Karsten Lehmann (Ed.)

TALKING DIALOGUE

ELEVEN EPISODES IN THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE MOVEMENT

KAICIID

DIALOGUE
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KAICIID – BEYOND DIALOGUE

Talking Dialogue

KAICIID –
Beyond Dialogue Series

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Edited by
Patrice Brodeur and Mohammed Abu-Nimer

Volume 2

Talking Dialogue

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Eleven Episodes in the History of the Modern
Interreligious Dialogue Movement

Edited by
Karsten Lehmann

In cooperation with
Patrice Brodeur

DE GRUYTER

KAICIID DIALOGUE CENTRE

KAICIID – Beyond Dialogue Series

The KAICIID Dialogue Centre is an international intergovernmental organization whose mandate is to promote the use of interreligious and intercultural dialogue worldwide in order to enhance understanding and cooperation to foster better social cohesion and inclusion as well as to prevent and transform conflicts towards peace and reconciliation.

This KAICIID Beyond Dialogue Series is part of the KAICIID Dialogue Knowledge Hub, which provides different online tools to overcome ignorance, stereotypes and prejudice in a long term process that aims towards developing a sustainable culture of dialogue globally.

The KAICIID Beyond Dialogue Series contributes to those general aims by presenting the results of in-depth dialogues and analyses between different forms of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' involved in various aspects of interreligious dialogue in particular. This series seeks to bring together theoreticians and practitioners in the specific field of interreligious dialogue from various regions of the world. An emphasis is placed on increasing interdisciplinary and cross-sectorial exchanges to bring greater understanding of this growing field of human activity and knowledge. Based upon cutting-edge research, this series intends to trigger new learning processes and to translate them into applied knowledge to be disseminated broadly.

The three volumes of this closed series are:
– Vol 1: Patrice Brodeur (ed.), *Dialogue beyond Dialogue – Perspectives from 'the outside' and ,the inside'*.
– Vol. 2: Karsten Lehmann (ed.), *Talking Dialogue – Eleven Episodes in the History of the Modern Interreligious Dialogue Movement*.
– Vol. 3: Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Renata Smith (eds.), *Improving the Impact of Interreligious Dialogue – On the Evaluation of Interreligious Dialogue Activities*.

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Introduction

Understanding the Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) Movement

1 Introduction: Refocusing the Perspective on IRD

The last two decades have seen a dynamic increase in the number of activities that are explicitly linked to the notion of interreligious dialogue (IRD). All over the world, empirical research projects underline the establishment of highly complex local scenes of these types of initiatives.[1] Especially at the national level, it is possible to identify a significant increase in dialogue organizations – either based upon state initiatives or the input of religious authorities.[2] And in the course of these developments, interreligious dialogue has become a significant topic on the international political agenda, too. It is no longer restricted to some experts of religiously affiliated non-governmental organizations (NGOs). IRD has also been put on the agenda of heads of state, as well as intergovernmental organizations.[3]

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1 Jürgen Micksch and Ingrid Hoensch Hoensch, *Miteinander vor Ort: kommunale Islamforen* (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2011); Council of Europe, ed., *Gods in the City: Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue at Local Level* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007).
2 Delphine Dussert-Galinat, *Le Dialogue Interreligieux: Entre Discours Officiels et Initiatives Locales* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013); Gritt Klinkhammer, *Interreligiöse und interkulturelle Dialoge mit MuslimInnen in Deutschland: Eine Quantitative und Qualitative Studie* (Bremen / Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2011); Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter: Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Balkans* (London Gordonsville: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011).
3 Katherine Marshall, *Global Institutions of Religion: Ancient Movers, Modern Shakers* (London / New York: Routledge, 2013); Karsten Lehmann, "Construction of the Concept of Religion in the United Nations' General Assembly: From Human Rights to Dialogue and Harmony," in *Handbook of the Changing World Language Map*, eds. Stanley D. Brunn and Roland Kehrein, (Basel, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2018): 1–16; Karsten Lehmann, "Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) in international politics: From the Margins of the religious Field to the Center of Civil Society," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Religion in Global Society*, eds. Jayeel. S. Cornelio, François Gauthier, Tuomas Martikainen and Linda Woodhead, (Abingdon: Routledge, in print).

These developments form the basis of a growing corpus of research-literature that focuses on two main areas: First, present-day researchers are dealing with the overall development of what is frequently described as the *Interreligious Dialogue Movement.* To name but two classic examples: In 1996, Jean-Claude Basset published the most inclusive history of IRD that gives a detailed description of more than 100 years of diverse dialogue initiatives and organizations with a particular focus on their conceptual developments.[4] On the other side of the spectrum, Catherine Cornille has recently published the first conclusive handbook in the field that combines focal points of conceptual discussions with case studies on the history of dialogue activities between different religious traditions.[5]

Second, two decades of research have produced a fascinating set of analyses on the abstract concept of IRD. They document the different usages of the notion of IRD in a detailed manner and explain their philosophical and theological foundations all over the world. In the opening remarks to her *Companion to inter-religious dialogue,* Catherine Cornille sums up the hypothesis that stands behind most of those analyses:

> Since the middle of the twentieth century, the notion of dialogue has become increasingly common in describing or prescribing the proper relationship between religions. Rather than competing with one another over territories, converts, or claims, religions have generally come to adopt a more conciliatory and constructive attitude towards one another, collaborating in social projects and exchanging views on common religious questions.[6]

These two areas of present-day research form, however, only half of the story: Present-day research is missing a systematic look at the very reasons, why IRD has become such a significant phenomenon and how it has been implemented in different social settings: What are those active in IRD actually doing? Are there groups and individuals that are systematically excluded from IRD activities? What socio-political motives underlie day-to-day IRD activities? What happens inside the organizations that form the centre of most IRD activities? To what

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4 Jean-Claude Basset, *Le Dialogue Interreligieux: Chance ou Déchéance de la Foi* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1996). See also: Paul Hedges, *Contemporary Muslim-Christian Encounters: Developments, Diversity, and Dialogues* (London / New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2015).

5 Catherine Cornille, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2013). Another classical introduction to the field: Martin Forward, *Inter-Religious Dialogue: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001).

6 Catherine Cornille, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), xii.

extent are they able to implement the general ideals of IRD into their concrete activities? What can we learn from success and failure in the field of IRD?

In sum, these questions indicate an area we have but anecdotal knowledge about. So far, researchers have primarily taken the self-presentations of IRD-practitioners at face value. They have tried to systematize their perceptions of what IRD has to do in a normative way. They have only insufficiently tried to look at IRD as a socio-cultural phenomenon that has to be analysed empirically and might help to understand the role of religion in present-day societies.

This is exactly the objective that stands at the centre of the present book. It wants to understand the socio-cultural place of IRD activities. In this sense, the present publication aims to be 'talking dialogue'. It is targeting the concrete day-to-day activities that form the global field of IRD. Consequently, the book puts the emphasis on two aspects of IRD activities:

- First, the book focuses on those organizations that stand at the centre of the modern history of multilateral IRD[7] and have shaped the respective activities on an international level.
- Second, it zooms in on concrete episodes in the founding periods of those organizations that underline the successes, as well as failures that have shaped those organizations.

Before further embarking onto this journey, there is, however, a need to clarify two central categories that stand at the centre of the analyses that form the following eleven chapters.

2 Central Categories: IRD Activities and IRD Movement

The following categorical reflections are based upon a rather abstract consideration: in a Weberian sense, every strand of empirical research starts from a number of conceptualizations that are directly taken from the field – in our case the

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[7] This book focuses on multilateral IRD organizations, except in one case that is initially bilateral (i.e. Christian-Jewish) because that story is seminal to how the World Council of Churches came to develop its own multilateral and many bilateral IRD activities. Contributions to the international IRD movement can also include other examples of bilateral organizations, such as the International Council of Christians and Jews (whose roots go back to 1928) and The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought based in Jordan since 1980, which began regular Muslim-Christian dialogue activities from 1984 onwards.

field of IRD.[8] The most significant of those assumptions is the conviction that there actually is a concrete socio-cultural activity called interreligious dialogue that is distinct from other day-to-day activities such as inter- or intra-religious dispute, conflict-mediation or political discussion.

Accordingly, all the analyses published in this book start from the self-perception of the people active in IRD, in as far as there are people and organizations that self-identify as doing dialogue. In addition, however, the analyses also take into consideration that the self-descriptions do not necessarily coincide with the perceptions of other parties in the field. Activities that are described as interreligious dialogue can e.g. also, be perceived as attempts of proselytization or a mere camouflage of political activities.[9] This also has to be taken into consideration, if one wants to better understand the very phenomena in question.

On this basis, two further assumptions need clarification. The first of these assumptions is linked to the question of how to conceptualize the notion of IRD activities on the level of social activity. What characterizes interreligious dialogue activities – e.g. as opposed to the concept of IRD in philosophical or theological terms? Second, to what extent does it make sense to link the ideal of IRD to a specific social form – i.e. an IRD movement? The next paragraphs elaborate on these two questions respectively.

2.1 IRD Activities as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon

Even the most basic, introductory works on interreligious dialogue make it very clear that this notion is a complex one. Authors such as Leonard Swidler, Diana Eck, or Marcus Braybrooke have repeatedly made the point that – on the one hand – the concept of dialogue looks back upon a long history that dates at least back to ancient philosophy.[10] On the other hand, their analyses highlight

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8 Max Weber, "Die ‚Objektivität' Sozialwissenschaftlicher und Sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis," in *Schriften zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Michael Sukale (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1991, first: 1904): 21–101; Nicholas Gane, *Max Weber and Postmodern Theory: Rationalization Versus Re-Enchantment* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire New York: Palgrave, 2002); Basit B. Koshul, *The Post-modern Significance of Max Weber's Legacy: Disenchanting Deisenchantment* (New York / Basingstoke: Springer, 2015).

9 Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Timothy Fitzgerald, *Religion and Politics in International Relations: The Modern Myth* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011).

10 Diana L. Eck, *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003); Leonard J. Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Study: Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Marcus Bray-

that the concept of IRD is a rather recent one that has a wide range of different equivalents in different languages.[11]

As far as the present argument is concerned, it is interesting to see that most of these reflections on the concept of IRD argue from philosophical or theological backgrounds and focus on the relationship between different worldviews. In her article on IRD in the international handbook *Understanding interreligious relations*, Marianne Moyaert captures these discussions very clearly in the following way:

> Dialogue is connected deep down with the search for truth and a striving for wisdom. It excludes fanaticism. A fanatic is a person who, convinced that he is absolutely right, locks himself up in his own position and refuses any critical testing or challenge. Dialogue presupposes precisely the engagement of people with critical minds, who question the obvious and also allow others to challenge them.[12]

During the last few years, this almost exclusively conceptual approach has been put under scrutiny. An increasing amount of literature focuses on IRD activities and questions any immediate nexus between concept and activity. To highlight two dimensions of these discussions: first, the analysis of IRD has been integrated into the more general research on concrete (historic and present day) encounters between individuals or groups of individuals from different religious traditions. It has become very clear that IRD has to be seen as one option of interreligious encounters.[13] Second, there is a rapidly emerging strand of re-

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brooke, *Widening Vision: The World Congress of Faiths and the Growing Interfaith Movement* (Oxford: LuLu, 2013).

11 In Spanish e. g. the following words are used: for interreligious dialogue, Diálogo interreligioso; for interfaith dialogue, Diálogo interconfesional; for dialogue between religions, Diálogo entre religiones. In Chinese one finds the following equivalents for interreligious dialogue: 宗教對話 跨宗教對話 宗教間對話. In Russian, one would use for interreligious dialogue, межрелигиозный диалог; for inter-confessional dialogue, межконфессионный диалог; and for dialogue among religions, диалог между религиями. Carmen Toth-Pickel and Jana Vobecká, *Peace Mapping Programme: IRD Directory Report:* http://peacemap.kaiciid.org/downloads/IRD-Directory-Report.pdf (accessed: 24.5.2020).

12 Marianna Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," in *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, eds. David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt and David Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 193–217, here: 206.

13 Julia Ipgrave, Thorsten Knauth, Anna Körs, Dörthe Vieregge and Marie von der Lippe, eds., *Religion and Dialogue in the City: Case Studies on Interreligious Encounter in Urban Community and Education* (Münster New York: Waxmann, 2018); Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001); Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

search that focuses on the concrete role of IRD in political processes. This shows that IRD is more than just a theological enterprise; it has a strong socio-political agenda.[14]

When considered together, these more recent strands of research open a perspective that moves away from the purely conceptual (and frequently anecdotal) towards a more descriptive (and certainly empirical) approach to IRD. They show the increasing diversity of dialogue practices in the field and the need to have a look at the manifold dimensions of IRD beyond the conceptual level of pamphlets and official speeches. Contributing to this emerging corpus of literature, the present book is not the place to argue for one or the other concept of dialogue. Rather, it takes the existing concepts of IRD as a starting point to analyse IRD activities as socio-cultural phenomena.

This particular focus on concrete IRD activities directly leads to the next question: To what extent does it make sense to talk about *one* interreligious dialogue movement? If so, such a movement would be formed based on what kind(s) of dialogical practices?

2.2 Focus on the Interreligious Dialogue Movement

This question actually addresses what seems to be one of the most fundamental convictions in IRD research. As soon as one has a closer look at the classical analyses of the history of IRD activities, there seems to be a two-fold consensus: first, the long history of IRD gained new momentum in the late 19th and early 20th century; second, the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions is the starting point of an IRD movement that serves as the social body of IRD today. Analyses, such as the studies of Dorothea Lüddeckens and Richard H. Seager, identify the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions as the single most important foundational

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Press, 2013); Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

14 Mar Griera and Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, "Interreligious Relations and Governance of Religion in Europe: Introduction," *Social Compass* 65 (2018): 301–11; Magdalena Nordin, "Secularization, Religious Plurality and Position: Local Inter-Religious Cooperation in Contemporary Sweden," *Social Compass* 64 (2017): 388–403; Mar Griera, "Public Policies, Interfaith Associations and Religious Minorities: A New Policy Paradigm? Evidence from the Case of Barcelona," *Social Compass* 59 (2012): 570–587; Tania Wettach-Zeitz, *Ethnopolitische Konflikte und Interreligiöser Dialog: Die Effektivität Interreligiöser Konfliktmediationsprojekte Analysiert am Beispiel der World Conference on Religion and Peace Initiative in Bosnien-Herzegowina* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007); Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Emily Welty and Amal I. Khoury, *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007).

event in the more recent history of IRD; they see it as the starting point for almost all the activities that are taking place today.[15]

In this context, the concept of an interreligious dialogue movement exists as one of these widely used categories without a clear-cut definition. Of course, it would be naïve to look for one commonly accepted definition of the IRD movement. Nevertheless, it is necessary to get a better idea of what an IRD movement might formally look like in order to assess e. g. the structures and/or the impact of IRD activities. To answer this question, it is helpful to refer to the sociological literature that conceptualizes social movements as a particular social form – be it in the field of politics, economy, or religion. In the words of the Canadian scholar of religions Peter Beyer, they

> are much more structured around particular issues and particular elements that inform them and far less on the basis of a distinction between members and non-members. [...] They] are adaptable to almost all purposes, are relatively easily generated, and can come and go individually without the society being changed in any fundamental way.[16]

In other words: In putting forth the concept of the interreligious dialogue *movement*, one argues that it is possible to identify a rather open group of people that are centring their activities on what they perceive to be the very idea of IRD. From this point of view, IRD activities are neither limited to specific organizations nor specific individuals. Rather, they have been, and are undertaken, by manifold different actors that – despite their different agendas, resources and worldviews – wish to put IRD into practice.

The present book sets out to see to what an extent it makes sense to use the category of the IRD movement to describe the developments in this field. Consequently, the following considerations begin with the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and continue with the analysis of further milestone events of international IRD activities. In line with the focus on concrete activities, the following case analyses will, however, take the notion of the interreligious dialogue movement primarily as a heuristic starting point for further reflection.

On this basis – to cut a long story short – the contributions in this book put forward three major hypotheses:

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15 Dorothea Lüddeckens, *Das Weltparlament der Religionen von 1893: Strukturen Interreligiöser Begegnung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin / New York: W. de Gruyter, 2002); Richard H. Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893* (Bloomington: Indianapolis, 1995).

16 Peter Beyer, *Religions in Global Society* (London / New York: Routledge, 2006).

1. First, the following analyses support the idea of an IRD movement as a very loose socio-cultural entity. All case studies underline the significance of the first 1893 World's Parliament of Religions as a symbolic point of reference for the work in the field IRD and show how different IRD initiatives were referring to each other.
2. Along those lines, the analyses identify a trend among IRD actors towards public activism that began in the late 1960s. – From the 1960s onwards, almost all the protagonists in the case analyses have become public figures and were actually trying to put religion back onto the public agenda.
3. In parallel, the analyses identify a trend towards formal religious representation in IRD activities. In the beginning, IRD was primarily linked to what can be described as religious *virtuosi*. IRD was primarily based upon the religious beliefs of individuals. Since the 1980s it has been increasingly embraced by major protagonists inside religious organizations.

Before further advancing the respective discussions, let's have a closer look at the research process that forms the basis of the analyses included in this book.

3 The Research Process

Following the previous lines of thought, the project invited an international group of young scholars to work in the archives of several international organizations that are widely perceived as central to the field of IRD. The research group represented an interesting variety of academic, regional, cultural and religious backgrounds. The young researchers came from Argentina, Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, the USA, and Venezuela. At the time of the project, their academic training included: Religious and Cultural Studies, Comparative Religion, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Islamic Studies, Divinity, and Language in Culture. Additionally, their archival work took place on three continents: North America, Europe and Asia.

The results of these diverse analyses very much depend upon the selection procedures that led to the identification of the concrete organizations, as well as the material that is used to address the above questions. Therefore, it is inevitable to describe this process in greater detail.

3.1 The Organizations Included in the Chapter of this Book

As already made clear, the analyses for each chapter of this book started from the observation that IRD activities are undertaken by a wide range of individuals and organizations. There is multi-fold evidence for IRD activities on the local, national and international level. As soon as one focuses on the great strands of the history of international IRD activities, it becomes, however, surprisingly clear that this history is dominated by a rather small number of organizations that can be described as central in as far as they align with three criteria:

–   First, they are interreligious (as opposed to e.g. intra-religious or bilateral or multi-religious) – in terms of their over-all set-up as well as their concrete activities;
–   Second, they either pioneered local efforts at establishing international IRD activities or worked from the beginning internationally to establish an IRD organization;
–   Third, they are willing and able to provide access to their internal discussions during the process of formation – as opposed to *ex-post* interpretations of those processes.

The main chapters of the present book, therefore, focus on this type of organizations and aim to cover the best known among them, with one exception: The World Council of Churches' Committee on the Church and the Jewish People. While this case was bilateral in nature initially, it was the root of WCC's later creation in 1971 of its Sub-Unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI), thus its inclusion in this book. In chronological order of their foundation dates, this translates into the analyses of main events in the early history of the following organizations (or: as e.g. in the case of the World's Parliament of Religions and the World Conference on Religion and Peace – events that formed the basis for the establishment of organizations, soon thereafter or much later):

–   World's Parliament of Religions
–   Religiöser Menschheitsbund
–   World Congress of Faiths
–   WCC-Committee on the Church and the Jewish People
–   Temple of Understanding
–   International Association for Religious Freedom
–   World Conference on Religion and Peace
–   Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions
–   Oxford International Interfaith Centre
–   United Religions Initiative
–   Universal Peace Federation

The decision to focus on these organizations does not at all imply that only the organizations included in this volume are of central significance to interreligious dialogue internationally. First, it goes without saying that organizations with an international scope form but a very small part of IRD activities today. There is an increasing trend among IRD researchers to focus on the more national or even local histories of IRD and these analyses show that IRD activities take very different shapes in different countries.[17] So far, our knowledge about the alternative, national IRD histories is still very limited and there is a need for further research to tell these histories in a more systematic way.[18]

Second, the exclusion of intra-religious dialogues (e.g. ecumenical activities) as well as bi- or tri- or multi-lateral religious dialogues (e.g. 'Abrahamic' activities) is not supposed to devalue the activities in those fields. It is interesting to see that the exclusive focus on international interreligious activities has, for example, led to the exclusion of a number of activities in the African, Arab, and Asian world, leading to a bias towards European and North American activities. It asks for further additional research to explain this development. At this state, we are only in a position to name this as a consequence of the present selection of data.

Finally, practical reasons made it sometimes impossible to include a specific organization in the project. In most of the cases, this was the direct consequence of the decision to base the analyses on concrete IRD activities from a historical perspective. For such an analysis, it is necessary to have access to at least one of two different sets of data on the foundation of the organizations in question – archive materials or individual experts. If an organization was not in the position to provide access to either the one or the other, it had to be excluded from the analyses. In other words: for the sake of comparison, a few of the most interesting IRD organizations had to be excluded from the present analyses.[19]

To put it more positively: The present volume sees itself as a first attempt in the analysis of IRD activities that focuses on central events in the history of IRD organizations with a worldwide scope. Accordingly, it hopes that there will be

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17 See for example: Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism* (London / New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion in the Dialogue Debate: From Intolerance to Coexistence* (Frankfurt am Main: LIT-Verlag, 2010).

18 See: Anna Halafoff, *The Multifaith Movement: Global Risks and Cosmopolitan Solutions* (New York: 2013).

19 The most obvious example is the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; while it was very supportive of this research project, the general regulations of the Vatican Archives restricted its access during the time period of this research.

further research that can help to expand this strand of analysis. This leads direct-ly to the question of the practical research processes that form the basis of the following analyses:

3.2 Perspectives and Sources

The proposed focus on the socio-cultural understanding of concrete activities – rather than conceptual reflections – presents the analyses with a new set of sour-ces. It draws the attention away from general statements or declarations of inten-tion towards the analysis of source-materials that document down-to-earth activ-ities – e.g. the discussions that lead towards those statements or the processes that made interreligious encounters possible in the first place. As far as the pre-sent-day activities are concerned, this type of information is primarily accessible via participant observation or expert interviews in the field.[20] In the context of a historical analysis of past activities (and this will be the primary focus in each one of the following chapters), they are mostly documented in archives that con-serve the day-to-day activities of the people working in an organization.[21]

The analyses that are collected in the present volume each used at least one of these different avenues to collect the data that form the basis of the interpre-tations. In most cases, this approach led to the discovery or unveiling of new sources for the understanding of IRD activities. Indeed, almost all the analyses in the book are based upon sources that have never been touched before (at times, literally so!). In this sense, they are not only approaching a new set of questions, they rather offer genuinely new insights into the history of IRD activ-ities.

Methodologically speaking, this research approach (as well as the usage of new archival sources) translated into a qualitative design that is strongly in-formed by constructivism:[22] First, the analyses are largely based upon the induc-tive analysis of the existing material (rather than a deductive approach). The re-searchers started with a review of data in the archives to identify the most

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20 Stefan Kurth and Karsten Lehmann, eds., *Religionen erforschen: Kulturwissenschaftliche Methoden in der Religionsforschung* (Wiesbaden: Springer-Verlag, 2011).
21 Alexis E. Ramsey, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa S. Mastrangelo, eds., *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition* (Southern Illi-nois: SIU Press, 2010); Ernst Opgenoorth and Günther Schulz, *Einführung in das Studium der Neueren Geschichte* (Paderborn / München / Wien / Zürich: UTB, 2010).
22 Reiner Keller, *Doing Discourse Research: An Introduction for Social Scientists* (Los Angeles / London / New Delhi: Sage, 2013).

interesting episodes. Second, the analyses focused upon the empirical construc-
tions of the IRD activities that are documented in the data. They have not started
from a predefined concept of IRD but rather tried to better understand the per-
ceptions of the actors inside the IRD organizations being studied.

Therefore, a number of different sources in the archives were combined and
analyzed systematically. The reviewed material contained papers, books, and
videos from the IRD encounters, letters, photos, handwritten pieces, formal
and informal interviews and the original Minutes of diverse gatherings. The re-
searchers worked through the numerous data and material in the archives and
conducted informal and in-depth interviews. After this process was completed,
the young scholars used a wide range of methods (from document analyses to
ethnographic techniques) to identify important aspects inside their respective or-
ganizations that could be compared and contrasted with the others present in
this volume.

All of this translated into a five-step process whose results stand at the cen-
tre of all the analyses that make up the following chapters.

3.3 A Five-step Process

(1) The whole project started with an initial workshop that took place in March
2014. This is when the researchers first met each other and heard about the aims
and goals of this research project. Since the group was heterogeneous – in terms
of their cultural, religious and academic backgrounds – an intercultural and in-
terreligious exchange about IRD from different points of view took place. The
outcome of this process was not only the clarification of the research topic,
aim and methods, but also the very constructive group dynamics among the par-
ticipants who benefitted from mutual advice and exchange.

(2) On this basis, the participants surveyed – as a second step – the existing
literature on the organizations that had previously been identified by the lead
researcher. In most cases, this task was rather disappointing because the aca-
demic literature on these central international IRD organizations remains scant –
with the exception of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions. The students
therefore frequently had to combine this literature review on the organizations
with the examination and analysis of both, primary and secondary bibliograph-
ical sources.

(3) In a third step, the researchers worked for two months (summer 2014) in
the archives and/or headquarters of the organizations they each chose to focus
on. There, the students: (a) got an overview of the archive material in existence
and met with experts in the field; (b) identified a very concrete episode they per-

ceived as central for the establishment of the organization in question; and, (c) collected the main available documents on that episode needed for their subsequent analyses.

(4) The fourth step was the sharing of each researcher's first results during a second workshop that was a cooperation with *Casa Arabe* in Cordoba, Spain and took place in October 2014. At the centre of this workshop stood the attempt to see the concrete episodes of the organizations in the wider context of the history of IRD activities in general and to hold an information exchange on the concrete activities as reflected in each archive. The experiences of the participants were varied and ranged from work with well-organized data and material under observation to preoccupation with the organization without any formal archive, catalogues, or categorized material but with live and active members to interview.

(5) These discussions initially formed the basis of a set of posters that were presented and discussed at the 'Dialogue beyond Dialogue' Conference (November 2014) showing the products of the archival research. Three months later, the research results finally were shaped in the form of the articles that have now been finally collected in this volume.

This overall process is reflected not only in the structure of every single chapter but also in the overall structure of the present book.

4 The structure of the book

As indicated above, this book focuses on a relatively small group of organizations that focus on IRD and can be perceived as particularly central to the worldwide field of IRD – either concerning their pioneering role in bringing together actors from different religious traditions or with regard to the spatial scope of their activities.

Along those lines, the book follows a chronological structure that focuses on core episodes of the early history of the organizations in question. These episodes were analysed, first, with regard to the rational or the concrete activities that took place inside the organizations and second regarding their role in the field of IRD. This two-fold interpretation is also reflected in the titles of the different articles:

Part 1: First Attempts at Developing Interreligious Dialogue 'from the Margins'
1. A Symbol for Interreligious Dialogue: The Beginning of the Modern Interreligious Dialogue Movement (The World's Parliament of Religions / 1893)

2. Vision, Ambition, and Failure: Adolf Allwohn's practical take on Implementing an early Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Organization (Religiöser Menschheitsbund / 1921–1923)
3. Mysticism meets Inception: Interreligious Dialogue emerging in Great Britain (World Congress of Faiths / 1933–1950)
4. Transformation from 'Mission' to 'Dialogue': The World Council of Churches' Engagement with Jewish People (WCC-Committee on the Church and the Jewish People / 1920s-1970s)

Part 2: Towards an Increased Activism in Civil Society
5. At the Grassroots of interreligious Dialogue Activities: Founding a 'Spiritual UN' (Temple of Understanding / 1968–1972)
6. An Encounter with Change: Opening Perspectives Beyond Europe and the US (The International Association for Religious Freedom / 1969–1975)
7. When Fear becomes Peace: Transforming Interreligious Dialogue into a Social Movement (World Conference on Religion and Peace / 1970–1973)

Part 3: Towards an increasing Support by Religious Hierarchies
8. From a Historical Event to a Modern Institution: Interreligious Dialogue and Global 'Critical Issues' (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions / 1989–1993)
9. A Centre for Cooperation: Uniting Interreligious Dialogue Efforts (Oxford International Interfaith Centre / 1993–2017)
10. Search for Inclusive Language: A New Stage of Awareness Inside the Interreligious Dialogue Movement (United Religions Initiative / 2000–2006)
11. Implementing Interreligious Dialogue: A Solution for International Challenges? (Universal Peace Federation / 2005–2009)

The general results of these analyses are summarized in an additional and final chapter, entitled "Final Remarks: Insights into the Field of Interreligious Dialogue". This chapter first elaborates further on the two central trends that are shaping the field of IRD until today – the trend towards increasing 'public activism' and the trend towards 'formal representation'. On this basis, it formulates five suggestions to the field.

5 Acknowldegements

the editor, the project came to a temporary hold. In order to make its results accessible, the editor finally decided in 2019 to finalize the work on the book. He is now working as Research Professor at the Private University of Education Vienna / Krems and is no longer maintaining any relationship to KAICIID.

The present book would not have been possible without the significant contributions of several persons. As the editor, I wish to thank them in the chronological order in which they have played their most important role.

First, I thank the eminent scholars that brought me in contact with the young researchers: Prof. Dr. Thomas Banchoff, Maria Crespo de Mafia, Melody Fox Ahmed, Prof. Dr. Richard Friedli, Prof. Dr. Francois Gauthier, Dr. Marat Gibatdinov, Dr. Stefan Kurth, Prof. Dr. Chongsuh Kim, Dr. Kathy Matsui, Prof. Dr. Wolfram Reiss, Prof. Dr. Paul Scott, and Prof. Dr. Helmut Zander.

Second, I want to thank all the researchers themselves without whom this book would never have been possible: María Bargo, Jana Philippa Parenti, Josep Oriol Guinovart Pedescoll, Evgeny Khamidov, Verena E. Kozmann, Rebecca Loder-Neuhold, Maryam Mouzzouri, Minjung Noh, Sana Saeed, Sara Singha, and Semiramis Vieira.

Finally, my gratitude goes to the following persons who made access to archives and special experts possible: Mary Nelson (Archives of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions), Kraatz and B. Reifenberg (Archives of the Religiöser Menschheitsbund), Marcus Braybrooke (World Congress of Faiths), Hans von Rütte (Archives of the WCC), Joan Kirby and Alison Van Dyk (Temple of Understanding), Karen Robson (International Association for Religious Freedom), Megumi Hirota Wada (Religions for Peace), Sandy Bharat (Oxford International Interfaith Centre), Maria Crespo de Mafia (United Religions Initiative), as well as Joy Pople and Thomas Walsh (Universal Peace Federation).

The book at hand is the result of the significant help of all these people mentioned here by name, as well as many others linked to the many IRD organizations whose collective support made this book a collaborative success. At this point, the editor wants to express his particular thanks to Patrice Brodeur and Renata Smith-Nelson (from the former Research Department) as well as Sophie Wagenhofer and Katrin Mittmann (from DeGruyter) who played a significant role in the whole editing process.

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Part 1 **First Attempts at Developing Interreligious Dialogue 'from the Margins'**

Maryam Mouzzouri

A Symbol for Interreligious Dialogue

The Beginning of the Modern Interreligious Dialogue Movement (World's Parliament of Religions / 1893)

1 Introduction

In September 1893, a 17-day long assembly took place at Chicago's Columbian Exposition that is widely considered to be the starting point of the interfaith movement[1] – the World's Parliament of Religions (WPoR). This assembly allowed for the encounter between mainly liberal minded-religious representatives from East and West.[2] It is now seen as the first step toward a modern interreligious dialogue movement. Representatives from Asian religions met together with American Christian leaders in the United States of America for the first time at such a large encounter[3], revealing a world of religious pluralism and not a world with only one religion.

In the decades that followed, the Parliament became a central point of reference for what this book calls the 'Modern Dialogue Movement'. Its main purpose was seen as an attempt to create a "forum for mutual discussion, for the fellowship of the various religions, and for the sharing of information about each other."[4] The Parliament aimed to show everyone at the Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and beyond that religions share unity and strength in their good deeds and work and can be based upon the Golden Rule.[5] The organizers wanted to bring all participants to a frank and friendly encounter to show

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1 Joel D. Beversluis, ed., *Sourcebook of the World's Religions: An Interfaith Guide to Religion and Spirituality* (Novato, Calif: New World Library, ³2000), 128.

2 John P. Burris, *Exhibiting Religion: Colonialism and Spectacle at International Expositions 1851– 1893* (Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 2001), 124.

3 The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the repective archive: James A. Kirk, *The World's Parliament of Religions Revisited* (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection at DePaul University, Box 21C, N.D), 1.

4 Kenten Druyvesteyn, *The World's Parliament of Religions of 1893: An encounter of American Christianity with other Religions* (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection at DePaul University, Box 21 A, 1971), 14.

5 Paul Carus, *The Dawn of a New Era and Other Essays* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 2016, first: 1899).

beyond doubt that religions seek the supreme truths and can bring answers to the main problems of their age.[6] The participants were asked to show the entire world the existence of human brotherhood, unity and peacefulness relations among religious people[7] but not asked to convert to any one particular faith and set of practices. One of the main topics was the unity of many religions. Thus, the first meeting in the 19th century between people of religions willing to put into practice mutual tolerance, courtesy and open mindedness, with the desire "to be useful to each other and to all others who love truth and righteousness"[8] this took place between 10 – 27 September in Chicago.

Even though most of the archival data linked to the actual work of the Parliament was destroyed by a fire in 1923, material exists proving that the assessment of the actors at the time was less unanimous than the reception suggests. The material consulted in the archives in Chicago dealt with the level of importance the World's Parliament of Religions had for people in the 19th century and furthermore what the people's reaction can tell us today about the beginning of the modern interreligious dialogue (IRD) movement. On the basis of existing archive material, as well as the media coverage dating from the end of the 19th century, the following article aims to examine whether the current impression of the Parliament reflects the same view as those opinions dating back to the 1890s.

Then and now, the positive assessment of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions currently dominates the over-all narrative about the first Parliament. Indeed today, the 1893 event is considered by most scholars and IRD supporters to be the beginning of the modern IRD movement. It represents the first official recognition of a more pluralistic religious culture in the world. The organizers' attempt to "unite all religions against all irreligion" has been considered, although this time with hesitation or even opposition to the notion of a 'unity of all religions', to be nevertheless a positive initiative generally, indispensable for the early history of what later emerged as IRD. The kinds of actors invited and chosen to participate in this first event demonstrate that comprehension and open-mindedness regarding other faiths were the priorities of the event. Despite this general perception, there were contrary attempts to prove that opinions at the time of the event were not as uniform as what is commonly accepted today

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6 Donald Wilson, *N.T.* (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection at DePaul University, Box 21C, 1966).

7 John H. Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions, Held in Chicago in Connection with the Columbian Exposition of 1893*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893), 10.

8 Charles C. Bonney, "The Genesis of the World's Religious Congresses of 1893," *New Church Review 1* (1894): 99.

and that there were strong positions against this event in 1893. Some of the strongest opposition came from some high religious leaders who could not comprehend the concept of bringing faith representatives together thus suggesting and/or conceding that all religions were at the same level and that each religion was one among many others.

While some reactions were highly virulent against this event, some others were instead deeply in favour. In overcoming these oppositions, John Henry Barrows (as the Chairman of the 'General Committee on the Congress of Religions' that was responsible to the overall implementation of the WPoR) made possible the first large-scale interreligious dialogue event in history. In the end, none of the religions represented in this dialogue were discredited or disappeared, with the exception of the complete exclusion of what we call today 'indigenous spiritualities' or 'cosmovisions', which were then not considered 'religions' at all. Time helps researchers to take into account both opinions and, in light of history, to qualify this meeting as having been a significant event despite some opposition, which was mostly the result of traditional ways of thinking.

To adequately examine this position, the paper is subdivided into three parts:

The first section covers the background leading up to and how the 1893 Parliament was developed, thus setting the historical context needed to analyze and understand the opinions of the event. To understand the reasoning behind why certain elements did or did not transpire, this section presents the context of the period, the relations between states and cultural aspects of societies, as well as the reason why they chose the city of Chicago rather than another city. This contextual setting provides us with possible answers as to why some high-level religious leaders were against the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893. It also provides insight as to why many leaders in the United States (US) strongly wanted this event to be created and held on its soil and how it was important for the international impression they wanted to put forth.

The second section outlines this paper's empirical approach and the limitations faced while collecting archival data and conducting live interviews in Chicago. Materials used for the empirical research incorporated a combination of primary and secondary sources found in Chicago during the time of the on-site research in July 2014. These included first-hand documents such as books, letters and journal articles. Second-hand resources included books and interviews of people who either worked on this event or who had shared information on this event, relevant to this study. All the documents used in this chapter were made available thanks to the help of staff at the following three institutions: DePaul University's Special Collections and Archives Department, The University of Chicago library, and the library at the Meadville Lombard Theological School.

The third section consists of the author's analysis. As mentioned above, the primary focus in the analysis is on the few first-hand documents encountered, out of which the hypothesis concerning the reactions to the Parliament in 1893 is then developed. As we will see, some found the event particularly favourable while others were fiercely against it. The paper then attempts to put forth the reasons for these reactions. The supporting analysis finally leads to the author's conclusion as to how important, or not, the World's Parliament of Religions is for the understanding of the interreligious dialogue movement in existence today.

2 Describing the Parliament and Setting the Socio-Cultural Context

The significance of the World's Parliament of Religions cannot properly be assessed without taking its historical and geographical context into consideration. Additionally, it is important to look at why the World's Parliament of Religions occurred on American instead of European soil. It is important to note that by the end of the 19th century, America "had already emerged as a powerful nation in the world"[9] and although Britain was the leading economic power at the time, the United States was beginning to emerge as a global economic power, as well. In short, as of 1890, the United States had a presence on the world stage.[10]

2.1 North America in the Latter Part of the 19th Century

The World's Parliament of Religions took place under Grover Cleveland's presidency, a time when the British Empire was economically dominant and US-British relations were cordial at best[11] due to remaining tensions about Britain's role during the American Civil War[12] and growing economic competition between the

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9 Lakshmi Niwas Jhunjhunwala, *The World Parliament of Religions* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2010), 8.
10 George M. Williams, "The World's Parliament of Religions: A Triumph or a Failure?" *Revue IARF World* 1 (1993): 7.
11 Sri Swami Chidananda, ed., *World Parliament of Religions Commemoration* (N.P., 1956), 26.
12 In 1869 US Government took legal proceedings against the UK because of the help the UK brought to Confederates inspite of the British Neutrality Act. In 1872 according to the ruling following international arbitration the UK was required to pay compensation to the US. Through

two nations. The organization of the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893 in the US was a great opportunity for the country to do something new, something big, push ahead and to show the entire world that the United States could do something great in its own territory. By 1890 the American economy was flourishing and the World's Columbian Exposition – or World's Fair – in 1893 acted as an additional boost, contributing to US international trade[13] at a time when overall international trade was dominated by the British.

Americans at the end of the 19th century were mainly Protestants with minorities of Catholics, Jews and Mormons, as well as many other religious groups such as the Swedenborgians, the Unitarians, and Universalists, etc. Yet, new waves of migrants from other-than-Europe regions of the world started to increase the religious diversity of the American population. Another important transformation was linked to many women lobbying for the right to vote, especially since women in the State of Wyoming had obtained it in 1869. Other states followed, although, the state of Illinois did not pass such a law until 1913. In the meantime, such activism was one important influence on the World's Parliament organizers inviting women to participate, adding to the ongoing sweeping social changes that were happening in the late 19th century in the United States of America, including the city of Chicago.[14]

The next section focuses on the structure of the Parliament and how it was established. The idea of the creation of a World's Parliament of Religions stemmed from Charles Bonney, a Chicago lawyer and layman in the Swedenborgian Church.[15] He wanted to complete the World's Columbian Exposition – which captured the spirit of the American Industrial era – by "glorify[ing] god on a world-wide scale."[16] In other words, he wanted to create the World's Parliament of Religions to compensate for the material focus of the Columbian Exposition by developing a congress with a spirit of openness in faith.

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this decision, the international arbitral tribunal in Geneva lay the foundation of the international public law.

13 Chidananda, *World Parliament of Religions Commemoration*, 26.

14 Richard H. Seager, "Pluralism and the American Mainstream: Views from the World's Parliament of Religion," *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989): 301–324. Arie L. Molendijk, "To Unite Religion against All Irreligion, the 1893 World Parliament of Religion," *Journal for the History of Modern Theology / Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte* 18 (2011): 228–250.

15 The Swedenborg Church, also named "The New Church", is based on the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) who was a Swedish scientist and theologian.

16 N.A., *Parliament Paper* (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection at DePaul University, Box 21C, N.D.).

2.2 Why Chicago

The World's Parliament of Religions was part of the World's Columbian Exposition whose purpose was to commemorate the 400-year anniversary of Christopher Columbus's discovery of the New World[17], from a European perspective. This exposition should have taken place in 1892, on the actual anniversary, but the organization of the event was not possible at the time for various reasons[18]; above all, the "magnitude of the project finally caused its postponement."[19]

In the middle of the 1880s, several cities were competing to organize the World Exposition: Chicago, New York, St. Louis and Washington.[20] Chicago had been chosen above the other cities for various reasons. First of all, in 1890, Chicago replaced Philadelphia as America's second-largest city [21] and was also one of the country's most prosperous cities. Also nicknamed the White City, which means "the highly evolved"[22], Chicago was a modern and progressive city where nothing was impossible. There were a lot of debates before the decision was finally taken to choose Chicago as the city that should hold the World's Columbian Exposition. Finally, on the 24 December, 1890 in Washington, President Benjamin Harrison (presidency from 1889 to 1893) announced that Chicago would be the host city for this main event, which would allow for the city to truly bounce back after the devastating Great Fire of 1871.[23] In his speech, he announced Chicago's role to hold "an international Exhibition of arts, industries, manufactures and the product[s] of the soil, mine and sea [...]"[24] and he solicited the attendance of all nations to participate in this event which he considered to be "pre-eminent in human history."[25] Located in

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17 Richard H. Seager and Ronald R. Kidd, eds., *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (Illinois: Open Court, 1993), 3.
18 Marcus Braybrooke, *The Interfaith Movement: The Present Reality* (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection at DePaul University, Box 21 A Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection, 1992), 2.
19 Bonney, "The Genesis of the World's Religious Congresses," 79.
20 Jhunjhunwala, *The World Parliament of Religions*, 9. Seager and Kidd didn't talk about a competition with Washington but only between Chicago, New York and St Louis. (Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 3.)
21 N.A., *Parliament Paper* (DePaul University, Box 21C, N.D.).
22 Richard H. Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2009), 25.
23 Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 3.
24 Druyvesteyn, "The World's Parliament of Religions of 1893," 5.
25 Druyvesteyn, "The World's Parliament of Religions of 1893," 5.

the middle of the US, the city of Chicago, one of the most important economic cities in the US, had at its disposal enough accommodation for thousands of people. The dice were thrown.

2.3 Leading up to the Parliament: Creation of the World's Parliament of Religions

In September 1889, Charles Bonney – suggested: "that the Exposition Corporation sponsor a series of international congresses to complement the material triumphs and technological marvels that formed the substance of the Exposition's displays."[26] Indeed, Charles Bonney wanted to implement something "higher and nobler"[27] than just the material aspect of the exposition. For this reason, in October, a committee of local Chicago businessmen, clerics and educators[28] suggested the creation of an international convention which would be more "representative of 'peoples, nations, and tongues'."[29] Thereby, they set up a convention which was to be called the World's Congress Auxiliary – directed by Charles Bonney who was the president – whose purpose was to manage twenty distinct congresses dedicated to many life aspects, including women's progress, medicine and surgery, history, public health, and religion.[30] The Department of Religions "was the largest and drew the greatest attention."[31] Regarding the Religious Congress, it was "agreed that this should involve people of all religions"[32], a point, which will be discussed at greater length below.

There was a General Committee on Religious Congresses of the World's Congress Auxiliary, appointed by Bonney to discuss and prepare the religious congress.[33] The members of this General Committee were chosen in December 1889. John Henry Barrows[34], the minister at Chicago First Presbyterian Church was selected by Bonney to be the chairman of the World's Congress Auxiliary's

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26 Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 4.

27 Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 4.

28 Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 4.

29 Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 4.

30 Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 4.

31 Druyvesteyn, "The World's Parliament of Religions of 1893," 7.

32 Braybrooke, *The Interfaith Movement: The Present Reality,* 2.

33 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1*, 6.

34 John Henry Barrows was a liberal Presbyterian "who advocated the reinterpretation of traditional Protestant creeds in the light of modern knowledge, but (who) remained convinced of the necessity of salvation through conversion". (Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter*, 52.)

Department of Religions. Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones – a liberal Chicago Unitarian – was chosen to be the Executive Secretary.[35] It is also important to know that the Religions' Department "was organized under four headings: Union Meetings or the Parliament of Religions; Denominational Presentations; Informal Conferences; and Denominational Congresses."[36]

Notably the idea behind the creation of a religious congress was not at all unanimous. There were some initial objections to Bonney's proposition; people especially questioned how religion could be exhibited like other disciplines.[37]

There were two opinions among the people who were members of the General Committee of the Religious Congress whose task was to help Barrows build the World's Parliament of Religions. One author mentioned that they were mainly "influential personal acquaintances around the world"[38] but for another one, it was especially a "local committee."[39] Although members of the General Committee were mainly Christians, the committee consisted of sixteen forms of religious faith. Indeed, the composition of the General Committee was as follows: Rev. John Henry Barrows (Presbyterian), Rt. Rev. Bishop William E. McLaren (Prot. Episcopal), Rev. Prof. David Swing (Independent), Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones (Unitarian), His Grace Archbishop A. Feehan (Catholic), Rev. Dr. F. A. Noble (Congregational), Rev. Dr. Wm. M. Lawrence (Baptist), Rev. F. M. Bristol (Methodist), Rabbi E. G. Hirsch (Jew), Rev. J. Z. Torgersen (Norwegian Lutheran), Rev. Dr. A. J. Canfield (Universalist), Rev. M. C. Ranseen (Swedish Lutheran), Rev. J. Berger (German Methodist), Mr. J. W. Plummer (Quaker), Rev. L. P. Mercer (New Jerusalem Swedenborgian, Rt. Rev. Bishop C. E. Cheney (Reformed Episcopal).[40] All of them were representing their own organizations. There was intense cooperation between Barrows and Jones to establish the Parliament. In a text from the end of the World's Parliament of Religions session, Executive Secretary Jones declared, "I am sufficiently happy in the knowledge that I have been to

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35 Jenkin Lloyd Jones was born on the 14 of November 1843 and died on the 12 of September 1918. Illustrious pacifist, he also was a pioneering Unitarian minister, missionary, educator and journalist. He tried to move Unitarianism away from a Christian focus towards non-sectarian engagement with world religion

36 Druyvesteyn, "The World's Parliament of Religions of 1893," 7.

37 Homer A. Jack, "The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions: How Some Religions Participated," *World Conference on Religion and Peace Report* N.N. (1991): 2.

38 Kenten Druyvesteyn, *Planning the Parliament*, (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection at DePaul University, Box 21 A, N.D.), 30.

39 Seager and Kidd, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism*, 4.

40 Walter R. Houghton, ed., *Neely's History of the Parliament of Religions and Religious Congresses at the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: F. T. Neely, 1894).

a certain extent the feet of this great triumph."[41] All the members of the General Committee were people who held a liberal and open vision about the world of religions, that is, a universal one. But as described further below, their position was not shared by all.

