



The International Council of Community Churches
Celebrating 75 Years

ON THE FRONT COVER

Center

Dr. Joseph M. Evans and Dr. Roy A. Burkhart shaking hands at the Merging Convention of
The International Council of Community Churches - 1950

Left

The leadership of the first Women's Christian Fellowship

Right

The first Board of Trustees of the newly formed International Council of Community Churches—1950

Many thanks to Rev. Robert Fread for providing photos and documents for this production.

Thanks also to Rev. John Woodcock.

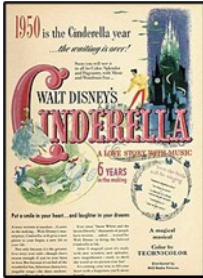
This booklet was produced by Rev. R.C. Fleeman and assembled by
volunteers from Peace Community Church, Ft. Myers Beach, FL

IT HAPPENED IN 1950

Senator Joseph McCarthy gained power, and McCarthyism began.

NBC aired "Broadway Open House," a late-night variety show.
It became a prototype for "The Tonight Show".

Xerox introduced its first machine.

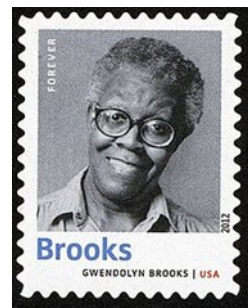


Jackie Robinson starred in his film biography *The Jackie Robinson Story*.

Walt Disney released his twelfth animated feature film, *Cinderella*.

The first African American winner of a Pulitzer Prize: Gwendolyn Brooks wins the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for her 1949 volume *Annie Allen*.

The Huntsville Times runs the headline,
"Dr. von Braun Says Rocket Flights Possible to Moon."



The Korean Conflict began.

THE ICCC WAS FORMED

One of the greatest events in the history of Protestantism took place at Lake Forest, IL, August 16-20, when the churches of the Biennial Council of Community Churches and the churches of the National Council of Community Churches came together in one great merging convention.

Darlington Raceway was the site of the inaugural Southern 500, the first 500-mile NASCAR race.



Althea Gibson

Althea Gibson became the first African American woman to compete at the U.S. National Championships (tennis).

Charles M. Schulz's iconic comic strip "Peanuts" began publication.

Paula Ackerman became the first woman in the United States to serve a congregation as a Rabbi.



Paula Ackerman

The first TV remote control, Zenith Radio's *Lazy Bones*, was marketed.

GREETINGS FROM ABRAHAM WRIGHT **Former and Acting ICCC President**

I greet you with overwhelming pride and bottled-up concerns. This year the ICCC family is still singing hallelujah to the spirit of Joseph Evans and Roy Burkhart and their faithful followers who listened to God's call for the two separate church bodies to unite under one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism even before the merger in 1950. This merger between the Council of Community Churches - primarily a Caucasian congregation - and the Biennial Council of Community Churches - primarily an African American congregation - gave birth to the International Council of Community Churches and became known as one of the most recognized integrated Christian bodies in the United States. There were still black and white, but we were united, not only at the Lord's table during the Eucharist, we became united as sisters and brothers at all tables. We planned together, worked together, attended camps, retreats, and other learning activities together. Together we cried and met at medical centers when one member of the Christian body was in trouble. We celebrated together, stayed in each other's homes during extended meetings, and protected each other against racial encounters when we were in places where others did not respect some of us as God's children.

In fact, there were bonds made that previously seemed almost impossible. For example, who can forget several after-conference mission activities at Bob Puckett's house in Norris, Tennessee, the meeting overnight site for all of us who highly valued the significant work the Council financially supported for essential work in Appalachia. The star of the pre-working and touring trip was Marion Bascom, waking us up early in the morning, shepherding us as if we were his biological children, and dressed as if he were the father in his own house. Or who could not admire the lived-out genuine bond made between Marion Bascom (African America), Bob Puckett (Caucasian), and Robert Taylor (Caucasian). They agreed that whoever were to go to Larger Life first, the one(s) remaining would deliver their eulogy (Taylor went first; Bascom delivered the eulogy; Bascom went second; Puckett delivered one of the eulogies; Puckett went last with eulogies delivered by all of us.

Bascom was also an outstanding figure on his own. Early one Monday morning Bascom walked into the office of a Baltimore, MD Caucasian Presbyterian pastor and told the pastor that he came to mentor him; the Presbyterian pastor gladly accepted Bascom; it was also this clergy who delivered one of the best eulogies at Bascom's funeral. He had the congregation in stitches for half an hour.

Then, too, I still remember vividly John W. Sutton relating a genuine narrative about Herb Freitag, a retired ICCC clergy. Freitag lived in Columbus, Ohio at the time. When ICCC Board meetings were held in Columbus, Freitag packed especially all the African American Board members in his station wagon and served as the "race" police for them as he took them to the clubs and prevented them from being discriminated against. Florida (Longboat Key, Clearwater Beach, Tampa, Jacksonville), Long Beach, CA, Chicago, and Phoenix can produce similar, genuine hospitality narratives. They were among the main centers for ICCC conferences and Board meetings.

The ICCC is a sanctuary for good preaching, teaching, and living the Word of God through some of the best qualified individuals: clergy, lay; male, female; adult children; and individuals of mixed cultures. It does it with the Word of God at the center and without dictatorial mandates. ICCC is a communion that lives life with emphasis on everyone at the table, worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth. This includes following fair practices based on faithfulness to God, faithfulness to Self, faithfulness to Others, and genuine support (*spiritually and financially*) to the Mission of ICCC, not for one day or month, but for a lifetime.

