

CONSEIL PROTESTANT
DU CONGO

MINUTES—MEETING 24

LEOPOLDVILLE, CONGO BELGE,

FEBRUARY 24—MARCH 3, 1946

the conditions laid down in Article 8 of the Articles of Agreement of L E C O (Minute 704) the proprietorship of L. M. E. be now transferred to the new organization,

750 New status of Protestant Missions in Congo

The General Secretary read the following letter which he had received during the present Meeting of the Council from His Excellency, the Belgian Colonial Minister:

MINISTÈRE DES COLONIES
CABINET DU MINISTRE

Bruxelles, le 23 février 1946

Monsieur le Secrétaire Général,

Confirmant les déclarations que j'ai faites au Sénat en séance du 7 novembre 1945. j'ai l'honneur de vous informer que, sur ma proposition, le Gouvernement Belge a décidé de mettre dorénavant sur le même pied, à conditions et garanties égales, toutes les missions chrétiennes dans la Colonie, en ce qui concerne l'octroi des subsides de l'Etat tant en matière d'enseignement que dans les autres domaines.

Les conditions auxquelles sera subordonné l'octroi des subsides, et qui seront les mêmes en ce qui concerne les missions de toutes les confessions, seront déterminées ultérieurement.

Les propositions de crédit que ces décisions impli-

quent, seront soumises à l'approbation du Parlement.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Secrétaire Général, l'assurance de ma considération très distinguée.

Le Ministre,
(sé) *R. Godding.*

A. M. le Révérend H. Wakelin Coxill

Secrétaire Général du
Conseil des Missions Protestantes,
à L E O P O L D V I L L E

- (b) After due consideration the following action was taken:
- (1) The Councillors record their profound satisfaction on receiving the statement of the General Secretary concerning the new status to be accorded by the Government to Protestant Missions in the colony as stated in the letter of the Colonial Minister under date February 23, 1946.
 - (2) They rejoice in the removal of disabilities suffered hitherto by adherents of the Evangelical Churches because of their Protestant convictions and they offer their respectful congratulations to the Colonial Government on having thus extended the benefits of Religious Liberty accorded to the people of the Colony by the Charte Coloniale to the important Protestant section of the African population.
 - (3) The Councillors express also their deep appreciation of the sympathetic consideration of this question given over a period of many years by

His Excellency the Governor General and by His Government and also of the immense service rendered by Senator Godding, the Colonial Minister, whose generous attitude towards all Colonial matters and whose vigorous executive action has secured this happy conclusion to a long and difficult discussion.

- (4) The Councillors are also profoundly cognisant of the indefatigable efforts made by the General Secretary of the C. P. C. to secure equitable treatment for the Protestant Community in the Belgian Congo and for the Protestant Missions working in the Colony. They thank him heartily for his efforts and in their expression of gratitude would associate with his the name of Dr Emory Ross, the former General Secretary of the Council. Dr. Ross initiated the effort to secure the full fruits of Religious Liberty for the Protestant Community in Congo and by his courage, firmness, courtesy, and skill did much to engender hope and confidence in the hearts of the Missionaries and the members of the evangelical Church. The Councillors place on record their high and sincere appreciation of the invaluable service of the Rev. H. Wakelin Coxill and Dr. Emory Ross and offer them their hearty congratulations also on the successful issue of their efforts.
- (5) Finally the C. P. C. calls on all member Missions to study closely and carefully the implications of acceptance of Government recognition and subsidy of their educational work and to do their utmost to conform heartily and loyally, in spirit

and letter, in quality and consistency of work, to the requirements of the Colonial Government in regard to Schools and training centers. At the same time the C. P. C. emphasizes again the unique contribution of the Protestant Missions in the field of education, which is to make that education in word and deed, in outlook, aim, and practice, completely Christian.

- (c) It was agreed that the Council express to Almighty God its highest praise and sincere gratitude for the recent change in attitude of the Colonial Government toward Protestant Missions in Congo, praying that it will serve to hasten the spread of the Gospel amongst our Congo Natives.

(Before continuing other business the Council united in special thanksgiving and prayer to God led, at the request of the Chair, by the General Secretary.)

- (d) The following cable was sent to the Colonial Minister:

Monsieur le Ministre Godding

Ministère des Colonies BRUXELLES

Au nom du Conseil Protestant du Congo réuni actuellement à Léopoldville ainsi qu'au nom de tous les Protestants du Congo noirs et blancs vous prie accepter plus profonds remerciements votre lettre vingt trois février stop Sommes vivement reconnaissants de ce que vous avez accompli à notre égard stop. Prions

accepter assurance nos respects et meilleurs souhaits pour l'avenir de la Belgique et sa Colonie.