The pretension of this event can easily be measured by the number of copies the General Committee sent to religious leaders all around the world as the "Preliminary Address". More than three thousand copies were sent.[42] Their main focus on the possibility by this encounter to show everyone in the world "the creative and regulative power of Religion as a factor in human development"[43] and "what are the supreme truths, and what light Religion affords to the great problems of the time."[44]

The World's Parliament of Religions is a series of Union Meetings in which the Representatives of the different faiths will participate. All controversy was prohibited during these seventeen days because they wanted to focus on what is the most important between religions: unity. Thus, it was established in the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions:

> On the morning of 11 September 1893, the Columbian Liberty Bell, only recently installed in the White City, tolled ten times in honour of what many considered the ten great religions of the world – Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[45]

3 Empirical Approach

Materials used for the empirical research of this chapter incorporate a combination of primary sources – including eye-witness accounts from 1893 – and secondary sources found in Chicago during July 2014, specifically in DePaul University's Special Collections and Archives Department, in The University of Chicago library, as well as in the library of the Meadville Lombard Theological School. Thus the paper is divided according to the type of document used: the first part of the paper mainly focuses on secondary sources to explain the context and to underline the modern perception held by current researchers on the Parliament; the second part concentrates on primary sources in order to examine

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41 N.A., *Parliament Paper* (DePaul University, Box 21C, N.D.).

42 Druyvesteyn, *Planning the Parliament*, 30.

43 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1*, 10.

44 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1*, 10.

45 Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter*, 43.

practical implementations. Primary documents are used to analyze perceptions from first-hand experiences of the Parliament.[46]

Research began in Chicago in July 2014 with the examination of primary sources. As previously mentioned, research for this paper was conducted in different places in Chicago to try to find as many primary source documents as possible.

DePaul University's Special Collections and Archives Department provided several books from 1893 – 1894 and some eye-witness papers by members of the Council and some participants. Four boxes of documents contained all documents available on the Parliament of 1893, including a few eye-witness documents from 1893 or 1894. Some documents of interest were undated. Other documents in these four boxes were written more recently – by Council members from the 1993 Parliament and others by researchers.

The University of Chicago's library supplemented the primary sources found at DePaul, most of which were written by 1893 Parliament participants. There were some relevant writings concerning Jenkin Lloyd Jones, the Executive Secretary of the World's Congress Auxiliary, found in its Department of Religion as well as in Meadville Lombard Theological School.[47] All provided more insights[48] in the form of letters written by Jenkin Lloyd Jones to John Henry Barrows and some written by Bonney or Alexander Russel[49] to Jenkin Lloyd Jones, as well as press articles describing main speeches and the public's reactions – the press's writings were generally more sensational that eye-witness accounts. Meadville Lombard's library archives also contained Jenkin Lloyd Jones' scrapbook containing valuable information that he had gathered from the press concerning the Parliament. This material provided a daily account from within the period the Parliament lasted. It also served as a basis for comparison with some authors' post-event accounts.

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46 Due to a fire in Berkley in 1923, many precious documents on this event have been destroyed. As I will explain in the section on my empirical approach, I will work from the few first-hand documents I have found in Chicago. It will be interesting to see what can be raised from these few primary documents. Does it confirm what is written on the subject or does it bring only a part of the truth? Was the perception of this event at this time different from the current perception?

47 All information regarding Jenkin Lloyd Jones are taken from the Library of Meadville Lombard Theological School and the Special Collection Research Center from the Library of the University of Chicago.

48 Allison Stokes and Hilary Landau suggested to consult the Archives of Meadville, a Theological School that collects most of the existing archival material regarding Jenkin Lloyd Jones.

49 Mohammed Alexander Russel Webb was the editor of St Joseph Gazette and a Missouri Republican. He was the main spokesman for Islam in America at this time.

4 Building a Parliament of the World's Religions: The Reactions

Before summarizing some of the key positions toward the Parliament, it is important to better understand what was meant by the concepts 'religions' and 'parliament'. While trying to find a generally acceptable definition for the concept 'religion' is extremely difficult, it is possible, however, to know from the archives that what the Parliament's organizers wanted to underline is that the word 'religion' refers to the "love and worship of God and the love and service of man."[50] It is necessary to keep in mind that the Parliament was a "spectacular manifestation of the dominant ideology of the West, as expressed in the old Anglo-Protestant mainstream of America around the turn of last century."[51] These organizers also wanted to emphasize the importance of allowing and promoting cooperation among religions. Their main ideal could be summed up as "diversity in unity."[52]

Not all religions or spirituality movements were invited. Traditional representatives of indigenous spiritualities were not only excluded: a few of them were relegated to being exhibition 'object' as part of the greater Chicago's World Fair, a sign that for all the 'progressiveness' that the World's Parliament of Religions represented in terms of theology, the broader social context remained what is described today as racist and colonial. Finally, it should be noted that some new religious movements were also not invited, whether out of ignorance or because these new developments were not yet significant or organized enough to have a representative mechanism in place to receive an invitation or even seek to have one sent to them. I would, therefore, argue that the organizers wanted first to focus on the 'main' religious movements.

As for the concept of 'parliament', it was a unique choice of wording at that time given that no major world religion had a legislative body elected by its own adherents.[53] The event took on a semblance of a legislative body in so far as de-

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50 John W. Hanson, ed., *The World's Congress of Religions: The Addresses and Papers Delivered before the Parliament and an Abstract of the Congresses Held in the Art Institute, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., August 25 to October 15, 1893: Under the Auspices of the World's Columbian Exposition* (Vancouver: J. M. MacGregor Pub. Co., 1894), 16.

51 Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter*, XXXVI-XXXVII.

52 Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter*, XIII.

53 Hans Küng and Karl-Josef Kuschel, eds., *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions* (New York: Continuum, 1993), 81.

bates and open discussions on a variety of topics took place, such as the search for unity against violence or the speeches with a common vision of the existence of "a spiritual root for human progress."[54] It was the first time in history, according to the historian of religions and theologian Jean-Claude Basset that believers of so many religions gathered in one space could speak about their faith and their own traditions in front of other believers[55]:

> What does "Parliament of Word's Religions" mean? The American Protestant initiators certainly did not envisage the democratic form of a parliament, but a fundamental democratic principle. The 'parliament' was an attempt to express two things: 1. The representatives of the world religions gather together at the same time in one place, stand side by side united with equal rights, and communicate with respect to one another. This de facto does away with any claim to superiority on the part of one religion over another – at least for the time of the parliament. 2. The representatives of the religions come from the grassroots of their membership, 'from below'. They are not members of the hierarchies of the religions, official delegations sent by their leaders or councils; they represent their religions each in an individual way. So, from the beginning, the 'Parliament of World religions' had the character, not of an institution, but of a movement, and this guaranteed its dynamic and variety.[56]

Through these methods, the Parliament, which gathered representatives of different churches to present their opinions on religious faiths, resembled the meeting of a series of Union Meetings. Bringing together different religions in one room was not easy to achieve. In the beginning, a "World's Congress of Religions seemed impracticable."[57] The following four points look at the limits and the difficulties that confronted the organizers of the event. One of the first difficulties was to bring together people from different religions and cultures from various countries, who have never had any significant contact with each other and who were "competing at so many points."[58] [59] Secondly, a large part of the audience did not know anything about Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'ïs, Jains, Shintos, etc. Additionally, not all the respective religious leaders or religious rep-

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54 Jean-Claude Basset, *Le Dialogue Interreligieux: Histoire et Avenir* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996), 77.

55 Basset, *Le Dialogue Interreligieux*, 77.

56 Küng and Kuschel, *A Global Ethic*. 81.

57 Hanson, *The World's Congress of Religions*, 17.

58 John H. Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions. Held in Chicago in Connection with The Columbian Exposition of 1893 Vol. 2* (Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893), 1559.

59 Philip L. Barlow and Davis Bitton, *Mormons and the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions* (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection at DePaul University, Box 21B, 1992), 9.

resentatives from within the diversity that exists within most religious traditions were invited. John Burris captured this point:

> Because of the manner in which the event was conceived by its Protestant organizers, the many faces of religion that appeared at the Chicago fair and Parliament were not nearly as representative of the religious world of the time as was believed.[60]

Therefore, the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions was more an East/West encounter than a worldwide religious encounter.[61]

The archival materials provide arguments that create greater comprehension about the resistance several persons had to the concept of 'parliament'. Since the beginning of the IRD movement, there has been resistance to this concept, as well as to the fact that this event was so huge with about 4000 people attending the inaugural session and more than 8000 people, the end session. According to George Dana Boardman, two kinds of comments emerged overall: optimistic– by which people tried to highlight the best, beauty and love – and pessimistic[62] – by which others emphasized the worst, infidelity and apostasy.[63] Thus, in light of new historical evidence, it becomes clear that the receptions of the vision of the World's Parliament of Religions remained deeply divided, with great supporters and virulent rejecters.

4.1 Favourable Opinions

This large event was significant for many people in 1893. It was something new developed among religious people. Many people in America, but also in Europe mostly, talked about the big event that took place in the New World.[64] For the public, one of the most sensational moments was the beginning when all religious people came into the platform wearing beautiful clothes. "At 10 o'clock they marched down the centre aisle arm-in-arm, the representatives of a dozen world faiths, beneath the waving flags of many nations, and amid the enthusiastic cheering of the vast audience. The platform presented an impressive spec-

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60 Burris, *Exhibiting religion*, 124.

61 Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter*, 144.

62 George Dana Boardman, "The Parliament of Religions: An Address before the Philadelphia Conference of Baptist Ministers. October 23, 1893," *The National Baptist* 6 (1893): 6.

63 Boardman, "The Parliament of Religions: An Address," 6.

64 M. Jean Réville, "Le parlement des religions à Chicago (11– 27 septembre 1893)," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 98 (1893): 187.

tacle the world never beheld before."[65] For many, it was the first time in their lives they saw so many religious and ceremonial costumes and clothing from other faiths and cultures. Some critical opinions condemn this spectacle of colours like being a carnival parade absolutely not worthy of what religion is. But beyond this first aspect, many saw more: for example, Bonney explained that he saw so many religious leaders with looks of kindness.[66] For many of these religious people, it was the first time they set foot on the American soil. "If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: it has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character."[67]

Several opinions on the Parliament's nature, effects, etc. were present following the close of the event. Examples of opinions that supported the event are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

Rev. John Ireland talked about the fact that this event "represents a great age in the life of humanity"[68] and added that "it presages a greater age which is to be."[69] Moreover the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions was deemed to be a wise decision which could advantageously influence religious people worldwide, as well as benefit the population, giving them the opportunity to encounter religious leaders from other parts of the world. This encounter supported religious representatives who decided together to give pre-eminence to love and peace and not to hostility.[70] Consequently, for many, the Parliament marked "an important time in the history of the human mind."[71] Not only was the agenda "remarkably varied, comprehensive and imposing"[72], but there were also representatives of 17 States present: England, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Germany, Tur-

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65 Charles W. Wendte, *The Great Parliament: Religions of All Lands Were represented: A grand Spectacle in Chicago* (World's Parliament of Religions Archives at Meadville Lombard Theological School, N.B., 1893), 213.

66 Gaston Bonnet-Maury, *Le Congrès Des Religions A Chicago En 1893* (Paris: Librairie Hachette), 16.

67 Jenkin L. Jones, *A Chorus of Faith as heard in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago: September 10 – 27 1893* (Chicago: The Unity Publishing Company, 1893), 298.

68 John Ireland, *Inauguration of the Work of the Congress Auxiliary of the World's Columbian Exposition* (Jenkin Lloyd Jones Archives at Meadville Lombard Theological School, N.B. 1893), 4.

69 Ireland, *Inauguration of the Work of the Congress Auxiliary*, 4.

70 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 2*, 1559.

71 Charles C. Bonney and Paul Carus, *The World's Parliament of Religions and the Religious Parliament Extension* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1896), 9.

72 Bonney and Carus, *The World's Parliament of Religions and the Religious Parliament Extension*, 2.

key, Greece, Egypt, Syria, India, Japan, China, Ceylon, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and the American States.[73]

It was the first time that women occupied some places in religious assemblies, and it appeared to be positive. Indeed, Bonney stressed the key role played by women from different churches and how this contributed to the Religious Congress' success.[74] Rev. C. W. Wendle described the importance of the event in these terms: "at no previous epoch of the World's history would it have been possible to have called together such a convention of eminent representatives of the great world faiths and churches."[75] Rev. Henry Y. Satterlee, rector of Calvary Church in New York, explained that:

> no other religious project, probably, has ever called forth so many enthusiastic testimonials from statesmen and historians, poets and essayists, ecclesiastics and foreign missionaries, college presidents and prominent men in every walk-in life; and the religious press was no less outspoken in its approval.[76]

President S. C. Bartlett of Dartmouth College was cautious and more wide-reaching when he expressed that "the Columbia Exposition may perhaps become the most important and noteworthy aspect of the most noteworthy gathering of our generation."[77] Archbishop Redwood of New Zealand thought that a man must be as free in religious matters as he must be in political matters. He said that we cannot force anybody to believe in what we believe. He also recognized the existence of some morsel of truth and charity everywhere which must be respected. Professor Richey considered the Parliament to be a "valuable setting forth of the relations of Christianity and natural religions."[78] To Mr. Nagarkar, it was "a foretaste of universal brotherhood"; to Joseph Cook, "a resplendent service to Truth"; to Dr. Boardman, "a lengthening of the cords of Zion and a strengthening of its stakes"; to Dr. Schaff, "a new epoch in the history of Religion.[79]

In addition to these favourable opinions toward the Parliament, its significance can be observed by looking at the number of people who attended. The description in Jenkin Lloyd Jones' book of the masses waiting before the opening

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73 Bonney and Carus, *The World's Parliament of Religions and the Religious Parliament Extension*, 15.

74 Bonney, "The Genesis of the World's Religious Congresses," 91.

75 Wendte, *The Great Parliament: Religions of All Lands* p. 213.

76 George S. Godspeed, ed., *The World's First Parliament of Religions: Its Christian Spirit, Historic Greatness and Manifold Results* (Chicago: Hill and Shuman, 1895), 9 + 62.

77 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1*, 39.

78 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 2*, 1557.

79 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 2*, 1557.

of the Parliament states, "as early as five o'clock on Wednesday evening, September 27, the crowd began to gather, and before the doors were opened at seven o'clock several thousand people were packed in a mass that reached to the sidewalk."[80] It was also said that 6000 people were admitted with tickets[81], but many other people were not allowed to enter since there were far too many.[82]

Thus the 1893 Parliament was not only a big event in history due to its capacity to bring together representatives of religions from distant parts of the world to listen to each other with an open mind, but it was also for including also a few women speaking from the tribune. It was a notable historical also because of the sheer number of people who were in attendance. The Christians who set out to organize the Parliament had planted the seed for something new that would emerge over the next century: the interreligious dialogue movement.

Despite these positive opinions, there were some virulent critics against the Parliament. Most of them came "from persons assuming to speak in the name of Christianity."[83] The next section deals with recalcitrant opinions, trying to explain why these were so strongly against the Parliament.

4.2 Negative Opinions

According to some authors, there were more opponents to the Parliament than those in favour. This section presents some of the main arguments that were put forth against the Parliament. Not all opposition to the Parliament were of the same nature or degree: while some were malicious, others were opposed to the concept of the Parliament as a matter of principle.

Among the most well-known critics was the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II[84], who called for a Muslim boycott of this event.[85] Because of the Sultan's op-

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80 Jones, *A Chorus of Faith*, 285.

81 Jones, *A Chorus of Faith*, 285.

82 N.A., *Mormons not heard: Elder Roberts Thinks His Church Was Slighted. He issues a challenge. Writes a Letter to President Bonney and Dr. Barrows*, (World's Parliament of Religions Archives at Meadville Lombard Theological School, N.B., 1893), 209.

83 Bonney and Carus, *The World's Parliament of Religions and the Religious Parliament Extension*, 2.

84 The Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II, was also the last Ottoman Caliph, claiming leadership of all Sunni Muslims worldwide in part because of the Ottoman Empire's control of the two Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz region of the Arabian Peninsula.

85 Friedrich Max Müller, "The real significance of the Parliament of Religions," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. Eric J. Ziolkowski (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993): 155.

position, the only Muslim who spoke at the Parliament was an American who had converted to Islam, not a major international representative. Perhaps the most surprising opinion against the Parliament was the refusal of the First Presbyterian Church in Chicago to assist J. H. Barrows in his work. In fact, in 1892, the General Assembly of the American Presbyterian Churches openly condemned this project. Dr. Morgan Dix's position was particularly potent, stating that the Christians who were present "were attacking the cross of Christ."[86] He also wrote that the Parliament was "a masterpiece of Satan."[87]

The Archbishop of Canterbury was also against the event and apparently, his opposition was a surprise for many.[88] In a letter, he explained his being unable – and thereby unwilling – to participate in, the Parliament especially because he considered Christianity to be the only true religion[89]. Others, and this is the case of Rev. Eitel of Hong Kong, tried to make some recommendations to the organizers by letting them know that they should not deny the sovereignty of their Lord rather than outright state their opposition.[90] He was afraid that the organizers unconsciously created something that was "treason against Christ"[91] and tried to inform them of what they were about to do.

These forms of criticism are summarized by John Henry Barrows around three arguments. first, "Christianity is too sacred for such treatment that it will receive in the Parliament"[92]; second, Christians against the reference of the Church of Rome as the Catholic Church; and third, as was the case of the Archbishop of Canterbury, that Christianity is the one true religion and "cannot be regarded as a member of a Parliament of religions."[93]

Despite all these critics, Charles Carroll Bonney stated that people who were against the Parliament helped it in some ways because "their criticisms...attracted more attention, (excited increased interest), and stimulated more thorough investigation."[94]

Organizers were largely happy with the development of the Parliament and its results. For this reason, Jenkin Lloyd Jones especially proposed at the end of

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86 John H. Barrows, "Results of the Parliament of Religions," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. Eric J. Ziolkowski (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993): 6.

87 Barrows, "Results of the Parliament of Religions," 6.

88 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1,* 20.

89 Cf. the letter in the annex.

90 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1,* 26.

91 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1,* 26.

92 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1,* 22.

93 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 1,* 22.

94 Charles C. Bonney, "The World's Parliament of Religions," *The Monist* 5 (1895): 343–44.

the event to carry on the World's Parliament of Religions throughout the years. He had a vision as to how the next Parliament would be a Parliament that would be "more glorious and more hopeful than this."[95] As history shows, the 1900 Parliament never took place. Another attempt for a Parliament of Religions was to be held in Chicago in 1933 but was "mostly forgotten and made little impact except for the founding of the World Fellowship of Faiths."[96] The world would have to wait until 1993, 100 years later, to see the next Parliament.

4.3 Opinions after the Parliament

This section outlines the reactions immediately following the Parliament, the main opinion of the Parliament in the days after it took place, and whether it changed the way people looked at religions.

Despite the difficulties to bring together all these religious leaders, the major opinion after the event can be summarized in the words of Rev. Dr. George Dana Boardman, a Baptist preacher and theologian: "the world's congresses were the crown of the exposition. The Parliament of religions was the diamond in the crown."[97] The Parliament was a great triumph. It was considered to be something unique, bringing faiths together. It illustrated the human spirit of fraternity. As printed in the Parisian publication *Le Temps*, "the Parliament was the most novel and amazing spectacle which America has offered."[98] America won its bet, the event was spectacular.

America was thus seen as a nation capable of organizing an event of this magnitude and diversity. Not only was the United States highlighted, but also Christianity itself, the 'host' of the Parliament who had truly developed something new: "She [Christianity] did what no other religions in this age can do or would dare to do. She challenged inspection and criticism at close range"[99], said Rev. Henry H. Jessup.[100]

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95 Jack, "The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions: How Some Religions Participated," 15.
96 Ursula King, "Rediscovering Women's Voices at the World's Parliament of Religions," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. Eric J. Ziolkowski (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993): 325.
97 Bonney and Carus, *The World's Parliament of Religions and the Religious Parliament Extension,* 17.
98 Barrows, "Results of the Parliament of Religions," 4.
99 Godspeed, *The World's First Parliament of Religions: Its Christian Spirit,* 19.
100 For thirty years, Rev. Henry H. Jessup worked as a missionary in Beirut.

Bonnet Maury goes further when affirming that "in his eyes, this event should have the most important moral impact on humanity since the 1789's Declaration on human rights and citizens."[101] He felt this event "was marked by courage[102] like an answer to the aspiration of the religious elite of civilized races."[103] John Henry Barrows also underlined two dimensions thanks to which the Parliament became such an important event: it was a liberal event and a social reformer event: "Catholics came out into a new atmosphere and gained from theological opponents new admiration and respect."[104] At this event, they were recognized as any other faith without any discrimination. Women also were not put aside: "they secured the largest recognition of her intellectual rights ever granted"[105] and also

> for the Parliament was unanimous in denouncing the selfishness of modern society and the iniquity of the opium trade and the rum traffic; for the Buddhist, the Brahman and the Confucian, who were permitted to interpret their own faiths in the Parliament of Man; for the orthodox Protestant, whose heart and intellect were expanded and whose faith in the Gospel of God's grace was strengthened by the words and scenes of that assembly; and it was especially a great event for the earnest and broad-minded Christian missionary, who rejoiced that all Christendom was at last forced to comfort the problem of bringing Christ, the universal Saviour, to all mankind.[106]

The Parliament illustrated the encounter of people from different civilizations and different faiths. The enthusiasm of the populace was notably visible, "planning forth occasionally in applauding shouts and waving of handkerchiefs"[107], but the public was also there, listening carefully to the speeches. Barrows underlined that "the ethical unity [was] apparent"[108] and "profoundly impressive."[109] People who were religious representative or who considered other religious people to be enemies realized that they were "brothers who had one father in Heav-

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101 Bonnet-Maury, *Le Congrès Des Religions A Chicago*, 320.

102 Boardman, "The Parliament of Religions: An Address before the Philadelphia Conference of Baptist Ministers," 8.

103 Bonnet-Maury, *Le Congrès Des Religions A Chicago*, 320.

104 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 2*, 1569.

105 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 2*, 1569–1570.

106 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 2*, 1570.

107 George C. Lorimer, *The Baptists in History: With an Introduction on the Parliament of Religions* (Boston: Burdett and Company Publishers, 1893), 9.

108 Barrows, "Results of the Parliament of Religions," 13.

109 Barrows, "Results of the Parliament of Religions," 13.

en."[110] During the Parliament it was the universals – the commonalities – Golden Rules, which were shared and not conflict, denunciation or critics. Thus "these men triumphed because they left much of their baggage at home."[111] Barrows also evoked the glory of this meeting which he felt was due to "its entire freedom from ecclesiastical control and the usual restrictions of conferences, assemblies and synods."[112]

The public was amazed, and the attendants were happy about how this huge encounter rolled out. At the end of the event, some of them openly expressed their wishes to carry on the idea of the Parliament. Jenkin Lloyd Jones himself proposed a city for the next Parliament in his last speech. In sum, the Parliament drew "the attention of the world to the importance of religious union, and it has announced the only real method of union. This in many ways is in itself a decisive fate."[113]

Moreover, the Parliament demonstrated to the world that it was possible to unite people whatever their faiths, beliefs, cultures. In *Unity Journal*, 18 January, 1894, there was an invitation to "take seriously to heart the prophecy we find in it."[114] It was the first time in history that such an event took place among people, many of whom initially opposed and fought it because of their faiths, but who would reach from then on a "mutual respect for each other's opinions."[115]

5 Conclusion

Despite the fact that the World's Parliament of Religions was a liberal, Western and American, as well as mainly Christian event, people who chose to participate at this event saw it as a possible means towards progress. Most of the documents used in this analysis agree that it was an event marked by courage, by a will to better know each other with profound respect. It was a meeting between men and not between things, and on minds and not on matter.[116] Many people

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110 Bonney and Carus, *The World's Parliament of Religions and the Religious Parliament Extension,* 24.

111 Jones, *A Chorus of Faith*, 18.

112 Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions: Vol. 2,* 1560.

113 Lorimer, *The Baptists in History,* 26.

114 N.A., *Freedom Fellowship and Character in Religion,* (World's Parliament of Religions Archives at Meadville Lombard Theological School, N.B., 1894), 306.

115 Wendte, *The Great Parliament: Religions of All Lands*, 213.

116 Boardman, "The Parliament of Religions: An Address before the Philadelphia Conference of Baptist Ministers," 3.

who took part in this event were more progressive religious officials in their own countries, although not all high-level religious leaders were present.

Recognized today as being the birth of the modern interreligious dialogue movement, the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions brought together a diversity of religious people representing mostly Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Parseeism, Shintoism, Taoism.[117] Among people who accepted the invitation to participate at the Parliament, there were not so many "old elites or the traditional religious leaders."[118] Those who accepted were often younger and modern religious reformers who had a global and liberal vision of religions. But despite this limitation, the diversity of guests was, for that time, a kind of socio-religious revolution completely outside the daily population's behaviour. Religiously liberal organizers were able to create a momentum of progress in religious matters. It was the first international interreligious event of its kind and magnitude, even though its degree of real openness may have then varied more than what the popular memory about it has become in later decades.

Although it was not easy to gather these participants, the organizers succeeded. This event is still perceived today as a real success. By going beyond the fears, tensions and threats expressed by some people, the organizers managed to turn the Parliament in a meaningful event. If they had been afraid of the criticism, they received from a few high-level religious leaders rather than work to overcome it, perhaps the World's Parliament of Religions would never have taken place. The organizers reached their goal by advocating commonalities between religious faiths and traditions, seeking a peaceful unity of all religions against violence and for the promotion of peace. Thanks to this vision, they were able to reduce the distance between the views that many people held towards different religions.

Today, there is still criticism towards the Parliament, but this 19th-century event can still serve as an example of success and progress. The modern interreligious dialogue movement began in an American society which did not have the same degree of liberal views as can be found today, yet a few of its visionary religious people made it possible to bring to fruition a particularly liberal vision then – the meeting of such a diverse group of religious people. It allowed for

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117 Eric J. Ziolkowski, "Introduction," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. Eric J. Ziolkowski (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993): 8.

118 Joseph Kitagawa, "The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and Its Legacy," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. Eric J. Ziolkowski (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993): 178.

the first decisive step towards the later development of a modern interreligious dialogue movement.

Even though he was not one of its participants, Mahatma Gandhi later shared a story about the 1893 event that is most representative of what an inter-religious dialogue meeting looks like: everyone has a part of the truth:

> Once upon a time in a great city an elephant was brought with a circus. The people had never seen an elephant before. There were seven blind men in the city who longed to know what kind of an animal it was, so they went together to the place where the elephant was kept. One of them placed his hands on the ears, another on the legs, a third on the tail of the elephant, and so on. When they were asked by the people what kind of an animal the elephant was, one of the blind men said: "Oh, to be sure, the elephant is like a big winnowing fan". Another bling man said: "No, my dear sir, you are wrong. The elephant is more like a big, round post". The third: "You are quite mistaken; it is like a tapering stick". The rest of them gave also their different opinions. The proprietor of the circus stepped forward and said: "My friends you are all mistaken. You have not examined the elephant from all sides. (Doc. Page 300) Had you done so you would not have taken one sided views". Brothers and sisters, I entreat you to hear the moral of this story and learn to examine the various religious systems from all standpoints.[119]

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119 Jones, *A Chorus of Faith,* 299.

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Verena E. Kozmann

Vision, Ambition, and Failure

Adolf Allwohn's practical take on Implementing an early Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Organization (Religiöser Menschheitsbund / 1921–1923)

1 Introduction

The history of the Western, modern interreligious dialogue (IRD) movement looks back at more than a century-long string of events, interventions, a multitude of initiatives and the establishment of various organizations that were, and still are, dedicated to fostering interreligious dialogue. In a highly globalized world, the interest in studying these interreligious relations and interactions between religious communities spark wide public and scholarly interest. Whereby "dialogue" is only one form of relational engagement next to conversation, cooperation, collaboration and everyday interaction, just to name a few.[1] As the question of how representatives of religions interact and how the religious other is perceived in this interaction in a plural world is a question that is not just of scholarly interest but also of interest to members of a growing number of religiously heterogeneous local communities. As a result of this paradigm shift those who participate find themselves being part of a shift towards plurality and changing perceptions of their own exclusivism and mere tolerance towards increased acknowledgement and validity of other religions.

While dialogue between religions has long-standing histories, the 1983 Parliament of World Religions in Chicago is widely accepted as a starting date of the modern development in interreligious relations while being mainly a shift within Western Christianity to rethink its relations to other religions beyond missions' endeavours. The RMB was part of this first wave of organizations experimenting in how these newly rethought relations might be applied.[2]

By dedicating the volume at hand to different voices and visions of the various past and present initiatives, this anthology contributes to the interreligious

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1 See: Catherine Cornille, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Hoboken and West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 1–2.
2 See: David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, David Thomas, eds., *Understanding interreligious Relations* (Oxford: University Press, 2013), 1–3.

dialogue movement[3] in general and – by including Rudolf Otto's Religious Union of Humankind, in the following abbreviated as the RMB,[4] it highlights not only general dialogue-dimensions but goes beyond it by focusing on the subjects of justice, moral, and peace. In accordance with the publication's overall aim to focus on informal key-moments recorded in the organizations' archives, such as debates and discussions during the organizations' founding moments, this chapter examines the largely unpublished RMB archive material of its first and only general secretary Adolf Allwohn.

By shedding light on the tensions between the organization's theoretical foundation and the practical implementation of the RMB, this paper explores the RMB's failure despite it being a timely endeavour and sheds light on the question: What were the roles of Adolf Allwohn and Rudolf Otto in this context?

The paper starts its examination in the founding year, 1921, as a starting point and outlines the RMB's vision through the introduction of its founder, Rudolf Otto, as its theoretical (and practical) starting- and endpoint of the RMB. The focus then shifts towards the RMB's general secretary, Adolf Allwohn, who was instrumental in the day-to-day business of the RMB and whose detailed notes and correspondence are critical sources for tracing the RMB's everyday business. The paper examines how the implementation of the RMB failed by looking at Otto's and Allwohn's respective biographies, Allwohn's relationship to Otto, Allwohn's role within the RMB and the challenges he faced until leaving his position as its general secretary.

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3 As said above the emergence of the modern interreligious dialogue movement is commonly linked to the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, which took place in Chicago and was part of the Chicago World Fair of that year. The emphasis of this event, according to the organizers, was to foster cooperation between different religious communities. However, according to Moyaert this event also set the tone and main challenge for the modern interreligious dialogue movement, then and now: the tension between identity and otherness. For further details, see: Moyaert, Marianne, "Interreligious Dialogue," in *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, ed. David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt and David Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 193–194.)

4 The abbreviation "RMB" derives from the alliance's German name *Religiöser Menschheitsbund* and is found throughout English and German literature on Rudolf Otto and the Religious Humanity Alliance. Rudolf Otto used the name and abbreviation first in his introductory article on RMB: Rudolf Otto, "Religiöser Menschheitsbund neben politischem Völkerbund," *Die Christliche Welt* 34 (1920): 133–135.

2 Adolf Allwohn: Identifying the Margin and the Center

In identifying main and marginal agents and putting them in context, this chapter follows a historical anthropological approach as reflected by Brian Axel,

> it may be said that the textual practices of historical anthropology operate from the margins – [...] however it should not be understood that either the topics under investigation, or the scholars involved in the inquiry, are marginal. In fact, in many cases, they are quite central. Nor should it be taken to imply that historical anthropology only studies marginal events or marginalized people [...]. On the contrary, historical anthropology, very powerfully, develops inquiries into the non-eventful, [...]. In other words, historical anthropology constitutes new centers of inquiry, just as it demonstrates the powerful positionality of the margins right at the center.[5]

This approach is considered appropriate in the study of Adolf Allwohn, who remained at the margins as the general secretary of the RMB despite the fact that he was predominantly responsible for organizing the RMB's everyday business. The question is: How can Adolf Allwohn's role be interpreted in the RMB's failure to establish a lasting foundation? It is my belief that offering an interpretation of the surviving documents and papers of the RMB's general secretary provides an additional perspective and thus may contribute to the overall knowledge about the RMB's implementation endeavour. One that will help us come to terms with potential answers to this question. Allwohn's notes and correspondence contain information on the settings, places and issues that may help to trace why the implementation of the RMB failed so quickly after its inauguration.[6]

Whereby "failure" itself is examined, as a source for potentially better understanding of the past doings and its possible influence on future IRD endeavours. As such, failure itself means to set a goal, act, and aspire, marks initiative, courage, action and intent. As preconditions for failure include progress and change as well as desire and expectations. Because the paradox of failure is that we can only fail if we strive to do.[7]

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5 Brian K. Axel, ed., *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and its Futures* (Durham N.C: Duke University Press, 2002), 2–3.

6 Amanda Coffey, "Analysing Documents," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, ed. Uwe Flick (London: Sage, 2014): 370.

7 See: Howe, Cymene and Stephanie Takaragawa, *Failure: Theorizing the Contemporary:* http://culanth.org/fieldsights/failure (accessed: 24.5.2020).

In the following Rudolf Otto and Adolf Allwohn, and their relationship to the RMB are introduced, by first outlining Rudolf Otto's vision for the RMB followed by introducing Adolf Allwohn and unpacking his role within the RMB followed by unpacking assumed key issues of its rapid failure.

1.2 Archival Research

In order to be able to trace the RMB's peak a century ago, it was necessary to go back to the archives and to make use of the existing Rudolf Otto-archive at the Philips-University in Marburg, Germany – the very same university where Otto taught as a professor of Systematic Theology from 1917 till 1929, the year of his retirement. Due to historical reasons, the Otto archive is currently divided between two locations within the university library: the main university library and the *Religionskundliche Sammlung*. The main documents in relation to the RMB, including Allwohn's documents, are archived in the latter location.

Otto was a passionate writer. Throughout his life, he was an enthusiastic user of the prevailing streams of communication, which he relied on to maintain his global social network. He exchanged numerous letters, postcards and, on rare occasions, also telegraphs with colleagues, family and friends. Although he – like many others in his time – wished that his correspondence be destroyed after his death, a significant part of it is preserved. However, there were certain limitations to consulting these remaining primary sources, since they were not digitized, and Otto's handwriting created a legibility challenge in reading these documents.

1.3 The Allwohn-Archive

The Otto archive contains Adolf Allwohn's correspondence and notes that pertain to his function at the RMB. Allwohn was in his mid-twenties when he became the RMB general secretary. He worked in this role while he was finishing his studies to become a pastor, working on his doctoral thesis and settling down in his private life as a newlywed. He started his work as general secretary in early 1921 and helped in the organization of the RMB's only conference in 1922. But then, in 1923, his involvement rapidly declined, resulting in ceasing to work for the organization for reasons we can only speculate about. Despite his sudden withdrawal from the RMB, Allwohn's papers and correspondences are important instruments aiding to help understand the RMB's dynamics at its founding mo-

ment and initial stages, as well as the conjectures regarding the organization's decline and ultimate failure.

It may be argued that Allwohn's documents are especially attractive due to their raw, untouched, and unpolished state (which is in conspicuous contrast to Otto's 'cleaned-up' appearing papers). Allwohn relinquished his notes and correspondences to the Otto Archive in 1952. In the still existing cover letter accompanying his RMB materials sent to the Otto Archive, Allwohn wrote to the Director of the *Religionskundliche Sammlung*, "I just sent the RMB files, which I was still storing, to your institute. I had no time to look through the materials beforehand. Surely, many of these papers may be recycled. Other materials may merge with the Rudolf Otto estate".[8]

Examining the Adolf-Allwohn papers unveils personal notes, jottings and fragmented thoughts. Sometimes they are even written on used marriage certificates (most probably due to a shortage of paper at the time), sometimes they are written with pencil, sometimes in ink, mostly unsigned and undated. Opening this box and looking at its contents, it seems that the museum's director at the time Heinrich Frick decided to keep Allwohn's estate in one piece and added it to the Otto archive as-is. Now, decades later, these materials have turned out to be a source of potentially important information about the founding time of the RMB.

1.4 Additional Sources: Expert Interviews

In addition to the above-mentioned primary sources, I was able to conduct several conversations with Rudolf Otto experts during the five-week research stay in Marburg. The experts consulted are Jörg Lauster and Peter Schütz, Philipps-University, and Ulrich Rosenhagen, University of Wisconsin, USA, a visiting researcher to Marburg. The main informant, however, was Martin Kraatz, who was long-standing Director of the *Religionskundliche Sammlung* at the University of Marburg, who agreed to provide me with his expert knowledge throughout several meetings as well as one lengthy telephone conversation.

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8 "Soeben habe ich die Akten des Religiösen Menschheitsbundes, die ich immer noch aufbewahrt hatte, an dein Institut abgesandt. Da ich keine Zeit dazu hatte, habe ich sie nicht durchgesehen. Sicherlich kann vieles zum Altpapier wandern. Anderes wird wohl dem Nachlass Rudolf Ottos einverleibt werden." See: OA 1754/Adolf Allwohn/no title/14. 01. 1952/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipp-University Marburg. Translated by the author. (The boxes materials are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

2 The Founder Rudolf Otto: The RMB's Well-Connected Theorist

The RMB was established in 1921, in post-war Germany by the German theologian, Rudolf Otto. Today, Otto is considered to be one of the first and most influential Religious Studies' scholars in Germany and is still well known to a wide audience through his magnum opus *The Idea of the Holy* (1917).[9] Like many other intellectuals of his time, Otto lived through WWI and its aftermath, witnessing suffering, social injustice and violence, which is believed to have influenced his writings. He believed that there is a need for an independent, international and interreligious forum to dialogue on shared ethical issues to the benefit of all people beyond religions. In line with this understanding, the purpose of the RMB was to work alongside the then newly established League of Nations, founded in 1920 as part of the Paris Peace Conference. According to Otto, the establishment of the League of Nations was not enough to cover the world's moral needs. Otto perceived the League of Nations as a mere political organization serving the interest of the prevailing politicians. Thus, the RMB was, in his opinion, needed to unite the fragmented post-war world and the logical addition to the League of Nations. Otto not only wanted to bring representatives of different world religions together but also hoped to give these representatives a shared platform to get in contact and think together about how to build future peaceful societies. As Choi summarizes, he viewed religious institutions and the state in a symbiotic relationship; While the state should respect the authority of religions, religions should contribute to the goodwill of the state by offering their share in raising the overall morale of the nation and ensuring the further developments of social norms and shared values.[10]

In an essay, published in 1920, just a year before the RMB was founded Otto states,

> we hope that the nations' shared misery today should finally teach people what religion and ethics should have taught them already: all countries and peoples have to reflect to-

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9 Jörg Lauster, Peter Schütz, Roderich Barth and Christian Danz, eds., *Rudolf Otto: Theologie – Religionsphilosophie – Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

10 See: Jeong Hwa Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen': Rudolf Ottos Religiöser Menschheitsbund und das Zusammenspiel von Religionsforschung und Religionsbegegnung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Zürich/Berlin: LIT-Verlag, 2013), 39.

gether on the big questions of mankind and on peaceful collaboration. Politics alone cannot do that.[11]

This statement summarizes the RMB founder's vision for the organization. Its principles include: a) providing a platform for the representatives of world religions to discuss issues of mankind; b) providing a forum for the representatives of world religions to discuss ethics; c) being an independent voice alongside the voice of political powers; d) contributing to a fraternal and peaceful communal life; while e) respecting religious and cultural differences.[12] According to Otto, these principles should culminate in the formation of the *Weltgewissen* (world consciousness), for which the RMB would function as an umbrella organization, fostering the participation of countless independent local delegations and groups around the world.[13]

As stated by the Rudolf Otto expert Kraatz, "the story of the RMB is inextricably linked with the person Rudolf Otto,"[14] thus demonstrating the importance of studying Rudolf Otto and the historical and intellectual context of his life and career to understand the organization. Otto, according to Kraatz and Lauster, is the most important figure in the history of the RMB, even though the organization has not been a recent research focus within the Otto scholarship.[15] It was only in 2010 (published in 2013), when Jeong Hwa Choi finished her dissertation on the RMB, that the organization was put into scholarly historical focus. Choi is the first scholar to have published, a monograph on the RMB.[16] Her contribution goes hand-in-hand with the current re-evaluation of Rudolf Otto's legacy, as seen in a recent major publication and an international congress held in 2012 at the

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11 "Die gemeinsame Not der Völker von heute wird sie [die Menschheit], so hoffen wir, endlich lehren, was Religion und Ethik sie längst hätten lehren sollen: das (sic!) die Menschheit aller Länder und Völker sich besinnen muss auf Zusammengehen, auf gemeinschaftlich zu leitende große Gemeinschaftsaufgaben, auf friedbrüderliches Zusammenwirken und –streben. Politischer Zusammenschluss allein kann das nicht leisten." Otto, "Religiöser Menschheitsbund neben politischem Völkerbund," 133–135. Translated by the author.
12 See: OA1282 Rudolf Otto/Weltgewissen und die Wege dazu (Erstes Mitteilungsblatt des Religiösen Menschheitsbundes, interreligiöse Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Versittlichung des Volks- und Völkerlebens/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipp-University Marburg.
13 See: Lauster, Schütz, Barth and Danz, *Rudolf Otto,* 1–28.
14 Conversation with Martin Kraatz on Rudolf Otto, 17.07.2014, Marburg/Germany.
15 Conversation with Martin Kraatz on Rudolf Otto, 17.07.2014, Marburg/Germany; Conversation with Jörg Lauster on Rudolf Otto, 17.7.2014, Marburg/Germany. See: e.g. Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen',* 7–10.
16 Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'.*

Philipps-University Marburg.[17] This conference gathered international experts in order to conduct contemporary readings of Rudolf Otto and his thought to explore his impact on current theology and interreligious dialogue.

In terms of historical context, it is necessary to point out that the RMB was by no means unique in its approach. After WWI, until the emergence of the Weimar Republic in the 1930s, many organizations similar to the RMB appeared on the national level in Germany, as well as on the international stage. Like the RMB, these organizations promoted dialogue and peace. For instance, the English branch of the League of Nations established the Committee of Religion and Ethics in 1921, with the intention of establishing an organization similar to the RMB. Also worth mentioning are the League of Religions founded in 1919 in England, and the Italian association of fostering religious and moral awakening, *Associazione per il progresso morale e religioso*, just to name a few.[18] Otto was in contact with many of these organizations,[19] and it is assumed that he wished to make his own contribution to that field by founding the RMB and vice versa these international contacts certainly strengthened the RMB's international network and initially attracted many religious representatives to its activities.

Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) may be described as one of the German public intellectuals of his time. Born and raised in Germany he experienced WWI from inside Germany – an experience, which doubtlessly left a long-lasting impression on Otto's intellectual development and thinking. In studying Rudolf Otto, we encounter an admirably prolific figure: a Lutheran pastor, world traveller, politician, writer, professor of Systematic Theology, a pioneer in the field of Religious Studies and founding figure of the RMB.[20] As mentioned above, he became well-known in the international arena through his magnum opus, *The Idea of the Holy*, first published in 1917 and translated into more than 30 languages.[21] This publication became a classic and still is acknowledged by theologians and religious studies' scholars today. The notoriety he gained through this publication helped him to widen his social network and enabled him to attract attention to his projects including the RMB.[22]

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17 Lauster, Schütz, Barth and Danz, *Rudolf Otto*.
18 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 102–8.
19 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 102–8.
20 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 13–20, 28–32, 58–59.
21 Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt und Garnier, 1923).
22 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 2013:45.

Let us, however, step back for a moment and examine a moment of Otto's early life that may have contributed to the later RMB vision. In 1913, inspired by his travels and political activities, Otto participated in an international conference in Paris, *Weltkongress für freies Christentum und religiösen Fortschritt* (World Congress for a Free Christendom and Advancement in Religion).[23] This congress tackled issues such as the relationship between Christians and non-Christians. Otto was invited to this conference to give a paper on the question "is a universal religion desirable and possible?"[24] There, he met Martin Rade (1857–1940) and Friedrich Siegmund-Schulze (1885–1969), who continued to inspire Otto long after the conclusion of the conference.[25] According to Choi, this event was the initial point of inspiration for founding the RMB eight years later.[26] During these years, Otto developed the following three RMB principles: a) All religions are equal; b) the state should respect religions' authority, while religion, in turn, should contribute to finding answers to ethical and political questions; and c) ethical norms and developments on national and international levels cannot be achieved without taking into consideration religion and politics. As he wrote: "Religion and state have to be in a symbiotic relationship in order to boost and advance the moral of the nation and foster social equity and peace between the nations."[27] Otto had the vision that representatives of all world religions work together to complete what political platforms, like the League of Nations, could not fulfill, that is, working directly for the people and communities, not for the people in political power.

Using his wide social network, and thanks to several essays he published in the journal *Christliche Welt* on the RMB, Otto was able to attract and motivate several key figures including representatives of world religions like Rabindranath Tagore (India) and Ryohon Kiba (Japan) and intellectuals inside and outside of Germany, like Heinrich Frick, Martin Rade, Kristian Schjelderup, Richard

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23 Frank Obergethmann, "Rudolf Ottos' 'Religiöser Menschheitsbund': Ein Kapitel interreligiöser Begegnung zwischen den Weltkriegen", *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 6 (1998): 79–106, here: 79–80.

24 See: Obergethmann, "Rudolf Ottos' 'Religiöser Menschheitsbund': Ein Kapitel," 80; Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 39.

25 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 38.

26 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*,38.

27 "eine von Diplomatie unabhängige, freie Gemeinschaft die grosse Fragen zwischenvölkischer Beziehungen, die Aufgaben allgemein menschlicher sittlicher Kultur im Zusammenwirken der gesamten Kulturmenschheit, [...] die Aufgabe, eine öffentliche Meinung der Welt zu bilden und das Weltgewissen zu wecken," Rudolf Otto, "Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbunde," *Die Christliche Welt* 34 (1920): 477–78. Translated by the author.

Wilhelm, Wilhelm Gundert and Emil Schiller.[28] Choi describes this key factor in implementing the RMB, "interested people from many different countries came [...] to Marburg to become his [Otto's] students, he was the centre of a developing network which included many public personalities who helped to make the organization known."[29] Otto wanted to implement the RMB's vision on the ground by encouraging these key-figures to establish independent local groups which was thought to help multiply the quantity of local groups and spread them easily. However, it was also in need of someone to manage the everyday business, a general secretary.

2.1 The RMB's First and Only General Secretary, Adolf Allwohn

In 1921, Adolf Allwohn was only twenty-eight years old when he joined the RMB and became its first (and only) General Secretary. He seems to have been highly ambitious and well-educated, studied Theology in London, Oxford, Leipzig, Berlin and finally in Giessen (where he completed his final exams in 1919 and 1920). After finishing his studies, Allwohn began his career as a pastoral assistant and later continued his education to become a Lutheran pastor in Kirtorf, Germany from 1922–1926 when he was ordained. In parallel, he completed a Ph.D. in Theology in 1923 and a second doctorate in Philosophy in 1924.[30]

Knowing these biographical details, one could argue that Adolf Allwohn was highly qualified when he became the general secretary of the RMB in early 1921. However, his motives to join the RMB are unknown. However, he held a great deal of admiration for Otto, and has been influenced by Otto's writings, which he expressed in a letter to Otto dated April 28, 1921, "I want to use this occasion to thank you cordially for all and everything your book 'The Idea of the Holy' gave me. Your devoted, Adolf Allwohn."[31] While Otto and Allwohn worked together to benefit the RMB their relationship remained professional.

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28 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 60–88.

29 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 58.

30 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 60–62.

