to the laws of organization for the Universalist Church there is the General Convention having jurisdiction over all Universalist clergymen and denominational organizations, State conventions, exercising within State or provincial limits a similar jurisdiction subject to the General Convention, and parishes composed of persons organized for religious improvement and the support of public worship. In practice the local parish or society is independent in the management of its affairs.

c. Unitarian Universalist Association

SOURCE: Constitution, art. 2, in *The Plan to Consolidate* (Wellesley Hills, Mass.: The Joint Merger Committee, 1959), pp. 4, 5.

[p. 4] *Section 1.* The Unitarian Universalist Association is an incorporated organization which by consolidation has succeeded to the charter powers of the American Unitarian Association, incorporated in 1847, and The Universalist Church of America, incorporated in 1866, by virtue of legislation enacted by The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of New York, respectively.

The Unitarian Universalist Association is empowered to, and shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for, religious, educational and charitable purposes. It is further empowered: to solicit and receive funds separately or with others to support its work; to make appropriations to carry on its work including appropriations to its associate members and to other organizations to enable them to assist the Unitarian Universalist Association in carrying on its work; and without limitation as to amount, to receive, hold, manage, invest and reinvest and distribute any real and personal property for the foregoing purposes.

Section 2. In accordance with these corporate purposes, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Association, dedicated to the principles of a free faith, unite in seeking:

- (1) To strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of our religious fellowship;

- (2) To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man;
- [p. 5] (3) To affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of every human personality, the dignity of man, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships;
- (4) To implement our vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice and peace;
- (5) To serve the needs of member churches and fellowships, to organize new churches and fellowships, and to extend and strengthen liberal religion;
- (6) To encourage cooperation with men of good will in every land.

Section 3. The Unitarian Universalist Association hereby declares and affirms the independence and autonomy of local churches, fellowships and associate members; and nothing in this Constitution or in the By-Laws of the Association shall be deemed to infringe upon the congregational polity of churches and fellowships, nor upon the exercise of direct control by their memberships of associate member organizations, nor upon the individual freedom of belief which is inherent in the Universalist and Unitarian heritages. No minister shall be required to subscribe to any particular interpretation of religion, or to any particular religious belief or creed to obtain and hold Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

[EDITORS' NOTE: Membership: Unitarian churches (1959), 109,508; Universalist Church of America (1958), 68,949 (*YAC*, 1961, p. 257).]

1743. United Church of Christ (Formed by Merger, 1957–61, of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church)

a. Congregational Christian Churches

SOURCE: *CRB*, 1936, Vol. 2, part 1, pp. 519–525, 614–616.

[p. 519] In 1931 the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States and the General Convention of the Christian Church (headquarters, Dayton, Ohio) united to form the General Council of the Congregational and Christian Churches. This national merger was followed by combinations in States and districts and as occasion called for it and congregations desired it local churches united to form “Congregational Christian” churches.

Both bodies having been wholly democratic it was not difficult to come together on that basis. Each church is free in its own life. It is a part of a group of churches which is also free in its sphere. These groups, or the churches in them, unite in State or district organizations which again are self-determining. Finally these groups join together to form the democratically constituted national body which exercises no authority but furnishes mutual counsel, inspiration, and instrumentalities for common Christian work.

A church may continue to be known as a “Christian” church or a “Congregational” church. A local group may continue as a “Congregational” association or a “Christian” conference, and in either case be part and parcel of the fellowship bodies of the “Congregational and Christian Churches.”

Something of the history and doctrine of the separate bodies is given, followed by a statement of the organization and work of the united body. In the latter it will be seen that the national missionary work has been completely combined...

[i. The Congregational Church]

History. The Reformation in England developed along three lines: Anglicanism, Puritanism, and Separatism. The Anglicans held to the old English Church, minus the papacy and the distinctively papal features. The Puritans, including the Presbyterians and some Anglicans, held to a National Church but called for a thoroughgoing reformation which would provide an educated, spiritually minded ministry and would recognize the right of the members to a voice in the selection of their ministers, the management of the local church, and the adoption of its creed or confession. They believed, however, that they should remain within the church and thus secure its reformation. The Separatists held that the whole system of the establishment was an anti-Christian imitation of the true church and could not be reformed, and that the only proper thing for a Christian to do was to withdraw himself from it.

