

## Abstract

The term “ecumenical” in theology today generally refers to the movement which seeks to achieve external unity among the world’s denominationally divided churches. The original meaning of the word (from *oikeo*: to dwell, inhabit; and *oikos*: house, household; *oikoumene*: the whole inhabited earth[Lk. 4: 5]) has lapsed into disuse, as did the later development of the sense of a common basic attitude or into disuse, as did the later development of the sense of a common basic attitude or doctrinal consensus by the “inhabitants” of the surface of the earth or the members of the church. A more modern, comprehensive meaning has since been developed: “ecumenical” means the entirety of the church, which, looking back to its common original traditional and looking forward to its hope, seeks a commonality in doctrine and in the life of faith. Movement toward unity or cooperation among the Christian churches. The first major step in the direction of ecumenism was the International Missionary Conference of 1910, a gathering of protestant. Several Protestant denominations inaugurated a Life and Work Conference (on social and practical problems) in 1925 and a Faith and Order Conference (on church doctrine and governance) in 1927. After World War II the World Council of Churches (WCC) was established; the International Missionary Conference joined it in 1961. The Roman Catholic church also has shown strong interest in improving interchurch relations since the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 65) and, with the patriarch of Constantinople, has lifted the excommunication of 1054. The Eastern Orthodox church was active in the movement since 1920 and joined the WCC at its inception. The more conservative or fundamentalist Protestant denominations have generally refrained from involvement. Another important factor in 20th-century ecumenism was the creation of united churches that reconcile splintered sects, such as the United Church of Christ (1957) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1988).