31 "Ich möchte Ihnen bei dieser Gelegenheit herzlich danken für all das was mir Ihr Buch "Das Heilige" gegeben hat. Ihr sehr ergebener Adolf Allwohn." See: OA1760 by Adolf Allwohn/no title/ 28.04.1921/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

2.2 A General Secretary with a Vision: Allwohn's Ambitions

While Otto referred to Allwohn as "Pastor" or "Secretary"[32], Allwohn himself signed official papers as the RMB's "General Secretary"[33] or "General Manager."[34] He states in his notes

> My allocated role is not restricted to merely administrative duties but goes far beyond and is primarily a religious call (to activate others). I feel to have been called by God to do so. I have the impression that God showed me a way to fulfil my innermost calling. [...] I was looking for an occupation like this, which is leading me beyond the function as a church's employee.[35]

This indicates that his role at the RMB was more than being a merely administrative employee, however, a clear-cut job description is not recorded. As the above-cited quotation shows, Allwohn had great expectations in his new position and he aspired to make a difference beyond his community, putting energy, time and thought into this goal. Moreover, Allwohn saw in his new position a call to fulfill God's will and to serve beyond the circles of his congregation. He saw his role as a missionary to serve God beyond the borders of the church, his interest was to serve religiosity itself. Furthermore, he recognized the potential political power inherent to a project like the RMB:

> The RMB does not underestimate the power of realpolitische [pragmatic] realities in the context of historic events, it [the RMB] is convinced that belief and conscience are equally, if not even stronger realities. These inner powers are asking to attract attention and consideration. They [the inner powers] can no longer tolerate that the course of the world is governed solely through money and brutal violence. The inner life starts now to gain more and

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32 See: OA1792, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

33 See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

34 See: OA1794, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, University Marburg; OA1795, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

35 "Die mir zugedachte Tätigkeit sich durchaus nicht im organisatorischer Arbeit erschöpfen ~~sollte~~ sondern hauptsächlich in einem religiösen Aufrufern bestehen sollte, fühlte ich mich von Gott zu diesem Werk berufen, ~~zumal. Und~~ Ich stehe so unter dem starken Eindruck, dass Gott mir hier einen Weg gezeigt hat, auf dem ich meinem innersten Beruf nachkommen kann. [...] Ich war schon lange auf der Suche nach einer Tätigkeit, die mich über das Amt eines Angestellten der Kirche hinausführen könnte." See: OA 1758, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

more strength so that it starts to enforce its influence in the outer life and that its principals are becoming leading principals to restructure the world. [...] He [the RMB] is counting on those who, considering their faith and consciousness are not willing to stay put and leave the world to the devil.[36]

As general secretary he attended to many matters on the ground like sending invitations, taking care of recruiting new members, as well as going on lecture tours and managing membership contributions. Allwohn's everyday duties included travelling through Germany to visit local groups and advertising initiatives, recruiting new members and organizing local group meetings:

What is unifying the confessions? Announcement of the Religious Union of Humankind – local group Offenbach, Friday the 13th of January 1921 8pm in the gym of the Goethe school [...].[37]

Dear Ms. Dillenberger! Please, produce 50 copies of the attached invitation and send them to me Saturday evening. In case this is not possible I will collect them from you on Sunday morning between 11am and 1pm. But I ask you urgently to finish them until then.[38]

local group in Marburg /Darmstadt; [...] I Hamburg: visited youth – youth ring and confessional mixed; [...] II Berlin: own evening, peace society religion and peace of nation, radical ethic; Catholics/Jews/Culture ring/ religious socialists/ Quakers[39]

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36 "Der R.M.B. verkennt nicht die Macht der realpolitischen Wirklichkeiten für das geschichtliche Geschehen, er ist aber überzeugt, dass Glauben und Gewissen ebenso starke wenn nicht noch stärkere Wirklichkeiten sind. Diese inneren Mächte verlangen jetzt gebieterisch Beachtung und Berücksichtigung. Sie können es nicht länger dulden, dass der Weltlauf allein durch das Geld und die brutale Gewalt beherrscht wird. Das innere Leben fängt jetzt an, so stark zu werden, dass es sich auch im ausseren Leben Geltung verschaffen und dass es seine Grundsätze sogar zum leitenden Prinzip einer Neugestaltung der Welt erheben muss. – [...] Er rechnet auf diejenigen, die es um Glaubens- und Gewissens willen nicht aushalten, stille zu sitzen und die Welt dem Teufel zu überlassen." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

37 "Was eint die Konfessionen? Kundgebung der Ortsgruppe Offenbach des Religiösen Menschheitsbundes am Freitag, 13. Januar 1921 abends 8 Uhr in der Turnhalle der Goetheschule Bernardstrasse [...]." See: OA1768, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

38 "Sehr geehrte Frau Dillenberger! Ich bitte Sie, umgehend 50 Abzüge von umstehender Einladung zu machen und sie mir am Samstag Abend zuzuschicken. Wenn Ihnen das nicht möglich ist, dann werde ich am Sonntag Vormittag zwischen 11 und 1 Uhr zu Ihnen kommen, und mir die Karten selbst abholen. Ich bitte Sie aber dringend, sie bis dahin fertig zu stellen. [...]" See: OA1789, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/January 13th, 1922 /Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

39 "Ortsgruppe in Marburg/Darmstadt; I Hamburg: besucht Jugend – Jugendring auch konfessionell gemischt; [...] II Berlin: eigener Abend, Friedensgesellschaft Religion und Völkerfrieden,

These activities shared one major goal, that is, the acquisition of new members. According to Choi, Allwohn was the most active and committed person in the first phase of the RMB.[40] However, considering the ambitions for international expansion, the RMB drew relatively modest interest towards potential membership among its German and international circles. After Allwohn's withdrawal, no other administrator followed often to continue the multitude of tasks Allwohn was balancing being a representative figure, being often the first contact for new members and thus taking care of the development of the RMB as well as the everyday administrative work.

3 The RMB's Principals: Guidelines Needed

Allwohn embraced his role as general secretary. He not only followed Otto's instructions but also applied his own thoughts about the organization's meaning and use. His notes reveal informative fragments on this thought processes,

> What is the task of the religious community, of the moral consortium? What is the task of religious communities and moral consortiums: Religious communities have huge, moral responsibilities—would be better for culture as well—there are also the big, international questions included: [...] imperialism, every moral assignment has cosmic aspects of [having influence] on the culture 2) The relationship of the R.M.B. to related ambitions. Who should become a member in the R.M.B. 3) Sceptics? Channeling destiny as God's personnel [...] wanting religious-moral public conscience – church is not strong enough – [...] moral achievement.[41]

The above excerpt indicates the direction of Allwohn's considerations on the RMB. He concluded that the system of religious communities put the commun-

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radikale Ethik; Katholiken/Juden/Kulturring/religiöse Sozialisten/Quäker." See: OA1783, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by author.

40 Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen',* 60.

41 "Was ist die Aufgabe der religiösen Gemeinschaft, [der] sittlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft: Religionsgemeinschaften haben grosse sittliche Aufgaben, Arbeiten auch Kult besser stellen, darunter auch Die [sic!] grossen internationalen Fragen: [...] Imperialismus, jede sittliche Aufgabe ist kosmischer Aspekt von Kulturmenschheit; 2) Das verhältnis [sic!] des R.M.B. und verwandten Bestrebungen. Wer soll dem R.M.B. beitreten; 3) Skeptiker. Schicksal lenken als Mitarbeiter Gottes [...] von den guten Werken; religiös sittliches wollen allgemeines Gewissen – Kirche nicht mehr wirkungskräftig – [...] sittlicher Leistung." See: OA1784 by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

ities in competition and cooperation at the same time. Therefore, in his opinion, the aim should have been to strengthen the general welfare and find common ground in relation to shared culture, the moral state of the community, as well as public networking of the involved denominations. All these elements must ultimately serve the purpose of building up a shared moral code and understanding. Subsequently, these developments would eventually lead to the establishment of a shared *Weltgewissen* and would further lead to the establishment of moral conscience in leaders and public figures, inspire and lead others in the community.[42]

Beyond these aspirations, Allwohn shared Otto's conviction that the RMB must also find resonance at the international level and that sceptics must be actively convinced about the project. Allwohn believed that the church alone was neither effective nor strong enough to lead this organization.[43] In his opinion, the RMB was more than a practical prerequisite and a child born out of ideals and enthusiasm. Religion, according to Allwohn, is interchangeable and, in the end, what is considered to be holy is not really important: "Whether I consider holy persons, holy things, heaven or earth, Jesus or Buddha, moral commandments or acts of God. It is not important what I adore, but it is important that whatever is considered holy must be worth it."[44]

According to Allwohn the idea of being moral has to connect to the dimension of the experience of the holy, that is, the religious feeling, which, in return, must be the feeling of being good and, finally, it – the holy – must direct how one lives. These moral activities should reach individual private lives, family lives, as well as political lives and beyond that communal life before they finally reach the state. The problem, according to Allwohn is that there is not enough awareness to allow for public life to be arranged by the individual's moral convictions.[45]

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42 See: OA1785 by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

43 See: OA1784 by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive; OA1783 by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, University Marburg; OA1759, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

44 "ob ich heilige Personen oder heilige Dinge, Himmel oder Erde, Jesus oder Buddha, sittliche Gebote oder Naturereignisse. Was ich verehre, das [...], es muss aber immer so sein, dass es wert ist, für heilig gehalten zu werden." See: OA1783, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

45 See: OA1783, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive; OA1759, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive, Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University

Allwohn interpreted, translated and further developed the RMB's ideas and principals – as introduced by Otto – into the day-to-day activities and realities he found. Thus, he was actively involved in contributing to implementing RMB principles.

It is undocumented whether Allwohn's interpretations were exposed to scrutiny and revision by Otto. However, the above-examined efforts by Allwohn to apply Otto's framework to the RMB's operation show that there was a great need for the development of a clear-cut implementation guideline for the RMB.

4 Allwohn's Endeavor towards Implementation

Examples of these negotiations discussed in local groups are demonstrated in the following quotes, which Allwohn wrote in formal letters addressed to Otto:

> I thank you dearly for your welcome greetings in the name of the local group. – We have had a session some days ago and pronounced the RMB's aims and tasks. In the process some wishes and plans for the RMB's directions got pronounced, which I was asked to communicate to you.[46]

> Dear Professor! The local group was missing a good reason to use the name Religious Union of Humankind. First, it was thought that the alliance would be a centralization of the religions of the entire humankind, until it was highlighted that 'humankind' would be the goal and the alliance represent nothing but the tool to achieve these goals.[47]

> There are two members at the local group who are standing on the grounds of religion of idealism and therefore somewhat distanced to the confessionals. One of them explained that he is missing your [Otto's] historical explanation for the whole business. He explained

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Marburg; OA1784, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

46 "Für Ihren Willkommensgruss danke ich Ihnen im Namen der Ortsgruppe recht herzlich. – Wir haben vor einigen Tagen eine Sitzung abgehalten und uns dabei über die Ziele und die Aufgaben des R.M.B ausgesprochen. Es sind dabei einige Wünsche für den Plan und die Richtung des R.M.B. laut geworden, die ich Ihnen mitteilen soll." See: OA1760, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/ 28.04.1921/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

47 "Sehr geehrter Herr Professor! [...] Man [die Ortsgruppe] vermisste von verschiedenen Seiten her eine nähere Begründung des Namens Religiöser Menschheitsbund. Man dachte sich zuerst die Sache so, dass der Bund eine Zusammenfassung der Religionen in der ganzen Menschheit bezwecke, bis dann darauf aufmerksam gemacht wurde, dass "Menschheit" wohl das zu erreichende Ziel sei, und dass der Bund der Religionen nur das Mittel zur Verwirklichung dieses Zieles darstelle." See: OA1789, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

that it would not be anything new you want to achieve. It would be the idea of the eternal right and the eternal peace, expressed earlier by Spinoza, Leibnitz and Kant.[48]

These quotations are interesting in various ways. First, they show that the local groups had influence over the positioning of the RMB and that the group members had the potential to, and the interest in, becoming actively involved in forming the RMB. Secondly, although the relationship between Otto and Allwohn remained formal, there was vivid exchange of ideas and concerns between the two.

Allwohn emphasized the role of the religious individual in creating unity among believers. However, he not only calls for this unity on the level of the religious individual but also on the level of the church, since he invites churches to get involved and work together for the same purpose. This underpins three major convictions Allwohn had in relation to the importance of the RMB's work: Firstly, he determined that there was work to do to reconcile the churches with each other[49], secondly, he pointed at the importance of churches and religious communities to be proactive and take part in public life and thirdly, he asked religious institutions and religious individuals to make use of their political influence.[50]

In Allwohn's understanding of the RMB, all religious people and the consolidated churches should work together towards the greater goals of world peace, justice and moral purity. In his understanding categories like justice and morality are universal. Allwohn echoes Otto when he emphasizes that 'peace' by itself is not a significant ideal by itself and without the right framework. This frame-

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48 "So gehören der Ortsgruppe zwei Männer an, die auf dem Boden der Religion des Idealismus stehen und so den Konfessionellen abhol sind. Einer von ihnen führte noch aus, dass er bei Ihnen die historische Begründung vermisse. Es sei doch nichts Neues, was Sie wollten. Es handle ich doch um die Ideen des ewigen Rechtes und des ewigen Friedens, die vorher von Spinoza, Leibnitz und Kant ausgebildet worden seien." See: OA1760, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/28.04. 1921/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

49 "Die Arbeit an der Versöhnung der [...] Kirchen wird durch den R.M.B. nicht hinfällig." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund von Adolf Allwohn /no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

50 "Wenn die Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften jetzt nicht diesen Schritt zur Gestaltung des öffentlichen Lebens tun, wird der Gang der Geschichte über sie hinwegschreiten, denn dann ist [...] ihre Bedeutungslosigkeit klar erkannt. Die Kräfte nämlich, die nicht mehr aktiv das Gesicht unserer Kultur mitbestimmen, sind belanglos geworden." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

work is described as 'justice' or 'social justice' and is introduced as a central category for the RMB's work.[51]

In all these notes it still remains unclear what Allwohn meant exactly when he referred to these major concepts that made up the initial goals of the RMB, that is, 'justice', 'social justice' and 'moral purity'. These concepts are neither defined nor detailed. This lack of definition may be considered a major weakness for the RMB's theoretical foundation, considering the fundamental importance of these concepts for the RMB as such. Instead these categories are used as if they are universal, cross-culturally applicable and thus more or less independent of context.

When it comes to the question of who should reach the goals, Allwohn is convinced that it is the RMB's duty to unite all religious people, communities and churches in order to achieve their goals.[52] Allwohn writes:

> the consolidation within a nation is not enough, because almost all public and social damages are world-damages and therefore their disposal is only reachable by the collective action of the whole cultured-mankind. It is clear that the international morals is only reachable through the collaboration of all religions.[53]

In accordance with Otto, Allwohn called for a national and international collaboration on the domestic, communal, national and international levels. He was

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51 "Es handelt sich beim R.M.B. nicht nur um religiösen Pazifismus. "Friede um jeden Preis" ist überhaupt nicht das ausschlaggebende Ideal. Es muss vielmehr Recht und Gerechtigkeit um jeden Preis erkämpft werden. Wenn der religiöse Pazifismus das tut, dann steht er im Rahmen der Aufgaben eines R.M.B. denn dann liegt hier die Bemühung um ein Teilziel [...]." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

52 "Die grossen Ideen der Gerechtigkeit und der moralischen Reinheit werden in der ganzen Welt vertreten. Es handelt sich jetzt nur darum, dass diese Prinzipien auch angewandt werden auf die Gestaltung des Öffentlichen und zwischenstaatlichen Lebens. Diese Aufgabe will der Religiöse Menschheitsbund, der Bund aller religiösen Menschen und aller Religionsgemeinschaften übernehmen." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/ Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

53 "Aber der Zusammenschluss innerhalb eines Volkes genügt nicht, weil fast alle öffentlichen und sozialen Schäden Weltschäden sind und deshalb ihre Beseitigung nur durch ein gemeinsames Vorgehen der gesamten Kulturmenschheit zu erreichen ist. Ganz klar ist es ja, dass die zwischenstaatliche Moral nur durch ein Zusammenarbeiten aller Religionen wirksam beeinflusst werden kann." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

convinced that morality emerges throughout all cultures and national borders,[54] and is shared by all religious individuals and penetrates private lives, extends to the family life, community life and stretches finally to the state life.[55]

In the question of who should participate, Allwohn was far more inclusive than Otto. While Otto felt that the RMB members should be religious and therefore united in their subjective feeling and experience of being religious, Allwohn fostered RMB memberships beyond the religious experience. He expressed that not only religious communities must be activated to join, but that anybody who is of good will must come together.[56] His understanding of who should participate was an ambitious goal by itself- theoretically and practically. Aiming at including religious and non-religious members implied moving beyond an inter-religious organization and towards a political movement. In these questions, Allwohn's vision reached beyond what Otto was imagining for the RMB.

On the question of how these goals– justice, moral purity, and world-peace, would be reached, Otto suggested two strategies: one was to create the already mentioned *Weltgewissen* and the second was to establish a parliament of religions. Allwohn follows up on Otto's notion of the *Weltgewissen* and emphasized its importance as shown in these two quotes:

> All the genuine movements will not reach their goals as the public and the will of the communities and nations do not stand behind them. Therefore, in order to stop the world's misery, the will of the people has to be woken up and this will have to be put forefront to support the great moral ideas and justice and the community. Therefore, the building of a public consciousness which is against all injustice and anti-moral and has a lively interest in the good.[57]

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54 "Das aus dem Religiösen kommende gute Handeln darf keine Grenzen und Beschränkungen kennen, sondern muss sich auf alles erstrecken." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

55 "Sittliche Aktivität. Privatleben, Familienleben. Leben [aus] der Gesellschaft heraus. Muss sich auch erstrecken bis ins Staatsleben und in das Leben der Menschheit [...]" See: OA1783, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

56 "Und nicht nur die Religionsgemeinschaften und die Menschen, die in einem engeren Sinne religiös sind, sollen aufgerufen werden, sondern alle die, die guten Willen sind und die sich von grossen sittlichen Ideen bestimmen lassen. – Alle diese Menschen und Gruppen müssen jetzt aus ihrer Vereinzelung hervortreten. In fast allen Ländern sind mehrere Kirchen oder sogar mehrere Religionen nebeneinander vorhanden, so dass jede dieser Gruppen für sich allein machtlos ist." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

57 "Und so lange werden auch alle wirklich gutgemeinten Bewegungen das Ziel nicht erreichen, als nicht die öffentliche Meinung und der Wille der Gruppen und Völker hinter ihnen

Therefore, there is the demand: Religions of all countries unite. This invocation will wake up the churches, the religious communities and the individual. Next all the representatives of those groups who hear the call will meet periodically in certain countries and world congresses to discuss the big questions of the public and international community. Such a parliament of religions will have great influence if the will of all the religious stand behind them, the will to justice and moral purity, the will of redevelopment of culture out of the spirit of the religion. When this will is awake in broad parts of the people, and then a true league of people will be possible, because just then the relationships and people as well as the races, classes [...] are able to be given an order in the spirit of justice.[58]

Allwohn perceived the *Weltgewissen*, first and foremost, as a means to oppose politics. People of all religions, religious people of all denominations and people without denomination should be activated and made aware of their political powers. These powers were supposed to be united beyond the borders of nations, to build a shared intellectual and moral basis, which would be discussed in local national groups and further specified in the international parliament of religions where representatives of all religions would come together and build a collective, an alliance to oppose political leaders if necessary. Allwohn was convinced that this social change started with the re/discovery of the religious sensibility as subjective experience, but he also considered religious principles to be a uniting factor to build a collective and foster political and social changes. The civil society as a whole would be strengthened and better prepared not only to overcome injustice more easily but also better prepared to prevent future injustice.

steht. Es muss also in erster Linie zur Behebung der Weltnot das Wollen der Menschen wachgerufen werden und dieses Wollen muss von neuem unter die grossen sittlichen Ideen der Gerechtigkeit und der Gemeinschaft gestellt werden. Es handelt sich deshalb einzig und allein um die Bildung eines öffentlichen Gewissens, das alle Ungerechtigkeit und Unsittlichkeit entschieden ablehnt und lebendiges Interesse an der Förderung alles Guten hat." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

58 "Deshalb gilt die Mahnung: Religiöse aller Länder vereinigt euch." Dieses gemeinsame Aufrufen wird die Kirchen, die Religionsgemeinschaften und die Einzelnen erwachen lassen. Dann werden sich die berufenen Vertreter dieser Gruppen und Kreise zusammenfinden und in periodisch wiederkehrenden Ländern und Weltkongressen die grossen Fragen des öffentlichen und zwischenstaatlichen Lebens besprechen. Ein solches Religionspaarlament wird grossen Einfluss haben, wenn hinter ihm der Wille aller Religiösen steht, der Wille zu Gerechtigkeit und sittliche Reinheit, der Wille zur Neugestaltung der Kultur aus dem Geiste der Religion. Wenn dieser Wille in breiten Volksschichten geweckt ist, dann wird zum Beispiel auch erst ein wahrer Völkerbund, [...] denn dann werden erst die Beziehungen der Völker wie auch der Rassen, Klassen [...] im Sinne der Gerechtigkeit geordnet werden können." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

Therefore, Allwohn's first and foremost goal was to find a collective and bring together those who want to participate in creating the *Weltgewissen*.[59] This collective was envisaged to bring together the inherent powers of communities and the powers of religious individuals, in other words, the united political power of civil societies.

In regard to the second part of implementing the RMB, namely, to form a parliament of religions Allwohn was less outspoken. What is sure is that the RMB was not the only organization at the time that was working on implementing religious awakening and social movement. There were similar initiatives founded independently from the RMB. Allwohn explicitly wrote in his notes about the League of Religions in England, within which adherents of six world religions participated: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Parsis.

The RMB reached out to these organizations willing to network and cooperate.[60] The strategy of networking would have certainly been helpful to reach the goal of forming a parliament of religions in the future. However, the main focus for Allwohn was to reach out to Germans and to establish a broad network of local German groups. Allwohn, who himself led the local group Offenbach and supported the RMB's aim to activate religious people in the area, understood these group meetings to be a means to stimulate open discussions. It appears

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59 "Welchen Weg wird der R.M.B zur Erreichung dieser Ziele beschreiten müssen? – Zunächst wird es sich um die Sammlung aller derer handeln, die erkannt haben, dass die religiösen Kräfte hinaustreten müssen ins Leben, um die Weltnot zu überwinden und um eine gute Neugestaltung zu erreichen. Diese Menschen werden zusammen mit dem Bund immer wieder ausrufen: "die Religion ist nicht tot, sie hat im Gegenteil gerade in unserer Zeit noch viel zu sagen. [...] Wenn sich die Menschen besinnen und den religiösen Grundsätzen die ihnen gebührende Föhrung [sic!] einräumen, dann werden alte Schäden ~~vermieden~~ beseitigt und neu vermieden werden können. Aber ein gemeinsames Vorgehen ist unumgänglich notwendig." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

60 "Dass der Gedanke eines R.M.B. einem Bedürfnis der ganzen Welt entspricht, zeigen die begeisterten Zuschriften nicht nur aus Deutschland, sondern auch aus Schweden, Holland, Österreich, der Schweiz, Italien, England, Amerika, Indien und Japan. Und dass es sich auch nicht um ein Unternehmen handelt, das Deutsche in erster Linie zur Abwendung der besonderen Notlage ihres Landes unternehmen haben, geht daraus hervor, dass ganz unabhängig vom R.M.B. ähnliche Bestrebungen [...] der vor kurzem in England gegründeten "League of Religions", [...] an dem die Vertreter von sechs grossen Religionen: Christen, Juden, Mohammedaner, Hindus, Buddhisten und Parsis beteiligt sind. Die deutsche Bewegung hat mit diesen Bewegungen der anderen Länder schon eine enge Fühlung gewonnen, sodass die Verwirklichung der gemeinsamen grossen Aufgabe nur noch eine Frage der Zeit sein kann." See: OA1785, by Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

that these discussions were an important tool to reach consent on two recurring questions: what does the RMB stand for as well as who should be able to join. Issues that remained unresolved.

5 The RMB Conference and Financial Challenges

One of the most severe everyday concerns was the constant lack of sufficient funding: "Still there are funds needed, for now, 500 Mark, for defrayal of office and travel expenses. We are turning trusting to you with the request to help fast."[61]

Reading these lines points to the serious problem Allwohn faced within the RMB. The organization was chronically suffering from a substantial lack of funding. The only regular funding came from the membership contributions, which hardly covered the basic costs. However, not every local group was suffering financially in the same way or to a similar extent.

It is quite intriguing that, despite the tight financial situation, the RMB conference took place in Eisenach in 1922, organized to follow in junction to another international conference. Thus, the RMB conference was relatively well attended and considered an overall success.[62] Despite this success, however, the precarious financial situation certainly became a fundamental reason behind the unsustainability of the RMB.[63]

6 Allwohn's Turn Away: Times of Radicalization

Shortly after the conference, the RMB started slowly to cut down on activities and then closed down quietly. One may argue that Allwohn's loss of interest in his position in the RMB and the tacit death of the RMB are no coincidences. The occurrence of both should, rather, be seen as symptoms of a change of the *Zeitgeist* in Germany. As much as the aftermath of the WWI created time and space for organizations like the RMB to promote conversations on peace and justice, the

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61 "Noch aber fehlen uns die nötigen Geldmittel es wird sich zunächst um etwa 500M handeln, zur Bestreitung der Büro- und Reise- und Druckkosten. Deshalb wenden wir uns vertrauensvoll an Sie mit der Bitte um schnelle Hilfe." See: OA1765, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskuntliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

62 See: Obergethmann, "Rudolf Ottos 'Religiöser Menschheitsbund': Ein Kapitel," 81.

63 See: Obergethmann, "Rudolf Ottos 'Religiöser Menschheitsbund': Ein Kapitel," 80 – 81.

1920s was a time of insidious political polarization and radicalization, which left very little space for these same organizations to continue their work. This change of the *Zeitgeist* and Allwohn's growing sympathy towards the National Socialist ideology ceased his endeavours to implement Otto's ideas and visions in regard to the RMB.

During the first year after its establishment, the RMB thrived and looked as though it would be a promising project. However, Allwohn's engagement, as active and promising as it might have been during the first two years, lost his drive rapidly in the third year. The last date found on Allwohn's documents is May 1923, just two years after he was appointed general secretary.[64] The lack of any document dated beyond this one indicates that he may have stopped his work with the RMB around this time. Due to the lack of sources, however, the exact date and reasons for this step remain inexplicable.

Looking at his subsequent development as an academic, it is clearly evident that later on in his career he had begun to have a great interest in the growing national-socialist ideas of the time. In 1934 he published an article titled *Radical Revolution* in which he praises *das Dritte Reich* as the needed turnaround, not only encompassing politics and economy, but also science, art, ideology and private life.[65] He became part of the *Deutsche Christen* movement, which aimed to unite all Christians in Germany, a movement also supported by Hitler's regime.

After publishing *Radical Revolution*, however, Allwohn was also known to be in contact with a new protestant movement named the *Bekennende Kirche*, known to be against the coordination of all Christians in Germany. A few years later Allwohn's academic career was interrupted. He lost his chair at the University of Giessen in 1940, to which he was appointed for eight years earlier in 1932.[66] After the end of WWII and due to the intervention of the Americans at the University of Giessen, Allwohn regained his professorship, but the university closed in 1950. Allwohn, therefore, had to change universities, succeeding in 1948. He ended his academic career in 1964 as a lecturer in the Philosophy Department at the University of Frankfurt and continued to work as pastor and psychotherapist.[67] Allwohn wrote in a letter in 1952:

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64 See: OA1808, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/13.05.1923/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

65 Adolf Allwohn, "Evangelischer Glaube im Dritten Reich, Kirche im Angriff: Brennende Fragen der Gegenwart," *Volksmissionarische Schriften* 1 (1934): 7–8.

66 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 60.

67 Heinz Röhr, "Adolf Allwohn: Vorläufer der Seelsorgertheorie," in. *Evangelische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie an der Universität Frankfurt am Main: 1945 bis 1989, eds.* Dieter Stoodt, Karl-

My lectureship gives me great pleasure. [...] Only, it is painful to me that I could not find time to publish anything so far. [...] As pastor I am for one year of use as hospital pastor. In addition, I am giving some psychotherapeutic treatments and instructive analyzes. – The faculties are not yet ready to recognize the meaning of in-depth psychology and to request a specialist in this area.[68]

Despite the promising and ambitious beginning of this man's career, it came to a relatively quiet end.

7 Conclusion

The *Religiöse Menscheitsbund* / Religious Union of Humankind (the RMB) is an early example of an interreligious dialogue organization. Starting as a theoretical idea developed during WWI, Rudolf Otto founded the RMB in 1921 as an organization aimed at creating a *Weltgewissen* shared by world religions. This essay examined its premature failure, analyzing the impact of Adolf Allwohn, the RMB's first and only General Secretary in relation to its failure of implementation. The failure of the RMB may be inextricably linked to the tension between the organization's theoretical ideal and the practical implementation of the RMB.

The RMB emerged out of historical times, in the aftermath of the WW I crisis and the Spanish flu pandemic, but also ended at a time of growing socio-political developments in Germany that foreshadowed the impending second world war. The formation of the RMB, and especially its failure, shows the situation of crisis in which Christianity in Europe fell after the end of WWI. In the aftermath of this cruelty and horror, several Christian organizations emerged on the scene, emphasizing the importance of peace, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, as well as the importance of social justice. These organizations' ideas and principals seemed rather timely, including Otto's RMB. Otto, the well-known theorist, had the vision that all world religions should cooperate with each other in aspiration for mutual respect and equality. He understood the RMB's role as a

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Gerhard Steck, Wolfgang Philipp, Adolf Allwohn, Hans-Werner Bartsch, Walter Dignath and Hans-P. Schmidt (Frankfurt am Main.: Peter Lang, 1991): 155 – 163.

68 "Meine Vorlesungstätigkeit macht mir viel Freude. [...] Es schmerzt mich nur, dass ich bis jetzt keine Zeit für Veröffentlichungen gefunden habe. [...] Als Pfarrer bin ich seit einem Jahr in der Krankenhausseelsorge eingesetzt. Daneben führe ich einige psychotherapeutische Behandlungen und Lehranalysen durch. – Die Fakultäten sind leider noch nicht so weit, dass sie die Bedeutung der Tiefenpsychologie erkannt hätten und dass sie einen Fachmann auf diesem Gebiet anforderten." See: OA1754, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/14. 01. 1952/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg. Translated by the author.

platform for negotiating social justice and peace, in addition to and in opposition to political powers.

Although Allwohn's remaining RMB papers and documents are rather fragmented, they still allow precious insights into the everyday concerns and challenges of the young and ambitious general secretary. Allwohn shared Otto's vision and ambitions to implement an international dialogue platform and besides being a representative figure, worked on practical matters like founding local groups, activating group members and collecting membership payments, throughout Germany.

During Allwohn's time as the RMB's general secretary, he encouraged discussions in the local group meetings, where the RMB principals were negotiated. By interpreting and negotiating Otto's ideas he prepared them for implementation. However, concrete guidelines may have been needed to support a lasting implementation and a definition of the core concepts of the alliance, such as what is meant by "social justice", or "all" religious people. Such concepts are not defined in detail by Otto or Allwohn.

Additionally, two crucial problems hindered the development of the RMB: the lack of regular funding reflected in the circumstances the only conference was held and, relatively speaking, modest interest in the RMB within Germany. For example, not all the German churches contacted were interested in participating in the RMB's vision and therefore blocked its growth. These are considered to be two main factors contributing to its eventual failure.

In 1923, only two years after starting his appointment, Allwohn drifted away from the alliance. The reasons for Allwohn's departure from his position as the general secretary of the RMB and the RMB's silent fading and final failure may include a shift of the *Zeitgeist,* embodied in the political radicalization of Allwohn, who seemed to have been somewhat sympathetic towards fascist idealism. Rudolf Otto on the opposite resisted these tendencies but, unfortunately, suffered from illness and did not have the constitution to continue the RMB. Several attempts to revive the RMB after the second world war failed. The case of the RMB shows that even if a vision is seemingly timely it cannot be implemented without a very specific organizational profile, financial support, network and the right political environment.

Although the RMB was a seemingly timely endeavour and initially able to attract worldwide interest due to Otto's international social network, the organization reached the climax of its activities and achievements already one year after its inception, when it held its only international conference in 1922. Being left without lasting national or international support, the RMB became gradually inactive in the following years, until it finally stopped its activities altogether at the end of the decade. According to Choi the reasons for its failure are

diverse and ambiguous. She also points at Otto's RMB revival attempts in the early 1930s, as well as those of other RMB supporters immediately after WWII and then again in the 1950s. However, these attempts never made a lasting breakthrough.[69]

A century later the RMB might have still struggled, although "most world religions have some form of worldwide representative organization and gathering opportunity."[70] Most of these organizations dialogue foremost communalities, differences and limitations within- and between their communities. The RMB, however, was calling for a very different approach, a focus that goes beyond religious boundaries, but making religion the instrument and key to mobilize people to discuss socio-political themes. In this respect Otto's RMB was- and probably still is one step ahead of past and current interreligious and intrareligious efforts.

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OA1759, by Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg.

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69 See: Choi, *Religion als 'Weltgewissen'*, 3. This failure notwithstanding, one can argue that RMB's ideas and principles are again detected in today's world, e.g. reflected in the work of Hans Küngs' Weltethos foundation (1995).

70 See: Cheetham, Pratt, and Thomas, *Understanding interreligious Relations*, 3.

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10 Annex

10.1 Annex 1: OA1758

Adolf Allwohn/no title/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg

Die mir zugedachte Tätigkeit sich durchaus nicht im organisatorischer Arbeit erschöpfen ~~sollte~~ sondern hauptsächlich in einem religiösen Aufrufern bestehen sollte, fühlte ich mich von Gott zu diesem Werk berufen, ~~zumal. Und~~ Ich stehe so unter dem starken Eindruck, dass Gott mir hier einen Weg gezeigt hat, auf dem ich meinem innersten Beruf nachkommen kann. Ich danke Ihnen deshalb für Ihr Anerbieten von ganzem Herzen und hoffe, dass Gott nur die Kraft geben wird für die grossen Aufgabe sie zu wirken, wie sie es verdient. – Ich war schon lange auf der Suche nach einer Tätigkeit, die mich über das Amt eines Angestellten der Kirche hinausführen könnte. Zwar liegt mir das seelsorgerische wirken, die Arbeit der religiösen Vertiefung und der Andachtsleitung durchaus, aber das Herzkon-

storium (?) hatte mir das Versprechen abgenommen, in meiner amtlichen Tätigkeit von meinem Besten, zu schweigen und nur das zu bringen, was den Leuten aus dem Herzen gesprochen sein. (So hat man jetzt auch einen anderen hessischen Pfarrer gesagt: Wir sind überzeugt, dass Sie nur Christus verkündigen, aber haben nicht nur diese Aufgabe, sondern wir sind auch Kirche und da müssen Sie auf die (...??) und ich hoffe für mein seelsorgerisches Wirken auch nach ~~meinen Amt~~ dem Aufgaben meines Amtes immer einen kleinen Kreis zu haben, den ich hier dienen kann. – Um Missverständnisse zu vermeiden, möchte ich ausdrücklich betonen, dass ich durchaus das Gute an der Kirche ~~sehe~~ und auch die Möglichkeit manch schönen Wirkens sehe, dass ich mich aber entschieden dagegen wenden muss, dass jede religiöse Weiterführung z.B. zu einer Ablehnung des Völkerhasses verboten wird. – Wenn ~~man~~ ich so ~~mit~~ smeiner eigentlichen Aufgabe nicht im Rahmen des Pfarrberufes ~~Amtes~~ nachgehen kann, so werden Sie es verstehen, dass ich ~~gerne~~ möglichst bald mein Amt aufgeben möchte und in meiner Sekretärtätigkeit auf die Ermöglichung dieses Aufgabens hinarbeiten werde.

10.2 Annex 2: OA1760

Adolf Allwohn/no title/28.04.1921/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg
Offenbach 28. April 1921
Waldstrasse 124pt

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor!
Für Ihren Willkommensgruß danke ich Ihnen im Namen der Ortsgruppe recht herzlich. – Wir haben vor einigen Tagen eine Sitzung abgehalten und uns dabei über die Ziele und die Aufgaben des R.M.B ausgesprochen. Es sind dabei einige Wünsche für den Plan und die Richtung des R.M.B. laut geworden, die ich Ihnen mitteilen soll.

Man vermisste von verschiedenen Seiten her eine nähere Begründung des Namens Religiöser Menschheitsbund. Man dachte sich zuerst die Sache so, dass der Bund eine Zusammenfassung der Religionen in der ganzen Menschheit bezwecke, bis dann darauf aufmerksam gemacht wurde, dass "Menschheit" wohl das zu erreichende Ziel sei, und dass der Bund der Religionen nur das Mittel zur Verwirklichung dieses Zweckes darstelle. Man könnte das wohl im Plan der Bewegung noch näher zum Ausdruck bringen. – Man beanstandete ferner, dass nur die Konfessionen zusammengefasst werden sollen und nicht alle religiösen Menschen überhaupt, denn es sei doch heutzutage weiterhin so, dass

wir den Zusammenhang mit einer Konfession aufgegeben hätten, ohne aufgegeben zu haben, für sich religiös zu sein, und ohne die Bereitschaft zur Mithilfe der Überwindung der Menschheitsnöte aufgegeben zu haben. – So gehören der Ortsgruppe zwei Männer an, die auf dem Boden der Religion des Idealismus stehen und so den Konfessionellen abhold sind. Einer von ihnen führte noch aus, dass er bei Ihnen die historische Begründung vermisse. Es sei doch nichts Neüs, was Sie wollten. Es handle sich doch um die Ideen des ewigen Rechtes und des ewigen Friedens, die vorher von Spinoza, Leibnitz und Kant ausgebildet worden seien. Wenn die Sache des RMB darauf aufgebaut würde, dann hätte sie auch grössere Wirkungsmöglichkeiten besonders im Ausland, das doch immer mehr die Philosophie Kants verehre. – Ich glaube nun zwar nicht, dass Sie diese einseitige Festlegung auf die religiösen Ideen Kants wählen werden, aber ich wollte Ihnen doch die geäusserten Bedenken mitteilen, damit Sie einen Überblick gewinnen können. – Ausserdem gehört der Ortsgruppe der hiesige konfessionslose Führer der Mehrheitssozialisten an, der von einer Diesseitsreligion der Verbundenheit mit allen Menschen, mit allen Dingen und mit dem All ausgeht. Auch er bittet um einen Platz im RMB – Er ist weiterhin der Wunsch geäussert worden, er möchte zu den Aufgaben des RMB doch auch diejenigen hinzugenommen worden, die mehr auf die einzelne Stadt oder auf das einzelne Volk beschränkt bleiben. Es wäre das die ganze Aufgabe der mit gemeinsamen Kräften in Angriff zu nehmenden Versittlichung des öffentlichen Lebens. Ich wäre Ihnen sehr dankbar, wenn ich hier über Ihre Absichten Näheres erfahren könnte.

Wir haben in unserer letzten Sitzung beschlossen, im Herbst gemeinschaftlich an die Öffentlichkeit zu treten mit einem Vortragsabend über "Völkergemeinschaft und Religion". Die Vertreter der einzelnen Gruppen sollen nacheinander über dasselbe Thema von ihrer religiösen Überzeugung aus reden. Vorher soll innerhalb der einzelnen Konfessionen für den RMB geworben werden. – In der hiesigen evangelischen Gemeinde ist noch kein besonderes Interesse für die Sache vorhanden, weshalb ein größerer Vortrag wohl angebracht scheint. Dürfte ich Sie da vielleicht bitten, uns diesen Vortrag zu halten? Für eine zusagende Antwort wären wir Ihnen sehr dankbar.

Die Kasse der Ortsgruppe enthält etwa 110 M. Wieviel soll ich davon an Sie abschicken?

Ich möchte Ihnen bei dieser Gelegenheit herzlich danken für all das, was mit Ihrem Buche "Das Heilige" gegeben hat.

Ihr sehr ergebener
Adolf Allwohn
Pfarrassistent

10.3 Annex 3: OA1785

Adolf Allwohn/ Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund/no date/Rudolf Otto-Archive Religionskundliche Sammlung, Philipps-University Marburg

Vom Religiösen Menschheitsbund
von Adolf Allwohn

(1) Der Gedanke eines Religiösen Menschheitsbundes (R.M.B) ist von dem protestantischen Professor der Theologie an der Universität Marburg (Deutschland) D.Dr. Rudolf Otto ausgegangen, der durch sein Buch "Das Heilige" weit über Deutschlands Grenzen hinaus berühmt geworden ist. Dieses Buch hatte schon überzeugend dargelegt, dass alle Religionen trotz ihrer grossen Verschiedenheiten doch viele Ähnlichkeiten in ihrem Erleben des Heiligen haben. Jetzt vertritt Professor Otto auch den Gedanken, dass die grossen Weltreligionen in ihren sittlichen Forderungen weitgehend übereinstimmen. Diese Einsicht hat ihn dazu geführt, alle Religionen aufzurufen zu einem gemeinsamen Vorgehen in der Erneürung der Kultur. Die grossen Ideen der Gerechtigkeit und der moralischen Reinheit werden in der ganzen Welt vertreten. Es handelt sich jetzt nur darum, dass diese Prinzipien auch angewandt werden auf die Gestaltung des Öffentlichen und zwischenstaatlichen Lebens. Diese Aufgabe will der Religiöse Menschheitsbund, der Bund aller religiösen Menschen und aller Religionsgemeinschaften übernehmen.

Dass der Gedanke eines R.M.B. einem Bedürfnis der ganzen Welt entspricht, zeigen die begeisterten Zuschriften nicht nur aus Deutschland, sondern auch aus Schweden, Holland, Österreich, der Schweiz, Italien, England, Amerika, Indien und Japan. Und dass es sich auch nicht um ein Unternehmen handelt, das Deutsche in erster Linie zur Abwendung der besonderen Notlage ihres Landes unternehmen haben, geht daraus hervor, dass ganz unabhängig vom R.M.B. ähnliche Bestrebungen ausgehen von dem protestantischen Erzbischof von Schweden, N. Söderblom in Upsala, und von der vor kurzem in England gegründeten "League of Religions", des "Bundes der Religionen", an dem die Vertreter von sechs grossen Religionen: Christen, Juden, Mohammedaner, Hindus, Buddhisten und Parsis beteiligt sind. Die deutsche Bewegung hat mit diesen Bewegungen der anderen Länder schon eine enge Fühlung gewonnen, sodass die Verwirklichung der gemeinsamen grossen Aufgabe nur noch eine Frage der Zeit sein kann. Von welchen Erwägungen geht der R.M.B. aus? – Er hält in unserer Zeit nichts für so wichtig als die Rettung der Welt aus der gemeinsamen ungeheuren Not. Er denkt bei dieser Weltnot nicht nur an die wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten, die in allen Ländern auf der Seite in Teürung, in Arbeitslosigkeit und in sozialem

Elend und auf der anderen Seite in Wucher, in Übervorteilung und in einem riesigen Anschwellen einzelner Vermögen bestehen. Er denkt auch nicht nur an die politischen Schwierigkeiten, die in den wechselseitigen Beziehungen der Volksgruppen in einem Staat wie auch der Staaten und Völker untereinander vorhanden sind. Sondern er denkt vor allem an die Weltnot, in die die öffentliche Moral hineingeraten ist, er denkt an Unsitte und Unzucht, an Ausschweifung und Gewinnsucht, an Ungerechtigkeit und Ungeistlichkeit. Ergeht dabei auch von der Erkenntnis aus, dass alle einzelnen Schäden letzten Endes aus nichts anderes als auf die Erkrankung des Ethos zurückgehen und dass der Egoismus in seinen verschiedensten Formen die gemeinsame Not verursacht hat. – Es sind schon mancherlei Bewegungen vorhanden und es werden mancherlei Anstrengungen gemacht, um die Ichsucht der Gruppen und Völker zu überwinden und zu einer gemeinsamen Bewältigung aller Schwierigkeiten zu gelangen. Diese Anstrengungen müssen aber so lange erfolglos bleiben, als sie von Menschen ausgehen, die selbst an Sonderinteressen gebunden sind und so an die Stelle des bestehenden Egoismus nur einen neün setzen. Und so lange werden auch alle wirklich gutgemeinten Bewegungen das Ziel nicht erreichen, als nicht die öffentliche Meinung und der Wille der Gruppen und Völker hinter ihnen steht. Es muss also in erster Linie zur Behebung der Weltnot das Wollen der Menschen wachgerufen werden und dieses Wollen muss von neüm unter die grossen sittlichen Ideen der Gerechtigkeit und der Gemeinschaft gestellt werden. Es handelt sich deshalb einzig und allein um die Bildung eines öffentlichen Gewissens, das alle Ungerechtigkeit und Unsittlichkeit entschieden ablehnt und lebendiges Interesse an der Förderung alles Guten hat. Wer ist aber mehr berufen, diese Weckung des Gewissens in den Völkern und in ihrer Öffentlichkeit betreiben, als die Gemeinschaften und Organisationen, denen vornehmlich die Gewissensbildung und die Willensbildung in grossen sittlichen Fragen obliegt nämlich die Kirchen, die religiösen Gruppen und die mannigfachen Gemeinschaften zur Pflege sittlicher Kultur?

Welche Aufgaben erwachsen dem R.M.B. aus diesen Erwägungen? Das Erste muss sein, dass alle religiösen Menschen mobil gemacht werden und dass die Religionsgemeinschaften aufgerufen werden, auch die Gestaltung des öffentlichen Lebens der sozialen Verhältnisse und des Wechselverkehrs der Völker in Angriff zu nehmen. Gewiss ist die Pflege des religiösen Lebens der Einzelseele und die Pflege der gemeinschaftlichen Andacht die vornehmste Aufgabe jeder Religion, und gewiss darf es sich nicht darum handeln, dass dieses Hauptbetätigungsgebiet irgendwie verkürzt werde, Aber die Religion kann unmöglich bei den Förderungen der Privatmoral stehen bleiben, sondern sie muss ihre religiösen und sittlichen Massstäbe auch an das öffentliche und zwischenstaatliche Leben anlegen und muss auch dieses aus dem Geiste der Frömmigkeit und

nach den Forderungen des religiösen Sittengesetzes zu gestalten versuchen. Das aus dem Religiösen kommende gute Handeln darf keine Grenzen und Beschränkungen kennen, sondern muss sich auf alles erstrecken und muss mit seinen starken Forderungen alle Gebiete ergreifen. – Wenn die Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften jetzt nicht diesen Schritt zur Gestaltung des öffentlichen Lebens tun, wird der Gang der Geschichte über sie hinwegschreiten, denn dann ist in den kulturtragenden Kreisen ihre Bedeutungslosigkeit klar erkannt. Die Kräfte nämlich, die nicht mehr aktiv das Gesicht unserer Kultur mitbestimmen, sind belanglos geworden. – Und nicht nur die Religionsgemeinschaften und die Menschen, die ein einem engeren Sinne religiös sind, sollen aufgerufen werden, sondern alle die, die guten Willen sind und die sich von grossen sittlichen Ideen bestimmen lassen. – Alle diese Menschen und Gruppen müssen jetzt aus ihrer Vereinzelung hervortreten. In fast allen Ländern sind mehrere Kirchen oder sogar mehrere Religionen nebeneinander vorhanden, so dass jede dieser Gruppen für sich allein machtlos ist. Hier muss also der Weg eines brüderlichen Zusammenwirkens beschritten werden, wie er zum Beispiel schon bei der "Trockenlegung" Amerikas, dieser von sittlichem ernst getragenen Beseitigung einer Quelle von Unzucht, Verwahrlosung, Laster und Gebrechen begangen worden ist, denn hierbei haben die verschiedensten konfessionellen und religiösen Gruppen entscheidend mitgearbeitet. Aber der Zusammenschluss innerhalb eines Volkes genügt nicht, weil fast alle öffentlichen und sozialen Schäden Weltschäden sind und deshalb ihre Beseitigung nur durch ein gemeinsames Vorgehen der gesamten Kulturmenschheit zu erreichen ist. Ganz klar ist es ja, dass die zwischenstaatliche Moral nur durch ein Zusammenarbeiten aller Religionen wirksam beeinflusst werden kann. Aber auch an der Lösung der Arbeiter-, Frauen- und Rassenfragen sind alle Völker interessiert und nur eine überstaatliche Regelung kann wirklichen Erfolg haben, allerdings erst dann, wenn die Neugestaltung dieser Verhältnisse von der öffentlichen Meinung der Welt als sittliche Notwendigkeit empfunden wird, wozu es einer Schärfung des Gewissens durch die Religionen bedarf. Auch die Beseitigung des Alkoholismus wird erst dann wirksam in einem Lande durchzuführen sein, wenn aus den anderen Ländern nicht immer wieder Versuche zur Durchbrechung des Verbots unternommen werden. – So muss als der Weg eines Weltbundes beschritten werden, der die Aufgabe hat, alle Religionsgemeinschaften und alle religiösen Menschen immer wieder zur Bildung eines öffentlichen Weltgewissens aufzurufen, eines Gewissens, das weiss, was sittlich gut ist und was die Gerechtigkeit erfordert und das so immer wieder das Volks und Völkerleben nach den Grundsätzen der Moral zu gestalten versucht.