Such sentiments could scarcely be tolerated in that age, especially after the Act of Uniformity, passed in 1559, the year after the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, and church after church which professed them was broken up. One pastor, Robert Browne, with his congregation, emigrated to Holland in 1581, whence he issued pamphlets so bitter in their attack upon the ecclesiastical government of the realm, that two men charged with distributing them were hanged, and the books were burned. In 1593 three others, Barrowe, Greenwood, and Penry, paid for their treasonable sentiments with their lives.

The movement, however, could not be suppressed, and in 1604 (the first year in the reign of James I) the man to whose influence is chiefly due the development of Separatism into Congregationalism came to a little congregation already organized at Scrooby. John Robinson was ordained in the Church of England, but he became acquainted with Browne's writings and accepted their principles without their virulence. For him, too, exile became inevitable, and, together with a number of friends and followers, he went first to Amsterdam and then to Leyden. Here they met with a friendly reception, but, after a few years, decided to remove to America, where they could practice their religion unmolested and at the same time live and rear their children as Englishmen. After many delays and discouragements, the first band of Pilgrim Separatists, 102 persons, under the leadership of Brewster, Bradford, and Winslow, landed at Plymouth, Mass., in 1620, and founded there the first Congregational Church upon American soil, Robinson remaining in Leyden. They were followed after a few years by the [p. 520] Puritans of Massachusetts Bay. So long as they were in England the differences between the two bodies were accentuated, but after their arrival in America the many points on which they agreed became more apparent, and the essential elements of both Separatism and Puritanism were combined in Congregationalism. This, indeed, was not accomplished at once. The modern conception of religious liberty was not yet realized. Certain members of the Salem Church, who preferred to use the prayer book and withdrew from the Puritan service for that purpose, were promptly sent to England as nonconformists, and an extreme Separatist, Ralph Smith, was dismissed to find a welcome farther south. Little by little, however, the two united, and it is significant that the strongest influence for such union appears to have been that of two laymen, Governor Endicott, of Salem, and Dr. Fuller, of Plymouth.

During the decade from 1630 to 1640, the Puritan immigration increased rapidly, and with each accession new churches were formed, as the companies not infrequently brought their own pastors with them, and in two cases a full church organization. By

1640 there were 33 churches in New England, all but 2 being of pronounced Congregational type. These two at first preferred the Presbyterian system, but did not retain it long. A notable result was that Congregationalism soon became practically a State religion, and church influence was everywhere supreme, although it did not find expression in ecclesiastical courts. In two colonies, Massachusetts Bay and New Haven, the franchise was limited, until 1664 and 1665, to church members, and throughout the older Congregational colonies of New England, sooner or later, the salaries of pastors were secured by public tax, until into the nineteenth century. Any action affecting the general religious as well as the social or civil life of the community was taken by the civil legislature, such as the calling of the Cambridge Synod, in 1646, to draw up a plan of ecclesiastical polity, and the expulsion of the Salem "nonconformists" and of Roger Williams; Williams was expelled not so much for his religious opinions, however, as for his attacks on the government.

The withdrawal of the Massachusetts charter in 1684 replaced Congregationalism by Episcopacy, but a new charter in 1691 restored the former conditions to a considerable degree. The old ecclesiastical tests once abolished, however, were not renewed, and, while Congregationalism was still dominant, it was not supreme.

With the beginning of the eighteenth century other forms of church life developed in New England. Episcopalians, Baptists, and Quakers protested against being taxed for the support of Congregational churches, and little by little there ceased to be a state church. Thus the voluntary, democratic system of Separatist Plymouth overcame the ecclesiasticism of Puritan Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut, although this result was not attained until after the Revolutionary War.

In this development of their early history, however, it was manifest that the churches considered fellowship fully as important as autonomy, and that the strict separatism, which in England developed into independency, found little favor. Separatist Plymouth was represented, unofficially indeed, at the formation of the first Puritan Church at Salem; and, as the different communities grew, they formed associations or consociations for mutual conference, and in 1648 the "Cambridge Platform" was drawn up, a general summary of doctrine and of the relation of the churches, which, while having no absolute authority, was recognized as substantially expressing the views of the churches.

The Congregationalists took the initiative in the remarkable revival known as "The Great Awakening," which was started in 1734 by the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and was developed under the eloquence of Whitefield. They had a prominent share in the political discussions preceding the Revolution, in its inception and conduct, and in the subsequent national development, sending such men as John Hancock and the Adamses to take part in the councils of the new nation, although they were not considered to represent the Congregational churches as a religious body.