Let us give bundles of thanks to Bruce Merton and Bob Fread, whose effective leadership led us through this year. Then, let us cherish the memories of some and recognize the leadership experiences and abilities of Marion Henley, Dorothy Sutton Branch, Barbara Holt, Caroline Burke, Dorothy Bascom, Sandra Nelson, Rhonda Blevins, William Samuels, Nick and Myrtis Brame, Roberta Smith, Lonnie Miller, Emma Smith, Phil and Sue Smith, Grace O'Neal, Sandra Roberts, Lorraine Richardson, Eloise Crenshaw, Charles Addison, Janet Burch, James W. Jones, and many, many others who lifted us high during the good and not-so-good times.

As the International Council of Community Churches celebrates 75 years of genuine service, let us use this occasion to examine our legacy and listen closely to what God says to us (as he said to Abraham) that He desires to continue to make ICCC a sanctuary for those who love the Lord. It is up to Churches and members of ICCC to decide whether we will be faithful in answering this call.

Religion: Merger

TIME MAGAZINE

August 28, 1950



When Dr. Roy A. Burkhardt took the presidency of the newly formed National Council of Community Churches four years ago, a Negro minister stepped forward and took his hand. "I'm Dr. Evans of Chicago," he said. "My people have a council like yours, and you and I, we've got to work together."

Since then Roy Burkhardt and Joseph M. Evans have worked side by side toward a union of the 200 white churches of the National Council with the 100-odd colored churches of the Biennial Council of Community Churches. Last week, at a four-day convention in Lake Forest, Ill., the two clasped hands once again. As they did so, 350 black and white delegates broke into the hymn, Blessed Be the Tie That Binds. The union of the two national organizations was a fact.

The new group, called the **International Council of Community Churches**, will act in an advisory capacity to some 300 of the 3,000 autonomous, nondenominational Community Churches** in the U.S. (total membership: more than 1,000,000). Its first president: the Rev. John R. Howe of Joplin, Mo. "We are entered on one of the most significant movements in the history of the church," he told the delegates. "Nothing quite like it has ever happened before."

**Which allow their members to worship exactly as they please. Says Dr. Burkhardt of baptism: "In our church [in Columbus, Ohio] we sprinkle, pour and dunk. You can have whichever treatment you desire. One lady, who had not had much religion, wasn't sure which was best so she asked for all three. So we sprinkled, poured and dunked her. That was her privilege, and I don't think God minded."

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FORMED

SECRETARY'S REPORT OF MERGER

JOSEPH S. FOX, SECRETARY, INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Approximately 400 delegates from about 225 churches, both white and colored, shared a most extraordinary experience on the very beautiful campus of Lake Forest College, a non-segregated, co-educational institution of learning with a century background.



DR. JOSEPH M. EVANS
AND DR. ROY A. BURKHART

At the afternoon session of Thursday, August 17, 1950, the following motion was unanimously passed at a crowded and deeply moving session of the delegates:-

"The delegates of the Biennial Council of Community Churches, and the delegates of the National Council of Community Churches, hereby accept the Constitution of the International Council of Community Churches as submitted, and here and now join themselves as the International Council of Community Churches: this Constitution to go into effect immediately."

Chairman Dr. Joseph M. Evans then declared that the International Council of Community Churches was now in session.

Thus were consummated plans for merging the two independent church councils which have been under way since May 1946.

The fact of the merger was not extraordinary; it had been planned for and anticipated for a long time: it was inevitable that it should happen at some time or other. That which was extraordinary about it is the spirit that prevailed. From the first moment the capacity of the convention was overtaxed by the unexpectedly large attendance; pre-registrations only indicated about 200 delegates. Little by little the atmosphere changed - not only climatically: Wednesday was sweltering to those not used to Chicago, Thursday witnessed a torrential downpour, with awesome thunder and flashing lightening coming almost simultaneously, Friday was so cool that those who had brought overcoats were now conspicuous for their wisdom - no, the atmosphere also changed spiritually in a most extraordinary manner. From the very first session delegates from the Negro church-

es worshipped so warmly, melodiously and enthusiastically that their warmth and fervor spread to the white delegates. Staid, cultured, dignified and sober white delegates began to smile, sing, expand and blossom. Warmth and friendliness were contagious; white folk found it was delightful to be loving. Colored folk, too, felt the contagion of efficiency and order: garrulous, disputatious, arguing would never do; this was a great moment, it should be faced seriously and honestly; emotion must not be permitted to sway reason. So the divine currents of love and goodwill flashed back and forth until prejudices melted and distinctions were swept away in waves of unselfish desires to be a true child of God.

As human beings purged themselves of selfishness and prejudice God was able to open the flood gates of His blessing. Each speaker and singer unmistakably showed it in service rendered; handshaking, laughter and tears, confessions and prayers became commonplace. It was a rare delegate who was impervious to a taste of this Pentecost. Those who had complacently and somewhat patronizingly advocated this merger as being the proper and Christian thing to do, suddenly became aware that God's heart had been pleased and that it was far more than proper and right, it was a long delayed action which it would have been a grievous sin to longer postpone. The action pleased God, so He poured out His blessings to all who would receive them.

Compared with all other Conventions of the National Council this one stands out for many reasons. There were no dull, tiresome speakers; folk did not leave the sessions because they were bored. Morning Watch began at 7:15 a.m.; many activities lasted until midnight or after. Those who led in that very early service were:- Dr. Mary G. Evans of Chicago; Rev. Kenneth B. Wyatt of Marshfield Hills, Massachusetts; and Rev. Geraldine O'Connor of Los Angeles, California. Dr. Daniel H. Stanton of Atlanta, Georgia, gave three powerful addresses of The Bible. He kept his hearers entranced by his wisdom and hilarious with his wit; grave and gay, thoughtful and entertaining all at the same moment. Engrossingly interesting addresses were given by Dr. James H. Robinson of New York, Dr. Raymond Dudley of Boston, Dr. C. W. Ranson of New York, Dr. Robert Hartman of Columbus and the Rev. Richard I. Porter of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Those who planned the program are to be congratulated on their wisdom in the choice of speakers.