Welchen Weg wird der R.M.B zur Erreichung dieser Ziele beschreiten müssen? – Zunächst wird es sich um die Sammlung aller derer handeln, die er-

kannt haben, dass die religiösen Kräfte hinaustreten müssen ins Leben, um die Weltnot zu überwinden und um eine gute Neugestaltung zu erreichen. Diese Menschen werden zusammen mit dem Bund immer wieder ausrufen: "die Religion ist nicht tot, sie hat im Gegenteil gerade in unserer Zeit noch viel zu sagen. Sie will das gemeinsame Leben in Volk und Menschheit erneürn. Wenn sich die Menschen besinnen und den religiösen Grundsätzen die ihnen gebührende Führung einraumen, dann werden alte Schäden ~~vermieden~~ beseitigt und neü vermieden werden können. Aber ein gemeinsames Vorgehen ist unumgänglich notwendig. Deshalb gilt die Mahnung: Religiöse aller Länder vereinigt euch." Dieses gemeinsame Aufrufen wird die Kirchen, die Religionsgemeinschaften und die Einzelnen erwachen lassen. Dann werden sich die berufenen Vertreter dieser Gruppen und Kreise zusammenfinden und in periodisch wiederkehrenden Ländern und Weltkongressen die grossen Fragen des öffentlichen und zwischenstaatlichen Lebens besprechen. Ein solches Religionsparlament wird grossen Einfluss haben, wenn hinter ihm der Wille aller Religiösen steht, der Wille zu Gerechtigkeit und sittliche Reinheit, der Wille zur Neugestaltung der Kultur aus dem Geiste der Religion. Wenn dieser Wille in breiten Volksschichten geweckt ist, dann wird zum Beispiel auch erst ein wahrer Völkerbund, der wirklich vom Geiste sittlichen Ernstes getragen ist, möglich sein, denn dann werden erst die Beziehungen der Völker wie auch der Rassen, Klassen und Schichten im Sinne der Gerechtigkeit geordnet werden können.

(4) Zum Schluss ~~werden~~ sollen noch einige etwa auftauchende Fragen und Bedenken erörtert werden.

I) Es handelt sich beim R.M.B. nicht im Geringsten um eine Religionsvermischung. Die Kreise, die eine solche betreiben, verkennen durchaus die Tatsache, dass in der religiösen Erneürung unserer Zeit alle Religionen und Konfessionen sich wieder auf ihre besonderen Grundlagen besinnen und ihr individülles Wesen kraftvoll ausgestalten. Das Ringen der Religionen miteinander wird deshalb nicht abnehmen, sondern eher zunehmen.

II) Trotz dieser Tatsachen glaubt der R.M.B an die Möglichkeit eines Zusammengehens zu praktischen Zwecken. Es steht erstens fest, dass im Geheimen ein stiller Zug den Religiösen zum Religiösen hinzieht, auch wenn jeder den anderen als Letzter ansehen muss. Und zweitens ist es unleugbare Tatsache dass trotz der Verschiedenheiten der Moral und trotz der verschiedenen religiösen Begründung der einzelnen Gebote des Sittengesetzes doch die entschiedene Ablehnung von Unsitte und Unzucht, Ungerechtigkeit und Vertragsbruch, Übervorteilung und Gewinnsucht, Ungeistlichkeit und Weltgebundenheit allen Religionen gemeinsam ist.

III) Die Aufgabe der Mission, zu der jede Geistesmacht sich verpflichtet fühlt, wird durch den R.M.B. nicht beseitigt, es wird im Gegenteil für die Auseinander-

setzung und Werbung noch eine neü Möglichkeit geboten, insofern als beim Zusammenarbeiten in unmittelbarem, persönlichem Geistesaustausch die Stärke des Glaubens der einzelnen Religionen sich bekunden kann. Kein Religiöser wird so die enge Fühlungnahme mit Andersglaubigen scheün, wenn er nur von der Kraft <u>seines</u> Glaubens wirklich überzeugt ist.

IV) Es handelt sich beim R.M.B. nicht nur um religiösen Pazifismus. "Friede um jeden Preis" ist überhaupt nicht das ausschlaggebende Ideal. Es muss vielmehr Recht und Gerechtigkeit um jeden Preis erkämpft werden. Wenn der religiöse Pazifismus das tut, dann steht er im Rahmen der Aufgaben eines R.M.B., denn dann liegt hier die Bemühung um ein Teilziel vor innerhalb des grossen Zieles der Erneürung der Weltkultur aus dem Geiste der Religionen.

V) Die Arbeit an der Versöhnung der absichtlichen Kirchen wird durch den R.M.B. nicht hinfällig. Er hofft aber, dass diese Bestrebungen die Notwendigkeit des gröseren Zieles der Vereinigung aller guten Willen in der Welt erkennen und dass sie ihre Freundschaftsarbeit vor allem im Hinblick auf die gemeinsame Bewältigung der Weltnot und die gemeinsame Neugestaltung des ganzen öffentlichen und zwischenstaatlichen Lebens betreiben.

VI) Der R.M.B. verkennt nicht die macht der realpolitischen Wirklichkeiten für das geschichtliche Geschehen, er ist aber überzeugt, dass Glauben und Gewissen ebenso starke wenn nicht noch stärkere Wirklichkeiten sind. Diese inneren Mächte verlangen jetzt gebieterisch Beachtung und Berücksichtigung. Sie können es nicht länger dulden, dass der Weltlauf allein durch das Geld und die brutale Gewalt beherrscht wird. Das innere Leben fängt jetzt an, so stark zu werden, dass es sich auch im ausseren Leben Geltung verschaffen und dass es seine Grundsätze sogar zum leitenden Prinzip einer Neugestaltung der Welt erheben muss. – So rechnet der R.M.B. auf diejenigen, die in die Waagschale der geschichtsbestimmenden Faktoren den Faktor der religiösen und sittlichen Wirklichkeit hineinwerfen müssen. Er rechnet auf diejenigen, die es um Glaubens- und Gewissens willen nicht aushalten, stille zu sitzen und die Welt dem Teufel zu überlassen.

Wer mithelfen will melde sich zum Beitritt beim Generalsekretariat des R.M.B. Offenbach a/M Waldstr. 124 pt, wo jede weitere Auskunft gerne erteilt wird.

Sana Saeed
Mysticism meets Inception

Interreligious Dialogue emerging in Great Britain (World
Congress of Faiths / 1933 – 1950)

1 Introduction: Theological Liberalism and the Founding of the World Congress of Faiths

In the wider framework of the present publication, the chapter at hand deals
with one of the earliest organizations of interreligious dialogue (IRD) in Europe.
The World Congress of Faiths (WCF) was officially established in 1936 under the
primary influence of Sir Francis Younghusband. The organization began its activ-
ities during a precarious period of time between two of the most destructive wars
humanity has seen (World War I (1914 – 1918) and World War II (1939 – 1945)). The
present study focuses on a period in the history of the IRD movement when in-
terreligious dialogue (IRD) was emerging as an eclectic idea that created spaces
for encounters among people who never before had the opportunity to engage
each other on a deeper level socially in Europe.

Against this background, this chapter looks at two closely entwined ele-
ments. It aims to: first, learn more about Sir Francis Younghusband's motives
that lead to the establishment of the WCF, as well as the specific role he played
in that context; and secondly, relate Younghusband's activities back to the time
between the two wars and analyze the influence of this particular context on the
history of the WCF. In examining these two main points, this chapter proposes
that on an individual level Younghusband's experience triggered the foundation
of the WCF while on a social level, this was framed within the context of the
Great Depression and the looming World War II that created the space for inter-
religious dialogue to emerge in the UK.

To better understand the developments that stood at the centre of WCF's
foundation, as well as the very centre of Younghusband's personal motives,
the analysis starts from two entwined theoretical concepts that have gained in-
creasing significance in the field of IRD research.

The first concept focuses on the individual level. In this respect, Younghus-
band's work for the WCF is linked to what Mayra Rivera describes as the forma-
tion of the "ultimate openness", where one "remains open to mystery and unpre-

dictable possibilities: to the ineffable, unnamable, and unutterable."[1] As a result of this "openness" Younghusband became central in organizing the WCF and inspiring his peers to join him in developing the first interreligious association in Britain.

The second concept refers to the work of John R. Friday who connects the beginning of the IRD movement as the "rise of theological liberalism," a lens that focuses on the human experience with religion.[2] More specifically, Friday examines James Fredericks' analysis of Friedrich Schleiermacher's writings on the human experience with the divine characterized as a personal experience combined with a "sheer immediacy," only later followed by critical thinking making it central to religion. Fredricks argues that religion, according to Schleiermacher, "is a matter of intuition, sense or feeling and should be considered a matter of doctrine only secondarily."[3]

This adds a more general dimension to the discussion.[4] This is a fitting frame from which to analyze Younghusband's experiences in relation to the establishment of IRD in the United Kingdom (UK). This liberalism is reflected in Younghusband's personal religious experience rebelling against his traditional Christian family by questioning Christian dogma and by participating in religiously diverse modes of worship. As a result, Youngbusband's personal experience is analyzed by examining archival material to determine how he moved towards becoming involved in the IRD movement and how his experience influenced the mission and vision of the WCF.

This chapter begins by describing the structure of the World Congress of Faiths and the key players involved in establishing the organization. By examining the WCF's early organizational structure and the socio-economic profiles of the people involved, this chapter aims to examine how the organization evolved from its inception. Using archive materials from the University of Southampton and Harvard University, this chapter pieces together experiences of the WCF members to show how they combined radical ideas of love and peace during a period of time plagued by war and economic depression. Even though WCF members dealt with frustrations mingled with a sense of despair at the end of World War II (WWII), facing the daunting process of rebuilding their communi-

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1 Mayra Rivera, *A Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theory of God* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Pres, 2007), 136.
2 John R. Friday, "Religious Experience, the Hermeneutics of Desire, and Interreligious Dialogue," *Theological Studies 74* (2013): 582.
3 Friday, "Religious Experience, the Hermeneutics of Desire," 583.
4 James L. Fredericks, "A Universal Religious Experience? Comparative Theology as an Alternative to a Theology of Religions," *Horizons* 22 (1995): 67–87.

ties, their resilience led to maintaining a movement that has influenced IRD concepts today. The importance of looking at this particular period of time is critical as it shows how the WCF has continued to survive since its official foundation in 1936, while other organizations have not.

While acknowledging the importance of the role that the WCF played in beginning the IRD movement in the UK, there are also lessons that emerge from the organization's experience. The visionary leadership of Younghusband led to a type of dependency on him, which took a toll on the unprepared WCF members after his death, reflecting one lesson for the IRD movement that is expanded upon in this chapter. A second lesson is that IRD was founded on the premise of Christian superiority.[5] Lastly, an analysis of these issues reflects on how the IRD moved from being a fringe movement in its beginnings to transforming into a larger mainstream movement.

The formation of the WCF cannot properly be understood without having a closer look at its socio-cultural context.

2 The WCF and the Socio-cultural Context of its Founding Members.

The following sections provide a short overview of the WCF's general goals and objectives, as well as its historic context to better understand the processes that are later analyzed in more detail. They aim to underline to what extent Younghusband's individual convictions were linked to the context of his time and how these two aspects influenced the early history of WCF.

2.1 Formation of WCF's Objectives and Goals

Any analysis on the formation of the WCF needs to start with Younghusband. Younghusband was not looking to form a new religion or spiritual practice in the founding of the WCF – although his own personal experience with mysticism

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5 The idea of Christian hegemony or agenda playing a role in the establishment of the early interreligious movement isn't something that just impacted the WCF, as Hedges notes in relation to the 1893 World Parliament of Religions "It should be noted, though, that an agenda of Christian supremacy and aspects of racial and cultural exclusion lay behind this event." Paul Hedges, *Controversies in Interreligious Dialogue and Theology of Religions* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 59.

and engaging the divine heavily influenced the founding of the WCF. He once wrote:

> The fully self-conscious human being knows himself to be not only a part of the Universal, but also a microcosm of it. This consciousness comes to its fullest realization in the mystical experience. He who experiences it is aware, as never before, that he is in very truth "a partaker of the divine nature."[6]

This engagement with what he perceived as a mystical experience became a thread that emerged in the vision, objectives, and mission of the early WCF congresses. In reference to Younghusband's spirituality, Braybrooke interprets it as "the human fellowship that he [Younghusband] sought to promote was inextricably linked to communion with the divine. The Congress, therefore, was an attempt to give practical expression to the mystic's vision of unity."[7] Younghusband's move towards universalism focused on elements of joy and love ánd influenced the concept of what fellowship means, as Younghusband states, "at its intensest and highest, fellowship seems to be a communion of spirit greater, deeper, higher, wider, more universal, more fundamental than any of these – than even love."[8] These examples portray Younghusband's engagement with mysticism, which he explores in the book *Modern Mystic* published in 1935 before the first WCF Congress was held in 1936. This article takes a deeper look into how Younghusband's mysticism influenced his involvement in the IRD movement leading to the inception of the WCF described below.

While Younghusband had been collaborating with people of diverse faiths via his travels in India, Tibet, Lhasa and other places in South Asia, he had not formally organized an official interfaith event until 1924 when he became Committee Chairman for the organization, *A Society for Promoting the Study of Religions*. This position became a catalyst for connecting him to the World's Fair in Chicago, the "First International Congress of the World Fellowship of Faiths," where he was a speaker.[9] Through these networks and his growing popularity as a speaker on unity among religions, he was asked to host an interreligious congress in England. Younghusband left the World's Fair in Chicago "feeling that this was the long-looked-for opportunity of fulfilling his life's purposes

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6 Francis Younghusband, *Vital Religion* (London: John Murray, 1940), 3–5, quoting 2 Peter 1:4.
7 Rev. Marcus Braybrooke is the current President of the WCF. Marcus Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship: The World Congress of Faiths* (London: WCF-Publications), 7. Emphasis added.
8 Younghusband, *Vital Religion*, 93. Emphasis added.
9 George Seaver, *Francis Younghusband* (London: John Murray, 1952), 333.

he accepted without hesitance. He had not sought it; it had been put into his hands."[10]

This eventually led to the establishment of the WCF. Younghusband strategically networked to pull in prominent leaders from various faith communities and leaders on religious thought, including his own to establish support for a congress in England. He realized the challenges that he would face in the formation of a larger organization when he received mixed reactions from the Anglican Church. Accordingly, to increase support, Younghusband used the connections he had with the media such as BBC to advertise the 1936 World Congress of Faiths held at the University College of London from 2 July to 18 July.[11]

With the help of many co-organizers, Younghusband developed a structure for the first congress, in the form of objectives and goals that were adopted within what came to be known as WCF as a result of this event. His desire was to create a fellowship of like-minded people based on mysticism, as he stated in a talk in Kent before the congress:

> The ultimate aim of the Fellowship can only be to intensify our sense of kinship with the universe to the mystic degree – to the point when the individual feels as if he and the universe were madly in love with one another.[12]

Younghusband emphasized maintaining kinship through mysticism by using three main concepts of the Second Chicago World Parliament of Religions:
– To work for fellowship
– To welcome the necessary difference among members of any fellowship
– To unite the inspiration of all Faiths upon the solution of man's present problems.[13]

As a result, the WCF also published its vision and objectives founded on the kinship and mysticism Younghusband spoke of earlier, as quoted in a formal pamphlet for public distribution:

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10 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband,* 333.

11 World Congress of Faiths, Program and Agenda of the first World Congress of Faiths (July 3rd – 18th, 1936), MS 222 A 826 /3/98, WCF Archives, University of Southampton. (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

12 N.A., Talk at Westerham / Kent, MSS EUR F 197/119, The Younghusband Collection, British Library, London, 11.

13 World Congress of Faiths, Program and Agenda of the first World Congress of Faiths, MSS EUR F 197/119, The Younghusband Collection, British Library, London, 3.

> Vision:
> To promote a spirit of fellowship among mankind through religion and to awaken and develop a world loyalty while allowing full play for the diversity of men, nations and faiths.[14]
>
> Objectives of the WCF:
> The object of the World Congress of Faiths is to promote a spirit of fellowship among mankind through religion, however, interpreted in its wide and universal sense. A sense far transcending its particular expression in any one of the World's Faiths, and penetrating to that divine essence we believe to be common to them all.[15]

This pamphlet gives an interesting insight into how Younghusband was inspired by concepts of transcendence, immanence, and mysticism, and how these concepts were woven into the larger vision of the organization. WCF meeting Minutes and the notes from the 1936 Congress also reflect the attraction that the early WCF members had with exploring these three concepts, especially after being swayed by Younghusband's passion. Professor Marcault, a French Professor of Psychology and a participant of the 1936 Congress, stressed the importance of universality in encouraging religious communities to collaborate on fellowship. As he stated, "peace and fellowship can only be constructive if they are incarnated in some positive religious aim in whose realization all faiths can agree to cooperate, and whose universality maintains them united."[16] The following analysis and episodes will reflect how universalism combined with concepts of transcendence and mysticism as thought of by Younghusband led to the founding of the WCF.

From 1940 onwards, the published list of objectives for projects and work of the WCF included an international element in its mission. Younghusband and the WCF leadership believed in expanding the organization beyond England.[17] They did this with a belief "to bring pressure to bear on governments and public opinion and to produce such a change in national policies as may bring peace to

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14 World Congress of Faiths, Its Objects, Message and Work, MS 222 A 826 /3/98, WCF archives, University of Southampton.

15 World Congress of Faiths, Its Objects, Message and Work, MS 222 A 826 /3/98, WCF archives, University of Southampton, 3.

16 Allen Douglas Millard, ed., *Faiths and Fellowship: Being the Proceedings of the World Congress of Faiths* (London: J.M. Watkings, 1936), 309.

17 Braybrooke states: "WCF is not really a world body, but rather a British-based organisation, although readership of its journal is scattered across the world and WCF has close relations with several other international interfaith organisations". In an Interview conducted with him, interview Braybrooke, also reaffirmed that the organisation did not live up to becoming the "world body" that Younghusband had envisioned. See: Braybrooke, *Widening Vision,* 38.

mankind through the living religions of the world."[18] To manifest this belief, they made a list of objectives to achieve for both events and meetings as shown in Annex 1. The annexe reflects a communication strategy for attracting and attaining members and for spreading the WCF vision. Additionally, Annex 1 portrays the types of meetings that they aimed to host, on a small-scale, to be held on a weekly basis amongst members and large-scale meetings open to the public. As stated in Annex 1, a goal of the WCF was to provide a space where people could "learn what others believe, what they think about life today and how they pray, meditate and worship" based on experience and not just intellectual thought.[19]

To better understand the setup of the WCF, it is necessary to have a look at the socio-cultural background of its members.

2.2 Socio-Cultural Background of the WCF Members and Co-Founders

At this stage, the socio-cultural background of the WCF members can only be assessed indirectly. In the planning processes of the WCF 1936 Congress, the supporters and Younghusband met on a weekly basis. During these meetings, it was decided that anyone could become a member if they contributed £1.00.[20] Lord Samuel, who became Chairman after the death of Younghusband in 1942, reflected on two principles for WCF membership during a public meeting of the WCF with 750 people in attendance:

> This movement does not enter into any of those disputations, it merely declares that all religions worthy of the name have at least two common principles: one that they seek righteous conduct in the individual; the other that they inculcate good-will among human societies, each with its own particularities and so each has its own element of universalism.[21]

The overall body of the WCF as an organization had a hierarchical leadership structure headed by a supervising council, under which there were three committees: The Executive Committee, an Action Committee and a Finance Committee.

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18 World Congress of Faiths: Its Objects, Message and Work, 4.
19 World Congress of Faiths: Its Objects, Message and Work, 4–5.
20 World Congress of Faiths, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting (1936), MS 222 A 826 2/1, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.
21 World Congress of Faiths, Annual Meeting Paper (June 4th, 1943), MS 222 A 826 2/1, WCF archives, University of Southampton.

There was a National Chairman who presided over meetings, events and writing the chairman's quarterly letters, a Treasurer to keep track of finances and membership dues, and a Secretary to keep track of meeting and event notes, as well as, to deliver communication to members. The council members were elected through an electoral system. Additionally, elected officers had an option of taking a short sabbatical for a year and then opt to run for re-election.[22]

The WCF membership predominantly consisted of Caucasian Christians even though there were some members from various faiths and traditions. All members regardless of their backgrounds reflected similar socio-economic and educational backgrounds. It is difficult to argue that the membership reflected diversity, as members from diverse faith traditions such as Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism etc. were few in number and were considered to be representatives of their respective faith groups. This led to the same people being invited to speak at IRD events which occurred during this time. As a result, it can be argued this represented a lack of diversity, as these speakers became the 'go-to' ambassadors for their religions. It is hard to say if the Great Depression impacted the membership from drawing on more economically diverse membership, especially as Younghusband specifically targeted supporters who were government officials and intellectual elites in the fields of religious thought and philosophy. What is apparent, however, is that the privilege present in the earlier membership of the WCF might reflect the reason why the organization began to struggle financially when its wealthy supporters began to disappear.

The next section analyzes how Younghusband grew through various interreligious experiences to inspire his peers to create a space for the IRD movement in the UK that occurred alongside the rise of the theological liberalism. To accomplish this, this section examines manifold data sources from the WCF archives and aims to underline how the research agenda sketched in the introduction can be translated into a concrete research agenda.

Using Brundage's definition of primary documents, both manuscripts, which are original unpublished documents such as meeting Minutes, and published documents, such as Younghusband's books on his travel experiences, were used for this research. When referring to archival sources, I am referring to the University of Maryland's definition: "*Archives* are usually unpublished, primary source material that document the activities of an individual or organization."[23]

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22 World Congress of Faiths, Minutes detailing the development of leadership (from 1936 – 1949), MS 222 A 826 1/1, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.

23 University of Maryland, *Definition: Archives:* http://www.lib.umd.edu/special/research/define/archives.html (accessed: 24.5.2020).

According to Brundage, secondary sources rely mostly on primary sources to make a case for their argument, such as websites and books on encompassing broad topics.[24]

More concretely, the materials used for this empirical research incorporate a combination of primary and secondary sources compiled during May 2014 at the University of Southampton and the London-based British Library in the United Kingdom. Archival research was also conducted at the Harvard Libraries in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the USA during September 2014.

The primary documents are from the World Congress of Faith Archives in the University of Southampton archives. They included Reverend M. C. R. Braybrooke's MS Papers, which were contained in sixty-three boxes.

Additionally, I used the World Congress of Faiths' MS 222 Archives consisting of thirty-five boxes. I chose to focus my analysis using these archives as they portrayed firsthand accounts of the formation of the WCF and its struggles from 1920–1950. I also interviewed Reverend Marcus Braybrooke the current President of the WCF, who provided background for my argument based on his own published research. As a result, I used a combination of research tools from manuscripts and published sources, as shown in Annex 2, in addition to interviews.

Furthermore, a combination of secondary sources published on the World Congress of Faiths, including books, websites and articles from the aforementioned libraries were consulted for this research, as well as research conducted online. A critical reading of these sources helped support the thesis of this chapter portraying how Younghusband's experiences with trauma, mysticism, and empathy triggered the establishment of the WCF. Lastly, additional sources were used to frame the implications for the future of interreligious dialogue in the conclusion.

On this basis, it is possible to compare three periods in the formative history of the WCF, which help us understand the dynamics of this initial phase by focusing on the role of Younghusband.

4 Sir Francis Younghusband and Mysticism

Sir Francis Younghusband struggled throughout his life with the feeling of there being more than the everyday stagnant and conventional practice of religion. His

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24 Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide Historical Research and Writing* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson Inc, 2002), 19–30.

various experiences growing up in India with his family on a Christian mission and experiences back in England show his desire to move towards a higher understanding of the divine. In a letter Younghusband sent to Mary Clark of Tunbridge Wells in May 1938, Younghusband claims to have engaged in mysticism, "I hope I am right in thinking that you have enjoyed a direct experience of God – an experience of communion with the Central Spirit of Things and have known what intensity of joy and exaltation of spirit that mystical experience brings."[25] Younghusband describes another mystical experience he had at a Welsh Revival meeting in 1905 in his book, *Modern Mystic*. It was a mystical experience within a Christian context that left him feeling "as if I were in love with every man and woman in the world."[26] These significant experiences reflect in some part the motivation for why Younghusband became a leader in the early IRD movement.

Several experiences defined Younghusband's spiritual journey growing up and as an adult. The most prominent was his involvement in the mission to Tibet on behalf of the British Government in 1903. Another was a car accident later on in life, which affected his health thereafter. As he stated,

> As I grew up into manhood, less and less could I rest satisfied in the conception of a god who must be approached and placated by means of ritual, and more and more did theology and ecclesiasticism obtrude themes as barriers- rather than offer themselves as bridges- to the understanding of an all-loving universal power.[27]

Younghusband came to "think of Jesus Christ as a real man, with all the frailties of men, who became great because of indomitable courage."[28] These experiences led him on the path of seeking spirituality in the form of mysticism focusing on universalism. Hence, it is no surprise that during the establishment of the WCF Younghusband merged elements of mysticism into the objectives of the organization.

Examining certain life-changing events in Younghusband's life gives us important insight into the formation of his thinking, leading to a sense of openness and visionary leadership that was essential in getting the WCF off the ground and also in giving it momentum to continue regardless of ideological hurdles.

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25 Braybrooke, *Widening Vision*, 21.
26 Francis Younghusband, *Modern Mystic* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company Inc, 1935), 214 – 246. See also: George Harrison, Unpublished Manuscript: Younghusband Anthology of Divine Fellowship, 212 A814 56/2, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.
27 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 14.
28 Braybrooke, *Widening Vision*, 25.

The first of three experiences that led Younghusband's movement towards "ultimate openness" was a horse accident that he had in 1894 as a youth. Writing in his diary before this accident occurred, Younghusband wrote, "I think I have had from time to time the feeling that I was born to recognize the divine spark within me [...] I shall through my life be carrying out God's Divine message to mankind."[29]

After being thrown from his horse he lay unconscious on the ground for fourteen hours. During his recovery period, he began to explore Leo Tolstoy, and wrote in his diary,

> I now see the truth of Tolstoy's argument that Government, capital and private property are evils. We ought to devote ourselves to carrying out Christ's saying, to love one another (not engage in wars and preparation for wars and not resist evil with evil) [...] And this is what I mean to do. To set the example first of all by giving up government service and all my private property, except what is absolutely necessary for supporting life.[30]

Younghusband was "deeply impressed" by Leo Tolstoy's, *The Kingdom of God is Within You.* It played a role influencing his early spiritual growth.[31] This immediate development around the time of the accident makes it plausible that the experience with his accident, his long recovery process and in the meantime discovery of Tolstoy's philosophy led him to leave government service. However, Younghusband eventually rejoined government service after marriage, leading him back to India. His fascination with Tolstoy suggests the beginning of his experience with transcendence where he begins to have desires to engage the other or the divine through human experiences with religion beyond Christianity.

After marrying and having a daughter, he became involved in politics again at which point he was invited to move to India to take up a government post. It was in India, in 1904, that Younghusband had a second critical experience that shaped his transformation toward IRD. He became involved in leading a mission to Tibet to secure a treaty for economic concessions and to prevent a Russian alliance. What seemed to Younghusband as a simple mission turned into something more controversial when the British advance, he was a part of came upon poorly armed Tibetan soldiers at the city of Chumi Shengo. A struggle over disarming the Tibetans, led to one shot ringing out from the Tibetan side resulting in a massacre of hundreds of Tibetans dubbed by Younghusband as

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29 A quote from Younghusband's dairy as quoted in: Patrick French, *Younghusband: The Last Great Imperial Adventurer* (London: HarperCollins, 1994), 109.

30 Younghusband, Diaries, quoted after: French, *Younghusband: The Last Great Imperial Adventurer*, 109.

31 Braybrooke, *Widening Vision*, 26.

"the Guru Disaster."[32] While Seaver's account of Younghusband's mission in Tibet reflects that 600 – 700 men were killed on the Tibetan side, other historians argue that almost 2,500 Tibetans were killed.[33] The outcome of the mission led to some of Younghusband's British superiors denouncing his actions and others applauding the final outcome. In the end, his behaviour met British interests since a final treaty was signed in Lhasa. This was a controversial event that became and remained a point of struggle spiritually for Younghusband, to the point of regret. As Frank Smythe wrote in Younghusband's obituary for a newspaper, "I am sure that Sir Francis would like it mentioned here that is was a source of grief to him all through his life that he was forced in the first place to meet violence with violence."[34]

After the treaty was signed, Younghusband stood on the side of the mountain peering down at the ancient city of Lhasa and had an experience, which he described as mystical. He later attributed his inspiration for the creation of the World Congress of Faiths to this experience. He described it as a feeling of "elation grew to exultation, and exultation to an exaltation which thrilled through me with overpowering intensity [...] Never again could I think evil. Never again could I bear enmity."[35] He continued on to state that it was "too rare" and in it "God is made real to us."[36] In this statement he related his realization, at the moment of his mystical experience, of the notions of universalism, the idea that we are all interdependent of each other in this universe. Also coming to the understanding of the sacredness of life, he stated:

> The fully self-conscious human being knows himself to be not only a part of the Universal, but also a microcosm of it. This consciousness comes to its fullest realization in the mystical experience. He who experiences it is aware, as never before, that he is in very truth "a partaker of the divine nature."[37]

Younghusband's experience portrays the reality of a spiritual struggle that people face in or after times of crisis, showing how mysticism or religious experiences can play a role in healing. While this event in Tibet was a dark part of Younghusband's past that haunted him, it led him afterwards to unexplored parts of

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32 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 227.
33 Charles Allen, "The Myth of Chumik Shenko," *History Today* 54 (2004): 17.
34 Frank Smythe, News Clipping: Lt.-Col. Sir Francis Younghusband (1942), MS 222 A 826 1/1, WCF archives, University of Southampton.
35 Younghusband, *Vital Religion*, 3 – 5.
36 Younghusband, *Vital Religion*, 3 – 5.
37 Younghusband, *Vital Religion*, 3 – 5.

South Asia to engage in spiritual encounters with Buddhism and Islam in places such as Kashmir. In India, Younghusband's basic religious convictions developed in "two main ways": "in greater experience of the mystery of the universe and in broadening sympathy with, and understanding of, people of other faiths."[38] He took this understanding back to the UK when he began engaging in the burgeoning IRD movement.

Back in London, some politicians repudiated Younghusband's military mission as stepping out of bounds from his station. Others such as Lord Curzon, greatly commended him for getting a treaty signed. In his book, George Seaver shares a rumour of King George saying to Younghusband: "I am sorry that you have had this difference with the Government. All Governments have their little ways, you know. But, don't you bother your head. I approve of all you did."[39] He was eventually knighted by the King and was exonerated as acting in accordance with British interests in his mission to Tibet. Regardless, Younghusband felt moved by his spiritual epiphany, resulting in his departure from government service for good.

After his mission to Tibet, Younghusband decided to explore South Asia further, while mentally processing the events that occurred during his political career. During this time, he met people of different faiths and engaged with their rituals and worship ceremonies, which he spoke about in a BBC Broadcast announcing the first congress of the WCF:

> [...] I have come into most intimate contact with adherent of all the worlds' religions, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Confucians. I have been dependent upon them for my life. The have been dependent upon me for theirs [...]. It has forced me down to the essentials of my own Christianity and made me see a beauty there I had not till then known.[40]

In 1911, it is possible to identify a third decisive event in Younghusband's biography. Again, he experienced an accident, but this time he was hit by a car in Belgium that severely injured him. He described later on the experience of laying in what he thought was his death bed, "the Belgian doctor arrived and informed the nurse that three days was the utmost that the patient could now live."[41] However, Younghusband survived beyond the three days predicted by the doctor and was eventually transported back to London with the help of his wife where he

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38 Braybrooke, *Widening Vision*, 25.

39 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 257.

40 Francis Younghusband, BBC Broadcast Script (June 21 1936), MS 222 A 826 3/98, WCF archives, University of Southampton, 1–2.

41 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 281.

was able to get the help of British doctors, whom he preferred. In personal accounts of this accident, he expressed his suffering and being in great pain without pain-alleviating medication. He also contracted pneumonia three times during the recovery process. His writings reflect his astonishment of human goodwill and the sympathy he received from strangers and friends alike during the excruciating healing process:

> The bare souls were exposed; and of warm human sympathy I had more than I had ever dreamed possible should be given. To an intense degree I felt the oneness of all humanity. As I lay at death's door I was extraordinarily susceptible to every touch and shade of human feeling. In some unknown way, I seemed to touch heart to heart with every human being.[42]

Through this experience, he discovered the ability of people to empathize and feel compassionate towards those in need, something that he reflected upon at the first WCF congress. As a result, he entwined this sense of interconnectedness and empathy he felt, into the mission of the WCF and used it to attract members to the IRD movement. He also expressed this in a book he wrote during his recovery process, entitled *Within*. It describes his first written engagement with his personal experiences with eclectic religions and his move to universalism. In a follow-up book, *the Light of Experience*, he acknowledges that *Within* may have been too radical for its time based on criticism he received from Christian relatives:

> I can see now that the view of Christianity, which I had taken, as a young man. And it was a struggle to reach a truer view. I stated my disbeliefs with perfect frankness, but perhaps too much of the freedom of expression I had been accustomed to see used in these Aristotelian Society debates.[43]

His exploration of how the divine exists inside humans emerged in *Within*. He elaborated that when someone is confronted with the experience of the "wholly good [...] then we may fitly trust it as our God, in place of the discarded Deity of our childhood."[44] While fifteen years later, in the *Light of Experience,* he acknowledged, "I can see that I laid too much stress on immanence and too little on transcendence," meaning that God exists above, as well as inside of us.[45] This

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42 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 283.

43 Francis Younghusband, *The Light of Experience* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), 242.

44 Younghusband, *The Light of Experience*, 242.

45 Younghusband, *The Light of Experience*, 242.

connects to the experience that Rivera, a contemporary theologian, points towards in her discourse on experiencing transcendence with an "ultimate openness," as a necessary tool to develop for religious scholars. She goes on to use Irigaray to emphasize that the space of difference in inter-human encounters should be "envisioned as that element that nurtures each one of us" instead of as a void or emptiness.[46]

Part of Younghusband's conclusion in *Vital Religion* was that joy and love were the foundation of all religions.[47] In *Modern Mystic*, a narrative of his thoughts on mysticism, Younghusband clarifies how he perceived mysticism based on concepts of joy and love reflecting "the Universal spirit."[48] He goes on to argue the practicality of the mystical experience, "and it is because the mystical state refreshes, reinforces and refines the spirit in a man that it is of such value in practical life. As practical men, we have to cultivate the spirit and seek out whatever will strengthen it within us."[49] In the conclusion of *Modern Mystic* he argued that trainings for this type of practical experience were "lacking" and advocated for universities and schools to facilitate the ability for students to meditate or have some form of space to experience mysticism.[50] Needless to say, this suggestion was, for its time, provocative, based on examples of not just his experiences with the Welsh Revival, but also based on his observances of Hindu, Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant mystics. Published in 1935, *Modern Mystic* reflects the mindset of Younghusband as he began laying the foundation for the formation of the 1936 Congress and what would become the vision of WCF.[51]

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46 Mayra Rivera, *A Touch of Transcendence* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Pres, 2007), 136. Younghusband, wasn't the only scholar (I may even say scholar of religion) who was moved by the idea of transcendence in this period of time. It was already suggested that Rudolf Otto also was exploring mysticism and these concepts of the "wholly other." This feeling or human experience for him was so overpowering that it led him to "transition into mysticism", traces of a type of spiritual process he argues is present in all religions. These experiences with mysticism and transformation were the powerful motivating factor for Younghusband to creating the WCF so that he could help others have the same mystical experience. As a result, threads of mysticism emerge in the vision and objective of the WCF. See: Younghusband, *The Light of Experience*, 37.
47 Younghusband, *Vital Religion*, 5.
48 Younghusband, *Modern Mystic*, 292.
49 Younghusband, *Modern Mystic*, 284.
50 Younghusband, *Modern Mystic*, 287–288.
51 Additionally, Braybrooke argues that Younghusband's mysticism influenced, "his conception of a fellowship of faiths that sprang from a mystical sense of the unity of all people. The 'brotherhood of man' was for Sir Francis, not a religious slogan, but a truth realized in religious experience". As a result, according to Braybrooke, Younghusband's larger intention in forming

5 The 1936 Congress

The root of the idea of hosting the first interreligious dialogue in the form of a Congress in Great Britain was inspired at the second World Fair held in Chicago in 1933. There, two people – Younghusband describes them as "an Indian and an American" – encouraged him to organize a congress headed by a British National-al Council in London.[52] Kedaranth Das Gupta, founder of the organization Union of East and West and Charles F. Weller, founder of the League of Neighbours both merged their two organizations to create the Fellowship of Faiths in the USA. They were the main organizers of the 1933 World Fair.[53]

As shown in the formation of the 1936 Congress, Younghusband's ideas on mysticism influenced the larger aim, which was to "develop both the meeting of people with each other and their communion with the Divine so that the unity of mankind might become more obvious and complete."[54]

At a preliminary decision-making meeting in November of 1934, Younghus-band held a meeting of the *All Peoples Association* in Piccadilly where he invited notable leaders to take part in organizing the first congress. One of the ultimate results of the 1936 Congress was the founding of the World Congress of Faiths immediately after the proceedings ended. At this point, members were voted into various officer positions for the organization. The following people were put in leadership positions to organize the 1936 congress:

1. Mr. Arthur Jackman – Organizing Secretary
2. Miss. Mabel Sharples – Honorary Secretary
3. Mr. Frank Brown – Chairman of the Publicity Committee
4. Miss Beatrix Holmes (als. Beatrix Potter) – Information Secretary for the Publication Committee and also a member of the Executive Committee
5. Mr. F.P. Richter – Chairman of the Publications Committee
6. Mr. A. Douglas Millard – Editor

All of these people were also members of the larger Executive Committee, which was chaired by Younghusband and overseen by the International President, H.H.

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the WCF was to "help members of all faiths become aware of the universal experience which had been his." through the use of interreligious dialogue. See: Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 6.
52 Francis Younghusband, Proposal for an International Congress of a World Fellowship of Faiths (June 1936), MS 222 A 826 2/2, WCF Archives, University of Southampton, 4.
53 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 13–14.
54 Younghusband, *Vital Religion,* 97–98.

Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda.[55] After its formation in 1935, Younghusband imme-
diately took a lead in creating a proposal that would be used to "give members of
Council and others interested a short account of the inception of the idea of a
Fellowship of Faiths and some conception of the character, scope and aims of
the proposed Congress," which was ultimately sold as a sixpenny pamphlet in
July, 1936. An additional goal of the pamphlet was to assure people that the mis-
sion was not to create a new "synthetic religion," a reassurance that members of
the WCF had to make throughout the initial stages of the establishment. This re-
flects one of the challenges that the organizers faced in terms of backlash from
certain religious leaders in the establishment of the congress, which is discussed
further on.

The program of the Congress outlined how it could be an answer to fight
eight "evident evils", defined through the papers presented by speakers that
were available to members before the Congress. Those eight evils were:

1. Fear
2. Hatred
3. Nationalism in excess or defect
4. Racial animosity
5. Class Prejudice
6. Poverty
7. Ignorance
8. Religious Differentiation[56]

The congress was held from 3 – 18 July 1936 at the University College of London.
The theme was *World Fellowship through Religion.* As put down in the conference
documents, the participants had a mix of private meetings for members and pub-
lic meetings open to everyone, including devotional meetings and services led by
members of all faiths represented at the meeting. This congress was the "first
time in an inter-religious gathering, discussion was allowed and was carried
on in good humour" a notable accomplishment of this IRD event.[57] Furthermore,
they had a Hindu-led yoga and meditation class, which indicated the open-mind-
ed thinking that the congress required. Members had to adjust to if they were not
already in that mindset. The congress was two weeks long with 20 speakers from
diverse faith backgrounds including Muslims, Jewish, Christian, Hindus, Baha'i,
Buddhist, Confucian and people who claimed to be independent thinkers. In ad-

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55 World Congress of Faiths, Program and Agenda of the first World Congress of Faiths (July
3rd – 18th, 1936), MS 222 A 826 /3/98, WCF Archives, University of Southampton, 3.
56 Program and Agenda of the First World Congress of Faiths, 4.
57 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 10.

dition to this, conference archives MS 222 A 826 2/2 reflect that there were at least 45 people involved in the organization of the congress up to the time it took place with additional people involved as volunteers.

The "Who's Who at the Congress" section listed a total of 50 prominent people including people who Younghusband had met at the 1924 Religions of the Empire Conference held in London and the 1933 World Fair in Chicago.[58] While there is no record of the total attendance of the Congress, at least 100 people were in attendance some of whom were already involved in the burgeoning IRD movement. However, based on the congresses that followed the 1936 congress, archives reflect attendance numbers of up to 400 people; thus, it is likely that the first congress had a similar turnout especially given the prominent leaders involved, such as the Aga Khan H.H, the Rt. Hon. Aga Sultan Sir Mahomed Shah and Baroda, and H.H. The Maharaja Gaekwar.[59] The first speaker to open the congress was Yusuf Ali who was the Principal of the Islamic College in Lahore and today is known to have translated one of the more widely used interpretations of the Quran.[60] Another notable speaker was Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who spoke about the History of India and later went to become the President of India.[61] The fact that there were such notable leaders and monarchs involved in the 1936 Congress was part of the reason that King George of England sent a letter of welcome for Sir Francis Younghusband to read at the opening of the congress. However, the glaring absence of the King and high representatives of the Church of England was noticed. This point brings us to the challenge the 1936 Congress faced.

To better understand Younghusband's personal impact on the conference, it is helpful to approach it from the point of view of the critics that were opposed to Younghusband's use, namely by expressing the fear that interreligious dialogue would lead to conversion.[62] For instance, WCF recorded that the Anglican Church refused to participate in the 1936 Congress as they "were in the business of conversion not conversation." Many other clergies from various faiths also did not participate.[63] Instead, mostly religious scholars attended the 1936 Congress. As mentioned earlier, Younghusband attempted to dissuade the notion that the

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58 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 3–8.
59 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 11–15.
60 Braybrooke, *Widening Vision*, 43.
61 Braybrooke, *Widening Vision*, 45.
62 Proposal, International Congress of World Fellowship of Faiths by Sir Francis Younghusband, 6–7.
63 Marcus Braybrooke, "The Spiritual Basis of Interfaith Work," *Dialogue & Alliance* 19 (2005/2006): 23–27.

WCF would create a "synthetic religion" or attempt to convert members, as seen in the proposal he wrote to establish financial support for the 1936 Congress.[64] At one point in the proposal, Younghusband specifically defines what he considers to be the fellowship of faith and particularly clarifies what he means by 'faith', differentiating it from what is perceived to be religion. Instead, he argues that the WCF would strengthen one's religious belief through a dialogue on commonalities with members of other faith, underlining the main component of the IRD movement today.[65]

As a result, Younghusband and the organizers of the 1936 Congress published a pamphlet for the public and the BBC broadcast amongst other marketing strategies to prevent this assumption largely being espoused by the Anglican Church. When Sir Francis Younghusband invited King George to the 1936 Congress the King sought advice from Archbishop of the Church of England who warned him against becoming involved. The two main concerns of the Anglican Church were first, that by being involved in the 1936 Congress the King and any Anglican Bishop would be admitting that there are many paths to God and that all religions are on an equal footing. This admittance of even limited validity of other religions would threaten the hegemony of the Anglican Church and also the British Empire. Secondly, another concern was that engaging various faiths and independent thinkers would introduce alternative thinking about religion that would be too radical for the Anglican Church to endorse.

The underlying assumption in this argument by the Anglican Church was that this would set the ground for conversion from the Church, a fear of the IRD movement that still persists today in some circles. This is reflected in the forward written by Younghusband in *Faiths and Fellowship* published after the congress, where he again attempts to prevent this misunderstanding. He insists that the 1936 Congress and the larger WCF founded through it, did not intend to compare religions, but rather to create a space to listen to each other's religious experiences, resulting in learning how people can come closer to God and to each other.[66] Braybrooke, an Anglican priest himself, responded to a question on this episode saying that the Anglican Church was not theologically prepared to consider the benefits of being involved in interreligious engagement when the IRD movement began.[67]

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64 Braybrooke, "The Spiritual Basis of Interfaith Work," 6–7.

65 Braybrooke, "The Spiritual Basis of Interfaith Work," 6–7.

66 Millard, *Faiths and Fellowship*, 9.

67 Reverend Marcus Braybrooke (President of the WCF), interviewed by Sana Saeed, May 4th, 2014.

The Anglican Church was not the only faith community grappling with how to engage 'the other' theologically and in practice. A speaker at the 1936 WCF, Reverend P.T.R. Kirk also held a similar position. A representative of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community at the 1936 WCF, Mr. Moulvri, also similarly felt that Islam should be accepted as a primary truth. Both speakers portray contradictions to the eight evils that Younghusband put forth to fight "religious differentiation" or religious superiority. Some messages contradicted the larger aim of the Congress to not make comparisons of religious beliefs by highlighting similarities or differences, such as Ranjee G. Shani stating, "Jesus and Buddha, Shakespeare and Ramakrishna [...] are in essence 'members one of another,'" hence dismissing differences as trivial.[68]

These sentiments portrayed the nuances that played a role in how speakers at the Congress expressed themselves in addressing the eight evils. It also shows the fallacy of interfaith speakers being thought of as representatives of their faith and making controversial claims, such as all people should convert to their faith since their religion is superior. As shown by other Christian and Muslim participants in the Congress discussions, they did not fully agree with conversion as an answer to world problems being addressed. Professor Haldane stated in his paper:

> Many Christians entertain the ideal of converting non-Christian people to Christianity. I think that a much higher ideal is to understand and enter into sympathy with the religions which exist in other countries and use the understanding and sympathy as a basis for higher religion.[69]

In his paper, Professor Haldane touches upon the same elements of empathy in engaging 'the other' as Younghusband discovered through his experiences with mysticism and spirituality. Sympathizing, in general, means relating to a person because one has had a similar experience, whereas empathizing means putting yourself in someone else's shoes by imagining their experience with compassion. Hence, the power of the imagination in connection to experiencing the divine comes into play here, where a person engaging in interreligious dialogue can both sympathize and empathize with the other's religious experience.

The above-described criticism directly addresses Younghusband's vision for the WCF connecting kinship to mysticism in a critical way. At the same time, it is interesting to see that while the critics grappled with ideas of their religious superiority or inclusiveness, they were also willing to engage in interreligious dia-

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68 Millard, *Faiths and Fellowship*, 224.
69 Millard, *Faiths and Fellowship*, 131.

logue as a way to prevent human disasters on the scale of a World War. In 1936, "the position of the Congress ruled out the view that any one religion has a monopoly on truth. It assumed that, despite differences, the world religions have an affinity, and share a recognition of spiritual reality and of ethical values."[70] The congress in this respect encouraged the perspective that religious differences are vital and should be respected. Instead of focusing on differences as a dividing point, the 1936 Congress and following congresses focused on "the discovery of areas of ethical agreement and perhaps with taking common action on certain moral issues."[71] In that sense, the group of eight evils listed earlier were seen by members as common moral issues that each religious group at the 1936 Congress could take action on, through the use of interreligious dialogue. For example, the third evil from the list, combating "nationalism in excess or defect" emerged from the rational nationalist rhetoric that had played a role in World War I, hence raising the importance of establishing harmony through IRD. However, unknown to the WCF members at this point in time, nationalism was on the rise again in Europe, particularly in Germany.

This directly leads to the third phase of this analysis: WCF's dependency on Younghusband, as well as its potential, to continue its activities.

