

**“Crusade for Christ” –
A Methodist Crusade in the middle of the 20th century**
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I. Introduction – theme, review of research and sources

At the UMC Archives at Madison/NJ, there is a large poster in the corridor of the offices that shows Jesus on the move, behind him a rainbow above damaged churches, war-ravaged areas, women and children crying imploring for help while troops of active young men and women follow him. This poster for the *Crusade for Christ Program* aroused my curiosity.

I received a research award at Bridwell Library (SMU/Dallas, TX), where I had found resources that helped to give information about both: the *Kingdom Advance Program* of the Evangelical United Brethren Church (EUBC) and the *Crusade for Christ* of the Methodist Church (MC), similar programs within the broader Methodist tradition in same time-period. I had explored and described the *Kingdom Advance Program* in view of relief and reconstruction of the EUBC in Germany after World War II before¹. In this paper I intend to focus on the Methodist *Crusade for Christ* program, what this program was about and how it was accepted in the church, especially as it combined democracy and Christianity.

Although, there has been little written about this program. Bishop John Wesley Hardt once said in an interview², that the *Crusade for Christ* program forced in the Methodist Church an enormous revival in the second half of the 1940^s and beginning of the 1950^s. This manifested itself in Sunday-school growth, increased engagement by and expertise of lay persons, pastoral vocations, publication, Christian schools and education, and the planting of new congregations.

Kenneth Rowe noted the *Crusade for Christ* program in his article “Making Methodist Disciples, 1939 – 1968” the enormous growth of Sunday schools, and also the increase of church members by seven percent in the Methodist Church, huge youth conferences, which brought

¹ I describe the wide spread relief organisation of the EUBC in my dissertation, published as: Schuler, Ulrike: Die Evangelische Gemeinschaft. Missionarische Aufbrüche in gesellschaftspolitischen Umbrüchen. Stuttgart 1998 [emk studien 1], pp 221-260.

² Interview at Bridwell Library, Dallas/TX, spring 2001.

together 11,000 youth and adult leaders on the national level, which followed from.³ Rowe does not however describe the program itself.

The biography of Bishop Garfield Bromley Oxnam⁴, written by Robert Moats Miller⁵, does discuss the program. Oxnam was a Methodist church leader who had a stake in a lot of different ecumenical boards and influenced the direction of his church. He worked in the *Federal Council of Churches of Christ*, whose president he was from 1944 to 1946. He cultivated useful contacts including the presidents of the United States (Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower). He was a delegate in an observing group who visited Germany in 1945 just at the end of war. In the person of Oxnam, a lot of important political and ecumenical connections run together. So it is not astonishing, that he became the initiator of the Methodist *Crusade for Christ* program.

Working on the Methodist history in Germany, one notices that after World War II all Methodist or EUB materiel relief came under the heading of these evangelistic-missionary programs. We find it on the letter-head of the accompanying letter. So the various relief consignments arrived under these program titles, including clothes, kitchen equipment, technical parts or bicycles. While one could not send money directly, the EUB for example sent raw materials (such as cotton) which could then be sold at a profit for church reconstruction (chapels, hospitals, kindergartens, old people residences, or domiciles for refugees). These transactions fostered economic activity in the years that followed. In that way offerings of

³ Rowe, Kenneth E.: Making Methodists Disciples, 1939-1968. In: James E. Kirby/ Russell E. Richey/ Kenneth E. Rowe. The Methodists. Westport/London 1998, pp. 245-254, especially pp. 245. 247.

⁴ Bromley G. Oxnam (1891-1963): Studies at the University in South Carolina and Boston; ordained deacon in 1915, ordained elder 1917; 1917-1926 minister of the *Church of all Nations Los Angeles*, that he founded; 1927 Professor of Boston University School of Theology; 1928-1935 President of the DePauw University in Greencastle; 1936 elected as bishop (Omaha, Boston, New York, Washington D.C.); 1939-1956 secretary of the *Council of Bishops*, president of the *Federal Council of Churches* 1944-1946; member of the *General Board of Education* 1939-1944, *General Board of Missions*, 1944-1952; chairman of the *Commission to Study Post War Relief. Conditions in Germany*; chairman of the *Methodist Commission on Chaplains*; president of the *World Council of Churches* 1948-1954.

⁵ Miller, Robert Moats: Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam. Paladin of Liberal Protestantism. Nashville/TE 1990.

members in the United States were multiplied.⁶ Behind all this stood a holistic understanding as part of a mission to spread the gospel.