Coxill

Secrétaire Général.

- (e) The General Secretary was requested also to write suitable letters of thanks to their Excellencies the Colonial Minister and the Governor General.

751 Basis of negociation with Government.

It was agreed that the following points be adopted in principle by the Council as a basis of negociation with government in application of the policy of equality enunciated in the letter of the Minister of Colonies dated February 23, 1946, addressed to the Secrétaire Général du Conseil Protestant du Congo.

1. *A policy of equality implies the following minimum practices:*
 - (a) The official recognition and general patronage of all schools, hospitals and other institutions of public worth and of approved standards, irrespective of the confession or nationality of the staffs thereof.
 - (b) Recognition of certificates and diplomas issued by all such schools, hospitals and institutions on the same basis for all subsidized institutions.
 - (c) Complete equality of opportunity [in public employment for the diplomaed or certificated graduates of all such schools, hospitals, etc.

- (d) Cessation of all influence exercised by government officials to cause persons to frequent or to boycott any given school, hospital or institution because of the confession or nationality of the staff,
- (e) Granting of financial and public labor aids if given, to all schools, hospitals and institutions of approved standards which wish to accept them, on a basis of complete equality.
- (f) Free access and equal treatment in all hospitals, dispensaries, clinics and welfare centres, supported in whole or in part from public funds, without discrimination or religious coercion.
- (g) The provision of institutions of higher education and professional training accessible to students of all confessions. This implies either:
 - (a) The provision of secular institutions, or
 - (b) provision of a sufficient number of mission-operated schools of both confessions, or
 - (c) access to confessional institutions without intimidation or religious coercion.

II. *In applying the policy to Protestant Missions the following points should be understood.*

- (a) Ultimate decision as to whether eventual subsidies will be accepted or not rests with the individual missions in Congo. Non-acceptance of subsidy should not preclude official inspection and recognition.
- (b) The Conseil Protestant du Congo is the central cooperative agency through which

Government and Protestant missions can best reach final understanding on the matter.

III. *The Council suggests the following points as elements of a permanent agreed educational policy to become fully effective at the expiration of a transitional period.*

- (a) Missionaries and Africans on educational staffs would have proficiency in French and a native language, in Belgian pedagogical methods and in colonial history. For educational missionaries this will generally imply a period of residential study in Belgium, with freedom of access to suitable educational institutions in Belgium.
- (b) Freedom of religious instruction in all mission schools would be maintained.
- (c) Inspection of schools and examination of pupils would be on an equal basis for all schools. Non-confessional inspection and examination is to be desired.
- (d) Schools approved under the agreed terms would have authority to issue diplomas or certificates on a uniform basis.
- (e) Diplomaed or certificated pupils of all schools of equal grade would be admitted to public employment on the same footing.
- (f) Aid for construction and equipment of schools would be offered on a uniform basis to all missions desiring it.
- (g) Transportation, medical, tax and other aids and exemptions would be granted to pupils of all schools on a uniform basis.
- (h) Subsidies for teaching personnel, missionary

and African, should be offered on a uniform basis to all missions.

- IV. *A transitory regime* applicable to missionaries and Africans at present in service on or leave would be established, based on the understandings eventually arrived as under Section III above, applied on more moderate lines and less strictly than the case of missionaries and Africans appointed after the understandings go into effect.
- V. It Was agreed that a committee composed of Dr. Tuttle, Dr. G. W. Carpenter, Rev. O. Stenström, Rev. J. Öhrneman, Rev. W. D Reynolds and the General Secretary, prepare, in French, a Memorandum embodying the above points. It was further agreed that this document be the official statement of the Council to be presented to Government.

752. *C. P. C Educational Secretary* (a) The Council considered at some length the question of C. P. C. Educational Secretaryship. It was felt by all, that in view of the changed Government policy, announced by the General Secretary at this meeting, action by the Council was more urgent and important than ever before. It was also felt that Dr. Carpenter, the present Educational Secretary, was now more than fully occupied with the great undertaking which la Librairie Evangélique and the Union Press Project had become.

(b) It was therefore decided, Dr. Carpenter being in complete agreement, to request the Baptist Missionary Society kindly to consider the possibility of releasing the Rev. Edgar H. Morrish of that Mission

to serve as C. P. C. Educational Secretary as soon as ever this may be practicably possible and, should the B. M. S. be willing to grant this request, to invite Mr. Morrish to fill this important post.