The discussion groups on Thursday and Friday afternoon, when delegates split up into departments - Children's Work, Youth, Women, Men, and a forum for Ministers only - were well attended and proved of very great value. Eight different ministers presided at the sessions and the Rev. Dorothy Sutton Branch and Rev. Tom Maurer conducted evening worship periods.

Among the many spectacular and most deeply stirring events must be placed the faultlessly arranged and executed Communion Service conducted by young people alone on Friday evening at the near-by Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest, the moment when Dr. Evans and Dr. Burkhardt stood with hands clasped when the epoch-making motion was passed unanimously merging their two bodies into one new organization, the memorial service led by Carl Burkhardt

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

AT LAKE FOREST CONVENTION

and Paul Turner, and the dedication of the new Executive Committee of the International Council, its Youth officers, and its Women's organization.

Nor can it ever be forgotten that this was in a most unusual sense a Convention of music, and such music as only those with the musical heritage of the Negro race can bring. It would be impossible to overestimate the spiritual value of their services. The Metropolitan Choir from Dr. Evans' Church in Chicago, drove out Wednesday and Thursday evenings and then drove back again after having given in each instance a magnificent concert. Paul Turner contributed his fine services on Wednesday, which were very greatly appreciated; while Rosa Page Welch carried on session by session, including the discussion groups and the never-to-be-forgotten "Were You There?" at the Youth Communion Service.

As the delegates began to separate, with many warm hugs and lingering handshakes, with many eyes streaming and promises to keep in touch with new friends made, it was the clear conception of all that beautiful as had been this experience, owned of God as it unmistakably was, there were ahead many problems that would call for a continued spirit of love, goodwill, forbearance, tact, coupled with Divine wisdom; but with all came the belief, this is God's will, He will see it through to success. This is historic, this is only the beginning; this is a new and living and vital part of His Kingdom for which we so often pray.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

President: J. R. Howe, Joplin, Missouri
 Vice Presidents: Oscar L. Rand, Washington, D.C.
 Fred Johnson, Columbus, O.
 Alfred Ruesch, Great Neck, N.Y.
 Secretary: Joseph S. Fox, San Diego, Cal.
 Treasurer: Ralph Jordan, Columbus, Ohio
 Placement for Ministers and Churches:
 Roy A. Burkhardt, Columbus, O.
 Joseph M. Evans, Chicago, Ill.

Finance Chairman:

R. Carl Stoll

AREA LEADERS

New England
 Mountain
 West Central
 Southern

Kenneth Bath
 Kelly Boyce
 Carl Burkhardt
 Richard Porter
 C. J. L. Rumph

East Central

William A. Bertha
 E. H. Gebert
 W. R. Hall
 H. Mansfield Collins
 Milton Crist
 Ernest Craig
 Hale B. Thompson
 G. Taylor Wright

North Pacific
 South Pacific

Middle Atlantic

North Atlantic
 Western New York

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Marion Bascom
 Horace Cushing
 J. M. Crutcher
 Eule Mohle
 George A. Scott
 Herbert F. Evans

George C. Violenes
 D. M. Byrd
 J. Wesley Jones
 Sadie Dorsey
 Mary G. Evans
 C. C. Hung

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS

Children's Work
 Youth Work
 Advisors:

Dorothy Sutton Branch
 Nathan Wilson, President
 Rudy Thomas
 Fred Doty

Women's Christian Fellowship
 Men's Work
 Missions

Belle Riley, President
 George Kramer
 Edward H. Hayes

Ex-Officio:

Jesse G. Smith, Office Manager



LAST EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE BIENNIAL COUNCIL, PICTURE WAS TAKEN JUST BEFORE DISSOLUTION OF THE BOARD

WOMEN UNITE IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



Women come together at one of the first meetings of the newly-formed Christian Fellowship.

BY LOUISE PORTER
RECORDING SECRETARY, WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Those of us who were present at Lake Forest College when The Women's Christian Fellowship of The International Council of Community Churches came into being on August 17-18 felt very humble, and deeply stirred that we should have the privilege of being present on such a momentous and historical occasion.

The spirit of Christian love and understanding was so evident that Lake Forest was truly a mountain-top experience for all of us. I am sure that even as the disciples who witnessed Christ's transfiguration on the mountain we, too, wished we might prolong such a heart-searching experience together; realizing, however, that like them, we, too, must return to face the problems and challenge of our day.

Much credit for the fine organization which evolved must be given to Mrs. Gladys Blackman who acted as chairman of our meetings in the absence of Mrs. Ralph Jordan, Director of Women's Work for the National Council of Community Churches, who guided us so ably as we sought to create a simple but workable organization.

We wish that all of you might have had the privilege of growing to know our new president, Mrs. Belle Riley, who was the former President of The Women's Christian Service League of the Biennial Council of Community Churches. Her Christ-like spirit and understanding were appreciated by all present at our meetings. Her address is 901 East 49th Street, Los Angeles, 11, California. She is ready and willing for any suggestions or questions.

Mrs. John Story, Chairman, and her committee of four women representing both the National and Biennial Council presented the following slate of officers and it was unanimously accepted.