There seems to be very little secondary source material about the *Crusade for Christ* program outside of the Biography of G. Bromley Oxnam. Therefore this paper is based on primary sources including the journals of the General Conferences from 1940, 1944, and 1948, church newspapers (*Zions Herald, The Christian Advocate, The Methodist Woman*), and finally the personal writings of church leaders who were heavily involved in the programs such as Bishop William C. Martin, whose papers are located in Bridwell Library, too. A collection of Oxnam's papers are located there as well.

The following paper is more or less a research project with some provisional results, few outcomes, some explained backgrounds and at the end questions that have to be clarified by research in the future. All this is mainly from a German perspective.

II. Irritation: The title "Crusade"

The title "Crusade" sounds quite strange to European ears. However the term is used even today often used in American contexts. The *Campus Crusade for Christ* is quite popular on American University campuses. This ministry was founded in 1951 by Presbyterian Bill Bright and has spread as far as Asia offering an evangelistic program in universities.

Between 1934 and 1960 there was a movement entitled the *Progressive Education Movement* in which liberal teachers wanted to influence the educational process to further develop American democracy. The initiatives from the *Association for the Study of Education in its Social Aspects* (since 1936, *John Dewey Society*) has been described by Daniel Tanner in his book about this movement as a *Crusade for Democracy*.⁷

⁶ S. Schuler, *Die Evangelische Gemeinschaft*, pp 221-260.

⁷ Tanner, Daniel: *Crusade for Democracy*. Progressive Education at the Crossroad. New York 1991.

The *Federal Council of Churches* (FCC)⁸ in connection with World War I established a *Commission on International Justice and Goodwill*. Sidney L. Gulick, the secretary of this commission, entitled his 1923 published book about the possibility of working for a violence free world *The Crusade for a Warless World*⁹. Gulick critically analyzed his current world political situation and set forth a program which included: the recognition and acceptance of personal responsibility for the spread of appropriate literature, education, apologetics, resolutions, petitions, the creation of study groups, even letter writing campaigns to politicians. He wrote: “The next great forward step for Christians in every land is the Crusade for a Warless World, a Crusade fired with holy and invincible enthusiasm, receiving joyous support from millions. The opportunity of the ages is before us. The suffering, war-sick world awaits our response to the call of the Prince of Peace.”¹⁰

In July 1943 the FCC *Commission to Study the Base of a Just and Durable Peace* led an *International Roundtable*¹¹ with 61 church leaders from 12 nations¹², which then formulated a *Message for a New World Order*¹³. This message included proposals for a reconciled relationship with the enemy after the conclusion of World War II. Among these was the roll of World Christianity in the re-education of the German and Russian nations as well as the far-East in Christian-Democratic principles. Bishop Oxnam publicized this program within the Methodist Church and insured that its contents were furthered in the church’s *Crusade for a New World Order*¹⁴. His engagement with the program at this time earned it, within Methodist circles, the title “The Bishop’s Crusade”.

⁸ Since 1950 *National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America* (NCC).

⁹ Gulick, Sidney L: *The Christian Crusade for a Warless World*. New York 1923.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, S. 150.

¹¹ The *Commission to study the Base of a Just and Durable Peace* was established by the FCC in 1941 when the US entered into World War II (08.12.1941 declaration of war to Japan; 11.12.1941 to Germany and Italy).

¹² As Methodists could be identified: Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam/Boston, the pacifist Ernest Fremont Tittle/Evanston and as an observer, Charles F. Boss, Jr.

¹³ *Leaders, Christian: A Christian Message on World Order from the International Round Table*. Princeton 1943.

¹⁴ Title of a pamphlet written by Oxnam.

Dwight Eisenhower (1890-1969), Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces beginning in 1944, published a book in 1948 with the title *Crusade in Europe*¹⁵, in which he described the Allies' strategy and victory over Hitler's Germany. As president (1953-1961) he proclaimed a *Crusade for Democracy*. One of his biographers described Eisenhower's *Anti-Communist Crusade*¹⁶.

The theme of Crusade is not a reflection of the middle ages. The term has been so spiritualized as to have little to do with actual with actual was. It is rather connected etymologically with the idea of mission, with the sense of following and carrying forth the cross of Christ. Here the enthusiasm and sacrifice for a mission is meant, in the original meaning of the word as "sent forth". In the secular realm (as it was used by Eisenhower) it is naturally associated with passionate Christian idealism, which strengthens and morally legitimizes the action. How should we now understand the Methodist *Crusade for Christ*, within the political, social and Church context of North America. What are the connections and boundaries?

