

# Dr. Blake, Pioneer in Collaboration

By JAMES C. O'NEILL

Geneva — (NC) — A young-looking, 59-year-old ex-American football player from Princeton University now holds the top administrative post in the World Council of Churches.

He is Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk (chief executive) of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. He has attracted attention and admiration far beyond the limits of his own church for his leadership in the ecumenical movement, both on a national and international scale. He is also well known for his support of the civil rights movement in the United States.

DR. BLAKE was elected WCC secretary-general here at a Feb. 11 meeting of its Central Committee, a policy-making body of the organization which carries out the desires and programs of the General Assembly of the WCC. He succeeds Dr. William Visser 't Hooft, Dutch-born theologian who has held the general secretariat ever since the WCC was established in 1948.

This means the American secretary-general is the only other person to hold this key post within the WCC since it was founded 23 years ago. The post is important because, while the WCC is not a super-church but only an instrument of its member churches, it nevertheless is the most potent organized body within the framework of Protestant-Orthodox relations and in their area of the ecumenical movement.

In accepting his nomination, Dr. Blake declared: "The ecumenical movement is now old enough and has been influential enough so that no Christian church has been unaffected by it. I believe the World Council of Churches is the most important instrument so far formed by that movement."

As secretary general, Dr. Blake will be the top administrative officer for an organization representing 214 member churches and eight other associate groups with memberships of less than 10,000. The major churches remaining outside of the WCC are the Roman Catholic Church and a number of the conservative evangelical churches, such as the Southern Baptist Convention (USA) and others.

Born Nov. 7, 1906, in St. Louis, Mo., the future WCC general secretary graduated with honors from Princeton University in 1928, with a bachelor's degree in philosophy, three years as guard on the varsity football team and a rating as an All-American.

He was briefly a teacher at Forman Christian College at Lahore, India, and from 1929 to 1930 did graduate studies at



New York—(RNS)—Dr. Eugene Carson Blake (left) meets the press moments after his arrival at Kennedy International Airport from the World Council of Churches' Central Committee meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, where he was named general secretary of the international organization. Asked to elaborate on the Vietnam situation, the United Presbyterian chief administrator called the WCC's statement urging immediate peace steps a "balanced" document and described U.S. policy as "outdated" and "self-defeating" if it continues on a unilateral basis. Dr. Blake said he would assume his WCC post on Dec. 1.

New College, Edinburgh, Scotland, to prepare himself for theology. In 1932, he received his bachelor's in theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Discussing his formative theological period in the '30s, Dr. Blake said that two men most affected him both theologically and personally. One was Reinhold Niebuhr, who "expressed continental theological developments in the American idiom," said Dr. Blake. The other was the late Anglican Archbishop William Temple, of Canterbury, who was among the early champions of the ecumenical movement.

Asked about modern theological trends, particularly the "death of God" development, Dr. Blake said the "questions they are raising now are not as new as some think they are, particularly the secular press. We were studying them also years ago."

From 1932 to 1935 he was assistant pastor at the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas, New York. In 1935, he became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Albany, N.Y., where he remained until 1940, when he became pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Pasadena,

Calif. He remained there until he was chosen stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA in 1951. In his new capacity he will in all likelihood relinquish this office since it is the executive office of his church.

Asked what he felt are the main problems facing the WCC at the time he was chosen its general secretary, Dr. Blake said they are "the same as those facing all Christian churches." The problems are, he said, how to communicate the unchanging message of the Gospel in a rapidly changing society; the problem of church renewal and the problem of how to keep size and organization from standing in the way of what the churches and the WCC represent.

The holder of 17 honorary degrees as well as awards from the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith of New York for his leadership in the cause of interracial justice and the fight for human rights, Dr. Blake has united his efforts with religious and social action groups beyond the strict limits of his own communion and of American Protestantism.

Executive and Central committee of the World Council of Churches since 1954. From 1954 to 1961 he was chairman of the WCC's Finance Committee and since 1961 he has been chairman of the WCC's Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service.

In this latter office he was involved in the preliminary discussions which have led to a joint effort by the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church for emergency and relief aid for famine in India and Africa. This program is the largest organized cooperative aid effort between the two bodies so far.

In accepting his election as general secretary, Dr. Blake pledged himself to continue his efforts and that of the WCC to continue pressing forward with work of achieving a united Christianity.