President	Mrs. Belle Riley	California
Vice-President	Mrs. Helen Jordan	Columbus, Ohio
Vice-President	Mrs. Oscar L. Rand	Washington, D.C.
Recording Secy.	Mrs. Richard Porter	Tennessee
Corresponding Secy.	Mrs. Earl Ross	Gahanna, Ohio
Corresponding Secy.	Mrs. Daniel Maiten	Missouri
Financial Secy.	Mrs. M. J. Osborne	Columbus, Ohio
Treasurer	Mrs. Grace D. Wells	Illinois
Treasurer	Mrs. W. R. Hall	California

Becky Story writes, "I felt it a great privilege to act as Chairman of the Nominating Committee, and to have even a small part in that wonderful history-making movement. It was the most thrilling, inspirational conference I have ever attended, and I shall never forget the wonderful experience. Certainly it has made a mark on the lives of all those who attended.

"I will be glad to be of any service I can in helping this new organization to grow, and I feel that it has tremendous possibilities with that fine group of ladies filling the offices and guiding it through its first years."

Our project for the coming year will again be "AL-LAHABAD PROJECT". A full report of the previous success of this united effort will be given in a later issue of THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, along with the completed minutes of this meeting of The Women's Christian Fellowship".

The following are the By-Laws of The Women's Christian Fellowship of the International Council of Community Churches which was formally brought into being at our convention at Lake Forest.

ARTICLE I

We recommend that we accept the name of "Women's Christian Fellowship of the International Council of Community Churches."

ARTICLE II

The officers of this organization shall be:

- President
- Two Vice-Presidents
- One Recording Secretary
- Two Corresponding Secretaries
- One Financial Secretary
- Two Treasurers.

ARTICLE III (Amended)

This group shall have its meetings and election of officers in connection with the regular meeting of the International Council of Community Churches. The tenure of any office not to exceed two terms.

ARTICLE IV

President and two Vice-Presidents to be authorized to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

THE CONVENTION SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, August 16, 1950

- 10:00 - 1:00 - Registration
 Afternoon - Presiding: Rev. Jesse Smith
 1:30 - Song Service -
 1:45 - Service of Worship - Dr. J. R. Howe, leading
 2:15 - "These Days Ahead" - Dr. Joseph Evans
 - Dr. Roy A. Burkhart
 - Charles Howe, Youth Pres.
 2:45 - Report from Area Leaders

*AREA MINISTERS OF
 BIENNIAL COUNCIL*

Rev. O. L. Rand
 Rev. Wm. A. Bertha, Sr.
 Rev. Jas. N. Cruther
 Rev. H. M. Collins
 Rev. Ida M. Stamp

AREA YOUTH LEADERS

Harry Shirley
 Kenneth Williams
 Norma Lee Goff
 Howard Fitzhugh
 Mary De Villers
 Byron Haley
 Nathan Wilson
 Vince Maggio
 Adnee Hall

WOMEN'S AREA LEADERS
 Mrs. E. Alexander
 Mrs. L. Flanders
 Mrs. W. R. Hall
 Mrs. Wm. P. Bailey
 Mrs. Robt. Kressoin
 Mrs. Gladys Blackman
 Mrs. Ethel Martin
 Mrs. Kelly Boyce
 Mrs. Charles Mohle

*AREA MINISTERS OF
 NATIONAL COUNCIL*

Rev. Kenneth Bath
 Rev. Jesse Smith
 Mr. Kelly Boyce
 Rev. Eric Braund
 Rev. Richard Porter
 Rev. Robert Copeland
 Rev. Horace Cushing
 Rev. Carl Burkhardt
 Rev. E. H. Gebert

- 4:30 - Organization of the Convention - Dr. Roy Burkhart

Evening - Presiding: Dr. Joseph Evans

- 7:30 - Song Service -
 7:45 - Devotional Service - Rev. Dorothy Sutton
 8:00 - Address - "The Call of God to Us Now"
 Dr. James H. Robinson

THURSDAY August 17, 1950

- Morning - Presiding: Rev. Delbert Wickstrom
 7:45 - Morning Watch - Dr. Mary G. Evans, leading
 8:30 - Breakfast
 9:30 - Morning Sing -
 9:45 - Bible Talk - Dr. Dan Stanton
 10:15 - Business - Consideration and adoption of new constitution for the merged bodies.
 11:30 - Lecture - "Partners in Building the World Church"
 Dr. Raymond Dudley

Afternoon - Presiding: Rev. John Story

- 1:45 - Song Service -
 2:00 - Discussion Groups
 Children's Work - Mrs. J. R. Howe Mrs. M. L. Simpson
 Youth Work Rev. Fred Doty Mrs. G. Johnson
 Women's Work Mrs. R. Jordan Mrs. M. J. Hatfield
 Men's Work Dr. A. Ruesch Dr. Hale B. Thompson
 Meeting of Ministers - Dr. Roy Burkhart

- 4:00 - Address - "The Challenge of the Church"
 Dr. J. W. Decker

- 4:40 - Explanation of Missionary Projects - Rev. W. R. Hall

Evening - Presiding: Rev. Kenneth Bath

- 7:30 - Song Service -
 8:00 - Worship Service - Rev. Thomas Maurer
 Anthem by Choir of Metropolitan Community Center
 8:45 - "The Unique Role of the Church in the World to Come"

Dr. Robert Hartman

FRIDAY, August 18, 1950

- Morning - Presiding: Rev. E. F. Ridley
 7:45 - Morning Watch - Rev. Frederick Rapp
 8:30 - Breakfast
 9:30 - Morning Sing -
 9:45 - Bible Talk - Dr. Dan Stanton
 10:15 - Business - Consideration of area organization, selection of an office manager, financial report and consideration of a biennium budget.
 11:30 - Lecture - "The Free National Church"
 Dr. Mark Dawber

Afternoon - Presiding: Rev. Milton Crist

- 1:45 - Song Service -
 2:00 - Discussion Groups (continued)
 4:00 - Business - Report of Nominating Committee and final adoption of biennium program and budget.