6 Challenges during WWII and after Younghusband's Death

This period touches upon the decline in the momentum of the WCF during World War II and after the death of Sir Younghusband. As Braybrooke states, "the death of Sir Francis was a heavy blow to the Congress because it depended so much on his inspiration and effort and because no plans had been prepared for this possibility. Many too had taken part out of personal regard for Sir Francis."[72] His death among other critical events became challenges for the survival of the WCF that reflect on how it went from being an organization involved in what some considered a fringe movement to what IRD is considered today, a respected mainstream movement.

As stated earlier, the WCF was officially established after the first 1936 Congress. The four congresses that followed, were successful, including one congress in Paris before the outbreak of World War II and a smaller intimate congress in

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70 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 11.
71 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 11.
72 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 14.

Birmingham, England during the war in 1942. As reflected in the introduction, regular meetings of the WCF were held during World War II, and there are a series of letters highlighting the air raids while the WCF was open for business hours. In December 1940, Younghusband sent a letter updating members about the WCF and introducing a new member, Rev. Rabbi Salzberger, an asylum seeker, who moved to England from Frankfurt, Germany. During a WCF meeting, Rev. Rabbi Salzberger described what a traditional Jewish home was like for the non-Jewish WCF members. Younghusband described the aim of the meeting "was to make religion not a compartment of life, like science or art, but a constituent pervasive element in the whole life. For as long as our life is not collected together by one bent, we are at harmony with ourselves."[73]

Nevertheless, WWII also resulted in the financial decline of the WCF. The WCF archives and sources reflect that the outbreak of war drastically restricted the WCF operations including communications among members and made international congresses impossible.[74] Despite the challenges, WCF continued to operate and elect new officers who were able to attend meetings. Baroness of Ravensdale – a supporter of the WCF since the founding of the organization and who became the Treasurer of the WCF in 1945[75] – gave a moving speech at a meeting on Tuesday, 27 November 1945 in London:

> We are all closer to the gutter and further from the stars than we were in 1939: our sensibilities have become blunted, our values reduced, we have slipped down the cliffs of civilization without being aware of that fact" indicating the toll the war had taken on peoples sense of hope that can also be linked to the overall decline of membership of the WCF.[76]

While the Baroness of Ravensdale gave fiery speeches on why interreligious engagement should be supported regardless of war and especially after war, the larger momentum began to decline. The archives reflect that they maintained an interfaith body of members during WWII including a director of an Islamic Cultural Center in London, two Rabbis, a Swami and many leaders of the Christian community who were in regular attendance and were elected to the executive committee. They held daily meetings where members took turns speaking. Nevertheless, the organization continued to financially decline after the war, be-

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73 World Congress of Faiths Chairman's Letter, by Sir Francis Younghusband, Dec 1940.

74 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 13.

75 World Congress of Faiths, Meeting Minutes (1945), MS 222 A 826 2/1, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.

76 World Congress of Faiths, Meeting Minutes (Nov 27th, 1945), MS 222 A 826 2/1, WCF Archives, University of Southampton, 1–3.

cause of the fact that the wealthier and prominent supporters were not as engaged as they were in the first two years. This can be linked to two entwined developments.

First, throughout the war, Younghusband kept up the momentum and inspiration to engage members. So, when he fell ill after the in 1942 Birmingham Congress the organization and officers of the WCF were ill-prepared to carry on the organization. The private Minutes of the meetings of the officers and speeches given at his memorial service reflect the sorrow of losing a visionary leader such as Younghusband, but also how dependent the members and officers had been on him as a source for inspiration. Beatrix Holmes, a member of the 1936 Congress organizing Executive Committee and longstanding WCF member paid tribute to his memory in George Seaver's book, *Francis Younghusband: Explorer and Mystic.* She explained how Younghusband "radiated happiness"[77] that was "infectious"[78] even during wartime. According to Beatrix Holmes, "it was a delight to witness"[79] Younghusband's "holy joy,"[80] which she argues "was the joy that only mystics know, which springs from the fact that you love what is separate from yourself, and that love unites you."[81]

Another WCF member, Rom Landau, who was originally from Poland and eventually became a British Citizen and a volunteer in the Royal Air Force, stated in his tribute to Younghusband, "nevertheless it was his presence that gave the congresses their distinct character, and that infused into the gatherings [...] the sense of unity and fellowship."[82] He continued that "it was a real tragedy that just when the World Congress of Faiths was getting into its stride and beginning to make itself felt, war broke out and, and soon afterwards Sir Francis died. How much the Congress depended on him became evident as soon as he was gone." Landau ended his tribute by saying, "I found that I could no longer give wholehearted allegiance to the cause when its torch-bearer has passed from my sight."[83] Although there was a sense of loss, as well as shock among the WCF members and Younghusband's death had caused a major disruption, the WCF moved on and eventually became a "continuing memorial" for Younghusband.[84]

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77 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 344.

78 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 344.

79 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 344.

80 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 344.

81 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 344–345.

82 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 345.

83 Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, 346.

84 Braybrooke, *Faiths in Fellowship*, 14.

Second, as a result of their financial struggles towards the end of WWII, the Executive Committee had a period where they recommended putting the organization into "cold storage."[85] Other members were, however, vehemently opposed to this idea, resulting in some members donating funds to keep the organization running in the form of 150 pounds each. Baroness of Ravensdale also donated 150 pounds for the organization to re-open an office in London, portraying the relevance WCF had for members.[86] Regardless, committee officers of the WCF spoke about how dire the financial situation of the WCF had become, to the point that they could not afford a part-time secretary.

This led to a number of changes that indicate the direction the WCF was moving towards. Baron Palmstierna, a Swedish minister living in the UK and a member of the WCF, expressed in his note of resignation from the WCF on 23 November 1949 that some WCF Executive Officers and members were shying away from a reality that the "time for big congresses as held in the past was over owing to financial and other difficulties." Palmstierna instead suggested that partnering with movements in other countries focused on interreligious engagement might be a good idea, such as the *World Alliance for International Fellowship*.[87] As a result, Heather McConnell, a new member who joined in 1948 after attending a series of lectures hosted by the WCF, suggested forming a youth committee as a way to broaden the organization's appeal. The last time the WCF had had active youth involvement was during the second WCF from 23 – 27 July 1937, which had four youth speakers. Afterwards, they unsuccessfully tried to maintain a youth council of the WCF. Although the attempt by Heather McConnell was not successful, the WCF finally reached a turning point in the 1950's that led to membership growth again when Sir John Stewart Wallace took over leadership. Eventually, the organization moved towards focusing more on publishing a regular journal and organizing small scale events, rather than big congresses.

After Younghusband's death, the IRD movement continued to grow. Charismatic leaders such as Younghusband were seen as the catalysts needed to spark the change. While his death impacted the organization, it resulted in restructuring WCF according to the vision of the surviving members, ensuring the continuation of the WCF. Today the IRD movement in the UK and the WCF itself has become more diverse as IRD has become more mainstream.

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85 World Congress of Faiths, Meeting Minutes (Oct 29th, 1945), MS 222 A 826 1/1, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.

86 World Congress of Faiths, Meeting Minutes (Oct 29th, 1945), MS 222 A 826 1/1, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.

87 World Congress of Faiths, Meeting Minutes (Nov 23rd, 1949), MS 222 A 826 1/1, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.

7 Conclusion: Lessons for Interreligious Dialogue from the Inception of the World Congress of Faiths

In summary, this article has tried to show how – on an individual level – Younghusband's experiences with trauma triggered the foundation of the WCF. However, on a social level, this experience was framed within the context of the Great Depression and World War II, which allowed Younghusband's idea to establish the WCF, making it relatable to many of his peers. The trauma, disaster and empathy that played a role in fostering the mystical experiences of Sir Francis Younghusband, led him to engaging interreligious dialogue on a large-scale at the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions and finally to found the WCF.

The WCF experienced its own sense of disaster and resilience combined with a constant underlying concept of empathy-building essential to interreligious dialogue. While at certain points, speakers during congresses introduced ideas that directly contradicted the idea of empathizing with the other, such as putting forth the notion of conversion, others focused on concepts such as humanism and universalism. The dialogue that the 1936 Congress allowed is a critical reason for why the WCF survived the Great Depression and WWII. While empathy played an essential underlying role in the inspiration behind the founding of the WCF in connection to experiences of trauma and disaster, larger lessons for the IRD movement also emerged from the early formation of the WCF. In the end, the death of Younghusband brought into question whether the WCF would continue or end, and indirectly whether the IRD movement in the UK would continue. Ten years after the death of Younghusband and through organizational re-structuring, the WCF and IRD both continued to transform and grow in the UK. Thus, a striking lesson for the IRD movement emerged from the founding of the WCF is not to create an over-reliance on a visionary leader. The makeup of the membership of the WCF portrays intellectual elitism and classism, including a lack of diversity beyond the individual speakers representing particular beliefs. Today, however, the WCF membership has grown to be much more diverse.

With regards to the first lesson for the IRD movement, the over-reliance on a founding leader can have ripple effects impacting the organizational structure and mission after the death or resignation of that visionary leader. As mentioned earlier, the leadership of the WCF and members were not prepared for Sir Francis Younghusband's death. While they were able to transition in the weeks after his death, it was not until nine years later, in the 1950's when the organization suf-

ficiently adapted with new leadership and a re-drafted constitution to enable the WCF to smoothen the operations of the organization. This opened up space in the WCF for seekers and led to congresses being arranged again after the end of the war.[88] Dependency is a problem for most interfaith organizations including non-religious or interfaith-based organizations. The fact that the archives reflect that some WCF committee officers quit their positions after Younghusband's death portrays how debilitating the dependency on one leader had been.

It is interesting to relate this to the concept of having a "founder's syndrome", which is a new theory on organizational leadership touching upon a phenomenon impacting organizations historically. Founders syndrome defined can be the over-dependency on a founder who is charismatic and visionary, leading to stunting long-term sustainability and "social value creation."[89] This theory could in part explain the relationship that Sir Francis Younghusband had with the people of the Executive Committee where they did not essentially agree on the structure of the organization. This is reflected in Minutes where Younghusband's need for control becomes apparent. However, it does highlight the need for organizations to set not just a preparation plan for a replacement of a leader in the face of death, but also safeguards from becoming completely dependent on a founder.

With regard to the second lesson for IRD, it is important to highlight the role that Christianity played in the inception of the organization. While Younghusband's experiences with mysticism, as portrayed in the earlier part of his life, were essential to him becoming open to engaging people of different faiths, elements of Christian superiority still came in whether culturally, because of the fact he was a Lt- Col in the British Empire or because he needed the influence to attempt to coax the Anglican Church to be more comfortable with his explorations. The idea of Christian hegemony or agenda playing a role in the establishment of the early interreligious movement is not something that just impacted the WCF, as Hedges notes in relation to the 1893 World Parliament of Religions: "It should be noted, though, that an agenda of Christian supremacy and aspects of racial and cultural exclusion lay behind this event."[90] Moyaert goes on to say that "one could argue that this first World's Parliament of Religions was more of

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88 World Congress of Faiths, Correspondence (1952 – 1956), MS 222 A 814 47, WCF Archives, University of Southampton.

89 Jessica Shortall, *Emerging Topics Series #7: Strategies for Managers Working within Founder's Syndrome organisations:* http://www.socialenterprise.net/pdfs/Emerging_Paper_7_Jan_07.pdf (accessed: 24.5.2020).

90 Paul Hedges, *Controversies in Interreligious Dialogue and Theology of Religions* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 59.

a Christian forum to which non-Christians were also invited than a true interreligious assembly" [91], which portrays the triumphalism that wasn't just affecting the countries based on nationalism, but leaked into how Western Christianity became involved in organizing interreligious movements. Hedges uses Pui-lan Kwok to delve further into this argument:

> In most interreligious dialogues conducted in Western ecumenical or academic settings, a handful of Third World elites, usually all males, are invited to speak as representatives of their traditions to a largely white Christian audience [...] The different 'world religions' are reified as if they were distinct and insoluble entities, represented primarily by male elite traditions, while interreligious differences are ignored and women's voices neglected.[92]

So, how did this affect the 1936 Congress and WCF? Unlike Rudolf Otto who insisted that the Christian lens should be used to engage mysticism, Younghusband was adamant that the WCF distance itself from using a solely Christian perspective in its mission and aims. This is connected to Rivera's theory explaining how the formation of the "ultimate openness" is where one "remains open to mystery and unpredictable possibilities: to the ineffable, unnameable, and unutterable."[93] In terms of Younghusband, his struggle with his spirituality and critical moments in his life were transformative in bringing him to interreligious dialogue and encouraging the other. As Rivera states, "in this ultimate we find a model for personal openness to the human *other* and the collective openness of socio-political systems."[94] As a result, Younghusband's engagement with mysticism was a result of him not feeling comfortable with the type of Christianity he grew up within the UK.

However, that did not prevent the politics from forcing him to partially cater to the Anglican Church while still refusing to claim the Anglican perspective as the truth. What played a role in the formation of the WCF was privilege in connection to social stratification portrayed through who was invited to engage in the organization. Connections to classism and intellectual elitism also played a role in the larger organization with whom Younghusband deliberately sought to engage in dialogue.

By establishing a space for intellectual elites to engage in dialogue and encounter each other based on faith, the WCF effectively established a space excluding youth and others who were capable of engaging in dialogue, but perhaps not from a privileged or intellectual perspective. This is important to acknowl-

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91 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 195.

92 Hedges, *Controversies in Interreligious Dialogue and Theology,* 64.

93 Rivera, *A Touch of Transcendence*, 136.

94 Rivera, *A Touch of Transcendence*, 136.

edge, because too often the darker side of the early history of the interreligious movement is hidden or brushed aside, preventing a completely transparent dialogue from occurring within the movement today.

The prominent leaders that played a role in the WCF can be seen both as negatively and positively affecting the organization. The involvement of the "movers and shakers" of the British Empire and of London, kept the organization from plummeting into cold storage or being put on hold as they used their own funds to keep it afloat until the 1950's where it resurfaced again. Today, Braybrooke mentioned that while the WCF has a large global membership base, they have stopped hosting international congresses. Instead, they have a journal that they publish that connects the international members to them, as reflected in their two narrower objectives today:

1 Publishing the "Interreligious Insight" journal on ideas, concepts and issues revolving around interfaith matters;
2 Organizing "conferences, meetings, retreats, visits and group travel".[95]

Lastly, while the WCF objectives have narrowed, the membership and diversity of the WCF has grown allowing space for more voices to emerge in the Interreligious Insight Journal and in the small-scale conferences as the larger IRD movement becomes more mainstream in the UK.

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9 Annex

Pamphlet of the World Congress of Faiths: Its Objects, Message and Work

1. To have an international presence through hosting large international congresses with representatives of "world faiths" from foreign countries.
2. Establish an international council.

3. Open branches of the WCF abroad to "bring our message to international attention".
4. Regular communication with members of international and local happenings relation to interreligious dialogue through the "chairman's quarterly letters" [similar to a newsletter].
5. Host regular receptions and networking events "to meet distinguished foreign visitors to England"

Three types of meetings:

– Regular membership only meetings held weekly or monthly.
– Public meetings hosted in major cities with universities and schools as a way to attract "the younger generations".
– Group meetings for the "common study of all living faiths of the world" based on experience and not solely on intellectual thoughts.

Goals of these events are defined in three ways:

– To provide a space where people can "learn what others believe, what they think about life today and how they pray, meditate and worship".
– Meetings are designed to attract teachers and health/social workers.
– The events and meetings additionally provide an opportunity "for members of local interfaith groups to meet people from different parts of the county and the world who share their concern".[96]

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96 World Congress of Faiths, Its Objects, Message and Work, MS 222 A 826 /3/98, WCF archives, University of Southampton, 4–5.

Rebecca Loder-Neuhold

Transformation from 'Mission' to 'Dialogue'

The World Council of Churches' Engagement with Jewish People (WCC-Committee on the Church and the Jewish People / 1920s–1970s)

1 Introduction

The online inventory of the archive of the World Council of Churches (WCC) characterizes the "Committee on the Church and the Jewish People" (CCJP) as follows:

> The CCJP was set up at the beginning of the 20th century. Its first mission was to convert the Jews to Christianity. After the genocide committed against the Jews during the Second World War, the mission of evangelism was converted into one of dialogue with the Jewish people. The Church's will was in fact to consider the throes of the Jewish people during this time.[1]

This article challenges the above assertion and presents instead a different reading as to the extent the *Shoah*[2] impacted the Committee and to what degree it was presented as the reason for a direct transformation from a mission to

1 Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, *4212 Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People (CCJP), 1932–1979 (Department):* http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/detail.aspx?ID=40936 (accessed: 24.5.2020).
2 This article uses the term *Shoah* instead of Holocaust. According to Yad Vashem "[t]he biblical word *Shoah* (which has been used to mean 'destruction' since the Middle Ages) became the standard Hebrew term for the murder of European Jewry as early as the early 1940s. [...] Consequently, we consider it important to use the Hebrew word *Shoah* with regard to the murder of and persecution of European Jewry in other languages as well." Yad Vashem, *The Holocaust: Definition and Preliminary Discussion:* http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/resource_center/the_holocaust.asp (accessed: 24.5.2020).

Jews into a dialogue with the Jewish people.[3] This contribution questions a direct transformation, or in other words, a direct linear development "from Conversion to Conversation"[4]; instead it aims to show that the reasons for this transformation has its root in the history of interreligious dialogue, specifically in mainline Protestantism.

The article first looks at the development of this committee from its establishment in the late 1920s to its transformation into a dialogue commission in the mid-1970s. It presents evidence for both transformation and continuity. It argues that evidence shows that the missionary attitude still prevailed at the end of the observation period. This article also aims to contribute toward filling the gap in the literature of Christian mission activities in the formation of interreligious dialogue in general.

1.1 Hypothesis

Since the start of interreligious dialogue between Christians and Jews, which began primarily *after* and *because* of the *Shoah*, actors in Christian institutions that were previously involved in missionary work to Jews downplay Christian missionary work as one of the roots for interreligious dialogue. For the WCC, dialogue was used as a new term, long after 1945. However, missionary intentions were the hidden goal behind it. The aim to evangelize remained a goal, at least to some degree, until the end of the 1970s, the observation period of this research.

Some actors rejected or hesitated to acknowledge that Christian missionary activities were a significant root for interreligious dialogue in general. For example, the main responsible figure for interreligious dialogue in the WCC, Stanley Samartha, stated:

> When I mentioned the possibility of Jewish-Christian dialogue, he [the minister for religious affairs in Israel, RLN] bristled with anger and interrupted me even before I could finish the sentence, angrily accusing Christians of trying to 'missionize' (his word) the Jews. Although I was upset, I recovered quickly, recalling the long centuries of persecution, which Jews suffered at the hands of Christians. The impression that I formed during these years is that in Christian-Jewish dialogues, the hidden agenda of Jews is *political* and that of Christians *mis-*

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3 Note that the wording (at first Jews, then Jewish people) is chosen explicitly. The several changes of the Committee's name include this transformation about how to address the "target group", as the subjects of Christian mission will be named in this article.

4 George Douglas Pratt, *Being Open, being Faithful: The journey of Interreligious Dialogue* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2014), 41.

siological, although there are some Christians who are against using dialogue for mission and some Jews who have deeply spiritual motives.[5]

Samartha first reacted with anger to a statement about a historically undisputed situation – that is Christian missionary work to Jewish people. He was upset for being 'wrongly accused' of Christians trying to evangelize Jews. But he quickly came to forgive the bearer of this accusation recalling Jewish history ("centuries of persecution", including, though not mentioned expressively, the *Shoah*). Either he felt that the missionary activity was a part of these persecutions or he excused these "wrong accusations" because of these persecutions. This paper attempts to show that the latter interpretation is more convincing and that Samartha can be seen as an example of an individual who did not acknowledge a specific dynamic that was indeed a contributing factor to interreligious dialogue. This article will try to shed light on the fact that the missionary agenda of some Christians in the WCC had existed as a hidden reason behind the Christian-Jewish dialogue.

1.2 Structure and questions

To properly analyze these gradual developments, it is necessary to focus on the longer-term processes. Thus, the article divides the Committee's history into five periods: (1) establishment till the Second World War; (2) the situation after the *Shoah*; (3) integration into the WCC; (4) first attempts towards 'dialogue' in the 1960s; and (5) the last phase that marks the end of the announced transformation to dialogue in the 1970s.

   The chronological sections focus on setting the social-cultural stage, seeking to examine elements such as: the missionary work towards Jews prior to the World War II (WWII); the Committee's reaction to anti-Semitism, to increased persecution of Jews and to the outbreak of the WWII; and the meetings' protocols after the genocide. The question of transformation requires examining institutional aspects such as: the process of integrating the Committee (within the International Missionary Council) into the WCC; when the transformation, from mission to dialogue, can be traced; and the evidence that supports the argument that the *Shoah* was the only determining factor for a transformation.

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5 Stanley J. Samartha, *Between Two Cultures: Ecumenical Ministry in a Pluralist World* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 34. Emphasis in original.

Additionally, this section takes a closer look at the retrospective construction of the genesis of interreligious dialogue. In the beginning, the focus is very much on the structural level: How did this institution function? How was it organized? Who were the actors? What did the mission to Jews look like? This is due to the fact that the institutional structure changed when the International Missionary Council was integrated into the WCC in 1962. The institutional changes happened shortly before and at the same time as the missionary aspect to Jews was challenged. This part of the article leaves behind structural questions and looks primarily at the content of the archival material, examining topics, arguments, controversies in the Minutes, and the protocols.

A strict chronological course of action is necessary due to the complex structural developments around the Committee, which affected the Committee's position; every change in the statutes of the WCC was caused by a change within the Committee.

Names and Abbreviations used in this Chapter[6]
CCJP: Committee on the Church and the Jewish People
ConCJP: Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People
CWME: Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
DFI: Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies
DWME: Division of World Mission and Evangelism
IMC: International Missionary Council
IMCCAJ: International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews[7]
WCC: World Council of Churches

Throughout this article, the term "Committee" or its correct abbreviation at this time is used.[8]

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[6] One practical note: The story of the institution in question is complex due to changes in name and structure over the years. Therefore, in this article several abbreviations are in use.

[7] However, the Minutes start to use the abbreviation of IMCCAJ in the 1950s. For example, Minutes of Baarn 1950 (International Missionary Council, Minutes of the joint meeting of the British and European Sections of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Baarn, Holland, July 24–26, 1950. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01.). Also, Hedenquist uses this abbreviation in his history of the Committee: Göte Hedenquist, ed., *Twenty-Five Years of The International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews: 1932–1957* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksells, 1957).

[8] The members of the Committee and the members of the organisations linked to it will also be called "missionaries", also if they should have been "only" active in other forms than "working on the base". I do this in taking recourse to their own use of "missionaries" in the sources.

2 Empirical Approach

2.1 Material Used

To address the above challenge, the article follows a specific research strategy; the main parts of the article will be based upon Minutes found in the WCC archive in Geneva. In other words, it will – following Anthony Brundage's terminology – focus on manuscript sources produced after the meetings that were circulated among a limited number of people, so that – for example – absent members of the Committee could be informed about any progress via these Minutes. [9]

Generally speaking, the Minutes always follow the same structure. They start with a list of attendees of the meeting (members, guests, most times with naming their sending institution). They then contain summaries of the programme items: decisions, like a press release that was agreed on or who will succeed in which position, are mentioned, papers named (presented by whom, about what topic, etc.), prayers or masses announced, etc. The appendices offer additional details, for example, a budget report. For this article, the Secretary's Reports of previous meetings and the reports of activities in various countries are of particular interest because they contain the most insights into the actual missionary work and reveal the attitudes of the involved actors. Very often, they also discussed papers, such as "Jesus and The Old Testament", which are attached in the appendices.[10]

The article also incorporates correspondence by the Committee's staff, letters, short written messages that circulated inside the WCC, memorandums, and the like. As this material, often covering a lengthier period of time[11], is bulky and hard to analyze, it was only used as background information.

As for secondary sources, the article also takes printed material into consideration. Public statements were consulted for background information. However, the research for this article focuses more on what the WCC and the Committee

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9 Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*, 4th ed. (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 2008), 19 f.
10 At this point, it is also important to mention that the Minutes mostly bear the note "confidential". As far as the present analyses are concerned, this gives further information about the readership of the Minutes.
Footnote 11?

were doing and not the countless public statements made by the WCC assemblies and its member churches regarding dialogue with Jews.[12]

Although quarterly newsletters existed, the earliest newsletter in the archive dates from 1967. This is rather late for the time period under study for this article, they are therefore not extensively used for this article.

2.2 Potentials, Limits and Source Criticism

The formal and official character of the Minutes sets limits vis-à-vis the potential scope of their interpretation. The texts in the Minutes are the result of careful editing, smoothed over and organized; they are not quick notes. Another hint towards the use of careful editing is the almost complete lack of reference to debates on voting: Almost all decisions were unanimous.

Although analyzing the complex structure of organizations like the IMC and WCC is challenging, the Minutes make it possible. With the Minutes, it also enables the identification of a number of different threads in the Christian-Jewish relationship (be it missionary or dialogical exchanges) that were attached to the Committee after the IMC incorporated into the WCC. Only through these Minutes can the complex structures be unravelled.

In addition to this institutional complexity, the archivists of the WCC highlighted another problem: in this global organization, many activities with the same goal ran parallel and were performed by different actors in the same organization. Additionally, the Committee does not represent the only way in which the WCC acted in regard to the Jewish faith and its followers. One example: in the Minutes of the ICCAJ from 1960 one can read about the Bossey Consultation held in 1956 on "Christian Convictions and attitudes in Relation to the Jewish People". Names of persons and institutions like the WCC's Faith and Order Committee appear in this article that seems to be completely new if one only consults the sources about ICCAJ.[13] However, it becomes obvious a few years later that

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12 Just one example: World Council of Churches, ed., *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish people: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its Member Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988).

13 World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 27th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Münster, Germany September 5th to 9th, 1960. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/02, 8. The Ecumenical Institute Bossey, located near the city of Geneva, was established in 1946 as an organization of the WCC. See: Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey,

these same people were members of another sub-group of the consultations, the WCC Jewish Leaders Consultation.[14] Thus, a chronology of all relations between the WCC and Jewish representatives is almost impossible to achieve.

However, the Minutes still can be seen as ideal sources for answering questions concerning the history of interreligious dialogue within the WCC. They provide a unique basis for the analysis of the main hypothesis in this article. Throughout the time of its existence, the Committee produced these documents and they can be compared easily due to their official nature. With them, it is known who was officially present from the first meeting to all subsequent ones until the 1970s. This long observation period also required a consistent primary source that kept its format throughout the decades, and these Minutes are the closest that come to this.

However broad the sources were, they could be analyzed to show aspects of this assumed transformation. In this chapter, covering the period between the late 1920s to 1975, explanations are limited to this particular organization first as the IMC and later on as it merges with the WCC.

3 The WCC – the World Meets in Geneva

The Committee had international members and representatives from far-reaching areas of the world. Yet these meetings remained focused on Europe. At the latest with its integration into the WCC in 1961, Geneva was still the central geographical point. Other organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Jewish Congress[15] chose Geneva as one of their main locations. Moreover, with the exception of the American Conrad Hoffmann, the influential personalities were Europeans, with an emphasis on Northern Europe (Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, and Norway). Therefore, it is necessary to draw a short sketch of the historical context within Europe, while still keeping in mind that Europe was of course entangled in global historic events and dynamics.

Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey: http://institute.oikoumene.org/en (accessed: 24.5. 2020).

14 Minutes of the CCJP Advisory Group, held at the CMS Guesthouse, Foxbury, Chislehurst, June 3 – 5, 1974, 1974. Archives du Conseil Oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.03.04/02, 3.

15 The connection between the Committee and the World Jewish Congress will be covered later on.

The period between the 1920s and the 1970s in Europe, or the "short twentieth century"[16] (Ivan Berend, Eric Hobsbawm), creates the backdrop for the historical background for the Committee. The important historical events that occurred are of course obvious, but it is necessary to outline some events, crucial for the understanding of the WCC's aims and how they changed within this period of time. The first issues to mention are the European and global impacts of World War I[17], mass migration movements and growing cities, the inter-war years with the increasing arms race and difficult diplomacy, especially with the rise of the Nazi Regime and other such fascist ideologies, with the increase in the persecution of Jews – and perceived Jews – first in Germany, then in Austria, and finally the outbreak of WWII and the *Shoah*.[18] Besides this Eurocentric focus, one event beyond the Mediterranean Sea is central, namely the founding of the State of Israel in May, 1948. This event and the subsequent consequences are discussed in-depth in the Minutes of this Committee. As discussed below, this historical element seems to have been a more central element in the change in the Jewish-Christian relationship than the *Shoah*. After 1945, Europe fought to build a peaceful continent. In this context the UN was founded, an event that was also central for the WCC. Of course, the Cold War[19] and nuclear threats must be seen as elements in the political background for the later years in this history of the Committee. Missionary work in countries – from the Committee's perspective – behind the Iron Curtain could not be maintained. Also, of great importance, was decolonization in Africa and Asia as described by some scholars as "perhaps the most important historical process of the twentieth century"[20]. At the beginning of our observation period, some nations that were involved in the missionary work towards Jewish people, like the British Empire, were omnipresent colonial empires. This changed dramatically during the timeframe selected for this paper. These dynamics led to large scale power struggles, violent conflicts and

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16 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme: Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 7th ed. (München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2004).

17 Numerous literature is available for this often called "Urkatastrophe" of the twentieth century. See, as one example: Jörn Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges* (München: C.H. Beck, 2014).

18 To give references for such a widely researched historical event as the *Shoah* is a difficult task. But nevertheless, one can start with Omer Bartov, ed., *The Holocaust: Origins, implementation, aftermath* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Simone Gigliotti and Berel Lang, eds., *The Holocaust: A reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005).

19 As an example, see: David S. Painter, *The Cold War: An international History* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999).

20 Dietmar Rothermund, *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1.

growing economic interdependence and the founding of the State of Israel that was so central to the Committee[21]. No view of the twentieth century can be complete without taking into account globalization. Following Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Petersson, at the end of our observation period, "many elements of contemporary globalization were in place"[22]. Despite the perceived problematic nature of the term[23], it should be stressed that aspects of globalization, such as more efficient communication systems, quicker and more available means of transport ("territorial compression") and the general "expansion, concentration, and acceleration of worldwide relations"[24], inevitably impacted the Committee.

In turning to the WCC, a short description is necessary. The self-claimed goal of the WCC is searching for Christian unity and pursuing the vision of ecumenism. It also includes pursuing "common witness in work for mission and evangelism."[25] The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910 builds on the threads for this organization; another is the 1920 encyclical suggestions from the Orthodox Synod of Constantinople about founding an organization similar to the League of Nations, the pre-cursor to the United Nations. In addition, the rise of student organizations and lay movements should be mentioned in this context.[26]

The International Missionary Council, following the Edinburgh World missionary conference of 1910, is the strongest thread that was woven into the tapestry of early Christian ecumenical relations. Its later integration into the WCC in 1961 in New Delhi is discussed further below in detail. Other institutions that were integrated into the WCC were the international conferences "Faith and Order" and "Life and Work", a world alliance of churches for global peace, along with "a council descended from the 19th-century Sunday school movement".[27]

WWII delayed the actual founding of the WCC for seven years, with the organization finally being established on 23 August 1948 with 147 churches from

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21 For a short summary of the events around 1948 and British-American interactions see for example Dietmar Rothermund, *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization*, 107–112.

22 Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), XI.

23 As an example of numerous literature regarding globalization see Jan A. Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

24 Osterhammel and Petersson. *Globalization,* 5.

25 World Council of Churches, *Frequently asked questions:* http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/faq#-br-what-is-the-world-council-of-churches- (accessed: 24.5.2020).

26 World Council of Churches, *History:* http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/wcc-history (accessed: 24.5.2020).

27 World Council of Churches, "History."

47 countries. The central concept behind its establishment is closely connected to the intentions related to the founding of the UN.[28] The WCC grew in members, as well as in special committees, sub-units and affiliated working groups. Concerns were and still are wide-ranging: from religion-related topics (ecumenical Christianity, interreligious dialogue, mission, relation to the Roman Catholic Church) to political engagement (forum during the Cold War, Apartheid in South Africa, etc.) and social commitments (care for refugees, for example during Hungarian Revolution of 1956, or integrity of Creation in other words: environmental sustainability).[29]

To refer to the large number of important relevant events that occurred before the WCC's establishment in 1948, the term 'pre-WCC' is used.

4 The Development from Mission to a Jewish-Christian Dialogue

4.1 "The Jews, however, were really longing for Christ …". Christian Mission to Jews prior to the *Shoah:* the IMCCAJ

This section begins with a quote that describes the initial atmosphere of Christian missionary work with Jews and how the attitude changed during the rise of the National-Socialists in the 1930s.[30] From discussions about how to handle the 'Jewish question' and about how to take actions against anti-Semitism, evangelization changed in part during the influx of refugees from Germany and Austria.

Preceding the establishment of the Committee, there were several years of preparation including gatherings in Budapest and Warsaw in 1927, both cities having then significant Jewish populations. The "visions" and "dreams" of missionary actions[31] led to the establishment of the IMCCAJ on 1 September 1930,[32] organized as a sub-committee of the IMC.

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28 Jörg Ernesti, *Kleine Geschichte der Ökumene* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2007), 66–68.
29 Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope, eds., *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva: WCC Publications; W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1997), V–XIV.
30 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach To The Jews. British and European Sections. 2 Eaton Gate, London. June 1st and 2nd, 1939. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 20.
31 General Secretary at the Committee Meetings, The International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. A Survey, Report and Forecast; 1st September

In 1932, its first full meeting was held, and the Committee's aims were stated as follows:

> a) To study the Jewish world in its various aspects, to develop wise policies and an effective and comprehensive programme. b) To co-ordinate missionary work among Jews throughout the world so as to prevent overlapping of effort, provide for the effective occupation of neglected areas [...]. c) To foster the production and circulation of literature for Jews appropriate for present-day needs [...]. d) To stimulate action in the various Christian communions with the purpose of enlisting local congregations in a ministry to the Jews in their parishes. [...][33]

The Director had to conduct the programme and activities as decided upon by the Committee linking the Committee to the IMC. As described in IMC Minutes, the Director "shall be a departmental officer of the International Missionary Council."[34] From 1932 onwards, the American Dr. Conrad Hoffmann, Jr., held this position.[35]

A look at the list of representatives underlines the global focus on mission to Jewish people: four officers of the IMC (including the Director Hoffmann) were present, 'guests', namely Ms. Ruth Rouse[36] and the secretary, Ms. D. H. Standley. In addition to members of the IMC representatives from the following organizations were present: British Jews Society, Church Mission to Jews, International Hebrew Christian Alliance, Church of Scotland, British Missionary Society, Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, Svenska Israelsmission, Presbyterian Church USA, and Church of England in Canada.[37]

1930 to 1st September, 1935, July 10, 1935. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 26.12.03/3, 1.

32 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Digswell Park, England, June 13 and 14, 1932. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 5.

33 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Digwell Park, England, June 13 and 14, 1932, 12.

34 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Digwell Park, England, June 13 and 14, 1932, 13.

35 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Digwell Park, England, June 13 and 14, 1932, 13.

36 For the biography of this outstanding personality, see Ruth Franzén, *Ruth Rouse among Students: Global, Missiological and Ecumenical Perspectives* (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Mission Research, 2008).

37 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Digswell Park, England, June 13 and 14, 1932, 3f.

In these meetings, topics that were discussed comprehensively create an overall impression of the various ways they tried to evangelize. These topics dealt with themes such as: whether converting to Christianity meant a complete escape out of discrimination; if converted Jews should be assembled in special "Hebrew-Christian" communities; whether missionary work also target Jewish children for they "present an open door to a Jewish family"[38]; combatting anti-Semitism; the problem of Non-Aryans (baptised Jews who are not categorized by racial anti-Semitism as Christians and not accepted anymore as Jews by the Jewish communities); the new phenomenon of Zionism and the rise of Jewish inhabitants in Palestine; suitable literature (which language was appropriate, e.g. Polish, Yiddish, or Hebrew); and, new methods to answer the 'changes' in Jewry (secularization, migration).[39] The work of the Committee was quickly accepted in the Protestant sphere.[40]

In Vienna, an enlarged meeting of the ICCAJ was held in 1937, months before the so-called *Anschluss*. Although the political situation in Austria is not discussed directly in the Minutes, one can find evidence of discussions on the persecution of Nazi-defined Jewish Germans, for example in the "Report of the Subcommittee on German Refugees" and the "Report of the Subcommittee on the Situation within Germany."[41] Besides the issue of anti-Semitism, concrete actions for the sake of helping Jewish refugees were presented.

By the time the next meeting took place in September 1938, the annexation was addressed in the Director's Report:

> In March of this year came the unexpected and complete absorption of Austria within the body politic of Germany. Many new problems for the Jewish missionary enterprise arose, and the problem of the Christian non-Aryan already critical in Germany was greatly magnified. Christian work for Jews was seriously menaced and there was a probability that

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38 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Digswell Park, England, June 13 and 14, 1932, 3 f.

39 General Secretary at the Committee Meetings. The International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. A Survey, Report and Forecast; 1st September, 1930 to 1st September, 1935.

40 Already in 1936 Hoffmann could report that "some of the societies working among Jews had asked for permission to put on their letter-heads the statement 'Co-operating with the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews.'". International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. British and European Section. Kasteel Hemmen, Holland, April 28th and 29th, 1936. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 4.

41 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. Vienna, Austria, June 2, 1937. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 17–20.

within the year the Swedish Mission and the Delitzschianum in Vienna would have to close down.[42]

Clearly, their first concern about the *Anschluss* was the danger it had raised to their "missionary enterprise" and the second one was the problem that the Nazi's classification did not pay attention to Christian baptism, due to their racial anti-Semitic laws.[43]

The last meeting in Europe before WWII took place in London in 1939. Hoffmann stated in his report that "the refugee situation was no longer a temporary emergency, but had become a permanent problem."[44] Hoffmann had no illusions as to what could occur in Europe: "there would probably be eventually 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 refugees."[45] In his report, the attitude about the persecution is strikingly clear: the primary problem was not the reason behind the persecution, but the Jewish and "Non-Aryan Christians" refugees. The question was – next to how to offer help for the refugees – what would be done to better focus the missionary goal on this new "target group"?[46] Apart from this thinking about new methods and tactics which seem not to be affected by the rise of Nazism, the daily business of the Committee had, in fact, changed dramatically: the

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42 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. British and European Sections. 2 Eaton Gate, London. September 21st, 1938, 1938. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 3.

43 This leads to the problem of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. Although this topic was central for the Committee and is highly interesting, an analysis of it would go beyond the scope of this article. This topic was discussed in their first meeting 1932 on the very first day and it was the first topic with regard to contents. Furthermore, in the Committee's point of view, they are fighting anti-Semitism, but the Minutes expose their own anti-Semitical thinking: It is the Jew him/herself who is to be blamed for anti-Semitism: "The causes [for anti-Semitism, RLN] are manifold. Not a few are contributed by the Jews themselves. Attitude, actions and activities of certain Jews provoke growing antagonism to all Jews." General Secretary at the Committee Meetings, The International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. A Survey, Report and Forecast; 1st September, 1930 to 1st September, 1935.

44 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. British and European Sections. 2 Eaton Gate, London. June 1st and 2nd, 1939, 3.

45 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. British and European Sections. 2 Eaton Gate, London. June 1st and 2nd, 1939, 3.

46 For example: "The refugees were for the most part cultured people and modernized in thought. The old literature was not much use. Some new writing was needed, especially in the field of anti-Semitism." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. British and European Sections. 2 Eaton Gate, London. June 1st and 2nd, 1939, 4.

London Office Secretary, Mrs. Conyers Baker, reported in 1939 that the main part of her day-to-day routine was helping immigrants.[47]

In the context of the pre-WCC, Adolf Freudenberg (1894–1994) represents the personification of the development that took place during that period. The German diplomat and pastor, married to a woman of Jewish ancestry, was the leading figure of the refugee help by the not yet officially established WCC. In 1939 in Geneva, he began to help Germans who were persecuted for racial and political reasons. Freudenberg worked together with the World Jewish Congress, also situated in Geneva.[48] Apart from helping refugees, the pre-WCC also acted politically, distributing information to the Western forces about atrocities and extermination in the Nazi-occupied areas of Eastern Europe.[49]

Thus, one can state that the missionary goal of the Committee, where anti-Semitism was a topic beyond others, increased due to the issue of helping Jews in times of death-threatening persecution by including an aim to aid the Jews through missionary work. This is traceable for the Committee, as well as for the pre-WCC organization. These changes by both organizations were reactions to the political events that took place in Europe and are a significant feature of the transformation that this article wants to analyze.

4.2 Attitudes after the *Shoah* and ICCAJ's/IMC's approaches towards the WCC

This section discusses how the Committee covered the topic of the *Shoah* in its meetings after 1945 and the institutional changes that took place subsequently. It also examines how the Committee approached the WCC prior to it joining it.

WWII ended ICCAJ meetings in Europe. The first post-war, and the first post-*Shoah* meeting took place in 1947 in Basel, Switzerland. Already on the first page

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47 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews. British and European Sections. 2 Eaton Gate, London. June 1st and 2nd, 1939, 10 f.

48 Konrad Raiser, "Rettet Sie doch! Erbe und Auftrag der Ökumenischen Bewegung," in *Juden, Christen und die Ökumene, ed.* Martin Stöhr and Klaus Würmell, (Frankfurt am Main: Spener, 1994): 10–19; Gerhart M. Riegner, "Am Anfang war die Tat: Flüchtlingshilfe und jüdisch-christliche Zusammenarbeit im Schatten der Schoah," in *Juden, Christen und die Ökumene, ed.* Martin Stöhr and Klaus Würmell, (Frankfurt am Main: Spener, 1994), 20–33.

49 Riegner, "Am Anfang war die Tat," 23–28.

of the Minutes, one can find a change compared with pre-war Minutes, a citation. The citation is from "God and the Jews"[50], published in 1947:

> So many things have been said about the Jews, so many things felt, but rarely in Christendom this: – that in them the Finger of God is raised, in warning, in challenge, in entreaty, in invitation to the Gentile World; that it is in them all the while that we who are not Jews are most particularly brought into contact with the will and power of God.[51]

The *Shoah* forced a recognition of the Jews, although they were still deemed to be 'others' and still used as something – as a "warning" (as stated to in the quotation above) – for an 'us'-group, for Christians. However, how did they deal with the *Shoah* in the meeting? The meeting in Basel was hosted by the Swiss Friends of Israel Missionary Society, and the President of the Swiss Jewish Missionary Society welcomed the delegates.[52] After the opening prayer service at the first session, Chairman Rev. Gill addressed the past events:

> [Gill] spoke of the unexampled changes which have occurred especially among the Jewish people throughout the world since the last meeting in Vienna in 1937, and of the resultant necessity of reconsidering and adapting the methods of presentation of the Gospel to this new and changed situation.[53]

The Reverend spoke of "changes" since 1937 without referencing the extermination that took place. Secondly, there is no move to reconsider the missionary intention as such but instead a call for "reconsidering and adapting the methods". Conrad Hoffmann, Jr. stressed in his Director's Report that Christendom must acknowledge their guilt, but they "must discover new and ethically legitimate methods and recognize and stress the responsibility of the churches for Jewish evangelism."[54] These sources reveal that it is undeniable that the surviving Jews remained the "target group" of their mission to evangelize ("our God-given task").

In 1947, the Committee renewed its constitution. Most striking in this new constitution is not what changed, but what stayed the same. Except for institutional changes (discussed below) the Committee's name, its character as a sub-

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50 Reginald Glanville, *God and the Jews: A Study in the Problem of Human Relationships* (London: Epworth Pres, 1947).

51 Glanville, *God and the Jews*, 14.

52 In German: "Verein der Freunde Israels." Glanville, *God and the Jews*, 3.

53 "Christendom, which had been unable to prevent this catastrophe, needs to engage in an act of penitence before God and contrition before man." Glanville, *God and the Jews*, 5.

54 Glanville, *God and the Jews*, 5.

committee of the IMC and as a department of that Council, its aims and policy, and most of its financing remained the same.[55]

Moreover, after the accusation of a lack of moral and spiritual issues, an ongoing mission to evangelize the Jews would be the best reparation for the *Shoah*.[56] Thus instead of reconsidering the mission *because* of the *Shoah*, they wanted to increase and improve the mission – *because* of the *Shoah*. In addition, the failure of the mission to the Jews was presented as due to wrong methods and wrong "target groups":

> World conditions are changing rapidly in every sphere, and the churches must be prepared to experiment in new methods, especially in the approach to secularized Jews. Particular attention should be paid to the task of reaching the intellectuals and students of universities.[57]

In the 1949 meeting, the immediate consequences of WWII were still present. The Committee's concerns were the refugee situation in Germany and worldwide[58], the "Hebrew Christians'" suffering under the Hitler Regime was still stressed[59],

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55 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 8.

56 "The Church as a whole must confess that its witness and protest were not vigorous enough to prevent the barbaric persecution of the Jews in Europe. Its indifference to the moral and spiritual needs of the Jews is equally blameworthy. The best reparation it can make is to recognize the evangelization of the Jews as the responsibility and task of the whole Church, and in all its denominations it must organize and equip itself to carry out this task. In every congregation the spiritual concern for the Jews should be awakened and promoted by the education of the whole membership as to their responsibility for, and the best methods of approach to, their Jewish neighbors." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947. 16.

57 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947.

58 "Mr. Hedenquist urged anew that foreign agencies sending relief in Germany should keep the World Council of Churches cognizant of what they are doing." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13 – 18, 1949. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 17.

59 "Mr. Hedenquist then spoke briefly on the needs of the Hebrew Christian and mixed marriage folk in Germany and appealed for cooperation of all in coming to the aid of these folk who were as much victimized by the Nurnberg racial laws as any out and out Jew." International

and the realization that missionary activities in countries behind the Iron Curtain were over.[60] The events in the years after the *Shoah* that led to the new state of Israel were a predominant focus. It seemed clear for the attendees that this new state changed the relationship between Jews and Christians, yet the evangelizing aim did not change.[61] The conference responded to the founding of Israel by creating an *ad hoc* committee that met only a month later.[62]

From this point on (1947), the Committee and the WCC started to intertwine more closely[63] and this revealed how the WCC had already been involved from early on in the missionary activities to the Jewish people.

The pre-WCC and its Provisional Committee first appeared in the Minutes of 1947. An appendix containing a list of delegates makes it possible to track down the sending institutions of the representatives at the time. Four (out of 66) are named with the WCC as their sending society: Pastor Adolf Freudenberg, Rev. Göte Hedenquist, Dr. Walter M. Horton[64] and Dr. Alphons Koechlin.[65] The Minutes themselves "reported on the progress of negotiations with the World Coun-

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Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13 – 18, 1949, 16 – 19.

60 "The session was a most sobering one and gave indication of considerable Christian martyrdom." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13 – 18, 1949, 14.

61 "There is no doubt that these events are ushering in a new chapter in the history of the Jewish people, as well as in the field of Jewish missions. Therefore, the present conference was meeting at a time of crucial and decisive importance. Let us pray that all in responsible positions may be blessed and especially guided by God so that the evangelization of Israel may indeed come to pass." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13 – 18, 1949, 1.

62 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13 – 18, 1949, Appendix B.

63 It should be reminded that these organizations have always been connected, because the IMC, of which the Committee is a sub-unit, was one of the main threads that led to the WCC.

64 Dr. Walter Horton was Professor of Theology, Oberlin College in Ohio, Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, *Query Result List:* http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/resultatliste. aspx (accessed: 24.5.2020).