The history of Congregationalism during the century succeeding the Revolutionary War centers about certain movements: A plan of union with the Presbyterians, the rise of missionary enterprise, the Unitarian separation, and what may be termed the development of denominational consciousness, manifesting itself in the extension of Congregational churches toward the West, the organization of a National Council, and efforts to secure some harmonious, if not uniform, statement of Congregational belief.

As the Congregationalists of New England gradually extended westward, they came into intimate relations with the Presbyterians of the Middle States, [p. 521] and these

relations were all the closer because of the doctrinal affinity between the teaching of the Edwardses, father and son, and the type of theology represented by Princeton College, of which Jonathan Edwards, Sr., was president. Furthermore, the Congregational churches in Connecticut were in many respects in harmony with the Presbyterian idea, with the result that, before the close of the eighteenth century, delegates were interchanged between the Presbyterian General Assembly and several Congregational associations. These relations were still further strengthened by the call of Jonathan Edwards, Jr., to the Presidency of Union College, and his taking a seat in the Presbyterian General Assembly. It was natural that this intermingling of the two denominations should result in more or less confusion, and, in some cases, in friction between churches in the same region, especially in the newer communities where churches were being formed. In order to avoid this a "Plan of Union" was adopted by the Presbyterian General Assembly and by the Connecticut Association, in 1801, and accepted later by other associations, providing that "missionaries should be directed to 'promote mutual forbearance' between the adherents of the respective polities where they should labor; that churches of Congregational or Presbyterian preferences should continue to conduct their discipline in accordance with their chosen polity, even where mutual councils were provided for; and in mixed churches a standing committee might be chosen, one member of which should have the privilege of sitting in a presbytery, while another should have a vote in a Congregational association."

While the plan was, in its inception, eminently fair to both parties, and worked out advantageously for each along certain lines, one result was the practical elimination of Presbyterianism from New England, and of Congregationalism from the new communities to the West, except as various Congregational settlements were established, as in the Western Reserve, in Ohio. On the other hand, the plan assisted materially in the development of the Congregational missionary movement. When the division into Old School and New School in the Presbyterian Church was accomplished in 1837, the Old School Assembly dropped the plan, while the New School continued it for 15 years, until the Congregationalists withdrew...

[p. 522] The influences which resulted in the separation between the Trinitarian and the Unitarian wings of the Congregational body became manifest early in the eighteenth century, with the development of opposition to, or dissatisfaction with, the sterner tenets of Calvinism. The excesses connected with The Great Awakening, and the rigid theology of the Edwardses, and particularly of their successors, Hopkins and Emmons, contributed to this divergence. The selection in 1805 of Henry Ware, a liberal, as professor of divinity in Harvard College, drew the lines between the two parties more clearly, and the college was now classed as avowedly Unitarian. Mutual exchange of pulpits still continued to a greater or less extent, and, while there was much discussion, there was no separate organization.

In 1819 William Ellery Channing, in a famous sermon in Baltimore, set forth the Unitarian conception so forcibly that separation became inevitable. Then a difficulty arose, occasioned by the distinction between the church as an ecclesiastical body, and the society, in which the ownership of the property was vested. In some cases the church and the society were in agreement in their theological views; but in others, the society differed from the church, and, according to the courts, was entitled to the property. A period of confusion and of legal strife existed until about 1840, when the line of

demarcation became complete. The section most affected was eastern Massachusetts, all but two of the Boston churches going over to the Unitarians. Congregational authorities give the total number of churches lost to them as less than 100, while Unitarians claim an accession of 150. Both are probably correct, as in many cases the churches were split, so that, while one side gained, the other did not lose. For many years the bitterness of the conflict continued, but of late years it has been steadily diminishing.

With the increase in the number of Congregational churches and the new conditions in the recently settled sections of the West, it became evident that some form of mutual fellowship more comprehensive than the local or State associations was needed. Under the leadership of Leonard Bacon, of New Haven, J. P. Thompson, of New York, and others, a council or convention met at Albany in 1852, this being the first gathering representative of American Congregationalism since the Cambridge Synod of 1648. At this council 463 pastors and messengers from 17 States considered the general situation, and their deliberations resulted in the abrogation of the "Plan of Union," hearty endorsement of the missionary work, a call for aid for the churches in the West, and the inauguration of a denominational literature. Under the fostering care of such men as H. M. Dexter and A. H. Quint, the development of a denominational life went on, and the next step was the calling of a National Council at Boston in 1865, whose principal work was the drawing up of a statement as to "the system of truths which is commonly known among us as Calvinism." So advantageous was this gathering considered that a sentiment arose in favor of a regular system of councils, and after conference between the different associations, there was called at Oberlin, Ohio, in 1871, the first of the National Councils, at first triennial, now biennial, which have done much to consolidate denominational life.