III. Church Union 1939 – The General Conference of the Methodist Church (1940)

In 1939 the *Methodist Protestant Church*, the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, and the *Methodist Episcopal Church, South* united, forming the Methodist Church (MC). The united church articulated its roots in its *Historical Statement*¹⁷, where they declared that they had from John Wesley a unique talent for evangelism, organization and administration as well as an appreciation for education and publications. "Wesley thus united in extraordinary fashion, three notable activities, in all of which he excelled. One was evangelism. . . . The second was organization and administration. . . . The third was his appreciation of education and his use of the

¹⁵ Eisenhower, Dwight D.: *Crusade in Europe*. Garden City/NY 1948.

¹⁶ Broadwater, Jeff: *Eisenhower and the Anti-Communist Crusade*. Chapel Hill/NC 1992.

¹⁷ Journal of the Uniting Conference 1939, p. 410. The *Historical Statement* was integrated into the Disciplines in 1948.

printed page.”¹⁸ Thus the “original divine commission” of the Methodists as leaders in evangelism was strengthened, and the passion for evangelism as central to the life of the church was declared.¹⁹

The next *General Conference* of 1940 established a *General Board of Evangelism* which consisted of the six Bishops of the council of Bishops, the Executive Secretaries of the *Board of Missions and church Extension*, the General Secretary of the *Board of Lay Activities*, as well as a member of the *Committee on Spiritual Life and Message* from the *Women’s Division of Christian Service*, and then in 1944, also a member of the *National Conference of Methodist Youth*. This *General Board of Evangelism* should include important areas of church work and coordinate them. Their job was to encourage and support all phases and expressions of evangelism by lay and clergy throughout the world. In this way they were to fulfill their commission from the *General Conference* 1940, in cooperation with the several agencies of the Church. They were to strengthen the pastors in their ability to lead in the area of evangelism, through education in the area of evangelism, through the distribution of literature, and „...to promote the practice of intercession and of family worship, and to stimulate the re-enlistment of inactive members of the Church in worship and in Christian Service”²⁰. The 1940 *General Conference* directed the *Board of Evangelism* to expand the formerly MECS program, *The Upper Room*, to encompass the entire church, and to distribute the devotional by the same name for the “cultivation of the spiritual life”.²¹

¹⁸ Historical Statement, in: *Disciplines* 1948, p. 4.

¹⁹ „The three branches that have united to form The Methodist Church have always believed that the only infallible proof of every genuine church of Christ is its ability to seek and save the lost... and the sole object of the rules, regulations, and usages of The Methodist Church is that it may fulfil... its original divine commission as a leader in evangelism...” (Historical Statement, in: *Discipline* 1948, p. 6).

²⁰ *Journal of the First General Conference*, Atlantic City, S. 658.

²¹ *The Upper Room* is a magazine, printed since 1941 and currently published in more than 100 languages. *The Upper Room* is also a program and a movement (since 1949 *The Upper Room Fellowship*) with a lot of evangelistic publishing, a library, a church and museum (since 1953) in Nashville/TN, an *Upper Room Prayer and Bible Conference* (since 1973), an *Upper Room Living and Praying Centre* where since 1977 praying is around-the-clock. Today prayer requests are transmitted via internet. In 1978, the roman-catholic *Cursilio* movement that already has been taken over by Presbyterians and Lutherans was adopted as *The Upper Room Walk to Emmaus*. *The Walk to Emmaus* is rooted theologically and institutionally in *The Upper Room* ministry of the United Methodist Church, but has an ecumenical outreach. Accordingly, a youth program called *Chrysalis* was developed

The General Conference made another important decision which impacts the *Crusade for Christ* program. They recognized the relationship and connectional responsibility for their mission and autonomous sister churches existing in areas of crisis or war (Japan, China, Germany, Italy, Austria, Poland, France). They were especially sensitive to the difficult conflict between a national and ecclesial identity. US policy isolationism was being questioned and a plan was developed with the churches, to guarantee worldwide *Law and Order* overseen by an international board, which would address issues economic and racial difference and guarantee individual freedom.²² They outlined an understanding of a Christian-democratic²³ social order. Those delineations, which involved an international social, economical and legal share of the responsibility for people outside the US, presented an alternative to the US policy of isolation. They supported the American awareness to be a moral authority and a world wide defender or teacher of Christian and democratic fundamental values.