Evening - Presiding: Charles Howe

THIS WILL BE A GREAT COMMUNION SERVICE BY THE YOUTH COUNCIL

SATURDAY, August 19, 1950

- Morning - Presiding: Rev. Kenneth Holmes
 7:45 - Morning Watch - Rev. H. Manfield Collins
 8:30 - Breakfast
 9:30 - Morning Sing -
 9:45 - Bible Talk - Dr. Dan Stanton
 10:15 - Business - Pledging the budget, promotion of the CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY and other matters.
 11:30 - Lecture - "The Free Local Church"
 Rev. Richard Porter

Saturday afternoon and evening will be free for sight seeing and other activities to be selected by the delegates.

SUNDAY, August 20, 1950

- 9:00 - Meeting of the organizing committee for the new association.
 10:30 - Church Service - To be held at The People's Church of Christ, 4100 South Parkway, Chicago, Illinois.
 Dr. Joseph Evans, leading the Service
 Rev. Joseph Fox - Preaching
 Music by the Senior Choir, The People's Church of Christ.
 Dr. J. Wesley Jones, Director, will sing.

Lunch will be served at The Metropolitan Community Center for those who desire it.

Afternoon - Presiding: Mr. Fred Johnson

- 2:00 - A Great Laymen's Meeting
 Speakers: For the Women - Mrs. Jordan - Mrs. Riley
 For the Men - Dr. Ruesch - Dr. R. Giles

- Evening - Closing Session - To be held in the University Chapel of the University of Chicago.
 - Music by the combined choirs of the Metropolitan and Cosmopolitan Community Centers.

Worship Service - "Seeking the Will of Our Father"
 Rev. Eric T. Braund
 "I Dedicate the Fellowship of the Biennial Council"
 Dr. Evans
 "I Dedicate the Fellowship of the National Council"
 Dr. Carl Stoll

NOTE: Dr. Stoll and Dr. Evans will then give (as it were) the rich heritage and vision of these two councils to Dr. Roy A. Burkhart, who will present them in a mighty union to the new president.

- Response - By the new president.



This history was written for the book *The Community Church Movement: Unity Without Uniformity*, 2nd edition by J. Ralph Shotwell published in 2000 for the ICCC's 50th anniversary. **The Rev. Marion Bascom, Sr.** at this time was pastor emeritus of Douglas Memorial Community Church in Baltimore, MD. He served as pastor of that church from November, 1949 to March, 1995. He served as ICCC President from 1959-1960. As a young pastor Rev. Bascom was present at the 1950 Merging Conference which formed the International Council of Community Churches, and in 2000 at the ICCC's 50th anniversary conference was the only Community churches ordained minister present for both conferences. Rev. Bascom died in 2012.

Excursus A
Bascom Remembers the Merging Conference
by Rev. Marion C. Bascom, Sr.
May 14, 1999

It was in the summer of the second half of the 20th century that a group of men and women met in Chicago to “plight their troth” as a group of Christians representing churches in what was to become the International Council of Community Churches. Early this group attempted to make certain that it would not become hierarchical but would become a Council of Community Churches, each independent of but dependent upon others, to fulfill the prayer of Jesus “that they might be one.”

That this prayer might surface into reality, two men - Roy Burkhart, internationally known for his ministry at First Community Church at Columbus, Ohio, later described in *The Christian Century* as one of America's twelve greatest churches, and the venerated Joseph M Evans, poet, scholar, and minister of Chicago's Metropolitan Community Church, long a cultural and religious center in Black America - brought the force of their witness to bear on the National Council of Community Churches and the Biennial Council of Community Churches is to reinforce the prayer as set forth in the Johannine Gospel.

The two fathers were in stark contrast. Dr. Burkhart was a mystic. He drew to himself some of the most powerful people in the Midwest. He was sort of “Mayor” of Arlington, the upper class society of Columbus. He was held in awe by most people with whom he trafficked. He brought many of us to Camp Akita where he spent time making ourselves available to the finest and noblest resident in our spirits. Dr. Burkhart lead us to what he called “The Healing Light of God .”

Dr. Evans was a master of pulpit oratory. He rolled his R's with a British flair. One of his never-to-be-forgotten phrases was: “according to Providential Arrangement.” He maintained the Negro spiritual and the Great Music of the Masters as being central to worship. He was a stickler for the liturgy of the church. Some of his readings were still extant among us. “His choir”, Metropolitan Community Church, under the direction of J. Wesley Jones, presented on each fourth Sunday night a stellar performance of Great Church Music . . . a centerpiece of Chicago's South Side . He was the Ecumenist, the believer in the oneness of all God's people.

So the two men, Roy A. Burkart and Joseph M. Evans, each blessed with unique and abundant spiritual gifts and leadership abilities decided that there was still room for additional growth - toward each other and therefore to God. So they locked arms and called us to follow.

There are names of men and women too numerous to mention or recall who heard the voices of these men. Yet, out of the memory of some names come to mind: R. Mansfield Collins, Chaplain Hall, Joseph Fox, Joseph R. Hutcherson, Robert Hayden, Orvis Jordan, Mary G. Evans, C. H. F. Rumph, Violet Marshburn, Mamie A. Douglas, John Edelen, Vincent Norris, Roland Ost, Tom Maurer, Rudy Thomas, J. Weldon Keckley, James Hite, Kenneth Bath, Ralph Jordan, C. C. Hung, Theodore Richardson, Albert Fedler, Jessica Hayden, James Roper, Mary Miller, William Shoemaker, Frederick Douglass, Oscar Rand , Dorothy Sutton Branch.