Of these councils the one held at Kansas City, Mo., in 1913, was particularly important as marking the definite recognition of the Congregational Churches as an organized religious body with specific purposes and definite methods. The purposes were set forth in what has been known as a Congregational platform, including a preamble and statements of faith, polity, and wider fellowship. This platform did not in any respect modify the essential autonomy of the individual church in its expression of faith or in its method of action. It did, however, associate more fully than had been done at any previous time these individual churches in what may be termed an organic unity based upon a fundamental union in faith, common purpose in action, and mutual fellowship.

The same spirit has been manifest in various lines of development, especially those looking toward coordinated action of different religious bodies. Congregationalists have been prominent in the organization and development of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, have cooperated most cordially and effectively in the preparations for a World Conference on Faith and Order, and have entered most heartily into the various movements for interdenominational cooperation.

Through its Commission on Interchurch Relations, the denomination endeavors to promote the idea of church unity in every feasible way, particularly by cultivating the closest possible relations with other Christian groups with which Congregationalists have a normal affiliation.

[p. 523] During the year 1924 the Evangelical Protestant Church of North America, a body of independent and congregationally administered churches, voted to become Congregational, and in 1925 this body was received into the National Council of

Congregational Churches as the Evangelical Protestant Conference of Congregational Churches.

Doctrine. The principle of autonomy in the Congregational Churches involves the right of each church to frame its own statement of doctrinal belief; the principle of fellowship of the churches assumes that a general consensus of such beliefs is both possible and essential to mutual cooperation in such work as may belong to the churches as a body. As a result, although there is no authoritative Congregational creed, acceptance of which is a condition of ecclesiastical fellowship, there have been several statements of this consensus, which, while receiving no formal ecclesiastical endorsement, have been widely accepted as fair presentations of the doctrinal position of the Congregational Churches, ... [such as] the “Cambridge Platform,” ... the Massachusetts revision, in 1680, of the Savoy Confession, ... the Saybrook Platform of 1708, ... the “Burial Hill Declaration,” [and the creed of 1883]...

With the development of denominational life, there came a demand for a somewhat more definite platform, and the platform adopted by the National Council of 1913 has served this purpose, and has been accepted with practical unanimity by the denomination. It is as follows:

“Preamble.—The Congregational Churches of the United States, by delegates in National Council assembled, reserving all the rights and cherished memories belonging to this organization under its former constitution, and declaring the steadfast allegiance of the churches composing the council to the faith which our fathers confessed, which from age to age has found its expression in the historic creeds of the church universal and of this communion, and affirming our loyalty to the basic principles of our representative democracy, hereby set forth the things most surely believed among us concerning faith, polity, and fellowship.

“Faith.—We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love; and in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Savior, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men. We are united in striving to know the will of God, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

“Polity.—We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul and the right of private judgment. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control. We cherish the fellowship of the churches united in district, State, and national bodies, for counsel and cooperation in matters of common concern.

“The wider fellowship.—While affirming the liberty of our churches, and the validity of our ministry, we hold to the unity and catholicity of the Church of Christ, and will unite with all its branches in hearty cooperation; and will earnestly seek, so far as in us

lies, that the prayer of our Lord for His disciples may be answered, that they all may be one.”

[p. 524] [ii. The Christian Church]

History. The period following the War of the Revolution was characterized by a general spiritual declension. This again was succeeded by a revival period during which, especially in what were then the western and southern sections, denominational lines were frequently ignored, and members of different churches united both in evangelistic and sacramental services. In some cases there were efforts to enforce ecclesiastical discipline, which resulted in revolt, while in others entirely independent movements were started, not so much antagonistic to, as independent of, ecclesiastical organization.

The pioneer in this movement was Rev. James O’Kelley, a Methodist minister in Virginia. He opposed very earnestly the development of the superintendency into an episcopacy, especially so far as it gave the bishops absolute power in the matter of appointments to charges. He presented his cause in the general conference and elsewhere, but failed to bring about the change he desired, and in 1792, with a number of others, withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church. A little later they organized under the name of “Republican Methodists,” but in 1794 resolved to be known as “Christians” only, taking the Bible as their guide and discipline, and accepting no test of church fellowship other than Christian character.