"The World Council of Churches is a community of persons, churches, faith and theological convictions that will remain important in the future only as it remains and becomes more fully an effective instrument of the ecumenical movement. The primary thing is the movement under God for the unity and renewal of the Church and its mission.

"I need hardly remind you that this mission includes a ministry of reconciliation not only of God and man and of confessional and church divisions but also a reconciliation across all the divisions of our world — divisions caused by geography, culture, race, poverty, affluence, ideology, sin and fear, unless reconciled by the Gospel, will prevent world peace and ever threaten world disaster."

Whether wearing his black clerical suit and exchanging the "kiss of peace" with newly arrived Orthodox prelates at the Geneva Ecumenical Center or relaxing in rough beds in the lobby of his hotel near the center, Dr. Blake radiates a warmth and a feeling of dynamic competence which should stand him in good stead in his new and not easy post.

The division of Christianity on theological grounds is wide, even within the World Council of Churches, and wider still outside of it. When he assumes the post later this year, he will know well the tasks before him. But, as he says, "one cannot meet these 250 major Christian churches and I do not believe this is God's will."

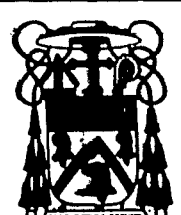
He will hold the post of general secretary until the WCC general assembly is convened in 1968. While it is up to that meeting to confirm him in the job in the future, he has pledged himself fully to the ecumenical movement wherever it manifests itself: "From this post I am sure that I will be interested in all forms of ecumenical action. Every church reunion where there is a possibility of unity is a step toward unity."



## Bishop Kearney's Appointments

MARCH

- 4 Friday—St. Joseph's Church—St. Monica Sodality Mass—9:00 a.m.  
St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 5 Saturday—Mercy Motherhouse—L.F.C.A. Mass—8:30 a.m.  
St. Agnes High School—Catholic Theater Luncheon—12:30 p.m.  
St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 6 Sunday—St. Joseph Church—K. of C. Mass—7:30 a.m.  
St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 7 Monday—St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 8 Tuesday—St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 9 Wednesday—St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 10 Thursday—St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 11 Friday—St. Francis Xavier Church—Novena of Grace—7:30 p.m.
- 12 Saturday—St. Francis Xavier Church—Closing of Novena of Grace, Blessing of Church and Low Mass—7:30 p.m.
- 13 Sunday—St. Joseph Church—Postal Employees Holy Name Society Mass—7:30 a.m.  
St. Peter and Paul, Elmira—Confirmation—3:30 p.m.  
Mark Twain Hotel, Elmira—Catholic Charities Dinner—7:00 p.m.
- 14 Monday—St. Anthony, Elmira—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.
- 15 Wednesday—Old St. Mary's Church—Preside and preach at Serr Club Mass—7:30 p.m.
- 17 Thursday—Corpus Christi Church—Preside and preach at Solemn Pontifical Mass in honor of St. Patrick—10:00 a.m.  
Nazareth College—St. Patrick's Day Program—4:00 p.m.  
Manger Hotel—Knights of Equity Dinner—7:00 p.m.
- 18 Friday—Christ the King Church—Golden Jubilee Mass of Brother Bradley—9:00 a.m.  
Nazareth College—Glee Club Concert—8:00 p.m.
- 19 Saturday—Nazareth Motherhouse—Preside and preach at Solemn High Mass on Patronal Feast—11:00 a.m.
- 20 Sunday—St. Patrick's, Macedon—Low Mass—10:00 a.m.  
Mother of Sorrows Church—Confirmation—2:30 p.m.  
Mother of Sorrows Church—Confirmation—3:45 p.m.
- 21 Monday—Our Lady of Good Counsel—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.
- 22 Tuesday—St. John the Evangelist Church—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.
- 25 Friday—St. Stephen's Church, Geneva—Capuchin Priesthood Ordinations—10:00 a.m.  
St. Francis of Assisi—Family Rosary for Peace—7:00 p.m.
- 26 Saturday—Mercy Motherhouse—Guild of the Little Flower Mass—10:00 a.m.
- 27 Sunday—Bausch and Lomb Cafeteria—Nocturnal Adoration Society Breakfast—8:00 a.m.  
Corpus Christi Church—Confirmation—4:00 p.m.
- 28 Monday—Manger Hotel—Jesuit Mission Dinner—7:15 p.m.
- 29 Tuesday—Blessed Sacrament Church—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.