At the outset, there was an air of suspicion - some churches, National and Biennial, could not make the leap of faith and therefore did not join the pilgrimage. The Biennial Council was in session at Metropolitan Community Church and after such procedures deemed necessary for its dissolution, the long trip was made to Lake Forest College where we joined hands to spend days together attempting to overcome our blackness, our whiteness, our being strangers, our being on different levels of worship, training and, of course, our traditions. All of us carried the baggage of our backgrounds. Who would be the first president, the first Minister-at-Large? Who would participate in leadership roles at "Supper Time?" Should we have a black or white president, etc.? These were some of the nagging questions that arose as the first week evolved.

Thought, imagination, preparation and prayer by the merging groups provided the force that bound us. Significant to the week was Dr. James Robinson, our keynote speaker, the minister of the Church of the Master, located in New York City, who for two years lead groups of students to volunteer in Africa, and was the inspiration for President Kennedy's Peace Corps. He led us each morning to think about the oneness that overreached us all. As week's end came, tensions had somewhat subsided, proximity brought about some fraternity and on Friday evening we experienced our Mountain of Transfiguration. It occurred in that massive and majestic Chapel at The University of Chicago. What better place than a Citadel of learning, the home of some of the greatest minds to be found anywhere in the world?

I am there now, as I reenact what I saw and felt in that transfiguring moment when Roy A. Burkart and Joseph M. Evans stood at the center of the chancel, held hands, and in an unashamed moment embraced each other and shared tears. The choir of Cosmopolitan Community Church, who's minister was Mary G. Evans, rose to sing from Gaul's "Holy City," that massive double chorus, "Let the Heavens Rejoice and Let the Earth Be Glad." How I wish I could have remembered it all with more precision but after fifty years it becomes difficult to recapture some of the "grace notes" that were present that evening.

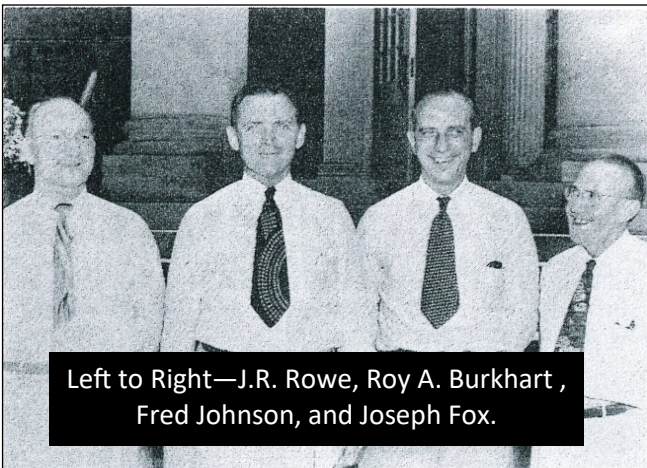
Sunday morning we returned to Metropolitan Community Church to worship as a new people . Jesse Smith, our new Minister-at-Large, called us to be witnesses we have become.

1950 RE-VISITED

Sunday, August 20, 1950, Merging Convention, the Final Day

The final day of the convention being a Sunday was a day of worship and celebration. In the morning worship was held at People's Church of Christ (now Metropolitan Community Church), with worship led by the church's pastor, Rev. Dr. Joseph Evans, and sermon by Rev. Joseph Fox of Old San Diego Community Church. Lunch was then served in the Metropolitan Community Center. That evening everyone moved to the University of Chicago campus for closing worship at the Rockefeller Chapel. Music that evening was provided by a joint choir of Metropolitan and Cosmopolitan Community churches.

Today's picture is an iconic picture of Rev. Joseph Evans and Rev. Roy Burkhart shaking hands outdoors on the campus of Lake Forest College with delegates behind them looking on. Stories told of the convention relate that Revs. Evans and Burkhart first joined in a symbolic handshake on August 17, just moments after the delegates voted the ICCC into existence. They joined in another handshake to symbolize the merger on Sunday evening in front of the Rockefeller Chapel.



Left to Right—J.R. Rowe, Roy A. Burkhart ,
Fred Johnson, and Joseph Fox.

In writing about the end of this convention, 70 years later Rev. Joseph Fox writes:

“As the delegates began to separate, with many warm hugs and lingering handshakes, with many eyes streaming and promises to keep in touch with new friends made, it was the clear conception of all that beautiful as had been this experience, owned by God as it unmistakably was, there were ahead many problems that would call for a continued spirit of love, goodwill, forbearance, tact, coupled with Divine wisdom; but with all came the belief that this is God's will, He will see it through to success. This is historic, this is only the beginning; this is a new and living and vital part of His Kingdom for which we so often pray.”

As this series on the 1950 Merging Convention comes to a close, I would like to give the last word to the venerable Rev. Joseph Evans:

“Our meeting together as brothers and sisters in the Lord, was quite a striking, an arresting manifestation of that kind of Christian fellowship humanity needs to develop more, if the lofty purposes of humanity's creation are ever to be realized.

“Never before have I participated in the movements or actions of a religious body, or any other assemblage of human personalities with as much inspiration and genuine satisfaction as our Council sessions offered. Seemingly we were all lifted above the common, the ordinary, the usual stereotyped method, or way of doing things. I feel we gave evidence of being definitely convicted of the righteousness of our propositions, the worthwhileness of the cause. Therefore, we sought to turn away from empty and meaningless garnishments to give ingress, place and operation to the mighty forces of the Spirit.