The Methodist Church took a firm stand in the question of a possible inroad in a current conflict as war. They concluded after a long debate, to follow the motion of Ernest Fremont Tittel²⁴: no church branch of *The Methodist Church* should be allowed to support war preparation or war itself; they should solely work for peace.²⁵

IV. The 1944 General Conference: Working Foci for the Worldwide Church

The Methodist Church united within itself several diverse interest groups, who desired to be supported by the 1944 General Conference:

since 1984. Also the *Academy of Spiritual Formation* was created with a two-year-program in Nashville/TN in 1982.

²² There were at that time also secular peace plans that focus on international plans for a society after the war (f.e. Johnson, Julia E.: *World Peace Plans*. New York 1943).

²³ Sometimes *Christian* and *Democratic* are used synonymic!

²⁴ Ernest Fremont Tittel (*1885) studied theology at the *Ohio Wesleyan University*, at *Drew Theological Seminary*; ordained in 1910; lecturer at different universities, prominent minister of then *Social Gospel*; forceful and committed pacifist. He is one of people in the *Fellowship of Reconciliation*, who in 1944 condemned in public the “indiscriminate” shellfire on German cities and civil population. Tittel was a member of the *Methodist Commission on World Peace*.

²⁵ This decision had to be qualified at the GC in 1944 when the world war had become reality and American Methodist soldiers were involved.

1) Due to the different studies, conferences and publications of the *Commission on a Just and Durable Peace* from the FCC (to which Oxnam belonged), which carefully analyzed the world-wide political and commercial situation, a plan for a durable peace on the base of a post-war Christian-democratic world order was developed. It stated, that the churches as world-wide Christian alliances have the responsibility to make states and governments aware that they are accountable before God. They also are to be an example for a tolerant and cooperative community.²⁶

In 1943 the *Six Pillars of Peace*²⁷ were carefully worded as political axioms and were spread in a campaign. The pillars opposed the US policy of isolation and made known at the same time, that American citizens were also responsible for development in the post-war world. Concretely, they demanded the foundation of the *United Nations*. For this Oxnam initiated an enormous letter campaign, in which members of *The Methodist Church* wrote to the president of the United States and to their delegates and senators, to remind them of their responsibility for justice and world-wide brotherhood, to influence international cooperation.²⁸

Parallel to the FCC, Oxnam established the campaign for a durable world peace as *Crusade for a New World Order* in the Methodist Church. For this a *Commission on Twenty-one* was constituted to develop plans for a post-war society with concrete assignments within the world-wide connected church. For this purpose, first a *Methodist Bureau of Research* was opened, “so that impartial, factual consideration of trends and measures may be made available to the membership of the Church and thus aid in forming public opinion

²⁶ *A Christian Message on World Order* from the International Round Table of Christian Leaders, Princeton 1943 is a remarkable document, which show concrete offers how to behave reconciliatory with war enemies after war.

²⁷ *Six Pillars of Peace*. A study guide, based on “A Statement of Political Propositions” formulated by The Commission to study the Bases of Just and Durable Peace of the FCC. New York 1943. Die *Six Pillars of Peace* were also printed in Methodist newspapers as for example on the cover of *The Methodist Woman*, March 1945.

²⁸ The campaign had the slogan: “The Peace May be Won with a ‘Three-Cent Stamp’” (s. Miller, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, p. 285).

upon the basis of careful research”.²⁹ In this context, a survey was made of all churches throughout the world that were associated to *The Methodist Church*. It included information about the current social-political contexts as well as the ecclesial situation (e.g. church buildings, hospitals, schools) at the beginning of the war.³⁰ All this activity for relief and reconstruction of the destroyed areas was done, while the war was still going on. Along with recognizing the needs of the churches overseas, the danger of secularization of the US was reflected.

As a result of this survey, the committee worked out a cost schedule for necessary immediate help to the world-wide relief and reconstruction. The *Committee of Twenty-one* applied to the *General Conference* to vote, that “a Church-wide effort be immediately organized inaugurated to raise as a special fund a sum not less than \$ 25,000,000.”³¹

*Ralph Diffendorfer*³² in his report about *The World Relief and Reconstruction Fund of the Crusade for Christ* reminded the *General Conference* that: “We need to think first about getting people again on their feet and making a living, the restoration of human relations, and personal reconciliation. These latter are the large problems of reconstruction on the days to come.”³³ He also made it clear that the “\$ 25,000,000 program of *Relief and Reconstruction* was only one of five major objectives of the Crusade. The others are the con-

²⁹ Journal of the 1944 General Conference of The Methodist Church, p. 777.