(c) Meanwhile it was agreed that a Committee, composed of Dr. Carpenter, Mr. Morrish and the General Secretary, and such others as they may coopt, serve as an Educational Central Committee. The major function of this Committee shall be that of cooperation with the Government in the development of its educational programme as related to Protestant Missions.

753. *Standing Committee: Medical.* (a) The Medical Committee Secretary, Dr. Glen Tuttle, presented an interesting report on the medical activities of Protestant Missions in Congo, which report was accepted with appreciation.

(b) Dr. Tuttle stated that several doctors having suggested a conference of protestant medical workers it is wondered whether the time is not ripe to initiate such conferences to be held every four years or thereabouts to consider especially the relationship of our medical work to the evangelistic phase of our programme. The question also arises as to the advisability of forming a Congo Evangelical Medical Society.

(c) *Congo Medical Association* It was agreed that Dr. Tuttle be asked to investigate the possibilities of the formation of a Congo Evangelical Medical Association, and of inter-Mission medical conferences under the sponsorship of the C. P. C.

(d) *Medical Schools.* The Council recognizes the very great value of the schools for medical workers which the Missions are conducting and which have secured Government recognition; and urges wider support for the institutions to insure their continuance and enhance their usefulness.

(e) *Dentistes.* It was agreed that we emphasize to our Home Boards the tremendous need of at least three missionary dentists in connection with our Protestant work in Congo.

754. *Report of committee on Comity* The report of this Committee was received and approved.

The Committee had considered the question of the station of Kintshua which had formerly belonged to the Mission Evangélique Norvégienne. This station had been purchased by Mr. Charles Miller of the U. T. M. from Mr. Christiansen. The Committee took note of the fact that Mr. Miller, in consulting officers of the Council regarding this purchase, indicated to them that he would make the purchase with a view to securing the station and the property thereon either for the Congo Gospel Mission or for the Unevangelized Tribes Mission. It was not indicated that this purchase, would be made in a personal capacity, nor would the Council approve such an action.

755 *Protestant principles and practices* (a) In compliance with the request of the 1945 Meeting of the Council the General Secretary presented the manuscript of a brochure on Protestant Principles and Practices. (Min. 716) This document, in French, was taken

almost entirely from one which had been prepared especially for one of the member missions of the Council.

(b) At the request of the Council the Chair appointed a Committee, consisting of the Reverends R. Anderson, Birkey, Eicher, Jones, Morrison and Reynolds to study the document presented and report back to the present Council Meeting.

(c) This Committee later reported:

- (1) That a statement on Protestant Principles and Practices in French which was approved by the member missions of the Council and could be given to Government Officials and to many in Congo unfamiliar with the Protestant Faith would be of exceedingly great value.
 - (2) That as such a statement is definitely doctrinal in nature and the opinions of all the Member Missions would need to be considered, the Committee recommended that the document as presented by the General Secretary be mimeographed and copies sent to all Member Missions.
 - (3) That each Mission be requested to submit to the General Secretary in writing as soon as possible, their approval or otherwise of the document, stating what words or statements they would wish changed, if any.
 - (4) That further definite action on the question of this brochure be taken at the next Meeting of the Council, if possible.
- (d) The Council adopted the Committee report,

it being stressed that the Christian Fellowship and cooperation now so greatly enjoyed by all the Protestant Missions in Congo was of such vital value and was so sacred a possession that, important as a Statement on Principles and Practices was, it must not be allowed in any way to mar that Fellowship. It was thought that where the beliefs and practices of certain member missions differed from those of others these differences could be clearly stated in the text of the brochure or in an appendix.

756. *Visit of Monsieur François Vandendorre.* The Council was honoured by a visit by M. François Vandendorre, Directeur au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique, who was on a special mission to Congo from Belgium at the request of the Colonial Minister, in connection with the setting up in Congo of Lay Schools for European Children.

Mr. Vandendorre addressed the Council and explained the Government plans in connection with lay schools and then kindly answered many questions put to him by Councillors.

The General Secretary thanked Mr. Vandendorre on behalf of the Council for his visit and for the valuable information and help he had given.

757. *School for white children.* The Rev. Elmer Hall, Secretary of Committee on Schools for White Children, (Min. 713) submitted the following report:

(a) The committee has gathered much information from missionaries connected with existing schools

for white children in Congo, such as the A.P.C.M. school at Lubondai.

- (b) Mr. Coxill and the Committee Secretary visited three sites in the vicinity of Kimpese and found two very suitable for a school of the sort under consideration, including such features as elevation, breeze, freedom from tsetse flies, accessibility, clay, sand, forest and soil favorable and water supply possible.
- (c) The assurance that a government lay school system was to be set up in the near future gave a pause to further planning for the school with the hope that there might be something in the Government scheme which would meet mission needs.
- (d) The necessity of an inter-mission project of such value that parents separated by great distances would be led to confide their children to the new school presents problems such as a single mission enterprise would not. This fact seems to justify our further waiting to see the outcome of the government proposal.
- (e) In the meantime we shall be on the alert to discover how to further our intention to present definite proposals that may be commended to the missions and the Home Boards.