A little later a similar movement arose among the Baptists of New England. Dr. Abner Jones, of Vermont, became convinced that “sectarian names and human creeds should be abandoned, and that true piety alone, and not the externals of it, should be made the test of Christian fellowship and communion.” On this basis he organized a church at Lyndon, Vt., in 1800. He was soon joined by Elias Smith, a Baptist minister of Portsmouth, N. H., and by many others.

In 1800 the “Great Revival,” as it came to be known, was started in the Cumberland Valley of Tennessee and Kentucky. It was confined to no denomination and in the preaching no attention was given to the doctrines which had divided the churches. In the Presbyterian Church, especially, this seeming neglect of fundamental doctrines was viewed with concern, and resulted in charges being preferred against two ministers, Richard McNemar and John Thompson, for preaching doctrines contrary to the confession of faith. As a consequence, these men, with a number of others, among whom were John Dunlavy, Robert Marshall, and Barton W. Stone, withdrew from the Synod of Kentucky and, in 1803, organized the Springfield Presbytery. Shortly afterwards this body was dissolved, and its members adopted practically the same position as that held by James O’Kelley in the South and by Abner Jones in New England.

General meetings, the first step toward organization, were held in New England as early as 1809, but it was not until 1819 that the first general conference met at Portsmouth, N. H., on the call of Frederick Plummer, of Pennsylvania, and Edward B. Rollings, of New Hampshire. The conference met again at Windham, Conn., in 1820, and regularly until 1832, when it was dissolved; but the following year, by the action of several conferences, a general convention was organized. In 1834, by direction of the convention, the Christian General Book Association was formed, and thereafter met once in 4 years in connection with the convention, the same persons being delegates to both bodies. This form of organization continued until after 1860, when the two bodies became entirely separated. In 1886 the general convention, then called the “American

Christian Convention,” and the publication board, then called the “Christian Publishing Association,” were again made identical in membership.

In the year 1829 Alexander Campbell and his followers separated from the Baptists of Pennsylvania and Ohio. Their teaching spread rapidly to Kentucky, and in 1832 Barton W. Stone, one of the most prominent of the original leaders of the Christians in that section, united with them, on the condition that the Bible alone should be the basis of the union. A large number of the Christians in Kentucky and Ohio followed Mr. Stone in this action, but even in these States the greater part remained with the original body, while the eastern and southern churches were not affected. Out of this movement, however, some confusion of names has arisen, since many of the churches of the Disciples are still known as “Christian” churches.

In the report for 1890 the denomination was listed as “Christians (Christian Connection) [see No. 413],” and the same name was used in 1906. This did not prove entirely satisfactory, and after some conference the name “Christian Church (American [p. 525] Christian Convention)” the title already officially chosen by the church, was adopted for the 1916 report, as identifying the denomination with its general business organization. This title was in 1922 changed to “Christian Church (General Convention of the Christian Church).”

In 1854, on account of the adoption of resolutions condemning slavery, the southern delegates to the general convention withdrew and formed a separate organization, which continued until 1890, when the delegates from the South resumed their seats in the convention.

Doctrine. The principles upon which its first churches were organized continue to characterize the denomination. No general organization has ventured to set forth any “creed” or statement of doctrine other than the Bible itself. Christian character is the only test of church fellowship, and while their interpretation of the teachings of the Bible is generally in accord with that of most evangelical denominations, they do not bar any follower of Christ from membership because of difference in theological belief. This same liberty extends to the ordinances of the church. Baptism is not made a requisite to membership, although it is often urged upon believers as a duty. While immersion is generally practiced, no one mode is insisted upon. The churches practice open communion and labor to promote the spirit of unity among all Christians.

Organization ... of the Congregational and Christian Churches... While the polity of the Congregational and Christian Churches is based upon certain definite principles, as set forth in its historical development it represents adaptation to conditions rather than accord to a theory of church government. The local church is the unit...

For fellowship, mutual assistance, and common Christian work, the churches gather in local associations or conferences, and in State conferences... Membership in the General Council includes ministerial and lay delegates elected by the State conferences.

[b. The Evangelical and Reformed Church]

[p. 614] *History.* The Evangelical and Reformed Church was established on June 26, 1934, at Cleveland, Ohio. As such it has a very brief history, but since it was formed by the union of two denominations, each of which had a long and honored history, we must briefly trace these two streams as they moved on their separate ways prior to the union.