³⁰ Ralph Diffendorfer reported, that detailed information as basic documents for post-war planning were published in a „Red Book”, while concrete ideas for relief and reconstruction in particular countries were brought together in a „Green Book” (s. Diffendorfer, Ralph: *The World Relief and Reconstruction Fund of Crusade for Christ*“. An address delivered at the National Conference of District Superintendents of The Methodist Church, St. Louis, September 27, 1944, p. 13f. Archives of Drew University, Madison/NJ). Up to now, I did not discover these books. Diffendorfer's summarized the outcomes in his report (s. Diffendorfer, *The World Relief*, p. 8-14).

³¹ Journal of the 1944 General Conference of The Methodist Church, p. 778.

³² Ralph Eugene Diffendorfer (1879 – 1951), clergyman; educated at *Ohio Wesleyan University*, *Drew Theological Seminary*, *Union Theological Seminary*; Assistant secretary of the *Epworth League* (1902-04), secretary of the *Missionary Education Movement in the United States and Canada* and *Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (1916-17), associate secretary of the *Centenary Commission of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension* (1918), director of *Home Missions Survey of the Inter-church world movement* (1919-20), 1920 appointed as secretary of the department of education of the *Committee on Conversation and Advance of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago*.

³³ Diffendorfer, *The World Relief*, p. 14.

tinuance of the Crusade for a New World Order, for Evangelism, for reviving Church School enrollment and attendance, and for a new sense of Christian Stewardship.”³⁴

- 2) *The Committee on Evangelism* enthusiastically fought for a simultaneous world-wide evangelistic program not only for one year but throughout the quadrenium 1944 – 1948 as. That special assignment was given to the *Board of Evangelism* in the declaration of union conference in 1939 as part of Methodism’s divine designation. This was then accredited by the *General Conference* in 1944, which authorized the *General Board of Evangelism*. The *Committee on Evangelism* was sure that the “united movement offers the possibility of such a spiritual renaissance and service to the world as the Church has not known for many years.”³⁵

In a dialog about the report one delegate pointed out the need to prioritize Evangelism, for “a spiritual awakening and his conviction that first things must come first and that no movement such as we propose can possibly succeed without a genuine spiritual renovation of our Church’s life”.³⁶

- 3) The *Committee on Membership, Lay Activities and Temporal Economy* received the assignment from the *General Conference* in 1940 concerning a unified program for Stewardship Cultivation. They did a lot of “preliminary work, study, research, organization, education, and development of stewardship materials”³⁷. They applied to implement a consistent and continuous plan for the training and development of capable christinas. “There is a tremendous need for the Christian investment of life and possessions in the world today, if we are to meet the needs presented at this hour in a world disillusioned and torn by strife.”³⁸

³⁴ Ibid. p. 16.

³⁵ Report of the Committee on Evangelism. In: Proceedings Forty-first General Conference of the Methodist Church, Kansas City, Missouri, April 26 to May 6, 1944, p. 128.

³⁶ Proceedings GC 1944, p. 135 (contribution of Albert E. Day).

³⁷ Report of the Committee on Membership, Lay Activities and Temporal Economy. In: Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

4) The *Board of Education, Sunday School Enrollment and Attendance* defended the fundamental relevance of a systematically organized Christian education program that is supported by the Sunday schools. The board recommended: “a) continuing a Church-wide Program for Church School Attendance; b) leading church school pupils to make decision for Christ and church membership; c) training persons for membership in the church; d) improving the quality of the educational service of the local church”.³⁹

When the idea was expressed, that all these projects were essential for the church and partially overlap each other, it was again Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, who, after a long debate, offered a concrete proposal to combine the different concerns. His proposal was that the whole program be integrated into one continuous four- year effort.

V. Four-year-program of the General Conference in 1944: “Crusade for Christ”

As a sequel to the previously begun FCC *Crusade for a New World Order*, Oxnam put forth the various key aspects of the different agencies’ askings as different facets of one goal-oriented plan. The *Council of Bishops* “believes that our [Church-] Government seeks to establish world law and order and recognizes the necessity if translating the ethical ideals of religion into the realities of economic justice and radical brotherhood”⁴⁰. In view of a world, that he described as physical, mental and moral desolated, he hoped to change the society by a consequent and qualified Christian education and in this way enable people to work on a responsible buildup of a just (democratic) society.

³⁹ Report of the Board of Education, Sunday school Enrollment and Attendance. In: Ibid. p. 130.