65 In the original list his name is written Alphonse Koecklin. Alphons Koechlin was "President of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Switzerland, member of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, chairman of the Committee of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid".

cil of Churches."[66] A letter quoted that the WCC proposed the Committee should be "a joint project of the I.M.C. and the W.C.C."[67] Apparently the WCC did not propose this, instead the proposal came from the Committee itself: "in the discussion which followed [this letter], satisfaction was expressed over this apparent willingness of the W.C.C. to consider the proposed collaboration."[68]

It is important to compare the WCC's role in the constitution of 1947 with that of 1932. The first change in the new constitution: item "IV. Organization/ c." states:

> Each section division shall consist of eleven members, seven to represent the International Missionary Council, one the International Hebrew Christian Alliance, and three to represent the World Council of Churches should it agree to share responsibility in the committee.[69]

In 1932, only three participants – except for the Director Hoffmann, who was also part of the IMC – were specifically mentioned as representatives from the IMC in the constitution. In 1947, the third institution is the WCC with three (out of eleven) representatives. For an organization not yet officially founded this seems to be a high number of seats.

In the Minutes that followed, it appears that the ICCAJ expected a dominant role by the WCC. For example, in the Report of the Commission on the Church and the Relief to Hebrew Christians, the first item states that the WCC's Department of Reconstruction should "make a special appeal" on behalf of the Hebrew Christians. The Ecumenical Refugee Commission, another unit of the WCC, should care for Jewish Christians.[70] The Commission on Church and Evangelism also addressed the WCC stating that their unit for evangelism should study ap-

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66 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947, 9.
67 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947, 9.
68 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947, 9.
69 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947, 8.
70 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947, 17.

propriate and practical steps for mission to the Jews, similar to the IMC.[71] Thus, the WCC – already before it was officially established one year later – was used as a projection surface for a lot of wishes: appeal to converted Jews, care for Hebrew Christians refugees, developing new methods of missionary activity.

Another important note about the new cooperation by the ICCAJ and the WCC is found at the end of the Minutes: 22 delegates of the ICCAJ visited Geneva. The reason for this trip among others was a visit to the WCC headquarters.[72] Although it is not expressed directly, this meeting with the higher staff of the WCC was a sign of the new cooperation.

In 1949, Göte Hedenquist entered the stage of the Committee. The dominant figure of the WCC, Visser t' Hooft[73], was listed as absent[74] but the Swedish missionary Hedenquist was present in Edinburgh. He was called upon as an official representative of the WCC to give a statement. He recalled the Amsterdam recommendations and condemned anti-Semitism in the Church.[75] Interestingly enough, he ended with a referral to the WCC:

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71 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947, 18.

72 "After brief addresses by Dr. Visser 't Hooft, Dr. Hutchison-Cockburn and other members of the Secretariat Staff, afternoon tea was served, and the delegates were shown around the various offices. Plans that had been made to visit the Institute at Chateau Bossey the following day had to be cancelled [...] All agreed the visit to the World Council of Churches Headquarters had been a most worthwhile postlude to the Basel Meeting, and expressed their gratitude and appreciation." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the Enlarged meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Basel, Switzerland. June 4 – 7, 1947, 23.

73 The Dutch Dr. Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft (1900 – 1985) was the dominant figure in the twentieth century in the ecumenical movement. He was engaged in the preparations of the WCC and over two centuries its general secretary. For more details see Wolfgang Lienemann, "Reformierte Identität im Kontext der Ökumene und des interreligiösen Dialogs: Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft (1900 – 1985)," in *Reformierte Theologie weltweit: Zwölf Profile aus dem 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Marco Hofheinz and Matthias Zeindler (Zürich: TVZ, Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2013), 127 – 48.

74 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13 – 18, 1949, 3.

75 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13 – 18, 1949, 6. In Amsterdam it was declared: "We call upon the churches we represent to denounce antisemitism, no matter what its origin, as absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith. Antisemitism is sin against God and man." Cited in: Kinnamon and Cope, *The ecumenical movement,* 421.

> [T]hat it gives careful consideration to the suggestion made by the International Missionary Council that the World Council of Churches share with it a joint responsibility for the Christian approach to the Jews.[76]

This confirms one of the WCC's roots in the mission to the Jews – "a joint responsibility", this time by an official delegate from the WCC itself, who himself had worked for evangelization beyond the Jewish population of Vienna before the *Shoah*.[77] An even tighter relationship between WCC and the ICCAJ before the official integration of WCC and IMC took place when Hedenquist was unanimously elected as "an Associate to the Director" (*in absentia*).[78] The election itself is puzzling[79], as the election did not follow the creation of the post. There are no arguments for the necessity of this position nor a hint as to what the tasks and responsibilities of this Associate to the Director would be.[80] Thus, it seems like a surprisingly quick career step in the Committee for a WCC member. In 1950, Hedenquist was appointed secretary of the meeting.[81] In 1951, Hedenquist became the new Director of the ICCAJ.[82] It can be suggested, that this meant now more than just a career step, rather it was likely the final phase in the WCC 'take over' of the Committee, including its Jewish missionary actions.

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76 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, 6.

77 Hedenquist led the Swedish Mission in Vienna from 1936 to 1940. During the Nazi-era he helped Jewish people and converted Jews to flee Austria. He then worked for the WCC and the Swedish Israelsmission in Stockholm.

78 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13–18, 1949, 9.

79 Rev. R.C. Macanna "announced that the Business Session had recommended that at this time the question of an associate to the Director should be given consideration. He went on to state that a most suitable and well qualified man had been found in the person of the Rev. Gote Hedenquist and recommended that the Committee give an unanimous call to Mr. Hedenquist for this post, to begin services as of January 1, 1950." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, Edinburgh, Scotland. June 13–18, 1949, 9.

80 The only concern that follows the call for election of Hedenquist is about the funding (5,000 Dollar per year).

81 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the joint meeting of the British and European Sections of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Baarn, Holland, July 24–26, 1950, 1f.

82 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 20th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Hemer bei Iserlohn Germany, July 21st-24th, 1951. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/01, 5.

These comparative results regarding the content and the institutional level offer compelling evidence for the argument that the *Shoah* did not lead to an immediate change in the attitude towards evangelizing Jews. The continuum in the constitutions between the early 1930s and 1947 is strong evidence of the same. The founding of Israel is also addressed as an event that led to a search for adapting their methods in evangelizing. Additionally, this period clearly shows the institutional roots of the WCC; from the beginning, Christian-Jewish relations were in its field of vision, but clearly for missionary purposes.

4.3 The Integration Process of ICCAJ/IMC and WCC

From the 1950s onwards, the integration process of the IMC into the still young WCC, as well as that of the Committee, was discussed. In 1951, a meeting was held, which included the Chairman of IMCCAJ, the Secretary of the Joint Committee of the IMC/WCC, the General Secretary, and the London Secretary of the IMC. At this meeting, an outline of the future of the IMCCAJ in the new institution was developed, planning to incorporate the Committee into the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC.[83] A change in the institution's name was decided: from 1960 onwards, the new name "Committee on the Church and the Jewish People" (CCJP) was in use.[84] The name change is significant; it is a change from "*to* Jews" into "*and* the Jewish People". This was seen as necessary because it was assumed that the WCC would probably "wish to introduce new names."[85] Although there were voices against the integration, time pressure moved the decision forward.[86] All concerns could appa-

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83 World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 27th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Münster, Germany September 5th to 9th, 1960, Appendix II. Appendix III of the same Minutes states that it was recommended to be incorporated with the DIVISION of World Mission and Evangelism. As from now, this article uses the abbreviation DWME for an easier understanding.

84 World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 27th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Münster, Germany September 5th to 9th, 1960, 4.

85 World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 27th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Münster, Germany September 5th to 9th, 1960, 15.

86 World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 27th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews in Münster, Germany September 5th to 9th, 1960, 1.

rently be cleared away, a vote in favour of the integration process seemed finalized in the Minutes of 1961.[87]

Aside from the narrow viewpoint on the relations between the Committee and the WCC, it is also important to look at the bigger institutional frame that is the IMC itself, as well as the WCC. Existing literature points to earlier close cooperation between IMC and WCC as early as in 1938. Starting in 1939 several committees were built to establish closer cooperation. Since 1948 in Amsterdam, the WCC and the IMC both used an official note about their cooperation. At the WCC's second assembly in Evanston in 1954, the question about a full integration as a goal still remained open. Sceptical voices in the IMC postponed the third assembly from 1960 to 1961 with the argument to gain time for clarifying still open questions and work on manageable solutions. Additionally, some members of the WCC were also sceptical. The discussion ended during a meeting of the WCC Central Committee in 1960 where the final vote was pro-integration. The IMC held a last meeting prior to the New Delhi assembly, where the integration was agreed upon. Finally, the third general assembly by the WCC took place in New Delhi from 19 November to 5 December 1961. Almost 600 delegates were present in India. The assembly – unanimously – adopted the integration of the IMC, with all its changes in the constitutions and structures.[88] The story of the IMC as a separate institution ended, and at the same time, the WCC made missionary work one of its core elements due to the incorporation of the Committee within.

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87 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/02, Appendix II. From this point onwards, it was Anker Gjerding, who was the main leading figure of the Committee and who was also present in New Delhi on behalf of the Committee.
88 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix II.

4.4 "The Time of the Conversion of the Individual Jew is passed." Changes in the 1960s

In Cambridge in 1962, a new era of the Committee began; the now "Committee on the Church and the Jewish People" of the WCC, Division on World Mission and Evangelism held its first annual meeting.[89]

This chapter now leaves behind the analysis of the institutional structures to focus on terminology. A new term appears in the Minutes from the 1960s onwards: dialogue. This term – in the sense of dialogue between selected representatives of different religions – appears for the first time in the Minutes in 1961 under the title "Colloquy [sic]: Dialogue or Mission?"[90] Mr. Grolle[91] introduced his paper and "explained that it had been written in the first instance in response to Mr. Macanna's request at Münster [the previous meeting, RLN] that he set down a clear statement on 'dialogue': it had not been intended as a basis for a discussion such as this."[92] He revealed the reasons for his paper:

> We cannot do better than start from the difficulties we are facing, i.e. from the question 'Why do Jewish missions face so many obstacles?' In facing it we must not lay too much stress on the false and stupid methods that have often been followed by missions.[93]

Mr. Grolle – presumably other missionaries, as well – felt that the challenges and "obstacles" facing evangelizing Jews had to be taken seriously, and to be overcome. He felt the main problem lay in the basic understanding of terms like "mission", "dialogue" and "witness" and tried to develop theologically under-

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89 World Council of Churches, Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People of the World Council of Churches Division on World Mission and Evangelism held in Cambridge, England July 13th-14th, 1962. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/02.

90 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, 3 (longer version, "D200").

91 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 3. Mr. Grolle is only mentioned in the Minutes as a member of the European Section.

92 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, 3.

93 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 1.

standable usages for these terms. He concludes that one should not try to convert the Jew since they are on the "right side":

> In this respect the Jews [...] stand closer to us who know the god of Abraham in His historical revelation than we do to so many so-called Christians. This is our unity with Israel which always remains and puts them on the right side of the line of partition, and which creates the contrast with all other religions. Therefore one cannot include the Jews under the heading of the general missionary command of Jesus.[94]

Mr. Grolle also presented another reason as to why the word "mission" is misguided when it comes to Jews:

> The Jews object to the term 'mission', when it is used of the Church's witness to them, because by it they are put on the same level with primitive peoples, cf. Chaim Weizmann's words to Lloyd George in 1917, 'When we lived in Jerusalem, London was still a mud heap.' They are obviously right in this, but the real difference is not in culture, but in the unique position of Israel as the people of God.[95]

Mr. Grolle quotes Weizmann: The changed situation resulting from the formation of the State of Israel. while hinting at the following: with the state of Israel as a resource, Christian missionaries were now confronted with more confident Jewish actors who objected firmly to Christians evangelizing Jews. Here, this shift in the power balance between a globally visible Christian majority and a Jewish minority with a state is crucial for the understanding of these new developments. Another situation that the members of the Committee were confronted with was the new way Jewish theologians thought about the historical person of Jesus[96], showing another puzzle piece in place of the renewed self-positioning by Jewish actors.

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94 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 1.
95 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 1.
96 "We have to acknowledge that the Jewish leaders and thinkers, especially in the State of Israel, nowadays speak of Jesus as a Jew, a holy man and kind of a prophet, of whom Judaism must be proud. [...] this may be called a Copernican change of mind." International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 3.

These changes provoked new explanations and a new terminology by the Christian missionaries: Mr. Grolle – after looking at the Jewish-Christian relations in the Bible[97] – preferred "dialogue":

> The term that has been chosen for this work of the Church is 'dialogue'. [...] A world of ideas lies behind the term. In practice, however, we have to use a short term. This is always dangerous, e. g. dialectal [sic] theology. One of the dangers is that it may lead us to accuse 'mission' of being a monologue. In practice this may well be the case very often, but we must be fair. Missions to Gentiles, when well run, do not aim at being merely a monologue. On the other hand, 'dialogue' is in danger of not leading to any practical effort, but of remaining in theological reflection and in a new self-consciousness without effectively encountering Jews. Then the 'dialogue' also becomes a monologue."[98]

And "witness":

> [W]e are, however, entirely satisfied with the term 'witness: used in our draft constitution, where our future task is described within the integrated body of W.C.C and I.M.C. I made clear to Dr. Halvorson that a Christian IS a witness of Jesus Christ, this being its definition. Even without speaking to Jews we are witnesses, good or bad, by our bearing, or looks, or handshake, or whatever it may be.[99]

To sum up: (1) Jewish people were still a "target group" for missionary work but were not to be treated like the "normal" Non-Christians. (2) "Dialogue" was a better term, but because it is not as straightforward as "to evangelize", its use was also seen as dangerous.[100] And finally (3) "witness" was the best term, be-

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97 He cited other authors, who had worked upon this, like Mr. Strachan: "At the foundation meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 the witness to Israel was brought under the general heading of Jesus' missionary commandment, that of bringing the Gospel to all creatures – the Jews were also creatures. So, the Jews were also included (Mr. Strachan came down on this argument again and again.)" International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 1.
98 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 2.
99 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 2.
100 Furthermore Mr. Grolle stated in his paper: "He [a certain Dr. Halvorson at the Münster meeting, RLN] made the mistake of confusion our ideal of dialogue with a non-committal conversation, [...]" International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 2.

cause, as stated by Groll, it implied multiple aspects: from the ordinary being present to missionary actions. In the end, he declared a new era:

> The time of the conversion of the individual Jew is passed, [...]. But the time of the Gentile Church will soon come to an end. We have had our chance and we have made very poor use of it. But it is nearly history [...].[101]

This declaration seemed more to be a self-assurance in that sense that the changes on behalf of the Jewish people would hopefully not mean an end to Christian missionary work to them. Therefore, Grolle's statements cannot be read as a realistic evaluation of the situation at the beginning of the 1960s, rather a hopeful message to his co-workers and allies.

It certainly became trendy to speak and write about "dialogue": Prof. Rengstrof [102] planned to write an article titled "Tolerance – Dialogue – Witness" in the announced News Sheet[103] that was to be published on 1st of April 1962.[104] This periodical allowed for a wider circulation of the ideas of "dialogue" and "witness".

Changes in the wording are not only detectable in papers and essays, but also in ordinary paragraphs in the Minutes like those of short reports from the delegates about their respective countries. In 1964, the Minutes included a report about Canada in which a "program of Christian-Jewish dialogue in the diocese of Toronto"[105] is mentioned, but this report is clearly about evangelizing Jews, since "missionary institutes" are named as such. This shows that the new term Chris-

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101 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix V, 3.
102 Karl Heinrich Rengstorf (1903–1992), located in Münster, Germany, was head of the Institutum Judaicum Deltzschianum and very active in the work of mission to Jews.
103 The News Sheet was the Committee's quarterly. It was reshaped in the early 60s, included articles (actual problems, discussions, locals and global issues, bible studies on a higher level ...), book reviews and was written in English, German or French.
104 International Missionary Council, Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews held in Hillerod, Denmark September 4th to 7th, 1961, Appendix VIII.
105 World Council of Churches, Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People of the World Council of Churches' Division on World Mission and Evangelism held in Driebergen, Holland August 25th-28th, 1964. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/02, 3.

tian-Jewish dialogue was used, but the content remained the same. Additionally, the term dialogue was used afterwards as a general reference.[106]

A look into the quarterly newsletter from the CCJP further broadens the picture on the use of dialogue as synonymous with missionary work with Jews. This newsletter starts with an outspoken newspaper article by Rabbi Singer stating, "all the same I think that interreligious dialogue between Christians and Jews is a farce, and, in addition, subtly demeaning."[107] Another article, entitled with "Mission to Jews" contains similar statements. Thus, since the first appearance of the term "dialogue" in 1961 in the WCC's material and the newsletter in 1967, the discussion on dialogue versus/and mission was in full swing. This newsletter from 1967 offers no less than 27 pages of essays, statements, responses, newspaper articles (e. g. *New York Times*). The authors were Jewish *and* Christian. Some examples of titles are: "Don't try to sell me your Religion", "The anti-dialogue pitch", "Mission to the Jews", "The uses of dialogue", "Israeli Rabbis meet to protest Christian missionary activity", "Christians in dialogue with men of other faiths", "The meaning of dialogue", and "Catholic guidelines on relations to Jews."[108] The CCJP reached the core of a "dialogue-discussion" and, it must be noted, while still being a unit of the Division of World Mission and Evangelization.

The changes – mainly in terminology – in the 1960s were also backed by Franz von Hammerstein[109] in his narration of the Jewish-Christian dialogue by the WCC, although he states that the beginning of "dialogue" started with cooperation in the Nazi era when Visser 't Hooft and Gerhard Riegner from the World Jewish Congress ("Riegner-Telegram"[110]) worked together to save the lives of per-

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106 In the same minutes, the term dialogue appears more often: "Professor Rengstorf reported about the confused situation in Germany. Since 1948 Jewish Christian dialogue had taken place in the first week of March every year. Jewish and Christian scholars had spoken to the same theme in form of Bible studies and lectures." World Council of Churches, Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People of the World Council of Churches' Division on World Mission and Evangelism held in Driebergen, Holland August 25th-28th, 1964. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/02, 7.
107 World Council of Churches, *Newsletter of the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People* 2 (1967) Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises. 4212.06.18: 15. The last page includes six names of "Books and articles of interest".
108 World Council of Churches, *Newsletter of the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People* 2 (1967): 15.
109 Franz von Hammerstein became the Secretary of the CCJP in 1975.
110 The "Riegner-Telegram" on 10 August 1942 was the presumed first message from a European source to the USA reporting about the decision of a strategic organised extermination of all Jewish people under the Nazi regime's control.

secuted Jews.[111] Still, he confirms this paper's thesis exemplified by the dates he mentions: "[T]here is only since 1962 an official contact between the World Jewish Congress (WJC) and the WCC about a closer cooperation."[112] While von Hammerstein explains this delay after 1945 with the diversity of both religions (from orthodox to liberal, from north to south etc.), the ongoing "mission attitude" by the WCC was all but welcoming for the WJC. In his narration, von Hammerstein goes on with the mention of the first meeting of eleven Christian and nine Jewish delegates in the Ecumenical Institute Bossey in 1965 (already mentioned above), coinciding with the Roman Catholic encyclical Nostra Aetate. Von Hammerstein states in 1967 that the Faith and Order Commission adopted a document containing dissension about missionary work but positive statements about the future relationship between Christians and Jews. Furthermore, von Hammerstein states that in this document the term "dialogue" with Jews is used for the first time in an ecumenical discussion. He claims it as the start of a new era, in which Jews are not studied and talked about, but changed from a "subject" to a partner.[113] In his wording, it says: "we stepped away from monologue to dialogue between Jews and Christians."[114]

4.5 Turbulences in the 1970s: Continuity or Transformation?

This chapter shows the last phase in the development that began in the first half of the century.

In the 1970s, changes occurred in the general structure of the WCC and in the Committee. Jewish dialogue partners[115] objected to the connection with the mis-

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111 This cooperation, mentioning Adolf Freudenberg as the key player, was already referred to. See chapter 4.1.

112 Hammerstein, Von Vorurteilen zum Verständnis, 12. Translation from German by RLN. Although in the original text von Hammerstein uses the word "Jewish World Organisations", he means the World Congress, which he mentions earlier.

113 World Council of Churches, *Newsletter of the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People* 2 (1967): 10.

114 World Council of Churches, *Newsletter of the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People* 2 (1967): 10. Translation by RLN. Original text: "Wir schritten fort vom Monolog zu einem Dialog zwischen Juden und Christen."

115 "In 1969, the Secretary of CCJP reported, 'Due to the objection of some Jewish organizations to work directly with a department within DWME, …'" (Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the World Council of Churches' Committee on the Church and the Jewish People held in Zürich, Switzerland September 13–18, 1971. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.01.01/01, Appendix I.). And furthermore, in Racine it was stated: "For historical reasons CCJP was placed

sion department, DWME, in the WCC; discussions about the relation of mission and dialogue and their own identity started again.[116] Questions about the Committee's position within the WCC were now being raised.

Three Programme Units were built in the WCC in 1971. One of these units was entitled "Faith and Witness" and comprised four subunits: "I. Church and Society (CS); II. Dialogue with Men of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI); III. Faith and Order (FO); and IV. World Mission and Evangelism (WME)."[117] With this step, dialogue and mission had their own separate units, DFI and WME. The crucial question at this point was whether the Committee should choose to be attached to the dialogue sub-unit DFI or to the mission sub-unit WME.

Around 40 years after its start with an ambitious mission to convert the Jewish people, the Committee decided, "at its meeting in Hamburg (Sept. 1970), that 'we prefer to be located in Programme Unit I (Faith and Witness) under the Sub-Unit Dialogue with Men of Living Faiths and Ideologies, having our own identity as we deal with the Jewish People'."[118] This means the Committee switched from the "missionary"-part to the "dialogue"-part within the WCC, or in the words of the protocol:

> It seems correct to define the direction in which things are moving as follows: until now CCJP was within the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) and related to the Dialogue Desk; in the future, CCJP will be (a) in the Sub-Unit for Dialogue but (b) it will remain related to CWME.[119]

This passage not only exemplifies that the Committee switched its position, but it also relativizes its change since the stress on the relation to the other sub-unit, and an 'in-between' situation of the Committee was constructed. One could come

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in DWME, but it caused practical problems in Jewish-Christian relations." (Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee of the Church and the Jewish People of the World Council of Churches' Division of World Mission and Evangelism held in Racine, U.S.A. September 18 – 23, 1969. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.02.02/03.02, 3).

116 "In the discussion it was pointed out that it would be necessary to go beyond the history of the Committee and see what is required today." A clear uneasiness with the history of the Committee is visible. (Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee of the Church and the Jewish People of the World Council of Churches' Division of World Mission and Evangelism held in Racine, U.S.A. September 18 – 23, 1969, 3.

117 Johan M. Snoek, CCJP Plenary Meeting, September 13th-18th, 1971 CCJP/71/7 June 1971, June 29, 1971. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.01.01/01, 1.

118 Johan M. Snoek, CCJP Plenary Meeting, September 13th-18th, 1971 CCJP/71/7 June 1971, June 29, 1971., 1.

119 Johan M. Snoek, CCJP Plenary Meeting, September 13th-18th, 1971 CCJP/71/7 June 1971, June 29, 1971, 2. Emphasis in original text.

to the conclusion that the Committee was feeling comfortable with this approach: 'mainly dialogue with a side dish of mission'. However, a pure missionary attitude was no longer fitting. It must be noted that this was a reaction to rejection by the Jewish dialogue partners. The question of continuity or transformation is a question of weighing up, but one thing is for sure: the time of solely talking about and studying the "Jewish people" was gone.

The obviously top-down dynamic, in the Minutes presented by the General Secretary of the WCC, Philipp Potter, in 1971 showed the change from a "Committee" to the "Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People". But obviously, not a lot had changed in this gathering of now 'ex-missionaries'. Already the first item in the new rules says: "its function should be those as already set out for the CCJP."[120] Thus the name changed again but the functions stayed the same. "As the name of the Committee is 'The Church <u>and</u> the Jewish People' (not: 'The Church <u>to</u> the Jewish people') it should also be reflected in the functions. We would need to listen and react to questions coming from the Jewish community."[121]

The question of whether it was more a continuum than a transformation is not to be answered too quickly. A further single event in the history of the Christian-Jewish dialogue by the WCC must serve as a final point to have a more complete picture of the 1970s. This single event, the meeting in Sigtuna (Sweden) in 1975, completes the circle that was opened by the first meeting in 1932 in Digswell Park; the development from almost 45 years should, therefore, be most recognizable. The meeting in Sigtuna had a main theme, worship. There were three addresses given: "Principles of Jewish Worship" by the Chief Rabbi of Stockholm, "Principle of Christian Worship" by the Bishop of Vasterås and "Possibilities of Worshipping together" by Bishop Appleton.[122] The two bishops and one Jewish representative left the dynamics from a Christian "we" to a Jewish "other" unbroken.[123] However, there is a remarkable difference: in 1975, a rabbi is invited

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120 Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the World Council of Churches' Committee on the Church and the Jewish People held in Zürich, Switzerland September 13–18, 1971, 8.

121 Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee of the Church and the Jewish People of the World Council of Churches' Division of World Mission and Evangelism held in Racine, U.S.A. September 18–23, 1969, 4. Emphasis in original text.

122 Minutes of the Eight Meeting of the World Council of Churches' Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People, held in Sigtuna, Sweden, June 6–10, 1975. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.03.03/03, Appendix: Proposed Agenda.

123 "Other matters considered were the use of Jewish commentaries of Christian preaching and the possibility of using the Synagogue lectionary in Christian Worship." Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the World Council of Churches' Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People,

to present his views on a general topic that is important to both Christianity and Judaism. Prior to WWII, no rabbi had been invited to the meetings, and whereas in the 1960s Jewish voices in the "mission-witness-dialogue"-discussion was presented, in the 1970s Jewish voices were actually invited to the meetings. A change from a conversation about their relations, discussing each other, to a conversation about a common topic (here: worship) is notable. It is also worth noting that they even considered worshipping together.

In the Secretary's Report from 1973 to 1975, the main topic is the new structure. It states, that it "has become visible: the office of CCJP is now located next to the office of Dr. Stanley Samartha, Director of Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI), and of Dr. John B. Taylor, who is responsible for the dialogue with Islam."[124] The Committee's Secretary, Johan Snoek, declares, that the change from "mission" to the "dialogue" sub-unit does not end the discussion about the relation between these two poles. Rather these struggles are vital, also to the whole ecumenical movement.[125] Samartha is of interest because he was also a staff member of the WCC. Samartha, born to Indian parents who were evangelized by Basel Missionaries, can be seen as *the* leading figure in the WCC when it comes to interreligious dialogue.[126] His background is the relation between (Protestant) Christians and followers of one of the traditional religions in India ("Hindus"), so he is not linked to any missionary activities to Jewish people. His presence in a meeting of the Committee can be categorized as a step of the Committee towards the general interreligious dialogue within the WCC and away from the particular position towards the Jewish people.

1975 serves as the end date for this article due to Arnold Jacob Wolf's report, as the first and only Jewish representative at the General Assembly of the WCC in 1975 in Nairobi. What he describes is similar to what was found in the primary sources: although he is officially invited, it is not at all a complete change to a sole dialogue attitude. In Nairobi, an impressive quantity of WCC members remained hostile to Jews, an end to missionary activities was out of the question.

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held in Sigtuna, Sweden, June 6 – 10, 1975. Archives du Conseil oecuménique des Eglises, 4212.03.04/02, Appendix: Press Release, 1.

124 Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the World Council of Churches' Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People, held in Sigtuna, Sweden, June 6 – 10, 1975, Appendix: Secretary's Report, 1.

125 Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the World Council of Churches' Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People, held in Sigtuna, Sweden, June 6 – 10, 1975, Appendix: Secretary's Report.

126 Stanley J. Samartha, *Between Two Cultures: Ecumenical Ministry in a Pluralist World* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 2– 4.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Committee was established as a unit of the IMC in the 1930s and its clear goal was to evangelize Jews, but also to fight anti-Semitism and the growing persecution. During the *Shoah*, the Committee (Hedenquist) and pre-WCC (Freudenberg) worked together with Jewish organizations to help persecuted Jews. After the *Shoah*, the Committee stuck to its missionary goals. In the Minutes, some representatives called for improving methods, but a full reconsideration of the missionary goal did not occur. Moreover, for some involved, an increased improvement of missionary work to Jewish people was the appropriate reaction to the *Shoah*. This confirms previous findings, for example by Rolf Rendtorff. He stated that it was seen as exactly *because* of the *Shoah* that the duty of proclaiming the gospel to Jews remained.[127] In 1947, a new constitution was instated; most parts in the constitutions from the early 30s and from 1947 feature the same content, which proves that the continuum was stronger than a transformation.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the integration process of the Committee/IMC and WCC is of utmost importance. With the Committee's final integration into the WCC in 1961, evangelizing Jews became an official part of the WCC. Within the WCC, the Committee was clearly part of the mission unit. Other relations to Jewish representatives were established in parallel within the WCC. In the early 1960s, dialogue appeared as a term, but the distinction between dialogue and mission remained unclear. At this point, a hidden missionary agenda is detectable when the terminology of dialogue was in use. Debates over mission and/or dialogue seemed to be the order of the day. Changes in the Committee's name, however, show one of the results of these discussions. Another consequence was the change within the WCC itself from the "mission-unit" to the "dialogue-unit" from the late 1960s onwards, and especially in the early 1970s. It is crucial though to note that the Committee still remained in connection to the "mission sub-unit" it had left behind.

Thus between 1932 and 1975, the Committee maintained a focus of "mainly dialogue, with a touch of mission". The door to "mission" and "witness" was not closed for those members who did not want or simply could not forget the genesis and history of the Committee, as is seen in the list of representatives from 1975; the clear missionary element is already visible in the names of the present organizations: "The International Hebrew Christian Alliance" (including "Jews

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[127] Rolf Rendtorff, *Hat denn Gott Sein Volk verstoßen? Die Evangelische Kirche und das Judentum seit 1945* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1989), 30.

for Jesus"), "Evangelical Lutheran Federation for Mission among Jews"[128], "The Church's Ministry among the Jews London", "Swedish Church Organization on Church and Judaism, Stockholm". All these organizations were responsible for missionary work in Vienna prior to and during the Nazi-era. Several other smaller organizations from various countries were also present. These organizations presented shorter or longer reports about the current situation in their parts of the world with regard to evangelizing Jews, which are similar to those found in the very first meeting in 1932. It is further noticeable that the International Hebrew Christian Alliance and the representatives from Sweden (Svenska Israelsmission) present in 1975 were already present in 1932. A clear transformation from a missionary institution into a 'pure' interreligious dialogue Committee cannot be confirmed in the timeframe of this study.

A notable transformation, however, is detectable in the dynamics within the encounters: at the end of our observational period, Jewish representatives were invited to give speeches. Topics, shared by both religious groups, like the topic of worship, were discussed. It was a change from being a subject of discussion in the meetings to being actual dialogue partners.

Finally, the development of the Committee must be seen in the context of historical events and changes (the foundation of the state of Israel, decolonization, parallel developments from 'mission' to 'dialogue' within the Roman Catholic Church, etc.). The participants of the meetings, the members of the Committee were not acting *in vacuo*. While concentrating on other roots and dynamics for interreligious dialogue, the important root of global Christian mission must not be ignored, neglected or actively downplayed. It is necessary to continue to dig for these maybe for some also inconvenient – but relevant – roots of interreligious dialogue, not only between "Judaism" and "Christianity" as shown in this article, but in general, and also regarding encounters of "Christianity" with other religions throughout the centuries. This article tried to show only one specific root that is tied to one specific organization. But this focus raises questions about future possibilities for research on similar dynamics regarding the attitude of Christians towards other religious groups in the history of interreligious dialogue. The treatment of various religions other than Christianity could then be compared, in order to see whether the trajectory of Jewish-Christian relations is unique or not.

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128 "It aims (1) to evangelize among Jews, (2) to assist Jewish-Christians, [...]." Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the World Council of Churches' Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People, held in Sigtuna, Sweden, June 6 – 10, 1975, Appendix: Germany.

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Part 2 **Towards an Increased Activism
in Civil Society**

Evgeny Khamidov

At the Grassroots of Interreligious Dialogue Activities

Founding a 'Spiritual UN' (Temple of Understanding / 1968 – 1972)

Since its very beginnings, the interreligious dialogue (IRD) movement has challenged its members to when it comes to their respective theological understanding of other religions.[1] On the one hand, there are those who actively seek the creation of one world religion. On the other hand, there are those who recognize distinctiveness and differences between religions. In any case, the question of how to relate to those of other religions remains a challenge to this day; it is one of the constitutive dimensions of the IRD movement as a whole.

The present paper seeks to contribute to the discussion of this central question by analyzing the early history of the Temple of Understanding (TOU), one of the central institutions of the modern IRD movement, created in 1960 and still in existence today. This paper analyzes the TOU's history with a particular focus on its contribution to IRD. The TOU was – and still is – characterized by a number of features, outlined below, that influenced the way the TOU developed. The defining features that are contributing factors in the organization's development are as follows:

- TOU is an organizational pioneer in the field of interreligious dialogue
- TOU contributes a specific approach to the field
- TOU is not part of any religious networks
- TOU is inclusive and appeals to all kinds of believers

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1 Marcus Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope: One Hundred Years of Global Interfaith Dialogue* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 1.

–   TOU is the first organization that regrouped religious organizations that have cooperated with the United Nations (UN)
–   TOU is a global organization in its focus, targeting the whole world
–   TOU was shaped by the two women that founded the organization

In this paper, the author argues that the analyzed archival materials revealed the following points that shaped the early strategy in the development of this multi-religious organization:

–   Firstly, the TOU saw its main contribution to IRD in the creation of an educational center for different religions;
–   The TOU failed to construct a building during the first stages of their activity and decided to hold a conference for the TOU adherents instead;
–   The First Spiritual Summit Conference was a turning point that defined the further development of the organization.
–   After the First Spiritual Conference, the TOU rejected the idea of constructing a building, instead, they built an organization, which has served the original purpose – education for understanding.

These arguments translate into the following structure:

Section 1, "How the TOU began", describes and analyzes the first steps of the organization. As a result of this analysis, it is possible to conclude that the TOU has several characteristic features. Its activities have had a global nature from the very beginning. It was one of the first pioneers in the sphere of IRD and has maintained its importance as an educational center for interfaith dialogue.

Section 2, "Inner workings of the TOU", is a description of archive materials. The analysis of primary sources aimed to find out the most interesting and important episode of the TOU history, resulting in the discovery that The First Spiritual Summit Conference in Calcutta might be considered to be the most interesting since it was the first event of great scope and importance for following their strategy and activities. Additionally, it was an event that changed the organization, setting a new goal. At the start of the organization, the main goal was to build a physical building symbolizing the unity of six religions and serving as an educational center, however, after this conference, the idea shifted to non-physical building – *spiritual temple*. Thus, the TOU history can be divided into two stages: the *physical temple* phase and the *spiritual temple* phase.

Section 3, "Papers tell about the TOU", presents a more detailed picture of the TOU based on the archival materials analyzed. It presents ideas and activities of the organization at the first stage of its evolution when the main goal was to build a *physical temple*, a place where everyone could come and learn something about the other. The building was meant to symbolize the unity among six major

faiths, as described by the protagonists inside the TOU, and simultaneously serve as an educational center with libraries.

Section 4, "The *Spiritual Temple*", first presents a general description of the TOU based on archival materials, then focuses on the most important episode of the history of the organization, the First Spiritual Summit Conference. It represents the strongest example of the realization of the TOU's ideas and the most productive method of performing an educational function.

1 How the TOU Began: Initiatives from Outside Traditional Hierarchies

To properly understand the early history of the TOU, it is important to keep two aspects in mind that affected the establishment of the organization – the socio-cultural context of the 1960s and the specific role of Juliet Hollister, the founder of the TOU.

1.1 The 1960s – A Time of Socio-cultural Change

In the history of the USA in particular, where the main protagonists who started the TOU lived, the 1960s were marked by a great movement for social change. This period can be described as one of counterculture, a revolution in social norms about clothing, music, drugs, dress, sexuality, formalities and schooling.[2] The then complex international political situation caused many people to search for something that could save humanity. With the world disunited by boundaries of enmity due to the Cold War, it was vitally important to find a basis that would bring people with different views together. These different cultural processes also influenced the TOU's ideals. Four examples were of particular significance: the counterculture, the establishment of new religious movements and the New Age movement, the establishment of new movements in third world countries and the USA's involvement in the Vietnam War.

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2 Brian Ward, ed., *The 1960s: A Documentary Reader* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 1; Edward J. Rielly, *The 1960s* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003), 285; Sharon Monteith, *American Culture in the 1960s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 242; Kenneth T. Walsh, "The 1960s: A U.S. News, *Decade of Promise and Heartbreak:* https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2010/03/09/the-1960s-a-decade-of-promise-and-heartbreak (accessed: 24.5.2020).

The early 60s were characterized by the countercultural movements that developed in the United States, which soon spread to other Western countries in particular. The 60s counterculture consisted of several movements, often overlapping: anti-war, anti-nuclear, civil rights, environment, hippies, the sexual revolution, women's rights, and many other movements with varied interpretations of the American Dream, some of which were accompanied by experimentation with psychedelic drugs.[3]

Also significant in the 1960s was the emergence of new religious movements, as well as the New Age movement, some of which had roots in different parts of the world. For example, organizations like Soka Gakkai and Transcendental Meditation emerged.[4] As for the New Age movement, it is difficult to talk about a united phenomenon. New Age refers to a large number of different trends, sometimes contradicting each other. However, it is possible to identify a number of general overarching ideas, such as 'contact', 'synthesis' and 'development'. The New Age idea of contact involves the transfer of information important for the self-development of an individual from a certain higher being to a human being. The kind of higher being could be a god or goddess of antiquity, ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, a historical figure – such as the Apostle Paul, a higher mind, a god of a modern world religion or an angel.[5] The idea of development can be designated by various terms – ascension, self-development, the transition to a new level of existence.[6] In short, we can say that the basic ideas that unite different New Age groups are: "ascension", understood as the idea of development using different spiritual practices, "synthesis", understood as the choice of any convenient practices belonging to different ideological systems and "contact", understood as guidance by spiritual beings.

Developments such as the rise of the national liberation movement in third world countries – Asia, Africa and Latin America – forced the United States to consider the region as a priority. In March 1961, President John F. Kennedy unveiled the program "Alliance for Progress", which provided more financial aid (20 billion dollars over 10 years) for Latin American countries. This program could be seen as analogous to the Marshall Plan for Europe in that it was meant to foster economic growth for Latin America. It was implemented in the

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3 Lewis Yablonsky, *The Hippie Trip: A Firsthand Account of the Beliefs and Behaviors of Hippies in America by a Noted Sociologist* (New York: iUniverse, 2000), 372.

4 Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: Religion, Culture and Society in the Age of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Willey Blackwell, 1996), 1–2.

5 Klimo Jon, *Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources*, 2nd edition (New York: North Atlantic Books, 1998), 193 – 215.

6 Daren Kemp and James R. Lewis, eds., *Handbook of New Age* (Boston: BRILL, 2007), 76.

wake of the victory of the Cuban Revolution (1959) and underpinned the American desire to prevent its spread in the region. The Peace Corps was also established as a US government-sponsored organization of volunteers who travelled to other countries, working in the fields of economics, education, medicine, etc. Both of these programs were designed to strengthen the influence of the United States in the international arena.

Finally, the 1960s were heavily shaped by the United States' growing active role in the war in Indochina. Despite the fact that the American army in South Vietnam exceeded 500 thousand persons armed with the latest technology, they failed to make significant progress in this war. The Vietnam War exacerbated the political situation in the country. This war was the first war, which was broadcasted on television. Every day, Americans watched the violent and bloody scenes of war. Young people became the hottest opponents of the war. The anti-war movement considerably gained scale. Marches and demonstrations, as well as campaigns to evade conscription began. The clearest manifestation of this movement was the US military siege of the Pentagon in 1967, which lasted for several days and was attended by up to 300 thousand people. The wide scope of the anti-war movement forced the US government to reconsider its policy. In 1968, President Lyndon Johnson was forced to announce the agreement of the US to hold peace talks with the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In addition, Johnson said that he would not stand as a candidate for president in the 1968 elections.

These four features of the 1960s created an atmosphere of anxiety. In this context, organizations such as the TOU emerged as answers to such global challenges. This can be illustrated with regard to the central figure that undoubtedly dominated the early history of the TOU – Juliet Hollister.

1.2 The TOU – an Institution outside Traditional Hierarchies

According to the groundbreaking study of Marcus Braybrooke, Juliet Hollister was born in Forest Hills, New York in 1916.[7] She was interested in world religions since the age of eighteen and studied Comparative Religion at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. During her studies, she had an opportunity to meet a number of Eastern religious leaders.[8] She found that the implicit sexism in many academic institutions blocked her opportunities

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7 Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope, 45–50*.

8 N.A., "Paid Notice: Death of JULIET G. HOLLISTER," *The New York Times* (November 30, 2019).

to pursue a career in theology. In her memoirs Hollister writes that she had many "visions" during her lifetime but she felt that she was the last person who should be chosen to deliver such a profound message to the world.[9] As was common for women of her era, she did not have a college degree; instead she saw in herself the strength of a sharp discerning mind and the quality of unconditional love.[10]

From the late 1950s onwards, Hollister began to make her dream a reality by gathering support for what became the Temple of Understanding, a name given to her project in India where the word *temple* has a non-denominational meaning of a sacred place.[11] When the idea to establish a Temple of Understanding was first announced, Hollister was a housewife without any affiliation to traditional religious or political networks and hierarchies. She simply felt a personal responsibility for the fate of the world.

As a first step to creation of the TOU, Hollister – together with her friend Virginia Prout – generated a list of outstanding leaders to send them letters with proposal of personal meeting and to discuss the creation of a special educational center for all religions.[12] Hollister planned to share her vision with, among others: Jawaharlal Nehru – the first Prime Minister of India and a central figure in Indian politics for much of the 20th century; Pope John the 23rd, H.H. the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Father Thomas Merton, Dr. Albert Schweitzer – philosopher, theologian and Nobel prize laureate, etc.

Hollister's role in the initial developments of the TOU already underlines two aspects that characterized the future history of the TOU. First, it is interesting that already at the beginning Hollister had in mind her work as a global endeavor, not being limited by religion, nation, and country. It was also important for her to promote the idea of a physical building as a common goal, not only as the result of one or two donors' contributions. In other words, the TOU had a global focus from the first days of its existence. Second, Hollister appealed not only to some religious people but also to those who were trying to address the challenges brought about in the 1960s, who were famous for their open views and their personal involvement in the fate of humanity. For example, the first major political figure to whom Hollister appealed was Eleanor Roosevelt. And when she sought funding for the libraries in the educational center of the young TOU, Hollister approached the Ford Foundation.

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9 Juliet Hollister, *Living my dream: The Remarkable Story of Temple of Understanding* (New York: Temple of Understanding, 2010), 88.

10 Hollister, *Living my dream,* 88.

11 Braybrooke. *Pilgrimage of Hope,* 93.

12 Archive of TOU: Box "The TOU History", folder "Correspondence: the 60s". (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the resepective archives.)

The special role of the TOU also stems from the fact that its protagonists are frequently underlining the fact that it is the only IRD organization with an international outlook that was founded by a woman and continues to be lead by one: – Alison Van Dyke, as the Executive Director. In a male-dominant society, Hollister managed to establish an interreligious organization under female leadership. Hollister initiated her activities in the beginning of the second wave of the feminist movement.[13] In this regard Hollister's success can be considered a sign of a change in the social conception of woman's role, as well as the result of the women's rights movement, which is reflected in more active and higher social positions for at least some woman. Hollister was aided in that her chosen social sphere provided supportive and tolerant environment, since principles of IRD presuppose understanding and appreciation of other. Additionally, it should be mentioned that the initial directions of Hollister's actions were influenced by Eleanor Roosevelt, who advised Hollister to address world leaders and to build an educational center using global efforts.

These factors set the stage for the formal establishment of the Temple of Understanding, analyzed in greater detail in the following sections.

2 Inner Workings of the TOU: Focus on Archive Materials

Currently, the archives of the Temple of Understanding are situated in the small town of Peekskill, NY. The materials are stored in a small room in special folders, exhibited in chronological order. In addition to paper-based data, the archive also contains audio and video materials. Those archives also include a separate fund for the photos, stored in albums where the images are organized according to the various activities to which they refer.

So far, the archive of the TOU is completely unexplored and uninvestigated. There is no full-time archivist who has been able to keep them in order, systematize its material and be actively engaged in saving them. The archives exist due to Alison Van Dyk, Executive Director of TOU and library enthusiast from New York, Nomi Saeed, who voluntarily engaged in digitizing archive materials and putting them in order. Thanks to these two persons, the archive's content has been gradually posted on the Internet, where it can be accessed by anyone.

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13 N.A., *The 1960s-70s American Feminist Movement: Breaking Down Barriers for Women*: https://tavaana.org (accessed: 24.5.2020).

The archives contain a wide set of materials that relate to the activities of the organization since its inception in 1960 to the present day. Nowadays all correspondence and paperwork are carried out mainly in electronic form. Thus, the greatest amount of material in the archives is up to the year 1990.

After becoming acquainted with all the archival material, I decided to focus on the period of formation of the organization when its ideas and ideals were first established. Thus, I began with material related to the first decade of the TOU, supplementing it with photos and audio material. Documents of this period, for the most part, consist of Hollister's correspondence with future members of the TOU and participants of various programs, which subsequently led to the TOU's structure. In addition to letters, there are newspapers and magazines containing interviews with Hollister, as well as newsletters published by the TOU. The materials found in the archives are quite diverse and contain organizational activities presented from different angles, lists of members, sponsors, conference programs, letters of invitation to participate in different activities and proposals to contribute to projects. However, it is difficult to get a clear image of how the idea for the TOU and its internal components came to develop, using only these archival sources. To fill this gap, I consulted Hollister's memoirs, written between 1979 and 1985, while keeping in mind that they were edited prior to publication.

The main focus of the analysis concerned Hollister's correspondence with future members of the TOU, namely letters written to each one[14] and their responses to the invitation to join the organization.[15] This correspondence reveals the vigorous activity and willingness of members to contribute to the organization's projects. I also tracked the financial development of the organization. Once the organization was known, it was sponsored by the voluntary contributions of ordinary citizens from around the world. Contributions varied from $1 to thousands of dollars.

In sum, the archival materials provide a detailed picture of the TOU history, which can then be divided into two parts: 1) the *temple* phase as one in which the main goal is to construct a solid embodiment of the interfaith dialogue or physical temple, and 2) the *spiritual temple* phase, where the first idea was dropped in favour of what Hollister, later on, began to call a temple without any boundaries. The next two sections try to reconstruct this history.

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14 Archive of TOU: Box "The TOU History", folder "Correspondence", Letter from Konkokyo Church of Izuo.

15 Archive of TOU: Box "The TOU History", folder "Correspondence", Letter from Kamil Hussein.

3 About the TOU: Gaining Support for IRD in the USA and Abroad

As already mentioned in section 2, the early history of the TOU can be traced back to the idea of two Connecticut housewives in the fall of 1959 to create a building where all religions would be represented in an educational centre where one could learn about the traditions of their neighbours. This goal more or less determined the actions of the first 8 years in the life of the organization, its search for sponsors and support, as well as the purchase of land for its construction.

Gradually a new trend in the organization's activities appeared: the development of various educational events. As a result, this became the primary format of work and the idea of a physical building morphed into the idea of a spiritual building, formed by the unity of people from around the world.

3.1 First step: Building a *Physical Temple*

The architecture of the building was important to embody Hollister's idea of interfaith dialogue and unity. In the initial plans, the building was to be constructed in the shape of the sun with six rays, each representing one of the six major religions (which at that time were thought to be Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islam).[16] Each ray would contain a chapel and a library. The whole building would be set in a circular pool of water. In the centre would be a courtyard for silence and meditation, containing a small circular pool with a lotus and a flame in its centre.