The older of these two bodies is the Reformed Church in the United States. It dates back to October 15, 1725, when the first communion was celebrated at Falkner Swamp,

about 40 miles north of Philadelphia, Pa. Prior to that date, however, scattered congregations existed in eastern Pennsylvania and even as far south as Virginia. Ministers were scarce and these groups of Reformed people sometimes engaged the services of school teachers to conduct religious services. There was as yet no organization to hold the widely scattered congregations together. In September 1747 Michael Schlatter, who had been sent to America by the Synod of South and North Holland, organized the *Coetus* in Philadelphia. This is a Latin term and means practically the same as the word Synod. It was, however, subject to the Synod in Holland and made regular reports to that body, from which it also received periodical aid. In 1793 the Coetus declared its independence from Holland and reorganized itself under the name of The Synod of the German Reformed Church...

The first missionary ... had been sent west of the Allegheny Mountains in 1783. Early in the nineteenth century missionaries were sent to North Carolina and to Ohio. People began to settle in new parts of the country which had been offered for occupancy and the church sent pastors to minister to these new settlements on the frontier. In 1819 the Synod divided itself into eight districts known as Classes. In 1824 [p. 615] the Ohio Classis organized itself into the Ohio Synod, with powers similar to those belonging to the mother Synod in the East... In 1863 the mother Synod and the Ohio Synod united in forming the General Synod, which, after an honored history of 70 years, ceased to function when the union of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America took place...

The Evangelical Synod of North America has also an interesting history to its credit. It traces its origin in this country to a group of six ministers who met at Gravois Settlement near St. Louis, Mo., on October 15, 1840, and formed the Evangelical Union of the West. It will be observed that both the Reformed Church and the Evangelical Synod have the same birthday, October 15, although the former is 115 years older than the latter.

At first, the Evangelical Union partook largely of the nature of a ministerial association, and it was not until 1849 that the first congregation affiliated itself with the same. Similar associations had sprung up in Ohio and further east, as also in the northwest. All of these eventually, by 1872, joined themselves to the original union with its center in St. Louis, and in 1877 adopted the name of the German Evangelical Synod of North America. Many independent congregations of German-speaking people, of either Lutheran or Reformed backgrounds, identified themselves with the denomination, and thus during the course of a century, the Evangelical Synod developed into a strong and virile body... During the hundred years of its separate history it extended its borders into many States of the Union, and came to occupy an honorable place among the denominations in America.

These two historic churches, in June 1934, after several years of friendly negotiations, formed a new denomination under the name of Evangelical and Reformed Church, each bringing into the union the rich heritage of the history of the past, with the conviction that by so doing they were following the leadings of Providence and were answering the prayer of Christ that "they may all be one," and thus would be equipped to render a greater service in the interests of the kingdom of God...

[p. 616] *Doctrine.* The Evangelical and Reformed Church, true to its name, believes in the Bible. It believes that the Bible is the Word of God, that God hath spoken and

revealed Himself in His word, and in Jesus Christ the Word made flesh. Early in Protestantism certain doctrinal statements were formulated to express what the respective churches which emerged through the Reformation believed. One of these was the Augsburg Confession, formulated in 1530 at Augsburg, Germany. Later on this was somewhat modified under the influence of Melanchthon, and John Calvin himself subscribed to this altered form of the Augsburg Confession. The Lutherans generally accepted this Confession either in its original or altered form. Martin Luther wrote a brief catechism in which some of these Protestant doctrines were set forth in the form of question and answer.

In 1563 the Heidelberg Catechism was issued at Heidelberg, Germany. It was prepared by two young theologians named Olevianus and Ursinus. This, too, was influenced by John Calvin and Melanchthon. It became the standard of doctrine for the reformed branch of the Reformation. When in 1817 the Evangelical Union in Prussia under Frederick William III was formed, which sought to bring together the Lutheran and Reformed groups, the matter of the doctrinal standards of the two bodies was not raised. It was presumed that each group might continue to believe in its own confessions and to use the same catechisms it had formerly used.

Those who came to America and represented the Reformed Church naturally held to the doctrines set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, while those who came to America at a later date and organized the Evangelical Synod of North America adhered not only to the Heidelberg Catechism, but also to the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechism, as interpretations of the essential truths of the Bible. They accepted all of them so far as they agreed, but wherein they differed they reserved the right to go to the Bible and find the final and ultimate truth.

When the Evangelical and Reformed Church was formed, these three standards of faith were thus brought into the union. Consequently, in formulating the doctrinal statement of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, there were written into the constitution these words:

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are recognized as the Word of God and the ultimate rule of Christian faith and practice.

The doctrinal standards of the Evangelical and Reformed Church are the Heidelberg Catechism, Luther's Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession. They are accepted as an authoritative interpretation of the essential truth taught in the Holy Scriptures.