⁴⁰ Bishop Oxnam quoted in: Robert Moats Miller, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam. *Paladin of Liberal Protestantism*. Nashville/TE 1990, p. 282.

Oxnam submitted his proposal to the *General Conference*, summarizing the key aspects of the agencies in a terminable four-year program; every year should have a specific duty topic and goal toward which all members of the church should enthusiastically work⁴¹:

1. Year:

main topic: *Reconstruction and Relief*; goal: The whole church should undertake to “raise \$ 25,000,000 by means of a special campaign during the first half of 1945, contributions to be in cash or pledges payable on or before December 31, 1945”⁴².

2. Year:

main topic: *Evangelism*; goal: to start manifold evangelistic assignments, work on literature and training courses, to reach 400,000 people who confess Jesus as their savior.

3. Year:

main topic: *Stewardship*; goal: not less than 400,000 new members should discover their special gifts and find the assignments to which they will covenant themselves.

4. Year:

main topic: *Church School Enrollment and Attendance*; goal: people should be motivated to visit Sunday school consistently; also 500 new congregations should be organized.

There was an extensive debate about the correct order of the yearly topics, that evangelism as the primary mission of the church should stay at the beginning of the crusade (see above) and could not be postponed, or at least raising the money and evangelistic program should happen with the enormous efforts at the same time. Finally it was argued conclusively, that facing the horrible world situation and the needs of brothers and sisters in war ravaged areas, the finan-

⁴¹ Bishop Kern voted in the General Conference debate: “...we must move as one solid and unbroken phalanx into the life of this generation and let this nation know that Methodism has a program that is commensurate with her latent spiritual and material resources” (Proceedings GC 1944, p. 130).

⁴² Proceedings GC 1944, p. 128, where is also a detailed list how the money was planned to allocate (s. also: Report of the Crusade for Christ. In: Quadrennial Reports to the General Conference of The Methodist Church 1948, p. 47-103; Methodist Archive, Drew University, Madison/NJ).

cial basic for relief and reconstruction have absolute priority. Furthermore combining evangelistic actions and raising money could lead to misunderstanding.

Looking at the Church's newspapers (The Christian Advocate, Zions Herold, The Methodist Woman) in the years 1944 to 1948, one sees how forcefully and continually the yearly topics were reflected in reports, guidances, graphics, pictures, advice for literature etc.. An official signet⁴³ was presented, a black buckler with a white cross that was sure to be recognized in publications. A special *Crusade for Christ Hymnal*⁴⁴ was published in the *Zions Herold* in September 1944. An artist drafted the *Crusade for Christ Poster*⁴⁵, a painting that was also printed on leaflets, postcards or published in newspapers. Readers were continually informed about the theaters of war, social grievances and the urgent need for change and development.

Trusting the statistics, people in *The Methodist Church* widely exceeded the aspired goals: Up to 1948 \$ 27.002.479 was paid into an account (promised at all \$ 27.687.367), 1.063.734 new members were registrated, 152.826 persons signed to give regularly 10%, 500.382 covenanted to support other projects, 3.994 heard the call as ministers, 9.370 people covenanted for a full time job in the Church; 567.641 people signed to join continuous Sunday Schools; radio stations regularly broadcasted Crusade radio programs: 5-minute-programs about lay activities, 15-minute-programs about Christian education.⁴⁶

Because of this enormous response and "outcome", the *General Conference* 1948 proclaimed a further for-year-plan, *The Advance for Christ and His Church*.⁴⁷

⁴³ See e.g. Zions Herold. The Independent Methodist Weekly, October 1944, p. 661.

⁴⁴ Zions Herold. The Independent Methodist Weekly, September 1944, p. 619.

⁴⁵ See in internet: www.drew.edu/books/200Years/part4/072.htm. The painting shows Jesus on a hill, looking on the destroyed city. That poster is different from the one at the archives at Drew University, Madison/NJ.

⁴⁶ Report of the Crusade for Christ. In: Quadrennial Reports to the General Conference of The Methodist Church 1948, p. 50-53 (Archives, Drew University, Madison/NJ); s. also: Miller, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, pp. 290-292.

⁴⁷ This program again had an aggressive-military subtitle: From Crusade to Conquest.

