Editorial Notes

Welcome to New Delhi

We are most delighted that from 18th November to 6th December, 1961, the third Assembly of the World Council of Churches is going to meet at the Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. It is a matter of deep joy that official representatives of about a hundred and eighty ecclesiastical bodies from about sixty countries as well as some of the very eminent Christian leaders and theologians from many lands will be coming to India to take part in its deliberations. The Editorial Board of *The Indian Journal of Theology* would like to take this opportunity to accord a very sincere and hearty welcome to the Assembly as also to all those who participate in it.

Although as an organization the World Council of Churches is only thirteen years old, it has fully justified its existence during this short period of time. The very large number of Churches that constitute its membership is a clear indication of the confidence and trust which the World Council has been able to awaken in them. Besides, we learn that a number of ecclesiastical bodies, including the Russian Orthodox Church, have recently applied for membership in it, and that the Roman Catholic Church will be sending Visitors to the New Delhi meeting of the Assembly.

The significance of the work which the World Council of Churches is trying to do cannot be gainsaid. For it aims to maintain itself as 'an instrument forged by the churches to enable them to fulfil their common calling in witness and service and to prepare for a clearer manifestation of the unity of the Church'. Even though our Lord intended His Church to be one undivided fellowship of all those who believe in Him, factions arose in it from very early times and divisions that continue to our day began in the fifth century. Then from the sixteenth century the Church in the West came under a process of proliferation. In other words, the one Christian fellowship has come to lie buried in the ruins of a disunited Christendom. It is in the context of this unfortunate fact that the World Council of Churches has, in the providence of God, been organized. It offers itself as a means through which the Churches associated with it will be able, on the one hand, to recognize and express, in so far as they can, the unity that already exists among them, and on the other, to work together in areas of common concern. The World Council of Churches does not function over against the Churches, for its *raison d'être*

is their willing co-operation ; neither does it have a programme to unify the Churches in the world, for that is a matter for them to work out as they are constrained by the Holy Spirit. At the same time the World Council of Churches offers the many organized bodies into which the one Christian fellowship has come to be divided a great opportunity, even in the midst of their disunited existence, to live and work together, unitedly facing the many problems confronting them, and above all to grow into the fullness of unity for which our Lord has so earnestly prayed (St. John 17:20-21).

This is an extremely delicate function for the World Council of Churches to fulfil, and we believe that the meeting of the Assembly in New Delhi will be a step further up the ladder by which the Holy Spirit guides the Churches to attain to its achievement. With all best wishes we extend a very warm welcome to New Delhi to all those who are associated with the meeting of the third Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

We are publishing in this number of *The Indian Journal of Theology* three of the remaining papers read at the Indian Christian Theological Conference held at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Madras, from 28th to 31st December, 1960. The last two papers read there, we hope, will be published in the next number of this *Journal.*

Therefore, as I have already said, He caused man to become one with God. For unless a man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished. And again: unless God had freely given salvation, we would not now possess it securely. And unless man had been joined to God, he could never become a partaker of incorruptibility. For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by His relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God, while He revealed God to man.

ST. IRENAEUS