## Bishop Casey's Appointments

MARCH

- 1 Tuesday—St. Bernard's Seminary—"Fourth Session, Vatican II"—7:15 p.m.
- 2 Wednesday—Our Lady of Mercy High School Auditorium—Sisters of Monroe County—Vatican Council Talk—7:15 p.m.
- 4 Friday—Sheraton Hotel—First Friday Luncheon Club—12:15 p.m.  
Sacred Heart Cathedral—Opening of Novena of Grace—7:45 p.m.
- 7 Monday—Becket Hall—Vatican Council Talk—7:15 p.m.
- 8 Tuesday—St. Cecilia Church—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
- 10 Thursday—St. James Church—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
- 13 Sunday—Cardinal Mooney High School Auditorium—Low Mass, Confirmation for Holy Name Parish—9:30 a.m.  
Holy Rosary Church—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
- 16 Wednesday—St. Thomas the Apostle, Irondequoit—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
- 17 Thursday—St. Patrick's Church, Victor—Low Mass—7:30 p.m.
- 19 Saturday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Pontifical Mass in honor of St. Joseph—9:00 a.m.
- 25 Friday—Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Albany—Consecration of Archbishop Edward Ryan—10:00 a.m.
- 27 Sunday—St. Boniface Church—Confirmation—4:30 p.m.  
Eastman Theater—Community Ecumenical Service—7:30 p.m.
- 28 Monday—Manger Hotel—Jesuit Mission Dinner—7:15 p.m.
- 29 Tuesday—St. Margaret Mary Church—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
- 30 Wednesday—St. Lawrence Church—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.

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# Churchmen who Shaped Ecumenical Era

(By Religious News Service)

Retiring this year are two internationally renowned Protestant leaders who have played giant-sized roles in an age of accelerating ecumenism and vital confrontations between religion and the secular world.

One is Dr. Willem Adolph Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, who was recently listed by a Roman Catholic prelate — Archbishop Paul J. Hallinan of Atlanta, Ga. — as foremost among ten "outstanding Protestant ecumenists" to whom Christians "owe much." (Named by the WCC's Central Committee to take over his post later this year was Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, chief administrator of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., who is renowned both for his leadership in Church union and Christian social action programs.)

The other is Bishop Otto Dibelius of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Berlin-Brandenburg, a former co-president of the World Council of Churches, who has been rated as one of Germany's most forthright and consistent defenders of Christian rights against totalitarian oppression. Bishop Dibelius will retire March 31 and meanwhile his successor will be chosen by the Church's Eastern and Western Synods, meeting respectively in East and West Berlin.

It has been said of Bishop Dibelius, now 85, that he has lived with authoritarian systems all his life; he was barely ten when Prussian militarism began to lay the seeds of modern Germany's swift march to power. But it was a quarter, if not less challenging atmosphere, out of which Dr. Visser 't Hooft was to emerge and finally attain what is regarded as one of the most important executive posts in Christianity.

An ordained pastor of the Netherlands Reformed Church — he was born at Haarlem on Sept. 20, 1900 — Dr. Visser 't Hooft took his doctorate at the University of Leyden with a dissertation, "The Background of the Social Gospel in America," based on material gathered during a visit to the United States. In 1924 he became secretary of the World Council of Churches, and in 1931 was made general secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft attended both the "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order" Confer-



BISHOP DIBELIUS

ences held respectively, at Oxford, England, and Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1937. Both of these meetings agreed to the creation of a new council which was to "continue to forward" within a single organization the purposes of the two movements for cooperation through the Churches.

When the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches was formed, Dr. Visser 't Hooft was made general secretary. In August, 1948, when the Council finally was formally constituted at Amsterdam, he became its general secretary.

The WCC has since grown from a total of 134 Protestant and Orthodox member bodies in 39 countries to 214 member and eight associated bodies in some 90 countries and territories. It has already held three Assemblies — the second at Evanston, Ill., in 1954 and the third at New Delhi, India, in 1961 — and its fourth assembly is planned for Uppsala, Sweden, in July, 1968.

Meanwhile, under the guiding hand of its general secretary — a man of sharp theological training, sure diplomatic instincts, and a fluency in English, German and French as well as his native Dutch — the World Council has shown an extraordinary growth in its first 18 years. It has, to cite a few examples:

- Established large-scale relief programs that annually assist more than 10,000 victims of natural disasters and political upheavals.