VI. Preliminary Conclusion

In an interview Bishop John Wesley Hardt, who witnessed as a young minister the implementation of the *Crusade for Christ* program, described the huge upswing and the rampant enthusiasm in *The Methodist Church*, which helped the newly united church to grow and grow together. Between 1945 and 1950 *The Methodist Church* grew 16.7%⁴⁸. Sunday schools, pastoral vocations, the engagement and training of lay persons (for example, home visits or evangelistic work) also boomed as did manifold publications, the efforts for Sunday schools and training centers, and the foundations of new congregations.

Despite a lot of methodical and terminological concerns, it is nevertheless impressive how accurately the social situations and needs in different national contexts were analyzed and how concrete calculations were made prior to the planning of a program that was then realized world-wide on all levels.

The declared intention to assume responsibility for the situation in the world and to work with all efforts to make things change, is impressive. For Germany, this help was in many respects terrific. Both, the *Evangelische Gemeinschaft* (EUBC)⁴⁹ and *The Methodist Church* had experienced a collapse at the end of the war – losses of members and buildings, which, in the context of the general German depression, meant that the continuation of mission work on its own was doubtful. According to the statistics of the German Central Conference in 1946 the *German Methodist Church* lost around 5,000 members by death (out of 56,000); of 398 church buildings, 141 were damaged, 45 destroyed and 36 heavily damaged; the publishing-house in Bremen was totally destroyed, as were 11 buildings of welfare and social activities. Nine were heavily damaged. It was said in the post-war report, that the *German Methodist*

⁴⁸ See official statistics of the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH): www.gcah.org/membership.htm; Noll asserts actually 20% (Noll, Mark A.: *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids 2000, United States Denominational Size, 1940-1988, p. 465).

⁴⁹ In Germany even after the world-wide union in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the name of the church in Germany, *Evangelische Gemeinschaft* (Evangelical Association), was retained. In Germany there was no union because the mission of the United Brethren had merged in 1905 with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Church lost the half of its Church properties. The connectional structure of the church which implied responsible interconnection was vital for its further existence.⁵⁰

There remain a lot of unexplained questions about the *Crusade for Christ* program:

How sustainable were the evangelistic outcomes? Did the new members stay? Was the peoples covenants kept? How was this program absorbed in other parts of the world? Why was the program on the whole so less known and transcribed in Europe? Was this, maybe also because of the linkage of Christianity and democracy with American identity (this question is most current today). For all, the program's name was highly scandalous within a European historical context.

Another most interesting question is, how the idea, to influence policy worked, e.g. when the occupation army in Germany and Austria had the goal to “democratize” and “reeducate” Germans and Austrians. What role did those 17,000 chaplains have, who had been educated since 1941, and who also came to Germany and Austria? Oxnam was chairman of the *Methodist Commission on Chaplains* and also a member of the *General Commission on Army and Navy Chaplains* that was founded by the FCC in 1917. An interesting sidenote is that the director of the office for *Religious Affaires* in the American occupation zone was church historian and Professor, Dr. Franklin Littell.

I think it would be very interesting to get to know much more about the *Crusade for Christ* and the following program including those and further questions.

⁵⁰ The situation of the German *Methodist Church* and also the *Evangelische Gemeinschaft* is described in my article: *Methodisten in Deutschland nach 1945*. In: *KZG* 13/2 (2000), p. 436f. The *Evangelische Gemeinschaft* lost the sixth of its preachers (29), half of their members and “friends” (about 20.000) and about the half of Sunday school children (12.000). 161 Circuit-riders, 35.000 members, friends and affiliated people, about 300 congregations and further preaching places remained. Beside the loss of 42 congregations with 23 churches and buildings in former East Prussia, 43 churches were totally damaged, 32 partially damaged. Only 40 churches were registered as not damaged. Also the church's agencies had considerable forfeit: the publishing-house in Stuttgart was badly damaged und the printing-house, too. Also, apart of the publishing-house was under control of the occupation army, because the former director, a pastor, was recognized as a member of the former national-socialistic party. Only one of eight hospitals of the Bethesda deaconess work [Werk] was not damaged, but that only intact hospital was occupied by the British army. Four of five nurse homes were totally damaged (Ibid., p. 435f.).