As planned by Hollister, the building was to serve as a symbol of unity of different cultures and religions. Each beam of this building would be one of the religions out of a single center for all. This meant that all religions have a common beginning, common idea and a common goal. The building itself was to remind the onlooker that, without exception, the Sun shines for and gives warmth to everyone regardless of their skin color, eye shape or religious beliefs – an image in tune with the New Age ideas of that period. In other words, the initial conception of the TOU reflected the social atmosphere of the time when it was founded. But it was important that the building would not be "a place of

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16 Archive of TOU: Box "The TOU History", folder "L.D. – plan", Brochure "The Temple of Understanding".

worship", but "a place of education, where anyone might enter and in a short period of time – perhaps through the films or recorded lectures, and by visiting representative chapels within the building – pick up some knowledge of the faiths of men and thereby some understanding of spiritual kinship of men."[17]
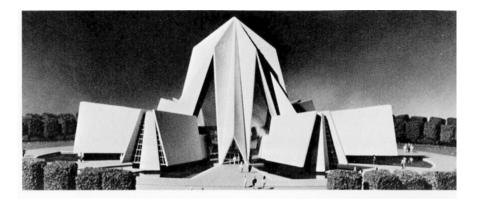

Fig. 1: Model of an educational center, 1959[18]

The idea of the physical building serving as an educational center was a cornerstone of Hollister's early activity. Seeking ways to realize this idea determined Hollister's actions. Without either a college degree or religious studies, Hollister did not have the credentials. Additionally, she was a woman tackling religious leadership, a sphere dominated by men. Interestingly, the first individual who officially voiced approval was also a woman. Through an indirect connection, she gained the opportunity to meet with Eleanor Roosevelt. Hollister had rough architectural plans of the building drawn up by her friend Lathrop Douglas and displayed them before her. Roosevelt thought it was a wonderful idea and encouraged Hollister to continue. She suggested that Hollister begins by developing support from key religious and political leaders around the world and she offered to write letters of introduction to Roosevelt's friends at the United Nations and around the world for her. Hollister received copies of these letters.[19]

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17 Robert Wallace "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," *Life Magazine*, (14 December 1962): 94 – 103.
18 Archive of TOU: Box "The TOU History", folder "L.D. – plan", Brochure "The Temple of Understanding".
19 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "Correspondence"; Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "Letters of introduction", 1959.

With this very interesting set of people in mind, Hollister started from the following list of key people: Pope John XXIII, Prime Minister Nehru, and President Nasser. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote letters of introduction for all of them. After receiving official responses, it was possible to plan her trip around the world to present her idea.

3.2 Trips around the World

Hollister's trip around the world can be reconstructed according to the interview she gave at the time to *Life* magazine. The initial tea date with Eleanor Roosevelt was 7 February 1960, and six weeks later Mrs. Hollister was on her way around the world with her 11-year old son Dickon. She had 1800 dollars initially intended for remodeling her kitchen and 3500 dollars borrowed from a bank.[20]

In Rome, Hollister presented her letters of introduction to Monsignor Martin O'Connor in the American College of the Vatican, then she attended a group audience with the Pope. In Cairo, Hollister spoke with Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout, the rector of Al-Azhar University, Muhammed Abdulah el-Araby, a revered professor of law at Cairo University, Anwar el-Sadat, Secretary General of the Islamic Congress and future President of Egypt.

In New Delhi, Hollister met with Prime Minister Nehru (the first Prime Minister of India and a central figure in Indian politics for much of the 20th century), Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (the first Vice President of India (1952–1962) and the second President of India from 1962 to 1967). In Bangkok, Hollister introduced her project to Somdej Pramaha Veerawong, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. Then Hollister visited New Asia College in Hong Kong and met with H. S. Hisamatsu, a Zen Buddhist leader from Kyoto.

All these people expressed words of support, promising to speak or write on behalf of the project.[21]

3.3 Presentation inside the USA

In 1960, Hollister did a fifteen-minute introduction of the TOU vision for the *Voice of America* radio show, which was recorded, translated into 32 languages and broadcasted around the world. She appeared on several talk shows includ-

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20 Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 97.
21 Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 97.

ing one with Harry Reasoner, *The Today Show* with Barbra Walters, and *To Tell the Truth* with Bud Collyer. The TOU idea was officially announced to the press at a benefit event sponsored by the *Women's International Religious Fellowship* in Washington, D.C. Afterwards, newspaper headlines began reporting about Hollister's plans: "Group Plans A 'Spiritual U.N. Here" is a headline from *the Washington Post*, published in December 1960.[22] Other journalists struggled to describe the center's purpose: "Six Faiths Join to Build Data – Exchange Center".[23]

Hollister also appeared on *The Reverend, the Priest, and the Rabbi*, a radio program hosted by Rabbi Samuel Silver of Temple Sinai in Stamford, taking part in an all-night show on the TOU. All this coverage successfully got the message out and an influx of mail began appearing at the Hollister residence. By the end of 1961, the TOU had already gained 1000 sponsors from 23 countries.[24]

Support sky-rocketed in their second year. Mail continued to pour in and by the fall of 1962, Hollister recorded 6000 supporters in 66 countries.[25] Right around the time that this interest was escalating, an article written about the TOU appeared in *Life* magazine. The article, entitled "Juliet Hollister and Her Wonderful Obsession", was published on 14 December 1962. In it, the author tells the story of the TOU[26] and also gives an account of Hollister:

> She has extraordinary energy and is direct in action, to a point which some of her friends consider foolhardy. If she felt that it might be a good idea to talk to Pope John, she might well try to reach him on the telephone. When she is swept by enthusiasm, she often exaggerates but not to the point of falsehood. She has a good deal of courage yet there is no real hardness in her; she weeps as often as any other women.[27]

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22 N.A., "Group Plans A 'Spiritual U.N.'," *The Washington Post* (December, 29, 1960).
23 N.A., "Six Faiths Join to Build Data – Exchange Center," *The Herald Tribune* (December 2, 1960).
24 Archive of TOU: Box "the TOU History – sponsors", folder "Lists, countries, amounts. 1960 – 1970".
25 Archive of TOU: Box "the TOU History – sponsors", folder "Lists, countries, amounts. 1960 – 1970".
26 Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 95.
27 Temple of Understanding, *The History of the Temple of Understanding:* https://templeo funderstanding.org/about-us/history/ (accessed: 24.5.2020). See also: Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession,", 94.

3.4 Support

While Hollister and those working with her were getting the message out about the TOU mission, steps were also being taken to establish the foundations of the organization. In 1960, Hollister began forming the Board of Directors. In addition to Hollister and her husband, Vice President Radhakrishnan was the first Board Member. More Board Members joined. They included Rabbi Israel Goldstein, Head of the New York Board of Rabbis, Reverend Lowell Ditzan, Head of the National Presbyterian Center in Washington, D.C. and Dr. Wen Yen Tsao, who worked as a cultural counselor at the Taiwanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. Tsao, in particular, was enthusiastic about the TOU and expressed this in an early letter to Hollister.[28]

By August 1960, the TOU had reached the tax-exempt status entitled to an international, educational corporation.[29] In September 1960, the first board meeting took place. The Board grew to include Norma Boyd, Founder and President of the Women's International Religious Fellowship – established in 1959 – and one of the founding members of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first sorority founded by African American students[30], as well as Mrs. Halm, the wife of the Ambassador to Ghana, Mohammad Zafrullah Kahn, Ambassador of Pakistan to the U.N., and Jim Mills, a former Chairman of the Board of Education in Greenwich, Connecticut. Related activity was simultaneously taking place outside the USA. A TOU committee was formed in Japan led by Lord Abbot Ohtani in Kyoto. Reverend Toshio Miyake of the Konko-Kyo sect was one of its members.

Hollister's dream resonated in various parts of the world. One can judge by the active responses of the public. At the start of Hollister's activities, she received thousands of letters from 22 countries with support for her dream and, moreover, declarations of financial support as well. Hollister's travel with her son generated media interest; many articles about her dream were written and she was interviewed several times and appeared on various TV shows. Many segments of American society, in particular, had immediately taken an interest in her ideas. This interest demonstrated that a broad range of people were ready to entertain the idea of the TOU. For some three to four years the number of supporters of this initiative grew to between six and seven thousand. Among those who responded to Hollister's appeal, were representatives of different nationalities and religions and people with different social status and income. Most of the

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28 Archive of TOU: Box "the TOU History – Correspondence", folder "1960 – 1970".

29 Archive of TOU: Box "Documents", folder "60s".

30 Archive of TOU: Box "1960: Board Meetings", folder "The List of Participants".

work was done by volunteers, supporting Hollister's ideas, and ready to help the organization.

During the first year of TOU's operations, its work was conducted out of the Hollister residence. But as the organization grew, it required more space and moved to its headquarters in an office in Greenwich, Connecticut, then to a Washington, D.C. office in 1965. That same year, Hollister named Peter Dunne the Executive Director. He was the Co-founder of the American Institute for Foreign Trade and the Director of the International School Foundation in Tucson, Arizona.

During this development, Hollister, her friends and supporters had in mind the organization's mission to create the educational center.

3.5 Constructing a Building

In her interview with *Life* magazine, Hollister mentions that they need approximately 5 million dollars to cover the cost of the land and construction costs, but that they still did not have this amount.[31] Hollister and her Board did what they could to raise as many funds as possible. They held fundraising events, such as a benefit dinner held at the Waldorf-Astoria where 23 U.N. ambassadors and thirty Japanese monks attended.[32] Interestingly in her letter of invitation to this event, Hollister underlines that the TOU is not a religious organization but an educational one.[33]

In the fall of 1965, Peter Dunne located a 20-acre parcel of land on the Potomac River that was deemed suitable for the TOU and was available at an affordable price. By 1966, the TOU had acquired the land.[34] Having secured the land, the Board of Directors moved the plan forward. On 12 October 1966, the TOU held an inaugural ceremony. The event included several speeches, an opening prayer and a tree planting. The speakers included Zafrulla Khan, Dr. Wen Yen Tsao, Rabbi Samuel Silver, Reverend Lowell Ditzen, and other prominent people working in the religious sphere.[35] Charles Mills served as Master of Ceremonies. The tree planting concluded the ceremony. Representatives from the major religions each planted a tree a Cedar Deodara for Hinduism; a Bamboo for Bud-

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31 Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession,", 103.
32 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1962-events".
33 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1962 – events", Letter of invitation to Ambassador Rossides.
34 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "Building projects".
35 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1966 – meetings".

dhism; a Cedar of Lebanon for Judaism; an Oak for Christianity; and a Turkish Oak for Islam.[36]

3.6 The Educational Dimension

During these early years, the TOU's activity expanded to include more than just fundraising and the planning of a future building. The organization began to find more ways to carry out its educational mission.

In 1965, the TOU held its first conference at Asia House in New York City on the theme of "Education for Understanding". A variety of individuals participated: Harry Meserve of the Organization for Religious and Mental Health in New York; Erwin Goodenough and Filmer Northrup from Yale; Wilfred Cantwell Smith from Harvard University; Edwin Stanton a former ambassador to Thailand; Amiya Chakravarty from Boston University; Shoyu Hanayana, representing Bishop Shinsho Hanayana; Zwnown Rossides Ambassador from Cyprus to the U.N.[37]

In 1968, the TOU held the first Washington Conference on Interreligious Understanding, co-sponsored by the National Presbyterian Center and Georgetown University. The main aim of this conference was to bring together a panel of qualified and dedicated spokesmen for Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. They discussed "the Validity Which Each of the Religions Accords to Other Religions". Among the speakers were different prominent people presenting various religions of the world.[38] They talked about their own faith's perspective on other religions and ways in which religions could communicate with one another in Washington and beyond. The papers presented at the conference were later published by the World Academy of Art and Science and the conference resulted in the formation of a steering committee for interreligious communication.

This conference was the first event of its kind held at a Roman Catholic University. And according to Marcus Braybrooke, this one-day meeting highlighted the main idea and shared belief that "many kinds of theological terminology as there are religions, that the great faiths of the world do possess the capacity

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36 Archive of TOU: Box "Photos: 1966".

37 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1965 – events".

38 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "Washington conference, 68"; for example: Rev. John Haughey, Professor of Theology at Georgetown University; Rev. Duncan Howlett of All Souls Church in Washington; Venerable Piyananda Maha Thera, President of the Buddhist Vihara Society in Washington, and Dr. Isaac Franck, Executive Vice-President of the Jewish Community Council of Washington.

and the will to join hands for the common good, and none of them considers that this would call for any compromise of their essential doctrines or rituals."[39] One could conclude that the event was an official confirmation of the possibility of interreligious dialogue from the theoretical perspective of different religions; religious authorities showed that their own sacred texts do not prohibit them from participating in a dialogue with representation of other religion.

Thus, the first steps of the TOU were determined by one specific purpose – to build an educational center. Hollister toured a number of countries around the world in order to present her project and to enlist the support of significant representatives of different religions. The next step was to achieve greater fame, which was accomplished with the help of media and television. However, the amount raised by the end of the 5th year of the TOU was not enough to buy the land and to cover construction costs. Although the organization had quite wealthy sponsors and the possibility to appeal to people who could single-handedly sponsor the construction of the building, the TOU was in no hurry to pursue this route since Eleanor Roosevelt offered to raise the necessary funds from around the world underscoring the international nature of the project. At the same time, a new stage in the organization's activities began; they started to hold conferences with the subsequent publication of the reports. In other words, they began to engage in that activity, the main function of which coincided with the intended purpose of the educational center.

To properly assess the significance of these developments, it is important to have a look at the second phase of the TOU's activities that focused on the *spiritual temple* – rather than the physical one. The subsequent developments underlined to what extent the organization did not wait for the physical structure of an educational center of all religions to come to fruition and, instead, undertook an educational mission without a building. This shift centered on what the protagonists inside the TOU described as the 'First Spiritual Summit Conference'.

4 The *Spiritual Temple:* A New Dimension in the TOU's History

During the first 8 years, the primary efforts of the organization were put towards the creation of the TOU building. However, in 1965, a turning point occurred when the TOU held its first educational events. In 1968, the first of several sum-

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39 Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 97.

mit conferences was held, marking a significant moment in the history of the organization, and signaling an important transition in the nature of its work.

4.1 The First Spiritual Summit Conference

The idea of a spiritual center had indeed attracted a great number of supporters and this idea was still kept alive by Hollister and her staff.[40] However, it was becoming clear that there might be a greater appeal by supporters in an alternate, yet related area, namely the desire for the religions of the world to exist in harmony with each other. Although those individuals were highly interested in the construction of a building, what they wanted most was to see religious leaders and communities working together, learning about each other and developing mutual understanding. In closely analyzing the letters of support received by Hollister one can determine that people were not primarily attracted to the idea of constructing the building itself but by the essential purpose of it – spreading the word[41], i.e. an educational function. The First Spiritual Summit was a major step in that direction.

The First Spiritual Summit Conference was held in Calcutta in 1968. It was convened at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture from 22 to 26 October. It was originally planned for Darjeeling, but severe storms and flooding required a last-minute change.[42]

32 representatives from 10 religions attended. Among them were leaders of religious communities, scholars and civil society. The event featured a variety of speakers with daily presentations of papers. The conference's theme was "the Relevance of the World's Religions".

4.2 Emphasis on the Importance of Religion

The main conclusion that can be drawn by analyzing the documents relating to the organization of the first conference in Calcutta is that the event was organized in order to emphasize the importance of religion and faith in the modern world. Recognizing that this was an important issue to reflect upon, the Board

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40 Archive of TOU: Box "Correspondence", folder "1961", Letters from M. Johnson, W.W. Bosworth, D. Stone.
41 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of the TOU", folder "Correspondence, 1965".
42 Archive of TOU: Box "Correspondence: 66 – 68"; Archive of TOU: Box "The History of the TOU", folder "1ˢᵗ Spiritual Summit".

of Directors chose this as the conference theme. Given the nature of the theme, it can be assumed that all those participating in the conference believed that religion was relevant from the outset. The TOU's mission was encouraged precisely because its supporters believed that religion was important to the world. Secondly, in desiring to promote understanding among religions, it can also be inferred that the TOU's supporters also would have felt that all religions were relevant and that it was worth the time and effort to gather representatives of the different faiths together to develop mutual understanding.

The conference-aim predominantly reflected these two aspects. It was hoped that gathering together religious leaders and thinkers would allow religious communities to articulate the relevance of religion and to begin to work towards developing commonalities. At the conference, eleven religions were represented: The Baha'i faith Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Shintoism and Zoroastrianism. The distribution of faiths and key representatives present are as follows:

– Christianity had the greatest level of representation.[43] For example, one of the speakers was Fr. Pierre Fallon, a pioneering leader of interfaith work in Calcutta who was working on behalf of the newly-formed Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (now called the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue). Aymero Wondmagnehu, Director of His Imperial Majesty's Private Cabinet for Religious Affairs and Administrator of the Ethiopian Orthodox Mission from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia also participated.
– Buddhism was represented by Princess Poon Diskul, Dr. Reimon Yuki and Dr. Hakujin Matsuo from the World Fellowship of Buddhists; Maha Thera, the President of Buddhist Vihara Society of Washington D.C.
– Dr. V. Raghavan from the University of Madras, Professor Amiya Chakravarty were among those that represented Hinduism.
– Dr. Syed S. Vahiuddin from the University of Delhi and Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan were representatives of Islam.
– Rabbi Mordecai Waxman from Ney York and Dr. Ezra Spicehandler from Israel represented Judaism.
– Two persons represented Zoroastrianism.

Finally, there was one representative for each of the following religions: The Baha'i faith, Confucianism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Shintoism.

In addition to the representatives of the religions, there were special counselors. From the list of the participants, it is clear that the organizers cared about

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43 See annex.

the quality of those who were invited. The conference was attended not just by members of different religions, but by active individuals who occupied positions of responsibility, with high social status. They were essentially people who could subsequently have an impact on their environment and society as a whole.

The papers presented by these individuals were published in *The World Religion's Speak* on 'The Relevance of Religion in the Modern World', ed. by Finley P., Dunne Jr. The titles of the participants' reports also tell us a lot.[44] First, one can note that most of them were devoted to the relevance of the religion in the modern world, so they supported the special mission of the TOU. One part of the reports describes ways of building interreligious dialogue. In essence, the conference was held in an atmosphere of cooperation and tolerance. It would not be an exaggeration to say that representatives of each religion felt responsible for the mission of preserving peace in the modern world.

On the morning before the last day of the conference, all those attending gathered together and crossed the Ganges River by steamboat to the Calcutta Botanical Gardens. At this occasion, they offered a communal interfaith prayer on the salvation of humankind.

Fig. 2: Common prayer of the participants at the First Spiritual Summit Conference[45]

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44 See annex.

45 Archive of TOU: Box "TOU: History", folder: "Calcutta Conference".

The conference ended with the drafting and signing of a formal declaration. The document spoke about the particular need for religion in these times:

> We see that science, technology, political and industrial forces, with all their powers, have so far not been able, either alone, or in combined effort, to produce the kind of world that all men desire. We believe it is time for all peoples and nations, including the leaders of our major secular institutions, to recognize the relevance of the world's religions to the fate of man in the present century.[46]

The declaration concluded by proposing the formation of an interfaith committee, an "international, inter-religious, world body"[47] and by suggesting that the TOU hold a second Summit Conference a year later.

The First Spiritual Summit conference was also special because it is one of the events that Thomas Merton attended on his fateful trip to the East.[48] He died less than two months later in Bangkok. His famous lines, "we are already one and we imagine we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are"[49], were first uttered at the Summit Conference in presenting his paper "Monastic Experience and the East-West Dialogue."[50]

The First Spiritual Summit Conference resulted in an agreement to gather once again in the same format of the 2nd Summit Conference. According to Hollister's letter to Dr. John Myers, dated 22 July 1969, they had begun planning the next Conference in Istanbul for the spring of 1970.[51] In this letter, Hollister also asks for financial support – not for building purpose, but for conference expenses.

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46 Finley P. Dunne Jr., *The World Religions Speak on 'The Relevance of Religion in the Modern World'* (The Hague; Dr. W. Junk N. V. Publishers, 1970), 208. Archive of TOU: Box "TOU: History", folder: "Calcutta conference".

47 Archive of TOU: Box "TOU: History", folder: "Calcutta conference".

48 An American Catholic writer and mystic, a poet, social activist, and student of comparative religion.

49 William H. Shannon, ed., *Thomas Merton: The Hidden Ground of Love – Letters* (New York: Macmillan. 2011), 12.

50 Dunne Jr., *The World Religions Speak*, 72.

51 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "Correspondence – 2nd Summit Conference", Letter to Dr. John Myers, July 22, 1969.

4.3 The Same Aim – an Alternate Embodiment

Indeed, the First Spiritual Summit Conference was a significant moment in the TOU's history. As was discussed above, it signaled a transition in the nature of the organization's work. The shift was especially important for the organization's vision of itself. The Summit Conference marks the moment that that original vision transformed into something else. The idea of a solid, concrete building dedicated to the world's religions, gave way to a new entity, a symbolic temple. The last reference to the idea of building an educational center in the sources was found in the book presenting papers from the First Spiritual Summit Conference.[52] The later correspondence reflects preparations for the next conference but not efforts to find other places or additional funding for a building; Hollister, as in her earlier correspondence, asks for financial support but not for construction of a building. Instead, she seeks funding for holding the next Summit Conference.

This shift might have been understood as a failure, but the present Executive Director of the TOU and heir to Hollister's ideas and ideals, Alison Van Dyke, expresses it differently by stating that it was a success and a development rather than a failure. A *temple* can be a tangible space that people visit, but it can also be something fluid and dynamic, such as a net of relationships formed and based on a common vision: the unity of the world's faiths, the development of peace and understanding and harmony in the world. The *temple* building thus became a symbolic entity. Its solid, concrete structure transformed into the common commitment to interfaith work. Although it was seemingly possible to continue efforts to find a place and seek additional financial support for building a physical temple, the idea changed in its essence; the material building was no longer as important as the spiritual unity expressed in the form of meetings in different countries.

The new direction of the TOU stands for several significant points that still characterize the notion of a *temple:*
– The word temple in the name of the organization gains a deeper meaning. At first, it referred to a physical building, to become a sacred place for the main six religions; after the shift, the meaning of the word temple was transformed to imply the unity of people sharing a common vision and this unity did not only include six religions, but all of them without any limits (a physical building would by its nature be limited by its space and opportunities to represent some religion or spiritual practices whereas opportuni-

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52 Dunne Jr., *The World Religions Speak*, 210.

ties presented by the symbolic unity represented in the activities are limitless).

– The spiritual notion also developed. Initially, it meant that the temple was related to the non-ceremonial side of religion and/or any spiritual practice in the world. After the rejection of the idea of building a physical temple, the word "spiritual" was added to refer to the non-physical nature of the temple.
– The rejection of the idea of building a physical temple freed a lot of energy, time and efforts that could be used directly for educational activities.
– Initially, Washington D.C. was considered as the best place for the TOU. While considering leasing a building, the organization chose New York – a world center and fertile ground for various activities. It is also worth noting that the chosen building was next to the UN, which underlined the TOU's title "spiritual UN", adding also many new organizational opportunities.

The above-mentioned developments at the end of the 1960s are necessary to properly understand the TOU and its role in the dialogue movement. They underline how the TOU established a particular educational approach to IRD that is still significant today. The variety of TOU's present activities and its constant improvement confirm this point.

5 Conclusion

The TOU is a dialogue organization with a rich history with its own contributions to interfaith dialogue processes. The organization still holds interfaith conferences and meetings of representatives of different religions, as it has done since almost the beginning of its inception. The organization also actively works with youth conducting special programs and introducing the TOU principles.

The TOU history is a story of how they developed their own approach to IRD. The organization was established as an attempt to realize interfaith dialogue through education and fostering the exchange of values. This educational mission was supposed to be carried out within a new building that would serve as a physical embodiment of the unity of the TOU-identified six main religions. During, the initial years, most of the TOU's efforts were aimed at raising funds for such a building. After a few years, in parallel with the fundraising, the organization began to hold members' meetings in the form of round table discussions and conferences. The most significant of these events was the conference in Calcutta (now renamed Kolkata). This event differed by its level (almost 100 participants, 5-day-duration) and venue (outside the United States in a country in the

East) from the previous conferences. The important result of this conference was that it exemplified the new format of work for the organization. Initially, it was assumed that education would be the primary function of the TOU, consisting of a library, recorded lectures and videos and representative chapel inside a physical building. But the 1st Summit Conference showed that the main purpose of this educational activity – to get acquainted with other religions, to understand them and their values, and to develop mutual respect and tolerance – could be achieved quite successfully in the framework of the conference. Moreover, the dependence on the significance of a specific building lowers the potential of the organization and also affects the equal status of members.

Another consideration is that the mobility shown by the activities in different cities and countries is very much in line with today's world – a world of globally Internet-connected networks. The last point, which serves as a confirmation of the effectiveness of the TOU, is that the ownership of the notion of a building through the use of the word *temple* and the continuation of its symbolism serves as an affirmation of the organization's existence and material embodiment of its ideas. If this building were not present, the organization would always have to maintain a high level of activity, conducting a number and variety of events to maintain its presence.

In the early 1960s, Hollister's undertaking initially gained an active and sincere response of people from around the world. The TOU has since then constantly received growing support, including in the form of remittances, from around the world. This has allowed the TOU to continue to fulfill its mission. Today, it remains an active and successful IRD organization working to unite people around the world.

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7 Annex

7.1 Annex 1: List of the Participants of the 1st Spiritual Conference in Calcutta (1968)

Christianity:
Fr. Pierre Fallon, a pioneering leader of interfaith work in Calcutta who was working on behalf of the newly-formed Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (now called the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue);

Lowell R. Ditzen, S.J. Director of the National Presbyterian Center, Washington, D.C.;

Harold F. Snyder, International Affairs Representative for South Asia;

Aymero Wondmagnehu, Director of His Imperial Majesty's Private Cabinet for Religious Affairs and Administrator of the Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

Fr. Thomas Merton;

Bishop A.J. Shaw, Methodist Church in Southern Asia, Mrs. Sanford Kauffman, Church Women United;

Sister Barbara Mitchell, Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, Purchase, New York;

Roland Gammon.

Buddhism:
Her Serene Highness Princess Poon Diskul, President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists;

Aiem Sangkhavasi, Secretary-General of the World Fellowship of Buddhists;

Reimon Yuki, representing Kosho Ohtani;

Venerable Piyananda Maha Thera, President of the Buddhist Vihara Society in Washington, D.C;

Dr. Hakujin Matsuo of Nishi Hongwanji, Kyoto, Japan;

Venerable Mahasthavira N. Jinaratana, Mahabodhi Society of India, Calcutta;

Mrs. Gyalo Thondup, President and founding committee member of the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Center in Darjeeling.

Hinduism:
Swami Chinmayanandaji, Chinmaya Mission, Bombay;

Dr. V. Raghavan, University of Madras;

Amiya Chakravarty, SUNY New Paltz;
Swami Madhav Goswamiji, Gouriya Math, Calcutta;
Swami Lokeshwarananda, Ramakrishna Mission.

Islam:
Dr. Syed S. Vahiduddin, University of Delhi;
Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, Leader of the Sufi Order International, and later on the founder of The
Abode of the Message, a residential spiritual center in New Lebanon, New York;
Al Haj S.M. A. Raschid.

Judaism:
Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, Temple of Israel, Great Neck, New York;
Dr. Ezra Spicehandler, Hebrew Union College School of Archaeology and Biblical Studies, Jeru-
salem, Israel.

Confucianism:
Dr. Wei Tat, from the College of Chinese Culture, Taipei, Taiwan.

Jainism:
Miss Vatsala Amin, Divine Knowledge Society, Bombay, Representing Munishri Chitrabhanu.

Sikhism:
Sardar Sher Singh, representing S.S. Sant Chanan Singh, Amritsar, India. Baha'I:
Dr. K.M. Munje, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of India.

Special counsellors:
Dr. Huston Smith,
Dr. Stuart Mudd,
Dr. Emily Hartshorne Mudd,
Reverend John C. Haughey.

7.2 Annex 2: List of the Reports of the 1st Spiritual Conference in Calcutta

Section 1: The Relevance of Religion in the Modern World
Introduction by HUSTON SMITH: The Relevance of the Great Religions for the Modern World
Dr. V. RAGHAVAN: The Relevance of Hinduism
Reverend PIERRE FALLON, S.J.: Christianity in a Pluralistic World
H. S. H. Princess POON PISMAI DISKUL: The Four Nobel Truths and the Eightfold Path
Dr. SYD VAHIDUDDIN: Religion in the Twentieth Century with Special Reference to Islam
Rabbi MORDECAJ WAXMAN: Judaism and its Relevance to Modern Problems
Professor WEI TAT: Confucius and the I-Ching
Reverend THOMAS MERTON: Monastic Experience and the East-West Dialogue
Reverend THOMAS MERTON: Extemporaneous Remarks
Swami CHINMAYANANDA: The Unity of Religion
Dastoor N. D. MINOCHEHR HOMJI: Zoroastrianism – "Thus spoke Zaratustra"
Ven. MAHATHERA D. PITANANDA: Buddhism and the other World Religions
Munishri CHITRABHANU: Jainism – A Way of Thinking and Living

Sardar SHER SINGH 'SHER': Sikhism and the Sikhs

Reverend LOWELL RUSSELL DITZEN: The Relevance of the Protestant Branch of Christianity to the World Today

Dr. EZRA SPICEHANDELR: Religion as a World Force: A Jewish View

Dr. REIMON YUKI: Buddhism in the Present Age

Swami LOKESHWARANANDA: Difference and Similarity among the Religions

Dr. SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR: The Pertinence of Islam in the Modern World

PIR VILAYAT INAYAT KHAN: The Significance of Religion to Human Issues in the Light of the Universal Norms of Mystical Experience

HOMI B. DHALLA: Zoroastrianism Today

Bishop A. J. SHAW: Jesus as a Message for our Day

SWAMI MADHAV GOSWAMI MAHAREJ: The Essential Brothehood of Mankind: A Hindu View

Dr. HAROLD F. SNIDER: Religion and World Problems

Ven. MAHASTHAVIRA N. JINARATANA: Religion in an Age of Scientific Achievement

Dr. TETSUTARO ARIGA: A Rethinking of Christianity

Dr. H. M. MUNJE: A Baha'i Viewpoint

Reverend TOSHIO MIYAKE: The Obligation of Religion in our Era

Semiramis Del Carmen V. Rodríguez
An Encounter with Change

Opening Perspectives beyond Europe and the US (The International Association for Religious Freedom / 1969 – 1975)

> "There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions and no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions (...)."[1]

1 Introduction: Beyond Europe and the USA

The history of what is frequently perceived as the interreligious dialogue movement normally begins with the Parliament of the World's Religions as the main starting point for inclusive interreligious dialogue. The Parliament is perceived as a gathering "(...) celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America(...)"[2] at the Columbian World Exhibition, where Swami Vivekananda (devotee of Advaita Vedanta, a branch of Hinduism) spoke to a public of 7.000 people aiming to cultivate dialogical relationships among the participants of the event. The Parliament was a major event where other religious leaders – such as Virchand Ghandi (a scholar from India), Anagarika Dhamapala (representative of Theravada Buddhism) and D. T. Suzuki from Japan (representative of Zen Buddhism) – also presented themselves to a wider audience.

The article at hand, however, seeks to emphasize a different aspect of this history. It highlights that what is perceived as the interreligious dialogue move-

1 Hans Küng, *The World's Religions: Common Ethical Values* (31 March 2005, speech at the opening of the Exhibit on the World's Religions at Santa Clara University).

2 Leonard Swidler, "The History of Inter-religious Dialogue", in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013): 3.

ment today was actually very much shaped by changes that took place during the increasing globalization from the 1960s onwards. Whereas the Parliament introduced a new perspective into the history of religions, the vision primarily associated with the Parliament came into practice in the context of the social developments of a worldwide counterculture. To make this point, the present contribution will focus on changes that took place in an organization founded on May 25, 1900, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, at the 75th anniversary meeting of the American Unitarian Association[3] – the "International Council of Unitarians and other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers". In 1969 after three name changes, this organization emerged as the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF). IARF has become one of the central institutions of interreligious dialogue today.

IARF was granted consultative status in ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) in 1972. It was also instrumental in the development of an NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief (CoFroB)[4], initiated in 1989. Furthermore, in 1992, CoFroB was granted formal status within ECOSOC. Since receiving this status, the representatives of IARF to the United Nations (UN) have intensely worked with CoFRoB. Today IARF consists of 73 member organizations, scattered over 26 countries that include countries such as India, Bangladesh, Macedonia, Philippines, Kenya, Malawi, and Nigeria, with believers of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Shintoism. It is a UK-based charity that works on five practical programmatic areas:
–   Supporting affected communities
–   Non-formal diplomacy
–   Young adult programs
–   Codes of conduct
–   Preventive strategies[5]

This paper aims to show that the 20th IARF Congress, entitled "Religious Encounter with the Changing World", hosted in Boston in 1969, represented a perspectival shift that stands for a more general shift in the history of the interreligious dialogue movement, namely from a theological to an activist focus. This is re-

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3 Founded in 1825 by people united by the cause of the poor and the cause of peace in USA. Now named Unitarian Universalist Association, after its union in 1961 with the Universalist Church of America.

4 The International Association for Religious Freedom, *IARF at the United Nations:* https://iarf.net/united-nations/ (accessed 24.05.2020).

5 The International Association for Religious Freedom, *Our Priorities:* https://iarf.net/about/Our%20Priorities/ (accessed 24.05.2020).

flected in the name change of the organization that occurred in the same year. This change of name legitimated IARF by allowing believers of religions other than Christianity, as well as conservative Christians, to finally feel represented. It was public proof of the intention of this organization to be open to any group that wanted dialogue and to establish a more activist stance.

To show this paradigmatic shift, this paper comprises three sections. First, a general background of IARF and the 20th Congress at Boston, 1969 is discussed, while also giving a socio-cultural background that will help to contextualize and understand the importance of that specific event. Second, the materials and processes used in the analysis are outlined. Third, the main findings of the archival research on the 20th IARF Congress are presented.

2 Historical Background: Dynamics of the 1960s

The 1960s cannot be properly understood without taking the previous historical period marked by war and severe socio-political problems into consideration. World War II (WWII) (1939–1945) ended leaving large human losses and cities destroyed by bombing, a sense of insecurity and fragility in different societies that only intensified through the development of the Cold War (1947–1991).

Another event of great importance was the Vietnam War, which occupies almost 20 years of Vietnam's history and is marked with a large death toll to all parties involved. This protracted and bloody war resulted in an estimated 2 million civilians killed across North and South Vietnam and 1.1 million fighters on both sides.[6]

These events led to the emergence of various social movements that protested US involvement in the Vietnam War. One such group was the counter-culture movement consisting of different groups, the hippies being the more well-known. They developed slowly and peaked during the 1960's. Characterized as an anti-war culture, they

> rejected established institutions. Calling them 'The Establishment', 'Big Brother', and 'The Man', hippies believed the dominant [sic] mainstream culture was corrupt and inherently flawed and sought to replace it with a Utopian society. Hippies rejected middle class values,

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6 Ronald H. Spector, "Vietnam War," *Encyclopædia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War (accessed: 24.5.2020).

opposed nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War. They embraced aspects of eastern philosophy and sought to find new meaning in life.[7]

New social groups not only emerged to protest US involvement in the Vietnam War, but also against unequal treatment of minorities exemplified by the Civil Rights movement as led by Martin Luther King in the United States in favor of civil rights for African Americans.

Such social movements were not restricted to the USA. Social discontent occurred in different countries in Europe, generating social upheavals, such as May 1968 in France, where strikes took place in different sectors of society led by workers and students demonstrating their general discontent, with unemployment and crisis as the main causes of these protests.[8] Recently, it has been argued that the 1968 events in France "escalate[d] as a general strike spreads to factories and industries across the country, shutting down newspaper distribution, air transport, and two major railroads. By the end of the month, millions of workers were on strike, and France seemed to be on the brink of radical leftist revolution."[8]

This time of change and reform could even be seen in Catholicism, with the Second Vatican Council. The Church had to find a new way to deal with political, social, economic, and technological changes. That is why Pope John XXIII convokes the Second Vatican Council with the idea of opening the church to the devoted and that they, in turn, could open themselves to the church.[9]

Although this did not seem the best time to call a council due to the complicated global situation, the Pope at that time believed that the church should help solve the problems of the modern age, to put the world in contact with the Gospel and open the church to this new world. This council was held from 1962–1965, after three years of preparation and the inclusion of observers from other religions. Unfortunately, during the development of the council, Pope John XXIII died and Pope Paul VI took over for the second stage of the same in 1963.[10]

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7 Brian Haddock, "The Hippy Counter Culture Movement (1960s)," *Mortal Journey* (09.03.2011): https://www.mortaljourney.com/2011/03/1960-trends/hippie-counter-culture-movement (accessed 24.05.2020).
8 N.A., "This Day in History. Worker protests mount in France," *History* (16.05.1968): https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/protests-mount-in-france (accessed 24.05.2020).
9 "Concilio Vaticano II," SCRIBD: https://es.scribd.com/document/279825878/Concilio-Vaticano-II-Pbro-roberto-Gonzalez-Raeta (accessed 24.05.2020).
10 "Concilio Vaticano II"

Among other things, the Council declared that religious freedom was a central part of Catholic teachings, also the Church encouraged Catholics to embrace dialogue with other Christians and non-Christians and to participate actively in ecumenical dialogue. Another point discussed was the relationship between Catholics and individuals of other religions. It was said that all humans were one community and that Catholics should respect the religions of others, their truths and everything they hold sacred, an objective that could be achieved through dialogue with them.[11]

This decade marked by war and protests as well as social, political, economic, and technological changes, was undoubtedly a decade of social change. These changes were crucial for the developments that led to the processes of reconfiguration that will be analyzed in the following sections, using an empirical approach that will be explained in the following section.

3 Empirical Approach: Archive Analysis Indebted to Anthropology

The present analysis follows an anthropological approach that provided the framework for the document selection and subsequent analysis of the event. Generally speaking, the empirical approach, indebted to concepts such as intertextuality and hypothetical deduction,[12] was used to guide the development of the research and to form the hypothesis established in this article.

The article revolves around the 20th IARF Congress held in Boston in 1969, for which archival research was conducted at the Hartley Library at the University of Southampton in England during July 2014. The research process examined documentation generated during the 1969 IARF meeting, related documents, as well as papers connected to important people from IARF and the Congress of 1969. The work with the selected documents of the archive was performed in such a way as to question the material at every step. The idea was to establish links between the texts, as well as to authenticate the information that could be verified.

Predominantly unpublished documents were found within the examined material. Examples of such unpublished material included General Assembly and Executive Committee Minutes, personal opinions about the event, resolutions submitted for approval to the General Assembly by various organizations,

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11 "Concilio Vaticano II"
12 Gladys Dávila, "El Razonamiento Inductivo y Deductivo Dentro del Proceso Investigativo en Ciencias Experimentales y Sociales," *Laurus. Resvista de Educación* 12 (2006): 180 – 205.

letters to the IARF's Executive Committee in relation to the Congress, as well as drafts of the trials of the Commissions. Additional published documents that were consulted were two small books containing the Congress program, essays by the Commissions, speeches, a treasurer's report, a secretariat's report, and other similar material. Also, a cursory review of other IARF's congresses, specifically of the first 30 years, was made. Finding in the folders mostly unpublished documents like those reviewed for the year 1969. This examination allowed a slightly broader view of IARF's work beyond the event selected.

Most of the documents found were in excellent condition, allowing for reading without much trouble. Crossed out sentences and words were common due to their condition of drafts and unpublished documents; however, this revealed the corrections made to the documents before and after the Congress, which made clear which information IARF did not want to publish at the time.

The documents chosen for the analysis of the 1969 event were those that more broadly covered the events that transpired during the days of the Congress. These unpublished documents served as an important source of information, exhibiting elements not found in published documents, such as doubts and corrections which displayed a less refined, more in-depth face of the event, where more critical details are visible.

4 Empirical Analysis of the Changes in 1969

4.1 The IARF 20th Congress

The IARF 20th Congress was held in Boston between July 12–20, 1969. It addressed the theme "Religious Encounter with the Changing World". This Congress was directly connected to the work of four commissions created in London in 1966, that represented the Association's concern regarding IARF's identity and purpose, which final reports were presented in Boston.[13] Dana Greeley of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) extended the invitation to hold the congress as a joint gathering of both IARF and UUA, the latter for the occasion of its annual General Assembly.[14] The discussions of this IARF meeting focused on four major areas:

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13 Max Gaebler, "The IARF 1958–1927: A Personal Recollection," in *Centennial Reflections. International Association for Religious Freedom, 1900–2000,* (Assen: van Gorcum, 2001): 152–140.
14 The goal or intention of making these two events together was to achieve mutual enrichment, which could be generated through this interaction. That is why the UUA offered the best possible hospitality to all the members of IARF who managed to participate in the congress.

–   The Christian in the modern world
–   The religious approach to the modern world
–   Dialogue of world religions
–   Peace, justice, and human rights.

To properly assess the changes that took place inside the IARF during the 1960s, it is important to underline four different aspects of these respective developments:
–   The long history of change
–   The commissions
–   The central papers presented at the 1969 event
–   The consequences from the 1969 event till today

4.1.1 A Long History of Change

Change has always been a central part of IARF's history. Right from the beginning, it can be seen how the need for change and inclusion began to manifest itself quite early in the history of this organization. According to Robert Traer the 1910 Congress, titled: "World Congress of Free Christianity and Religious Progress", alluded to discussions concerning the name of the Association:

> The 5th Congress was held in Berlin in August 1910. In 'A Summary and Appreciation' Charles Wendte explained that the Executive Committee meeting in Berlin had decided that the original name of the Council should be changed to conform more closely to the participation of religious liberals in the meetings held in the first ten years of the twentieth century. Unitarians had been in the majority at first, but liberal or free Christians became more numerous by the middle of the decade, particularly in Europe. This fact was reflected in the names given the Congresses [sic] during the first decade of the century. In Berlin, Unitarians on the Executive Committee suggested the name of the Council no longer explicitly refer to Unitarians and proposed that the title of the Boston Congress be used for the Council. After two meetings of the Executive Committee unanimous support was achieved for the name, 'International Congress of Free Christians and Other Religious Liberals'.[15]

This reflects a rather passive attitude towards the "other", they are recognized, but only in a generic way, not reflective of the actual diversity of beliefs among the members and participants of the congresses. Indeed, as seen above, the majority of the participants, at that time, were believers in Christ.

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15 Robert Traer, "A Short Story of the IARF," in *Centennial Reflections. International Association for Religious Freedom, 1900–2000*, ed. International Association for Religious Freedom (Assen: van Gorcum, 2001): 20.

They changed the name because of the existence of major participation of free Christians in the Congress (and not mostly Unitarians). Although reasonable, this change in name thus reflects a consequence more than a cause of change.

So, from 1910 onwards, the word Christian was included in IARF's new name. On August 14, 1932, in a speech at a conference in St. Gall[16], Professor Dr. L. J. van Holk said that the future work of the Association should consist, among other things, in helping in the fight for freedom, democracy, and tolerance and the rights of oppressed minorities. It was also his desire that new Eastern movements representing various cultures and religions joined the organization, encouraging the rapprochement between East and West, between Christian and non-Christian religions – this approach was eventually fully achieved during the 1980's and 1990's.

In the meantime, by 1934, Americans wanted to eliminate the words "liberal" and "Christian" from the title. On the first of December 1950 in a letter sent to the IARF group's members, Dr. H. Faber[17] (IARF's Secretary in 1969), explained that the International Unitarian Conference asked the American Unitarian Association (AUA) to intervene and aide in the name change and purpose of IARF since this would, in their opinion, restore the vision that the founders had for the Association, transforming it into an instrument for cooperation with any faith that strives for liberty. The resulting request was to change the name to 'International Association for Religious Freedom and Liberal Religion'.

The AUA was convinced that the original objectives of Wendte, one of the founders and early leaders of IARF and an initiator of the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, intended for a more inclusive organization than reflected in the name given at its inception. The problem may have been that at the time the religious situation in Europe regarding liberal Christian churches put its believers in a defensive mood and caused them to feel that they needed to assert their position. Placing the word Christian in the title may have created a more solid position for them in the eyes of different Christian churches/denominations given that an international association recognized them as important members.

Dr. Faber also claimed that a name change would not attract other illiberal religions for two reasons. First, in the past, the organization had attempted to get close to them without positive results, and second, because the liberal Christian

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16 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 4/2, Folder 1, Box 1. Speech from L. J. v. Holk "The Future of the Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom" at the St. Gall Conference, August 14, 1932.

17 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 4/2, Folder 1, Box 1. Letter from H. Faber, Secretariat of the IARF, to IARF member groups, 1 December 1950.

denominations kept their liberal status quiet. In 1958 this issue was raised again in Chicago as well as in 1961 in Davos, and London in 1966. In spite of reoccurring discussion on this topic, it took IARF 35 years to finally come to the decision to change its name a third time. Although the name change was finally agreed upon, the decision was not unanimous since many still thought changing the organization's name was inappropriate.

From the above brief survey of the history of its name changes, it is no surprise that the change that would eventually occur in 1969 was not an unproblematic achievement. Both groups, against and for the change, developed good arguments. However, in the General Assembly of 1969, the Association declared its wishes to be inclusive at a global level, achieving finally the acceptance of this long-debated change of name.

One possible reason for the acceptance of the name change can be found in the subject treated by Commission I, "Christians in the world today". Discussion of this subject led many members to abide by the change for several reasons. First, the commission dealt with topics of interest to Christians. Secondly, they viewed themselves as represented in the Association through the Commission, despite the elimination of the word Christian from the Association's name. Finally, unlike what had been believed in the past, it was thought that the transformation of the name would bring with it a growing possibility for new groups to join IARF. In essence, what happened was a shift in perspective.

Despite the acceptance of this particular transformation, of the nine Resolutions submitted to the General Assembly, only three were adopted.[18] The first was in regard to a congratulation to the UN on its upcoming 25th anniversary in 1970. The second resolution stated IARF support for the UN on its educational projects. The third and last resolution adopted dealt with admiration for technology and creativity inspired by the moon landing, which took place during the same week as the Congress. In addition, minor changes were made to sections 1–2 and 3 of Article N° 2 which concerned the redaction, in order to clarify the meaning of the article.

Moreover, among the rejected resolutions, in Resolution I[19], the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia proposed certain changes in Article 2, "Aims and Purposes". They asked IARF to promote religious freedom and other human rights, tolerance and reverence for all religious expressions, a free and non-dogmatic

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18 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. In the booklet of the XXth CONGRESS of IARF. Resolutions, 34.

19 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. Resolutions delivered to the General Assembly at the XXth CONGRESS of IARF.

approach to solving different social and ethical issues, as well as the spiritual union of humanity. Their purpose was to attract others to the association.

Such an article at the time stated that the aims and purposes of the Association were, among other things: to unite the historical Liberal Churches, unite the organized Liberal Movements, and free religious communities and workers for freedom, all three of which matched the aims of the organization.[20]

The rejection of Resolution I appears to be due to a fear of change, or rather what change could have brought: instability, although temporary, the need to self-assess and reunite. Thus, although a major change occurred in IARF in the form of the name change, the decision not to alter the purposes of the organization reaffirmed the power that liberal Christians had in IARF.

4.1.2 The Commissions

The IARF commissions that were important for the 1969 Congress were formed in the London Congress in 1966. As far as the present analysis is concerned, these commissions are of particular interest because they were established as an immediate response to questions posed by members about the identity and purpose of the organization. Important figures in this organization, such as A. W. Cramer, the Executive Secretary in 1969, believed that these commissions could become the heart and soul of IARF since the secretariat could not be the only source of life for the organization.

The commissions provide us with a strong sense of the state of the discussions leading up to the 1969-event. The following sections will cover all three commissions while focusing particularly on the commission that explicitly dealt with the question of dialogue.