Wherever these doctrinal standards differ, ministers, members, and congregations, in accordance with the liberty of conscience inherent in the Gospel, are allowed to adhere to the interpretation of one of these confessions. However, in each case the final norm is the Word of God.

The Evangelical and Reformed Church, therefore, continues as the church of the Word. On this rock it has built its house. And in so doing it is true to its traditions and to the spirit of Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Calvin, and all of the reformers.

Like all Protestant churches it accepts the two sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper and adheres to the rites of confirmation, ordination, consecration, marriage, and burial. It allows freedom of worship, but in the interest of unity and harmony, it prescribes forms of worship and hymns for common use.

Organization. The Evangelical and Reformed Church has a presbyterial form of government.

[EDITORS' NOTE: Membership of the Congregational Christian Churches (1959) was 1,414,595, of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (1959), 809,137 (*YAC*, 1961, p. 254), thus totaling 2,223,732 for the combined United Church of Christ. The new denomination was formed in 1957, but the former

organizations were left unaltered pending approval by the constituent churches of a new constitution. A Statement of Faith was adopted July 8, 1959 (Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 2d rev. ed., p. 221). The new constitution, which went into effect July 4, 1961, combines congregationalism for the local congregation and presbyterian form of connectional organization, headed by a General Synod. For a Presbyterian proposal (1960, 1961) that the United Church of Christ enter a further interdenominational merger, see Nos. 664, 665.]

1744. Ur, Civilization of, Shown by Records

SOURCE: C. Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees* (New York: Scribner, 1930), pp. 168, 169, 171, 172, 208. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, and Ernest Benn Ltd., London.

[p. 168] We must revise considerably our ideas of the Hebrew patriarch [Abraham] when we learn that his earlier years were spent in such sophisticated surroundings; he was the citizen of a great city and inherited the [p. 169] traditions of an ancient and highly organised civilisation. The houses themselves bespoke comfort and even luxury. Apart from the actual fabric there was little left to throw light on the daily life of the inhabitants, but one or two stores of tablets did bear witness to their intellectual interests. We found copies of the hymns which were used in the service of the temples, and with them mathematical tables ranging from plain sums in addition to formulae for the extraction of square and cube roots, and other texts in which the writers had copied out the old building inscriptions extant in the city and had compiled in this way an abbreviated history of the principal temples...

[p. 171] One other aspect of life in the City of Abraham is brought into relief by our excavations. In the temple of Dublal-makh, about which more will be said later, there was found a hoard of many hundreds of tablets belonging to the business archives of the building. As king and landowner the god received rent and tithes and offerings of all sorts, and since there was no coined money, all these dues were paid in kind and required storage-room in the temple; hence the need of the magazines which surround every sanctuary. The Sumerians were essentially business-like, and no transaction was recognised in law unless it was witnessed to by a written document, and so for all incomings the priests drew up formal receipts of which copies were filed in the temple archives; whether it were a herd of sheep or a single cheese, a bale of wool or copper ore from foreign parts, the receipt was duly made out and entered. As the stores were drawn upon for the use of the temple, animals required for sacrifice, oil for squeaking door-hinges, wood for making a statue or gold for adorning it, the responsible official drew out an issue voucher giving the name of the recipient and his authority for the demand, and copies of these too were filed; a great [p. 172] hoard of these such as we found in Dublal-makh throws no little light on the secular activities of a religious house.

Further there were on the temple premises regular factories where the raw materials paid as tribute were manufactured into finished goods, and we have elaborate balance-sheets of such a factory in which women attached to the service of the god were employed in spinning wool and weaving cloth, balance-sheets drawn up every month and three months with a nominal roll of the workers, and, in parallel columns, the amount of raw wool each had received, the tally of her work and its cost reckoned by the issues made to her of food and supplies. It is all very practical and curiously modern, and again we see how very different from what we might have thought were the antecedents of the Hebrew people...

[p. 208] Here and there in the remains of Persian houses dated tablets have been found which carry on the history of the inhabited town to about the middle of the fifth century before Christ, and hereafter there is silence...

The populous city became a heap, its very name was forgotten; in the holes of the Ziggurat owls made their nests and jackals found a hiding-place, and the Bedouin pitched their camps under the shelter of the 'Mound of Pitch,' little guessing that here had lived Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation and of their own race, Ibrahim Khalil Abdurrahman, the Friend of God.