Crusade Signet:



Crusade Hymn:

The Crusade for Christ

Robert W. Holcomb

Robert W. Holcomb

A - mid the night of darkness and destruction,
Bind hearts of sorrow with thy balm of kindness,
God, haste the day when nations in agreement,

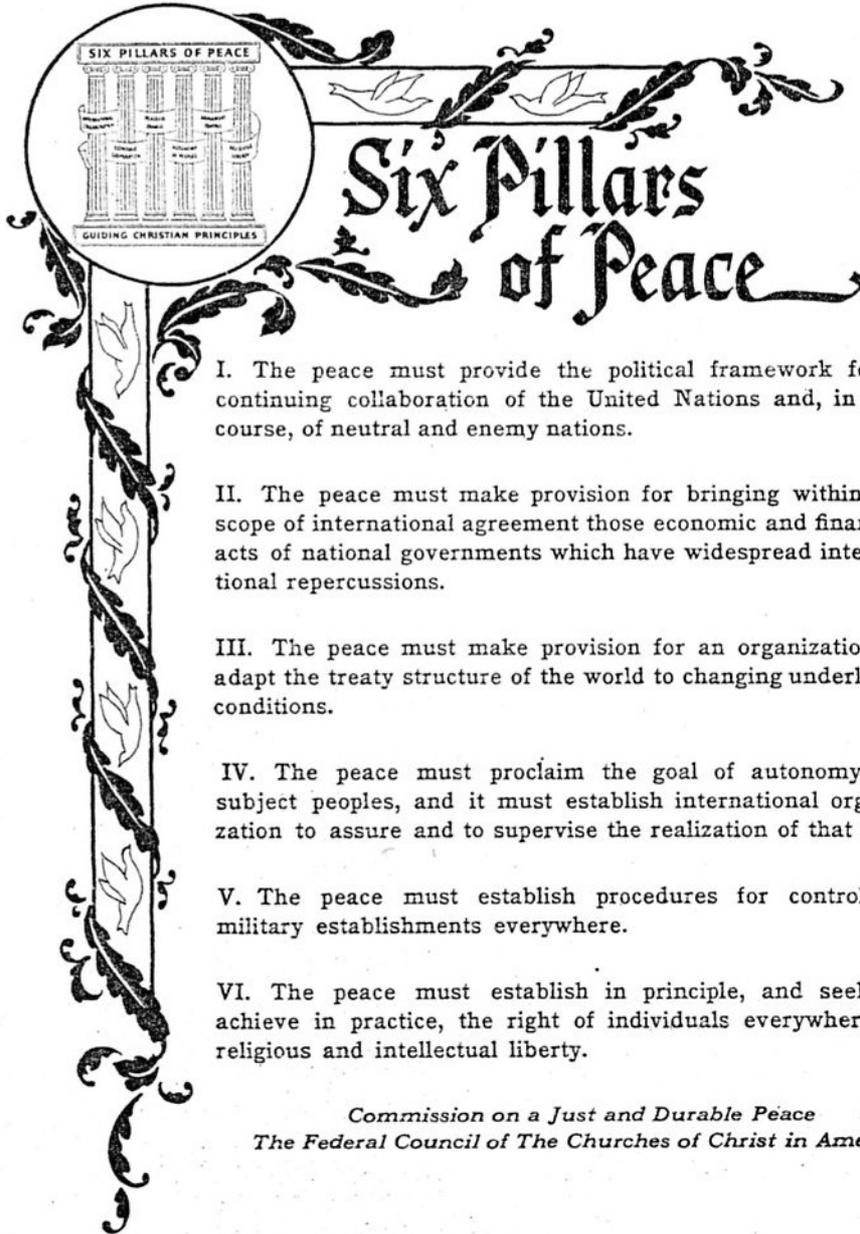
As men grope blindly to the way of light;
Lead forth thy people out of terror's night;
Will in a joyous brotherhood unite;

Send forth Thy Truth O God with peace impelling,
Flash forth in splendor on a world of darkness,
Keep from mankind the scourge of war's destruction,

Make us strong Crusaders for the cause of Right.
Make us strong Crusaders for the cause of Right.
Make us strong Crusaders for the cause of Right.

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Six Pillars of Peace:



I. The peace must provide the political framework for a continuing collaboration of the United Nations and, in due course, of neutral and enemy nations.

II. The peace must make provision for bringing within the scope of international agreement those economic and financial acts of national governments which have widespread international repercussions.

III. The peace must make provision for an organization to adapt the treaty structure of the world to changing underlying conditions.

IV. The peace must proclaim the goal of autonomy for subject peoples, and it must establish international organization to assure and to supervise the realization of that end.

V. The peace must establish procedures for controlling military establishments everywhere.

VI. The peace must establish in principle, and seek to achieve in practice, the right of individuals everywhere to religious and intellectual liberty.

*Commission on a Just and Durable Peace
The Federal Council of The Churches of Christ in America*

Crusade Poster Archives Madison/NJ:

