

"THE HOPE OF THE WORLD"

TEXT: "But you are fellow citizens with every other Christian - you belong now to the Household of God. Firmly beneath you is the foundation. The actual foundation stone being Jesus Christ himself. You are all part of this building in which God himself lives by His spirit."

Ephesians 2:20 and 21.
J. B. Phillips Translation

The observance of World Wide Communion helps to symbolize the world wide fellowship of the Christian faith. Several years ago, Kenneth Scott Latourette of Yale University said of Christianity:

"Never before in the history of the world has any group of ideas - religious, social, economic, or political - been propagated over so wide an area or among so many people by so many who have given their lives to the task."

His words remind us that we do have great cause to rejoice. For we are attached to no small petty event, no localized endeavor, no restricted company. This Gospel of our Lord knows no iron curtain of economic system or political order. It crosses every frontier of geography and flows over every barrier of race, creed, class and culture.

Today the great hymns of our church are being sung with equal fervor by Eskimos and Fiji Islanders, in Park Avenue churches, and in small African huts. Today, the Bible will be read with reverence in every known tongue. Today, from Boston to Bombay, from Madagascar to Maine, Christians will be kneeling at the table of our Lord. And so it is with great feelings of gratitude, we share in the only true world family. In a very real sense, this is the only hope of our world. For only as we come to acknowledge God as the Father of us all, only as we unite in a common devotion to the teachings of Jesus, only as we pledge help to those in need, will we come to realize the Kingdom of God on earth.

The observance of World Wide Communion not only expresses the world wide fellowship of our faith, but it has come in recent years to symbolize the growing unity of the Christian conscience, voice and church. The World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948, and again at Evanston in 1954, dramatized the growing unity of Protestant Christendom. In a message to the churches, the World Council of Churches declared:

"We are divided from one another not only in matters of faith, order, and tradition, but also by pride of nation, class and race. But Christ has made us his own, and He is not divided. In seeking Him, we find one another."

Our coming together to form a World Council will be vain unless Christians everywhere commit themselves to the Lord of the church in a new effort to seek together, where they live, to be

his witness and servant among their neighbors.....
We have to make of the church in every place a
voice for those who have no voice, and a home
where every man will be at home.....

It is not in man's power to banish sin and death
from the earth, to create the unity of the Holy
Catholic church, to conquer the hosts of Satan.
But it is within the power of God to do this...."

Thank God that at last we Christians are beginning to move
together. Thank God that at last we are beginning to break over
denominational lines. It is in this solemn sacrament which we
observe today, that we are reminded of the growing unity which the
Church of Jesus Christ shares in this 20th century. We are not
alone. We derive strength from the millions who this day share
in this sacrament and in his spirit.

We are growing in our realization that His program is the only
program possible for human society. We are beginning to see that
we can't have a world at all unless it is a Christian world.
Political arrangements, economic agreements, and scientific
inventions will not bring us salvation. In Him alone is the
Hope of our world. He is the foundation stone of the Household of God.

In this church, the Table of our Lord is open to all who are
sincerely trying to grow in their understanding of the will of God.
We invite you to come to the altar, and trust that the experience
may be for you a time of dedication and reconsecration.

LET US PRAY:

Eternal God, our Father, grant that we may feel
ourselves bound to our Christian brothers everywhere
by ties of spiritual kinship that overleaps all
racial and national boundaries. . Make us strong
links in the chain of Christian fellowship that this
day stretches around the world. Amen.