1745. Ur—Houses of Abraham's Time

SOURCE: C. Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees* (New York: Scribner, 1930), pp. 162, 164, 165. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, and Ernest Benn Ltd., London.

[p. 162] Just outside the limits of the Sacred Area we excavated a section of the town proper, the residential quarter [of Ur]... The houses of the time of Abraham stood on varying levels stepped down from the mound's summit to the flat ground below; when they were destroyed the uppermost might suffer severely, but those on the lower terraces were deeply buried by the rubbish fallen from above, and many were so well preserved that it was easy to picture them as having been deserted but yesterday instead of thirty-eight centuries ago...

[p. 164] The houses excavated were private houses of middle-class rather than of wealthy citizens; they were of different sizes, and their ground-plan varied according to the exigencies of the available space and the means of the owner; but on the whole they conformed to one general plan. They had been plundered and burnt in 1885 B.C., and they had been built at any time between that date and 2100 B.C., most of them having been more than once restored or reconstructed, so that they gave quite definitely the type of dwelling belonging to a representative class during a fixed period...

Judging from the private houses of the age of Nebuchadnezzar which had been excavated by the Germans at Babylon, we had expected to find very modest dwellings one storey high and built of mud brick consisting of three or four rooms opening on to a court: instead of this we discovered that in Abraham's time men lived in houses built with walls of burnt brick below, rising in mud brick above, plaster and whitewash hiding the change in material, [p. 165] two storeys high, and containing as many as thirteen or fourteen rooms round a central paved court which supplied light and air to the house. The streets were narrow, winding, and unpaved, with on either side blank walls unbroken by any windows, streets such as one sees in any modern native town, impossible for wheeled traffic. Against one house a mounting-block showed that donkeys would be used for riding or for freight, and the corners of the narrow lanes were carefully rounded off to prevent injury to goods or riders.

Through the front door of a house one passed into a tiny lobby with a drain in its floor where the visitor might wash his hands or feet, and from that into the central court. On one side rose the brick stairs leading to the upper floor, and behind the stairs was a lavatory with its terra-cotta drain; then came the kitchen, distinguished by its fireplace and the stone grinders left on the ground; a reception-room with two doors or one door unusually wide was for guests, another room might be for the servants, and yet another the domestic chapel. Though the walls stood in some places as much as 10 feet high, there was no sign of ceiling-beams, so the groundfloor rooms must have been lofty, a great advantage in this hot climate. Of the upper floor nothing remained.

1746. Ur, Location

SOURCE: Leonard Woolley, *Excavations at Ur*, pp. 11, 12. Copyright 1954 by Ernest Benn Ltd., London. Used by permission.

[p. 11] Ur lies about half-way between Baghdad and the head of the Persian Gulf, some ten miles west of the present course of the Euphrates. A mile and a half to the east of the ruins runs the single line of railway which joins Basra to the capital of Iraq, and between the rail and the river there is sparse cultivation and little villages of mud huts or reed-mat shelters are dotted here and there; but westwards of the line is desert blank and unredeemed. Out of this waste rise the mounds which were Ur, called by the Arabs after the highest of them all, the Ziggurat hill, 'Tal al Muqayyar', the Mound of Pitch.

Standing on the summit of this mound one can distinguish along the eastern skyline the dark tasselled fringe of the palm-gardens on the river's bank, but to north and west and south as far as the eye can see stretches a waste of unprofitable sand. To the south-west the flat line of the horizon is broken by a grey upstanding pinnacle, the ruins of the staged tower of the sacred city of Eridu which the Sumerians believed to be the oldest city upon earth, and to the northwest a shadow thrown by the low sun may tell the whereabouts of the low mound of al 'Ubaid; but otherwise nothing relieves the monotony of the vast plain over which the shimmering heat-waves dance and the mirage spreads its mockery of placid waters. It seems incredible that such a wilderness should ever have been habitable for man, and yet the weathered hillocks at one's feet cover the temples and houses of a very great city.

As long ago as 1854 Mr. J. E. Taylor, British Consul at Basra, was employed by the British Museum to investigate some of the southern sites of Mesopotamia, and chose for his chief work the Mound of Pitch. Here he unearthed inscriptions which for the first time revealed that the nameless ruin was none other than Ur, so-called 'of the Chaldees', the home [p. 12] of Abraham. Taylor's discoveries were not at the time apprised at their true worth and his excavations closed down after two seasons; but more and more the importance of the site came to be recognized.

¹

¹Neufeld, D. F., & Neuffer, J. (1962). *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Student's Source Book*. Commentary Reference Series. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.