The Council agreed to accept the above interim Report and requested the Committee to continue its activities.

758 *Missionary Aviation Fellowship.* The General Secretary reported on correspondence which he had

conducted during the past year with the Missionary Aviation Fellowship in London and read a letter, written by Dr. Stanley Browne, reporting on two meetings of the Fellowship which he had attended in London, one on December 18th 1945, and another, a sub committee meeting, on January 8th 1946.

The Council received these reports with keen interest and satisfaction and the General Secretary was requested to continue his negotiations with the M. A. F. so that, if possible, the services of this fellowship may be made available for the Missions of Congo.

The Council earnestly hopes that one or more members of the M. A. F. will attend the West Central African Conference in July so that the whole scheme may be further discussed and the flying conditions and actual needs of our missions in Congo may be more fully known to the Fellowship.

759. *Subversive movements.* The Council took cognizance of the activity of certain dangerous movements in Congo. After full discussion the following action was taken: The Council once again goes on record as opposing the spread in Belgian Congo of the movement variously known as "Jehovah's Witnesses", "Kitawala", "Watch Tower", and "International Bible Students Association". It recommends to all Protestant Missions active positive Christian teaching to counteract the anarchistic and irresponsible character of this movement; and counsels moderation and self-control in the emotional expression of Christian experience.

760. *Libre examen.* It was agreed that Dr. Carpenter be asked to secure (or have prepared) material on "Libre Examen" suitable for use in Congo.

761. *Bible Teaching.* It was agreed that the Council express to the Missions its conviction that more adequate Bible and doctrinal teaching should be afforded to Protestant Christians throughout Congo, with special emphasis on the central historic truths of the Christian faith; and its sense of the necessity of jointly providing suitable courses for this purpose, especially in French. To this end it is recommended that space be set aside in the "Evangile en Afrique" for this purpose, and that the General Secretary of the C. P. C. be asked to explore the practicability of providing correspondence courses, preferably with the aid of Protestant leaders in Belgium and elsewhere.

762. *Opening new Stations* After the consideration of one or two unfortunate disagreements over the occupation of territory, the Council took the following action: In the interest of Christian harmony and effective service, for which the Council has stood for so many years in Congo, the Council most earnestly requests that no Mission in Congo open a new post in proximity to a neighboring Mission or Missions without the knowledge and approval of the other Mission or Missions. Should agreement not be reached the Council requests the Missions concerned to allow the Council to be the arbitrating body.

763. *Polygamy.* The Council discussed the efforts that were being made by the Belgian Colonial Government to discourage polygamy and encourage and

strengthen monogamous marriage. The General Secretary was requested to write to the Governor General on behalf of the Council to express the deep appreciation of Protestant missions with the Gouvernement policy in this matter

764. *Historical sketches for use at W. C. A. Conference.* It was agreed that the General Secretary request each Mission in the Belgian Congo to furnish him with a short interesting historical sketch of the Mission, of not more than 300 words. These histories will be compiled in a booklet to be printed or mimeographed for use at the West Central Africa Conference.

765 *Minutes.* It was agreed that the minutes of this present meeting should be printed.

766. *Vote of thanks to the President.* It was agreed that the Council give a rising vote of thanks and appreciation to the retiring President, Dr. Tuttle, for his valuable aid and guidance of this Council Meeting.

767. *Vote of thanks to the B. M. S.* It was agreed that a rising vote of thanks be extended to the Baptist Missionary Society for the use of its church building and for the many courtesies and kindnesses its staff has shown during this session of the Council.

768 *Next regular Meeting.* It was agreed that the next regular meeting be held in February, 1947, at the call of the Secretary; and that the kind invitation of the M. M. C. C. to meet at one of their stations be accepted if practicable; otherwise the meeting will be held at Léopoldville.

769. *Special meeting of council in July, 1946.* It was agreed that a special meeting of the C. P. C. be held in connection with the West Central Africa Conference in July, at which occasion consultation may take place with Home Board representatives on certain topics.

770. *Adjournment.* The 1946 meeting of the Council was adjourned with Prayer.

President :

Dr. GLEN W. TUTTLE

Minute Secretary :

Rev. FREDERICK L. ROWE

General Secretary :

Rev. H. WAKELIN COXILL.