“We came away from our never-to-be-forgotten sessions saying in the chambers of our hopeful convictions, GOD IS IN THIS THING, AND IF GOD IS IN IT THEN IT MUST BE MOTIVATED BY THAT INDESTRUCTIBLE FORCE THAT IS SURELY AND TRULY WORKING TOWARD BRINGING TO PASS THE ANSWER TO THE MASTER'S PRAYER “THAT THEY MAY BE ONE.””

**A Brief
HISTORIAL REVIEW
of the
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CHURCHES**

Presidents of the International Council of Community Churches

1950-52	J. Ruskin Howe (First Community Church, Joplin, MO)
1952-53	Hale B. Thompson (St. Paul Community Church, New York, NY)
1953-54	G. Taylor Wright (Community Church of Sherman, NY)
1954-55	Edward H. Gebert (Longview Community Church, WA)
1955-56	Maurice A. Dawkins (Peoples Independent Church of Christ, CA)
1957-58	Robert Hayden (Metropolitan Community Church, AL)
1958-59	Ralph W. Jordan (First Community Church, Columbus, OH)
1959-60	Marion C. Bascom, Sr. (Douglas Memorial Church, Baltimore, MD)
1960-62	Louis H. Wedemeyer (Scottwood Community Church, Columbus, OH)
1962-64	E. Weldon Keckley (Bethany Union Church, Chicago, IL)
1965-66	Carlyle F. Stewart (Peoples Community Church, Detroit, MI)
1966-67	Joseph R. Hutcherson (Church in Aurora, OH)
1967-69	Nelson C. Pierce, Sr. (Palisades Community Church, Washington, D.C.)
1969-72	Darneau V. Stewart (Peoples Community Church, Detroit, MI)
1972-74	Ralph E. Marsden (Greendale People's Church, MA)
1974-76	James R. Hite (Douglas Memorial Community Church, MD)
1976-78	Donald E. Johnson (Jensen Beach Community Church, FL)
1978-80	Harold G. Fuess (Park Ridge Community Church, IL)
1980	R. Colby Thomas (Church of All Faiths, Oakland, CA)
1980	Barbara Holt (Church in Aurora, OH)
1981	J. Ralph Shotwell (Flossmoor Community Church, IL)
1981-83	Marion F. Henley (Commonwealth Community Church, Chicago, IL)
1983-85	C. Jim Marsh (Longboat Island Chapel, FL)
1985-87	Claude E. Wilson (Havenscourt Community Church, Oakland, CA)
1987-89	Robert M. Puckett (Norris Religious Fellowship, TN)
1989-91	Paul F. Scott (Douglas Memorial Community Church, MD)
1991-93	Larry A. McClellan (St. Paul Community Church, Homewood, IL)
1993-95	Orsey P. Malone (Neighborhood Community Church, Los Angeles, CA)
1995-97	J. Ronald Miller (Wilson Memorial Community Church, Watchung, NJ)
1997-99	Gregory D. Smith (Christian Community Church, Toledo, OH)
1999-01	Judson A. Souers (The Church at Litchfield Park, Litchfield Park, AZ)
2001-03	Abraham Wright (Park Road Community Church, Washington, DC)
2003-05	Grace O'Neal (People's Community Church, Detroit, MI)
2005-07	Herbert F. Freitag (Chapel-By-The-Sea, Clearwater Beach, FL)
2007-09	Leroy McCreary (People's Community Church, Berea, OH)
2009-11	Saundra Nelson (Zion Temple Community Church, CA)
2011-12	Paul Drake (Community Church of Little Neck, NY)
2012-14	Bruce Merton (Peace Community Church, FL)
2014-16	Richard O. Griffith (MI)
2016-18	William H. Samuels (Commonwealth Community Church, IL)
2018-21	Harry F. Foockle (Antioch Community Church, MO)
2021-24	Abraham Wright (Park Road Community Church, Washington, DC)
2024-25	Robert Fread, (Clergy in Special Standing)
2025	Abraham Wright (Park Road Community Church, Washington, DC)

Annual Conferences of the I.C.C.C.

- 1950 *Merging Convention*, Lake Forest and Chicago, IL
 1951 *"One Faith, One Fellowship, One God and Father of Us All,"* Longview, CA
 1952 *"Community Churches in Action,"* East Lansing, MI
 1953 *"The Community Church at Work,"* East Lansing, MI
 1954 *"A Sign for These Times,"* New York, NY
 1955 *"Community Churches and Their Ministry to the Wider Community,"* Los Angeles, CA
 1956 *"What Is a Community Church?"* Oberlin, OH
 1957 *"The Nature of the Unity We Seek,"* East Northfield, MA
 1958 *"What Is a Community Church?"* East Lansing, MI
 1959 *"A Religion of Open Faith,"* Massanetta Springs, VA
 1960 *"The Faith and Ethics of the Christian Community,"* Lake Forest, IL
 1961 *"The Relevance of the Church in the Next Decade,"* Gunnison, CO
 1962 *"Toward a Reborn Church,"* Westerville, OH

The Annual . . .

