

You would run into the most interesting people and have interesting conversations. One evening a man came up to me who had belonged to a scientific organization, and he began to talk. I had a dim recollection of him. As he talked I found out he was one of the officers of a particular group of a particular denomination which had several large groups in the U.S. He told he how he was going from Phila. to Chicago once a month and was now coming back from that, to meet with the representatives of another of these groups in order to discuss plans for getting these two groups together. Here were these two groups of men discussion how can we get our people into one organization? How get a plan they could present to both?

He sat and talked with me two or three hours and told me many interesting details that I don't think he would have told me if he had altogether realized how different my viewpoint was from his. As he described this I could see how he and the group of administrators he belonged to, and the group of administrators of the other denomination held exactly the same view of the unimportance of eternal things, of the unimportance of the things both their denominations thought were so important. The desirability of doing everything possible to build the kingdom of God on earth here, the importance of our getting together, and yet representing these two groups with differences on a number of what I would think were very minor points. But they would each represent their group and one would surrender something, and the other would surrender something, and they would work out a plan and they would go back to their group and get them to agree to it.

The idea was to get them together in order that you have a larger group to work for social improvements, and to work for getting all religions together. Of course to them there's not a great deal of difference between Christianity and other religions. There's no difference to them between Catholicism and Protestantism. So their endeavor is to get these different groups together, and they have put a great deal of emotion into this.

Just a word about this word ecumenism. The word comes from the word oikoumene which occurs a number of times in the NT. But not a great many times. The ordinary word for the world or universe is kosmos. This word oikoumene is the word that is apt to be used for the Roman Empire. Augustus sent out the word that all the oikoumene should be taxed. So it was that it was necessary to go to Bethlehem in order to register. The taxing of the Roman Empire. It stands for the general ungodly world. So it is quite an appropriate word. Ecumenical movement which is not really an effort to get Christians together. It is an effort to get people together. To get people together for certain social purposes.

The ecumenists like to hold union services in every possible way. Union services in which everything essential about the particular groups is more or less forgotten, but the ceremony is stressed. An atmosphere of reverential calm is stressed and that sort of thing. So they formed an organization to consider certain aspects, and another organization to consider other aspects. They had a great missionary conference in 1908 in Edinburgh in which there was a great deal of fine presentation of truly Christian