• Sponsored programs for

the relief and rehabilitation of hundreds of thousands of war refugees and displaced persons.

- Created the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (jointly with the former International Missionary Council) and through which it speaks and acts on behalf of the member Churches.

- Acted as a link between member Churches and rendered service to them in cases of special need.

- Established an Ecumenical Institute at Cologny, near Geneva, to promote study of issues of common concern to the Churches.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft has caused for special satisfaction in the fact that the Council has helped overcome political divisions to such an extent that its membership covers both sides of the Iron Curtain. This was evidenced most notably by the 1961 decision of the Russian Orthodox Church to join the Council.

More impressive still has been the rapport between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church. This has involved the Vatican sending observers to WCC meetings, and the WCC naming observers to the Second Vatican Council.

A recent development has been the visit paid to the WCC's Geneva headquarters by Augustin Cardinal Bea, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. This was preceded by the creation of a joint Vatican-WCC "working group" which has started both to explore theological questions and foster cooperation in matters of common concern.

Addressing the WCC's Central Committee at its Geneva meeting last week, Dr. Visser 't Hooft took into the future and the challenge with which his American successor must cope.

World Christianity, he said, stands at points of vital decision in both the effort to heal breaches between religious groups and the search for ways to relate most effectively to social, political and economic affairs.

He said that while at the present time "practically all the main confessional families have accepted, in principle, that they have an ecumenical task to fulfill . . . from now on our chief concern must be to deepen rather than to broaden the ecumenical movement. The main task now is the task of con-

centration rather than expansion."

Both Dr. Visser 't Hooft and Dr. Blake, his successor, were among 12 contemporary religious leaders at a gala banquet given in New York in 1963 by Time magazine to honor 289 persons from all walks of life who had appeared on publication's cover.

The guests also included Dr. Dibelius, who was Time's cover subject April 8, 1953. This was the year when the Lutheran short grey beard and his twinkling blue eyes, had warned the East German Communist regime against nourishing "the deceptive belief that the church can be easily and quickly done away with." Only weeks before Soviet Zone authorities had arrested and imprisoned Protestant churchmen as "anti-state reactionaries."

Now withdrawing as head of the Berlin-Brandenburg Church — a post which made him nominal ruler of Germany's 40 million Protestants — Dr. Dibelius had previously resigned as chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany.

A symbol of the unity of German Protestants regardless of the partition of the country, the bishop — long a bete noir to the Communists — reached what the Reds probably regarded as the peak of defiance in 1959 by writing a letter to Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, head of the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church (VELKD) for which he was accused of urging civil disobedience to the East German government by charging that neither it nor any totalitarian state constituted a "Supreme authority" to which Christians owe allegiance in any biblical sense.

In his letter, Bishop Dibelius discussed the 13th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans which had been used to explain what many scored as the passive acceptance of Hitler by the German Christians. The text reads: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."

St. Paul's words, Bishop Dibelius contended, do not apply to the East German or any other totalitarian regime because they have no claim to the biblical status of "the powers that be." In such states, he said, "there is no right in



VISSER 'T HOOFT

the Christian sense of the word . . . Paul's words are set aside."

Often labeled "a NATO and atom-bomb bishop" and "an enemy of the German people" by East German critics, Bishop Dibelius had earlier fallen afoul of the Nazi regime.

A marked man in the Hitler era because of his courageous anti-Nazi preaching, he was arrested on a number of occasions for brief periods. He was forbidden to travel, and his driving license was suspended. His home was a damp, dark underground apartment in Berlin's Lichterfelde from which he maintained a clandestine correspondence with other churchmen and kept in touch with the various pliers of the German resistance. The day after Hitler's suicide he emerged from Berlin's underground to become its first postwar Protestant bishop.

With one totalitarian era over, Bishop Dibelius had to begin his struggle with another that was even more rigid and relentless. His greatest concern in recent years has been to preserve the unity of the Evangelical Church in Germany in a politically divided nation. At the same time, he has continued to speak out against every encroachment on religious rights in the Soviet Zone.

When he celebrated his 85th birthday last May, congratulatory messages poured in on him from many parts of the world. Editorials in the press and radio hailed him as the outstanding personality of Protestantism today. A broadcast message from West German President Heinrich Lübke praised the church leader for having stood unwavering and strong in faith against the spirit of evil and godlessness. Through his example, the President added, the bishop had given men new confidence and hope.

# Holy

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