CONFERENCE

Council of Community Churches

Otterbein College

WESTERVILLE, OHIO

JULY 3-7, 1962



THE TOWERS



DEAN ROGER HAZELTON
Graduate School of Theology
OBERLIN COLLEGE

COST: \$45.00 for All Expenses Limit — 400 Delegates See Registration Form for Particulars

- 1963 *"Ecumenicity Is of God,"* Charleston, IL
 1964 *"Serving this Present Age Though Unity in Community,"* East Northfield, MA
 1965 *"Our Great Adventure,"* East Northfield, MA
 1966 *"Toward Community with Freedom,"* Oberlin, OH
 1967 *"How to Be Human Through Religion,"* Gunnison, CO
 1968 *"The Church in a Grand and Awful Time,"* Indianapolis, IN
 1969 *"What's New in Church and World,"* Daytona Beach, FL
 1970 *"Let Love Be Genuine,"* Santa Barbara, CA
 1971 *"Putting the World Together,"* South Bend, IN
 1972 *"God, Is It I? Why Me? OK God!"* Tampa, FL
 1973 *"Affirming Our Fellowship,"* Oakland, CA

Annual Conferences of the I.C.C.C.

- 1973 “*Seasons of the Spirit*,” Sacramento, CA
1974 “*Toward a New Quality of Life*,” Detroit, MI
1975 “*Community—Responsibility*,” Arlington, VA
1976 “*Focus on Freedom*,” Claremont, CA
1977 “*Who We Are*,” Birmingham, AL
1978 “*Looking In – Reaching Out*,” Cherry Hill, NJ
1979 “*Living Our Nowness – A Tapestry of Multi-Dimensional Living*,” Sarasota, FL
1980 “*The Family of God*,” San Antonio, TX
1981 “*Blooming Where We Are Planted*,” San Jose, CA
1982 “*Strengthening Our Stakes, Lengthening Our Cords*,” Memphis, TN
1983 “*Shalom*,” Norfolk, VA
1984 “*Unity in Diversity*,” Chicago, IL
1985 “*For the Sake of Mission*,” Phoenix, AZ
1986 “*The Growing Edge*,” Atlanta, GA
1987 “*Faith and Fellowship*,” Buffalo, NY
1988 “*Increasing Our Inclusiveness; Enlarging Our Circles*,” Fort Worth, TX
1989 “*You Make a Difference*,” New Orleans, LA
1990 “*The Power to Be Free – The Struggle to Be Faithful*,” Bethesda, MD
1991 “*Gathered in Unity; Presented in Truth*,” Birmingham, AL
1992 “*How Shall They Preach; What Shall They Teach?*” Denver, CO
1993 “*Faith to Faith*,” Lincolnwood, IL
1994 “*Celebrating Churches and Centers; Renewing the Spirit*,” Marlboro, MA
1995 “*Equipping the Saints for Ecumenical Ministry*,” Kansas City, MO
1996 “*The Joy of Faith*,” Long Beach, CA
1997 “*Falling Walls – Rising Hopes (Ephesians 2:14)*,” Columbus, OH
1998 “*Living Water (John 4:10)*,” Clearwater Beach, FL
1999 “*They Will Know We Are Christians*,” Toronto, Canada
2000 “*We’ve a Story To Tell The Nations*,” Oak Brook, IL
2001 “*Unity In The Joy of The Spirit*,” Albuquerque, NM
2002 “*Christian Faith and Action In An Interfaith World*,” Pittsburgh, PA
2003 “*Hospitality in the Household of God*,” Cleveland, OH
2005 “*Fun in the Son; Re-Creating in Christ*,” Orlando, FL
2006 “*Bringing Back The Music*,” New Orleans, LA
2007 “*Whom Shall I Send? Send Me!*” Nashville, TN
2008 “*With Christ at the Crossroads*,” Los Angeles, CA
2009 “*Christ, Color and Context: Reconciliation in the Body of Christ*,” St. Louis, MO
2010 “*Embracing Our Heritage: Freedom, CommUNITY, Love*,” Indianapolis, IN
2011 “*ALL INclusive*,” Las Vegas, NV
2012 “*Spice Up Your Life!*” Charlotte, NC
2013 “*A time of reflection...reflect the Light!*” Grand Rapids, MI
2014 “*God is doing a new thing...*” Omaha, NE
2015 “*Come to the Water*,” Dublin, OH
2016 “*Reunion 2016: Coming Together in Jesus*” Louisville, KY
2017 “*Living Faith in a World of Change*” Cherry Hill, NJ
2018 “*Gateway to Glory*” St. Louis, MO
2019 “*A Gathering of God’s WHOSOEVER People*” Jacksonville, FL
2020 “*A Purpose and A Promise*” 2-day Virtual Gathering
2021 “*Send Us*” Dublin, OH
2022 “*God Heal Us*” Dublin, OH
2023 “*We Are Family*” Charlotte, NC
2024 “*Priorities in Christian Living*” Kansas City, MO

2025

75 Years of the ICC

“Remembering the Past, Dreaming a Future.” Lake Forest and Chicago, IL



Blackstone Hall
Lake Forest College
Lake Forest, Illinois
Site of the Merging Convention
August 15-20, 1950

ONE OF THE GREATEST EVENTS IN THE HISTORY of Protestantism will take place at Lake Forest, August 16 - 20, when the churches of the Biennial Council of Community Churches and the churches of the National Council of Community Churches come together in one great merging convention.

Dr. Joseph Evans, Minister of the largest community church in the world, President of the Biennial Council, and Dr. Roy A. Burkhart, Minister of The First Community Church of Columbus, Ohio, President of the National Council of Community Churches, will be co-leaders of this merging convention.

Delegates will come from all over the nation. They will be entertained at Lake Forest College, living, eating and sharing together. It will be a rare experience. It could be, in a real sense, the birth of the United Church.

All sessions will be held at Lake Forest College, through Saturday evening. The sessions Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon will be in the great People's Church of Christ, in Chicago, where Dr. Evans is minister. The closing session, when the merger will be consummated and the new fellowship of community churches will be launched, will be in the Chapel of The University of Chicago.

This is certain: It will be a great event; in the church of our Lord, in the world.