Commission I: 'The Ideology and the Church'[21]

The participants of this commission chose the topic "the Ideology and the Church". They considered it their task to discern where ideology had hardened in the Church and Christianity, without neglecting the possible existence of ideological trends in liberal Christianity and modern secular ideologies. To do this, they discussed the meaning of the word ideology, coming to the conclusion

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20 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 4, Box 2. In the booklet of the XXth CONGRESS of IARF. Constitutions and Bylaws as proposed, 46–52.
21 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 4, Box 2. In the booklet of the XXth CONGRESS of IARF. Report Commissions I, 5–13.

that in a general sense it is a combination of ideas that a man has about himself and the world.

They ended by clarifying that the opposite of a hardened ideology is not the abandonment of intellectual thought but the keeping of a constant critical eye towards doctrines, recognizing that theories are provisional, aiming for a most realistic possible interpretation of reality and admitting that there is no such thing as a new reality but rather a changing reality.

Commission II: "The Religious Approach to the Modern World"[22]

This commission chose as its theme, "the Religious Approach to the Modern World". Its participants talked about religion in a secular world, in a demystified world where industrial civilization has depleted the individual and made him feel lonely and lost, where the attempt to give meaning to man through secular enterprises has failed. This world drained of meaning needs religion to guide it in its insatiable demand for meaning.

For them, the problem with religion is rooted in outdated concepts, values, and ways of life that are far from the scientific in this techno-cultural world. The gap that these outdated ideas leaves, makes people lean towards secular ideas. This shows the need for a religion that is willing to stand with today's scientific truths as an equal.

Although Commission I and II played a role in the research of this paper, it was Commission III that was of particular importance.

Commission III: "Dialogue"[23]

The report on this commission distinguishes between different modes of dialogue and communication between individuals and groups. The first of these is the dialogue of imperialism. Most interreligious communication in the past was conducted through the mode of dialogue of imperialism. In this mode, the absolute superiority of one position and consequently the absolute inferiority of any other are assumed and this approach is normally linked to political supremacy. The second mode corresponds to witness dialogue. In witness dialogue, religions claim to have no desire to convert others but instead aim only to present their respective positions to others; however, the assumptions of dialogue of imperialism as noted above are still present. The third mode, the dialogue of confrontation, takes place when one side has political power and takes the form of a con-

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22 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 4, Box 2. In the booklet of the XXth CONGRESS of IARF. Report Commissions II, 13–27.
23 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 4, Box 2. In the booklet of the XXth CONGRESS of IARF. Report Commissions III, 28–39.

frontation of ideologies. It is a face to face encounter between ideologies in conflict. The fourth mode is the dialogue of mutual search. This mode unfolds when men admit that they do not possess all the truth and they meet to share, learn, change, and grow together.

This commission encouraged the adoption of the last type of dialogue between the members of any Church and the members of IARF, while admitting that this was not the popular dialogue at the time between religions and cultures.

It is necessary to emphasize that the analysis of the texts by the members of the commissions are important, taking into consideration the Association's aim to make them the future heart of IARF.

The first observation is that although the topics presented by the members of the first two commissions are important, conference participants mentioned that they were too intellectual and too professional, as explained by June D. Bell in his report on the commissions.[24] Thus it is important to note that if people who attended the event found these reports too abstract, then for people who do not have the same academic preparation it would prove even more complicated to understand.

The report submitted by the members of Commission III proved to be the most useful for IARF members and the people of the communities from where the participants were from. This is not an attempt to dismiss the contributions made by the members of Commission I and II but, considering that the aspirations for these are to become the heart of IARF, a higher effort to achieve pragmatic applications should be made, aiming towards a wider public, thus achieving a wider impact.

This did not occur with Commission III, precisely due to the pragmatic weight that this report possessed, allowing it to transcend, with relative simplicity, beyond the Congress and its immediate participants. This is a report that can be taken as it is to any community and be understood and implemented without major problems, since it explains how to approach the other and achieve mutual growth.

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24 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. In the booklet of the XXth CONGRESS of IARF. D. Bell, June, report on the Commissions, 81.

4.2 The Central Papers from the 1969 Event: Ware Lectures

Based upon the reports of these three commissions, the discussions at 1969 event were clustered around three major lectures that stood for the changes that took place inside the organization, as well as for the wide spectrum of different approaches to those changes. There were three major lectures:

1. "The Christian in a Changing World" by Professor Doctor. B. Delfgaauw (Dutch).
2. "Religion in a Secularized World" by Professor Doctor Martin E. Marty (American).
3. "Universal Religion Universalist Religion" by Professor Doctor RJ Z Werblowsky (Israel).

The next sections will focus only on the first two lectures and leave out the third lecture, which was found to be on a topic too abstract and epistemological to be relevant to this article. Instead, as mentioned above, this article focuses on the less theoretical and more pragmatic objective that was to reach out to and draw in a greater number of people to heighten their interest and get involved in interreligious dialogue. This tied into the overarching goal during the time period, namely, to help people reach peace through dialogue.

4.2.1 "The Christian in a Changing World"

The initial title assigned to this speech was "The Church and the New Reality" but Delfgaauw wanted to change it because he was convinced that this title suggested:

> In the first place that something of the nature of Church is necessary to Christianity. Now that is just the matter in question. Is it necessary? The next presumption is that we are living or are going to live in a new reality, as if this were standing ready to hand. There is no new reality replacing an old reality; we live in a reality which is continually changing and will continue to change. What we must do is to learn to live with change.[25]

According to Delfgaauw, the old title suggested a degree of statism, implying that the Church is an impenetrable and solid force that faces a new reality, while the

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[25] Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. Paper by B. Delfgaauw, "The Christian in a Changing World" (paper presented at the XXth CONGRESS of IARF, Boston, Massachusetts, July 12–20, 2014), 35.

new title features Christianity -a set of beliefs- as something a little more flexible and the world is no longer presented as an enemy. The concept of change should be accepted as something natural. What Delfgaauw says is that the world is continuously changing and that the Christians should understand and accept this, since institutions or even a set of beliefs cannot survive if it remains impassive. And thus, denying change would be denying the world as it is.

It is interesting to highlight that Delfgaauw's lecture focuses on the idea of change, where it comes from, and how people are reacting to it. What remains clear after all this is that for Delfgaauw change must not go unnoticed and that the roots and cause of a conjuncture are vital to the better understanding of change.

4.2.2 "Religion in a Secularized World"

The second lecture at the 1969 event was given by the well-known theologian, Martin E. Marty. He talked about how the war between traditional religious forces and secular humanism was ending.

> Religious theorists have recently undertaken to do an about-face a 180-degree turn in their attitude toward the secular. After hundreds of years of automatic and stereotyped opposition, they have tried to find ways to embrace and affirm the secular reality. [Meanwhile] (...) Secular leaders, particularly those of self-conscious humanist outlook (...) have found less reason to counter-attack and to oppose all forms of religion on automatic and a prioristic [sic] grounds.[26]

Marty stated: "Western religionists have welcomed some dimensions of non-Western secularization more readily than they had been able to look with favor on non-Western religion."[27] Although it is apparent from Marty's statement that the approach to the East had been up to this point poor, it should be noted that the first major steps to get closer to the religions of the East had already been taken at the 1969 Congress. Further steps were taken, although intermittently, following the Congress and a reciprocal relationship had been fully established by the 1990s.

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26 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. Paper by Martin E. Marty. "Religion in a Secularized World" (paper presented at the XXth CONGRESS of IARF, Boston, Massachusetts, July 12–20, 2014), 2.
27 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. Paper by Martin E. Marty. "Religion in a Secularized World" (paper presented at the XXth CONGRESS of IARF, Boston, Massachusetts, July 12–20, 2014), 2.

He also states that the various issues that were happening in the world at that time led religious and secular leaders to connect and to question themselves. The message is to respond to an era of openness and not to blind opposition, information that IARF put into practice at 1969 in changing its name to reflect a more open organization.

After reading these approaches it is important to ask whether these two speeches accurately responded to the interreligious dialogue needs of the time, which were supposed to reach a large group of people through the further dissemination of information by participants of the Congress. It should be recognized that these speeches took into account the changes occurring during the 1960s, events such as the student protests, anti-war protests, growing secularization, religious self-reflection and globalization. Within these speeches, recurring themes appear: Change, respect, and openness to others, the secular and religious other- not only of West but also of East. These themes advocate for a higher degree of religious flexibility.

All the above indicates that these lectures indeed seem to reflect what became a dominant insider perspective within IARF. This new emphasis looked towards open dialogue with the other, promoting, by means of their words, the generation of positive social impact by fostering the overcoming of interreligious conflicts and trying to achieve social justice by helping others. This change became even more obvious in the years immediately following the 1969 congress.

4.3 The Consequences of the 1969 Event: Meeting with Change

What began to grow in 1969 with the simple change of two words in the Association's name allowed for a vast number of later developments. The first little steps that were taken by IARF that year were the incorporation of the founder and president of Rissho Kosei Kai Nikkyo Niwano in the Executive Committee of the Association and the inclusion of the Buddhist group Rissho Kosei Kai and the Shinto group Kyo Izuo Konko Church – both from Japan – as members of IARF. The latter addition was presented to the organization by the president of the 'Japan Free Religious Association' Shinichiro Imaoka. This allowed for an IARF tour to Japan in 1970.

4.3.1 Expansion of Membership Organizations

The change in name sent the message to the world that IARF was open to non-Christian groups who wanted to engage in a dialogue. This yielded results in a relatively short amount of time. From the 1969 Congress onwards, Japanese member groups were more and more involved in IARF's work. The organization would continue to expand. Indian groups, from the subcontinent of India, became involved in the 1980's and 1990's and played more important roles in the Association. By 2015, IARF had members of various faiths such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Shinto, and Zoroastrianism. This diversification proves that the more active attitude towards the other that was taken in 1969 worked in bringing more faiths together in dialogue.

More changes continued to occur in subsequent congresses, like IARF's 22nd Congress held in Montreal in 1975 under the title "Our Unity in Diversity". For the first time, students from Gakurin, the Rissho Kosei Kai seminary in Tokyo, attended an IARF Congress, where ten of these students introduced their organizations at a session entitled "Meet Rissho Kosei Kai".

The work of the Japanese groups in the Association concluded with a congress held in Tokyo. It was the 25th IARF Congress, held from July 23 to August 10, 1984, under the title "Religious Path to Peace: Eastern Initiative, Western Response." According to Robert Traer, it was not only the first time that an IARF congress was held in Asia; it was also the congress with the largest number of participants since the congress held before WWI.[28] Additionally, home visits were offered for the first time and 240 people experienced Japanese everyday life by visiting homes of Rissho Kosei Kai members in Tokyo. Another first for IARF during this Congress was the making of a film of the 25th Congress by Rissho Kosei Kai and the IARF Japan Liaison Committee.

This Congress was a success given that, as its title and the history of IARF suggests, the East reached for IARF and the Association answered. Masuo Nezu stated that:

> [During this] Congress participants enthusiastically discussed their views and exchanged ideas each day. Their dialogue helped people of different faiths from both East and West to deepen their understanding of each other and reflected one aspect of the IARF spirit, 'learning from one another'. At the Congress service in the Great Sacred Hall, some 7,000, people prayed and rededicated themselves to the one single purpose common to

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28 Robert Traer, "A Short Story of the IARF," in *Centennial Reflections. International Association for Religious Freedom, 1900–2000*, ed. International Association for Religious Freedom (Assen: van Gorcum, 2001): 27.

all – world peace. A Buddhist sutra was chanted, and devotions were offered by Hindu, Christian, Shinto, Islamic, and Sikh representatives.[29]

The next step was the organization of the Japan Chapter in that Congress and its subsequent establishment in 1985, having an annual conference every year since then. It is so that from the

> 1990's regional IARF programs (...) permitted diverse religious and cultural interest within IARF (...) India IARF members from Brahmo, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Unitarian and the Ramakrishna Mission groups have promoted interfaith harmony in South Asia through local programs and community development projects. Lay Buddhist and shrine Shinto members of the IARF have continued to support interfaith activities in Japan (...) IARF activities in the Philippines have reached beyond the traditional Christian and Unitarian member groups to include Chinese Buddhists in Manila as well as indigenous communities and Muslims in Mindanao.[30]

It is clear that IARF changed its structure sufficiently to accommodate a great deal of new member groups. The Association transformed from an organization mostly for free or liberal Christianity during its first 30 years (although the aspirations were to expand its frontiers), to one that promoted liberal religion in general by the 1940's, and finally starting a great change in its focus in 1969 to focus purely on religious freedom.

What all this shows is that the 20th IARF Congress of 1969 indeed generated a change in the Association, enlarging its frontiers, opening its doors to any religion in the world that wanted to get in touch with other faiths, learning through the process more about themself and others. It took a couple of years, as well as the active presence of Asian groups, but it is clear that the 1969 Congress is a transformation point for the Association as exemplified by the title of the 20th Congress booklet, "An Encounter with Change".

The exceptional work of this growing Association continues till today. It held its 34th Congress in August 2014 in Birmingham, the United Kingdom, on the theme of: "Challenges for Religious Freedom in the Digital Age". It focused on the challenges and opportunities to religious freedom that comes from today's advanced technological capabilities in communication.

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29 Masuo Nezu, "IARF's Recent 30 Years: East and West," in *Centennial Reflections. International Association for Religious Freedom, 1900–2000*, ed. International Association for Religious Freedom (Assen: van Gorcum, 2001): 210.

30 Robert Traer, "A Short Story of the IARF," in *Centennial Reflections. International Association for Religious Freedom,1900–2000*, ed. International Association for Religious Freedom (Assen: van Gorcum, 2001): 33.

Additionally, it is possible to trace a much more fundamental change in terms of the internal social diversity inside the IARF – in terms of both religious and sexual diversity.

4.3.2 Expansion of Social and Religious Diversity

Of IARF's member groups in 1969, most of the 26 groups were formed by believers from unitary and liberal religions and although Japanese and Indian groups were members, they were a small minority. Of those 26 groups, fifteen were formed by people from European countries. The IARF Executive Committee elected that same year showed the same limits in variety; members were mostly of the same European nationalities. There was also a total of five women amongst the 24 members that formed the Executive Committee. And all the members were highly educated.[31]

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the panels where women did not participate and hardly any person younger than 35 years. Additionally, there was no African-American. At that time, there was a preponderance of highly educated male participants and people from European countries. Therefore, it can be said that, in the 1969 IARF's Congress, there was not much religious variety. It would even be difficult to claim that the 1969 Congress was an interreligious gathering. The public in attendance was not particularly diverse.[32]

Comparatively, the 34th Congress exhibited much more member and participant variety regarding sex, religion, and country of origin, reflecting the impact of the changes IARF had made since 1969.

There were 39 speakers of diverse origins and several women among them. Rev. Dr. Wytske Dijkstra was elected as president of the Association (2014–2018). Birmingham was chosen as the site for the Congress due to its cultural diversity, as well as it being the location for a Stupa which contains the funerary remains of Gautama Buddha, a large Indian statue, a great number of churches, museums and much more. The choice of location for the congress in Birmingham was meant to showcase IARF as an international interreligious association, continuously reaching out to a greater number of countries and religions.

It is important to say that it was, to a large degree, the East that reached out to the West in IARF. At this point, it is imperative to return a moment to 1969 to

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31 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. List of the new Executive Committee selected Boston during the XXth CONGRESS of IARF, July 1969.
32 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. List of participants (continental) CHARTERFLIGHT PANAM, Boston XXth CONGRESS of IARF, July 1969.

exemplify this last statement. A letter sent by the president of the Japan Free Religious Association, Shinichiro Imaoka – IARF's first Japanese member – to the Director of IARF's office Mrs. B. van Gennep[33]states that he persuaded the Rissho Kosei Kai to apply for membership in IARF and asked the Executive Committee to approve the application. Declaring that the Rissho Kosei Kai was a newly created organization with thirty years of existence and was "... aiming at a new interpretation of Mahayana Buddhism and its applications to daily life [has] succeeded in responding to the ardent needs of the mass of people in Japan during and after World War 2."[32]

Returning to the present analysis it can be seen that IARF rose to the opportunity of meeting the East by first selecting Nikkyo Niwano, founder and president of Rissho Kosei Kai, as a member of the Executive Committee,[34] organizing and promoting a tour and a conference in Japan in 1970, and later naming him President of IARF from 1981 to 1984. This conference, which aimed at fostering dialogue between IARF members from overseas and the Japanese groups, resulted from the joining of the two Japanese groups above mentioned to the Association.

The examples described above affirm the claim that the 1969 Congress was the transition point, at which change was finally accepted. Rev. Joost W. Wery, in the preface of the book devoted to the 20th IARF Congress held in Boston in 1969, reaffirms that the purpose of the name change was:

> to open as wide as possible the door of the Association for groups and individuals of different persuasions and to invite them to come in and to share in the quest for mutual understanding and tolerance and the service for a more human world. No religious association or religious human being should be afraid of change. In the process of becoming we are summoned to find ever deeper meaning in our existence and greater opportunities to serve.[35]

5 Conclusion: New Urgency for Change

IARF, post-1969, was able to increase the scope of its activities and become a truly interreligious dialogue organization. From the 1970s onwards, its congresses

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33 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. Letter from Shinichiro Imaoka, to Mrs B. van Gennep, 7 February 1969.

34 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. Minutes of the Meeting of the General Assembly at the XXth CONGRESS of IARF, July 18, 1969.

35 Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS 256 A986 1/10, Folder 1, Box 1. Joost W. Wery, Preface to the booklet of the XXth CONGRESS of IARF (IARF The Hague Holland, 1970), 3–4.

were able to reach, like never before, a wider public thanks to the union of more Asian groups to IARF. This greater reach allowed for the sharing of information, beliefs, worldviews, and practices from two different sides of the world and diverse religions. This has become the norm for IARF thanks to the wider perspective and active attitude regarding the inclusion of other religions to the Association accepted during the 1969 Congress.

Regarding the interreligious dialogue movement, this episode of IARF's history stands for the trend to open interreligious dialogue organizations up to new frontiers by actively seeking a wider religious diversity. In this respect, the interreligious dialogue movement can be seen as a part of a changing world filled with diversity that needs to be embraced and acknowledged to fully create a world where people no longer fear the other because they understand them. With understanding comes empathy, a value that enables peace and that could make the world a better place. This was displayed in IARF's opening up to religious diversity from 1969 onwards in response to invitations from the East. The resulting open dialogue nurtured new chapters in its history with other religious beliefs.

Equality of importance regarding someone's religion and sex is something else that can be learned from this episode. One can find a call for self-reflection when looking at the large difference in numbers between women and men that constituted the Executive Committee in 1969 and the small number of non-Christian and non-western member groups present and affiliated to IARF at that time. Interreligious dialogue is not for some but for all, no matter gender, sex, religion, social class, or place of origin; it must be cultivated in all corners of the earth so it can be beneficial to humankind as a whole.

All of this can be linked to the more general discussions on the notion of interreligious dialogue itself. Paul F. Knitter defines interreligious dialogue as "the interaction of mutual presence (...) speaking and listening (...) and witnessing the commitments, the values, and the rituals of others."[36] While John Taylor says that: "Inter-religious dialogue is a sustained conversation between parties who are not saying the same thing and who recognize and respect contradictions and mutual exclusions between their various ways of thinking."[37]

It requires a receptive and open mind without losing a critical view of the other and oneself. This attitude enables the participating parties to improve their mutual understanding. It is not about agreeing with everything that the

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36 Zoran Brajovic, "The Potential of Inter-Religious Dialogue," in *Peacebuilding and civil society in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ten Years after Dayton*, ed. Martina Fischer (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007): 186.

37 Zoran Brajovic, "The Potential of Inter-Religious Dialogue," 187.

other says but to understand their beliefs and respect them without losing one's own identity. In the meantime, they also get to know themselves better through the others. Or as Hendrick Kraemer says: "inter-religious fellowships [leads] (…) to a better-founded mutual respect, a deeper self-knowledge and a sincere desire and readiness for self-revision."[38]

That is why the critics regarding the over abstract nature of the content of the papers submitted by two of the three commissions are also important since a congress is supposed to reach to more than the few that could afford participation in it. The information generated should reach beyond the gathering to benefit more people. That is why the program and contents of it should seek to be less technical so that the participants can reproduce the knowledge acquired, thus interreligious dialogue could reach more people.

Moreover, learning to be less proud and more open to change proved to be the key to this meeting with change, and as said above, it is indispensable to interreligious dialogue. It does not have to be a complete change; baby steps are equally valuable to achieve aims. Additionally, as it was beneficial for IARF it can be beneficial for interreligious dialogue as well.

In general, the change that came in those years for IARF and interreligious dialogue revolves around the more active presence of Eastern religious groups in both religious gatherings and interreligious institutions.

This finally adds yet another interesting aspect to the present analysis. It is curious that the Association has not yet reached to South America where its work could do so much good. This is, after all, a time of a religious increase in that part of the world, especially since the election of the Argentine Pope Francis and the sentiment of international religious recognition that this has triggered in South America.

Such regional expansion can also be rewarding for the Association itself due to the religious and cultural diversity that characterizes this part of the world. Isn't the aim of IARF to open its doors to other believers? Maybe, just maybe, the political, economic, and social problems that characterized today's South America can be lightened by the peace, faith, self- knowledge, and hope that an interreligious encounter leaves behind: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."[39]

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38 Hendrik Kraemer, "The Role and Responsibility of the Christian Mission," in *Philosophy, Religion, and the Coming World Civilization*, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Netherlands: The Hague Martinus Nijhoff, 1966): 249.

39 UNESCO, *UNESCO Constitution:* http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (accessed 24.05.2020).

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Josep-Oriol Guinovart-Pedescoll

When Fear becomes Peace

Transforming Interreligious Dialogue into a Social Movement (World Conference on Religion and Peace / 1970 – 1973)

1 Introduction

1.1 First words

This article deals with one of the central turning points of what is referred to in this volume as the international interreligious dialogue (IRD) movement. It examines an episode that took place almost 80 years after the 1893 modern approach[1] that is now widely perceived as the beginning of the interreligious dialogue movement[2]: the 1970 World Conference on Religion and Peace.

The present paper argues that the first World Conference on Religion and Peace can be considered a turning point in the last 50 years of the interreligious dialogue movement. The foundation of Religions for Peace is still held in admiration by those who saw it born and is frequently a reference point at many multicultural interreligious dialogue conferences. Among its major achievements at that time was the fusion of secular and religious efforts by addressing social justice questions as well as the conscious use of the then more theologically based interreligious dialogue movement to tackle also social and political problems. This new activist approach gave the IRD movement a new impetus, especially because this conference lead to the foundation of an international organizational organization of the same name: The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP, as it was first known as; now it is referred to as 'Religions for Peace').

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[1] Leonard Swidler, "The History of Inter-religious Dialogue" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-religious Dialogue,* ed. Catherine Cornille (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013): 3 – 19.

[2] In the present-day literature, the terms inter-religious and interreligious vary in plenty of contexts. For the sake of consistency, I decided to use the "interreligious" version for IRD. At the same time, there is still an open debate around the word 'interreligious' as opposed to 'interfaith', which is not the main topic in this text. Yet, I decided to use interreligious consistently throughout this chapter, even though I consider both terms to be totally interchangeable. For a more extended debate on this, see Paul Hedges, *Controversies in Interreligious Dialogue and the Theology of Religions* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 3 – 15.

The author holds that this case study has special meaning because, unlike other international IRD organizations existing at that time (i.e. IARF, WCF, TOU), WCRP originated in Japan, far from North Atlantic countries, in a land that had suffered one of the most extreme forms of warfare, the two atomic bomb attacks over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. This particular context helps to explain what in retrospect was a momentous decision: founding a permanent organization at the end of the (first) WCRP. WCRP's later fruits have only confirmed how significant that episode in 1970 was for the next period in the history of the IRD movement. Indeed, WCRP as an international IRD organization has become an outstanding moving force worldwide not only encouraging dialogue between religions and humankind, but also rising as an outstanding INGO that also plays an advising role at the United Nations.

This article first analyzes who took part in the establishment of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and how they influenced its creation and development, not exempt of problems that will also be discussed in the following pages. Secondly, the paper discusses the importance of the World Conference on Religion and Peace in the IRD movement. In order to offer a broader perspective and to bring more understanding to the previous points, this article focuses on three periods: 1) the late 1960s that preceded the formal establishment of the WCRP, with its particular social context; 2) the first conference that occurred in 1970; 3) the early follow-up years of the establishment of WCRP as a formal international IRD organization.

Research for this article was conducted in the Japanese headquarters of Religions for Peace (World Conference on Religions for Peace-Japan). Therefore, special emphasis is placed on aspects of the organization in that Asian context. In addition, a number of terminological clarifications are addressed immediately below

2 Basic Concepts and Socio-Cultural Context

2.1 Basic Concepts

This article follows the terminological considerations spelled out in the introduction. First, it does not start from a pre-determined definition of interreligious dialogue. Rather, it uses the self-description of the actors in the field as an indication of the extent to which a particular phenomenon can be described as linked to IRD or not. In the case of the 1970 World Conference on Religion and Peace,

the framing as an interreligious dialogue organization is so explicit that it certainly falls within the boundaries of the broadly defined concept of IRD.[3]

Second, the article supports the idea of an IRD Movement as a heuristic concept based upon the self-description of the protagonists in the field. The following analysis shows that the main actors involved in the 1970 World Conference on Religion and Peace saw themselves in line with other interreligious dialogue activities. They repeatedly referred to past events, such as the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, as well as other major ones frequently associated with the history of the IRD movement. In this sense, it is inevitable to associate the 1970 event with this IRD movement.

Third, there is a need to clarify the terminology used to describe the main object of study – Religions for Peace, as it is now known. It must be noted that the World Conference on Religion and Peace started as the name for both its first assembly conference as well as the organization that was born officially on its closing day. Since the focus in this chapter covers the three periods of before, during, and after the conference, the third including both references to the event as such and to its emerging organization, there is a need to clarify both usages.

To make it easier to understand, the terms "World Conference on Religion and Peace"[4] and the acronym WCPR are used indistinctively during the article when pointing to the event. If a specific assembly needs to be pointed out, then the term WCRP will be preceded by an ordinal number. (I.e. first WCRP assembly, the second WCRP assembly, etc.) Additionally, the organization that emerged out of this conference was also called, at first, World Conference on Religion and Peace.[5] It was only in the 1990s that the name was officially changed

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3 Marianne Moyaert "Interreligious Dialogue," in *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, ed. David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt and David Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) explores the roots of Interreligious Dialogue.

4 *World Conference on Religion and Peace, World Conference for Religions and Peace* and *World Conference for Religions on Peace.* All these names for the event are considered correct and were used in different situations. Since the 3rd Conference the standardized name has become *World Conference for Religions on Peace.*

5 The original name of both the conference and the association was *World Conference on Religion and Peace.* However, due to some confusion with the initial event itself and its subsequent organisation, in the mid-1990s, WCRP was changed to *Religions for Peace (RfP).* The Japanese name, however, still is registered as the original one since the translation into Japanese would make it really confusing. In this paper I will use the acronym *WCRP* as well, since the references are mainly to the period in which it was the official name. When required it will be stated as *Religions for Peace.* The Japanese name is stated as 世界宗教者平和会議日本委員会 *(Sekai Shukkyôsha Heiwa Kaigi Nihon Iinkai).*

to "Religions for Peace" (RfP). In order to avoid confusion, in this chapter, the acronym of RfP is used to refer to the organization that emerged after the WCRP conference and the more recent phase of this organization since the early 1990s.

In addition, it is necessary to reflect on the concept of 'syncretism'.[6] Whereas syncretism can be considered to be a positive concept in some cases (anthropologically speaking, when adopting different traits of different cultural groups), in the practice of IRD there has been a strong correlation between syncretism and 'impurity', given that the concept of 'purity' is associated directly to that of 'authenticity' in the overlapping fields of Religion and Theology. In other words, especially in some Muslim, Christian and Jewish contexts, to keep the 'purity' of a religion one remains suspicious of anything that might come across as 'syncretistic'. These understandings can also be considered to be tools of power.[7] On the same basis, Gort mentions that "as a rule, the mixing of religions is condemned [...] as violating the essence of the belief system'. But, since Christianity, at its earliest stages is also considered to have gone through a syncretic process this term has always been considered controversial.[8]

Finally, the present chapter uses the rather simple, binary opposition of 'the religious' and 'the secular' simply because that is how it can be found in the archival sources. In the last decades, the discussions on those categories have gained considerable momentum with the reconsideration of the supposed necessity to strongly separate the religious movement from the social and political spheres of life.[9] Also, how different major religions have either accepted the postulations of modern secularism or still kept to a desire to influence the public

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6 Different experts in religious studies, anthropology, history and sociology elaborate on this sensitive topic in the compendium by Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw entitled: *Syncretism/anti-syncretism: The Politics of religious Synthesis.* (European Association of Social Anthropologists London: Routledge, 1994). Also, on the field of religious syncretism, see: Jerald D. Gort, Hendrik Vroom, Rein Fernouth and Anton Wessels *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach,* (Michigan: Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1989).

7 Different experts in religious studies, anthropology, history and sociology elaborate on this sensitive topic in the compendium by Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw entitled: *Syncretism/anti-syncretism: The Politics of religious Synthesis.* (European Association of Social Anthropologists London: Routledge, 1994). Also, on the field of religious syncretism, see: Jerald D. Gort, Hendrik Vroom, Rein Fernouth and Anton Wessels *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach,* (Michigan: Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1989).

8 This thesis is fully developed in: Jerald D. Gort, *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989).

9 David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot / Burlington: Ashgate, 2005).

sphere, must be considered when it comes to the birth of the modern IRD movement as well as the birth of the WCRP in particular. The following chapter takes these discussions into consideration. They are, however, primarily based upon the terminology used in the source materials.

To discuss these developments, one must start with some analysis of the historical context during which WCRP emerged initially in the late 1960s and RfP got established during the year 1970 in particular.

2.2 The Counterculture Period and the Fear of another Global Conflict.

In what became the introductory package for the delegates, Dr. Homer A. Jack presents one question that summarizes the main problem that the conference tried to solve: "Why have organized religions been unable to give effective leadership for world peace and indeed why have they usually been unable to affect the policies of governments and their leaders?"[10] In other words, how can religions have a positive influence in politics and try to become a beacon of hope in facing social problems?

Jack, an American Unitarian minister and theologian, took an active role in connecting the pieces that led towards the WCRP Conference. Right from the beginning, he moved from the US to India to help establish the different committees and initiatives that worked throughout 1968 and 1969 towards establishing the WCRP Conference in 1970. His devotion to this task made him the first General Secretary of WCRP and a pillar in the foundation and evolution of the organization renamed Religions for Peace (RfP) a few years after his retirement. This key leadership role also made him the target of some critics and attacks. Chapter 3 takes a closer look at Jack's role.

The 1960's and the early 1970's were central to some of the biggest cultural changes in modern history. The political instabilities faced a cultural boom that was fed by a new form of globalization. The 1960's saw the escalation of the Vietnam War, the start of US involvement in the conflict in a world divided into two by the Iron Curtain at the heart of the globalized Cold War, the fight for Civil Rights and the search for the end of racism.[11] Politically speaking, the 1960s and 1970s were dominated by the antagonism between the political blocks of

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10 Oriental Package material, 1970, BOX-WCRP1, WCRP Japan Archives, Tokyo.
11 James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97 (2003): 75–90.

the capitalist West, and the communist East. The race to get the first person to the moon marked the end of a decade of social movements and changes beyond human imagination.

These different socio-cultural strands were central and intertwined with political developments during these years. As the USSR and the USA engaged in the nuclear arms race, the rest of the world watched helplessly and feared the outbreak of a conflict bigger than ever before. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the lengthy Vietnam War (1955–1975) added to this fear and prompted the need for civil action on a global scale.

The above-mentioned tension between the two blocks of the Cold War had a strong religious dimension: on the one hand the falsely attributed words to Yuri Gagarin "I see no God in here", illustrate the religious framing of the block controversy. Strong criticism can also be found regarding the way religion had influenced the upcoming of the events that brought Vietnam to War, and how Catholicism had played a major role in the first stages of the conflict.[12] Also, scholars have pointed out the influence of religion in political strategies (mainly supporting two main blocks – Catholicism and Protestantism).[13]

On the other hand, Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, in his Inaugural Greetings for the WCRP in Kyoto, emphasized "it is true that many people today are negating or neglecting religion. But, no matter whether they believe in God or not, there are, deep in their hearts, ridden by serious doubts and are asking themselves, "Is this the right way for us to live?"[14]

This last quotation leads right into the main subject matter of this article – the development of the first WCRP. Before beginning the analysis, it is necessary to say something about the sources consulted.

2.3 The Japanese WCRP Archives

Since Japan played a leading role in the constitution of the WCRP, the Japanese branch of the WCRP (also key in setting up WCRP's regional branch, the Asian

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12 See on controversial criticism to the Catholic Church and the way it influenced the events of the first years of the Vietnam War by the hand of Ngô Đình Diệm: Avro Manhattan, *Vietnam... Why Did We Go?* (New York: Chick Pub., 1984).

13 Dianne Kirby, *Religion and the Cold War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), offers a selection of scholarly articles regarding the power that religion itself played in the Cold War and how it became a pillar of the different regimes.

14 Niwano's Greetings. (Transcript) 1970. BOX-WCRP-1. WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo. (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

Conference of *Religions for Peace* Japan – ACRP) was instrumental in putting together a series of books that focused on the history of the WCRP *[World Conference on Religions for Peace, 2000 & 2010]*. These books help build an understanding of WCRP/Religions for Peace's evolution. However, they only cover the beginning of the activities, have a greater focus on the periods following the end of the Cold War and, of course, the beginnings also of ACRP.

However, part of the data and materials stored in the archives were not included in these edited books, providing an excellent opportunity to analyze and put together essential data that had not yet been used in order to better understand the beginnings of WCRP/Religions for Peace.

Part of the documents produced during the initial phase (late 60's and early 70's) was moved from Japan to the US by Homer A. Jack, who put them together and edited later in a revised version of the WCRP procedures and the evolution towards RfP in 1993.[15] Those documents related to the conferences are composed of different summaries that, sadly, are only published in Japanese.[16] This situation raises an important point when deciding to do research in the Japanese archives where the originals are still located: these were written in Japanese and, thus, left in Japan. They were not much studied in the following years. Homer A. Jack did not know Japanese, so part of the archival documentation must have been, unintentionally, neglected.

Additionally, Homer A. Jack published a book entitled *WCRP: A History of the World Conference on Religion and Peace*[17] broadly covering the first steps of the development of WCRP. This book, which has been discontinued, is also constructed around parts of the documents in the archives that the same Jack wrote right after the first WCRP was held.[18] In spite of the quantity of interesting

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15 Homer A. Jack, *WCRP: A history of the World Conference on Religion and Peace* (New York: World Conference on Religions for Peace, 1993).

16 Rev. Yoshitaka Hatakeyama, former Under Secretary of the Japanese branch of the WCRP (Religions for Peace Japan) and, since late 2014, Secretary General of the Asian Conference of *Religions for Peace* Japan–ACRP-, declared the intention of translating these materials into English so they could serve for further research purposes.

17 Homer A. Jack, *Religion for Peace. Proceedings of the Kyoto Conference on Religion and Peace* (New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1973).

18 Sadly, the main actors of the first act of this play passed away in recent years, such as the 'big 3' Dr. Homer A. Jack, Rev. Greeley and Rev. Nikkyō Niwano, who had tied the hearts of the first 300 people and made the first WCRP possible. However, a second generation, followers of the legacy of the founders are still reachable. Following in the steps of her grandfather Rev. Kosho Niwano, now stands as the president-elect of the Risshô Kôsei-Kai. I had the chance to have a 30-minute meeting with her, during which we could exchange ideas and opinions on the work her grandfather had done in helping to build WCRP/Religions for Peace, both in

material, the focus was rather on the more recent history than the description of the origins of Religions for Peace.

Therefore, the subsequent analysis is primarily based upon material written in English and found in the Japanese archives, as well as material that was moved to the United States. This means there were some episodes and points left aside or found incomplete in earlier publications in English about the early development of WCRP/Religions for Peace, as well as points of view of other founding members that might not have been taken into account. The materials of these archives are truly important since they fill some blanks in the history of the establishment of the WCRP and help build a better understanding of its achievements and limitations. Therefore, it is necessary to use this information extracted from the archives to further analyze the events in question.

In a way, the history of the archival material mirrors the history of the early WCRP. The first WCRP was held in Kyoto. However, the coordination office had been established in Tokyo a year earlier, which explains why the vast majority of the organizing documents were kept in the facilities of the *Rissho Kôsei-Kai* (立正佼成会), in the WCRP Japan office. However, when it was decided to establish in New York City the headquarters for the newly founded WCRP organization right after the end of the first conference in 1970, the documents that were written in English, constituting a great percentage of the main papers for the founding and the organization of the overseas committees, were moved to the United States.

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Japan and internationally. In addition, Prof. Sanada and Rev. Katsuyama, both part of the Rissho Kôsei-Kai and present at different assemblies of the World Conference on Religions for Peace, agreed to meet me and to answer some questions regarding the information I had gathered. Finally, I had the chance to talk to Ms. Wada and Rev. Hatakeyama. Both have been working for over two decades in the office and provided me with countless sources of information, opportunities and opinions in what had happened in the recent years and how it might have been connected to the past events of the WCRP. These publications present fascinating pieces of information on the constitution of the first committees and their antecedents. They list, for example, some of the central speeches and the addresses that were presented in the early days of the organization. They also provide the names of the main speakers and the members who acted as moderators of the sessions, showing that the present authorities were high-level scholars, not only important representatives of their respective faiths. As an example, the President of the International Court of Justice in The Hague between 1970 and 1973, Sir Zafrulla Khan (a Muslim leader from Pakistan); the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva from 1966 to 1972, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake and the first Japanese Nobel laureate in Physics in 1949, Dr. Hideki Yukawa, all representatives of important political and social segments of the late 60's, were not only present but also speakers. For a more accurate list, see Rissho Kossei Kai, *The Kyosei Times* 56 (October 1970) and Attendance List 1–3, 1970, BOX-Organizers, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

In the process of organizing the first conference, 90 % of the materials kept in the office were written in Japanese. Therefore, some difficulties arose in terms of content. Some material had both copies in Japanese and English. To simplify, I chose the English version when there were two copies of the same text and translated fragments of the documents that were critical into English.

In terms of methods, this created a challenging situation where different types of data had to be read and compared with one another. The analysis contained in this chapter is primarily based upon this archival data. In addition, existing publications in English and the results of a few interviews were used. In sum, access to the materials stored in the Japanese branch of Religions for Peace provided this study with first-hand material not commonly used, which also helps create a more precise vantage point into what happened at the beginning of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

3 The First World Conference on Religion and Peace

3.1 Main Actors in the 1970 Conference

The pre-history of the World Conference on Religion and Peace starts in 1969. Two different meetings took place with 32 members of an appointed committee[19] that first met in Istanbul, Turkey, in January 1969, and in Tokyo, Japan, in October 1969, with the aim to establish the first assembly of WCRP. The protagonists of this process are as follows:

Archbishop Angelo Fernandes (1913 – 2000), Archbishop of Delhi and Secretary General of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of India, was the leader of the International Interreligious Symposium on Peace in New Delhi in 1968. He would later be one of the Presidents of the World Conference on Religions for Peace (Catholic).

Dr. Dana Mclean Greele (1908 – 1986) was the President of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), and for 8 years, also President of the Unitarian Universalist Association of the US and Canada. He was the last President of the American Unitarian Association and the 1st President of the merged Unitarian Universalist denomination. He was also considered one of the main interlocutors in all the previous dialogues conferences (Unitarian).

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19 Homer A. Jack, *WCRP: A History*, 34 – 46.

Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath (1902–1973) was the President of the organization of Reform Judaism in the USA as well as a well-known anti-war and civil right activist who worked with Martin L. King. He was the main link to Judaism in the early years of WCRP (Jewish).

Rev. Dr. Homer A. Jack (1916–1993) was the first Secretary General of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, as well as a peace activist, parish minister, denominational executive, and the Director of the Chicago Council against Racial and Religious discrimination. For several years, Jack studied Mahatma Gandhi, which explains why he was sent to India in the early phase of preparations for WCRP. His contributions to the Niwano Peace Foundation and the IARF (International Association for Religious Freedom) were also extremely valuable. He served on various WCRP and different UN committees until he retired from Religions for Peace in December 1983. His role in the conservation of the archives and the legacy of WCRP is outstanding, as well as the connections he kept after he retired from his work (Unitarian).

Rev. Nikkyō Niwano (1906–1999) was the President of the Rissho Kosei Kai, a Buddhist lay organization, he established in 1938. In 1963, he went to the West as a member of the Peace Delegation of Men of Religion for Protection against Nuclear weapons. He met Pope Paul VI and took part in the Second Vatican Council. This experience prepared him to serve on the preparatory council for the establishment of WCRP. He was also the Director of the Japan Religions League and Chairman of its Committee on International Affairs.

The above-mentioned individuals are the main faces who visibly took part in the creation of WCRP/Religions for Peace and who also assumed the main roles in developing and taking it further. Their names are also supported by all those who made the first conference possible, and whose names are also brought up in different sections of this article. These eminent figures dominated the history leading to the foundation of WCRP and all of them, as displayed above, were born in the first years of the 20th century, right before World War I or just at its beginning. Additionally, all of them were main representatives of faiths that had been struggling with the emergence of atheism at the beginning of the 20th century. They also felt an urge to address the main problems the world was facing and to apply religious and moral values in order to help solve them, in a search for a valid way to peace.[20]

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20 First preparatory meetings: Istanbul and Tokyo, 1969, BOX-Letters1, WCRP Japan Archives, Tokyo.

The first traces of modern globalization were seen in those years, as a result, as these key religious figures travelled the world in order to join WCRP.[21]

3.2 Leading up to the Establishment of WCRP/Religions for Peace[22]

To analyze the 1970 event, it is important to dig even deeper into its pre-history. The beginning of the first World Conference on Religion and Peace started with the meeting of four religious leaders who met in 1962 in the United States of America. Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, Bishop John Wesley Lord, Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath and Bishop John Wright were the main four among a group of several representatives who agreed to have two conferences in the U.S. (A first one in January, 1964 in New York and a Second National Interreligious Conference on Peace in Washington in March, 1968) before considering a bigger international adventure.[23]

After these meetings, Homer A. Jack and H. Haalbert traveled to Asia to find the first partners interested in joining the preparation of a world conference. Following this trip, at the beginning of 1968, a larger group of members started a travelling peace mission to Geneva, Rome, Istanbul and Jerusalem to meet with the leaders of the four major religions of the world (since the 60's and without major change: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism).[24] The trip also stopped in New Delhi for an International Inter-Religious Symposium (sponsored by the Gandhi Foundation) and a Japanese-American Interreligious Consultation on Peace in Kyoto. In the first part of the trip, it is really obvious that Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Hindu faiths were strongly considered.

Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, Bishop John Wesley Lord and Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath became part of the Committee on Peace sent as Exploratory Mission

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21 Homer A. Jack, *WCRP: A History*, 398–412.

22 There is a timeline section by Homer A. Jack "Brief chronology of events leading to the Kyoto conference and beyond" in *WCRP: A History of the World Conference on Religion and Peace* (New York: World Conference on Religions for Peace, 1993): 278–280, which provides complete information on all the IRD events and main meetings that led to the first WCRP.

23 There is a timeline section entitled "Brief chronology of events leading to the Kyoto conference and beyond" in Homer A. Jack, *WCRP: A history,* 278–280 that presents all the IRD movement events and main meetings that led to the first WCRP.

24 Statistics regarding the number of religious population in each period can be found in different books and internet references. An easily accessible one is from the Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary, ed. *Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary:* https://www.gordonconwell.edu/ (accessed on 24.05.2020).

to North Africa and Asia, mainly to sound out the possibilities of having different religious leaders join a world event. Rev. Herschel Halbert, and Dr. Homer A. Jack spent four months searching for scholars and leaders who were ready to meet. The results were astonishing.[25] They found total readiness from different leaders of religious communities with the wish of joining forces. However, they discovered that some steps needed to be completed before getting into the next stage.

3.3 Planning the Conference

We must bear in mind that the technical limitations of the 1960s made some tasks difficult in comparison to what it would become in the 21st century. In practical terms, the Committee found that there was a need to answer several questions before starting with such a big event:

– Could they make leaders of different faiths to join and to talk at the same level regarding problems and peace? This Factor was one of the main hopes and something that would mark this event compared to other organizations and meetings held until that point in time. Having different representatives sit down and discuss in such a tense climate could be productive in order to help address and hopefully alleviate political issues.

– Would they find a neutral enough place in terms of religion and politics? Holding the Conference in a country that was taking part in the conflicts of the late 60s or with a clear predominant faith would not help create an appropriate climate for the assembly.[26]

– Based on the sponsorship, could they find the balance and avoid a Judeo-Christian, Western (and US) domination in the symposium? This question would be also solved at the same time as the decision to be taken on a neutral place in which to hold the conference.

– And last but not least, would they have enough funds to have enough representatives attend the meeting? The Conference would be a 100 % privately funded event (and by the donations of the different participating associations). In addition, the budget provisions for the establishment of the

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25 In the different letters regarding the preparation Committee Letters, 1970 – 2, BOX-ORGANIZERS, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo there are both the figures about the positive reception and the committees that lacked response.

26 Jack & Committee search hall,1969, BOX-LETTERS, 5, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

WCRP changed all along with the preparations, and affected the final out-come.[27]

These first questions summarize the early difficulties encountered by the organizers. Their responses to those questions gave birth to the idea of having a preparatory meeting either in New Delhi or in Tokyo. Taking advantage of the centenary of the birth of Gandhi, the National Committee for the Centenary of Gandhi's birth in India suggested holding it there. It was then when Dr. Jack first stepped to the forefront, moving to New Delhi to organize the several meetings that came after moving to India.

The 1968 encounter in Istanbul served as a pre-meeting once again to sort out some basics that would help prepare the meeting and the opening of an international office that was set up in Boston. On the way back from the first meeting in Boston, Rev. Nikkyō Niwano and Rev. Miyake together with some other Japanese organizers had the chance to meet the Bishop of Canterbury and have a private audience with Pope Paul VI in the Vatican (see section 3.4.3).

On this basis, the first World Conference on Religion and Peace, held in Kyoto, united about 250 delegates from ten major religions and from 39 different countries and nations to discuss three main points: disarmament, development and human rights. These three topics would subsequently become the pillars of the following conferences with a fourth topic added later that would keep changing, depending on the year and location the conference would be held (e.g. such topics included environmental protection and climate change).

3.4 Kyoto 1970

Based on the oldest documents that directly refer to the first WCRP (located in the headquarters of the *Asian Conference on Religions for Peace / ACRP* in Tokyo), the 1970 event was described as:

...a world-wide movement, consisting of men and women of faith who meet to share their concerns about the many factors and situations which threaten world peace and deny human dignity. While acknowledging that religious elements have aggravated rather than reconciled existing tensions and conflicts,

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27 The archives still kept the first estimations of the budget and how it changed during the building of the conference. Inviting and coordinating the guests would be the main focus of the entire budget. Budget estimations, 1970, Budget File, BOX-TRANSCRIPTS, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

yet we would work together as religious people and with all people of good-will for the realization of a world free of violence – a world in which all people may live in freedom, justice, and peace.[28]

As far as the present argument is concerned, this document is of central importance. In addition to this initial self-description, this paper argues that *the focus of WCRP's attention at the time drifted from religion itself to religion applied to solving world problems*. That was a major change from all the previous inter-religious meetings that had been held in which reflection and exchange about religions was the main focus. At the end of this conference, however, there was a unanimous agreement that there should be a Conference Follow-Up Committee that would continue the task and make sure that the work of the WCRP would not be forgotten. To this end, an actual organization was established also to be called the World Conference of Religion and Peace.

To better understand this change, it is helpful to underline a number of particular aspects of the 1970 event that have been frequently neglected. One of these points is related to the participants of the conference and all the challenges linked to the attendance of the event and how the material in the archives illustrates this.

3.4.1 WCRP Participation

Even though it has been stated before that data regarding the participants on each part of the conference is rather scarce, it was possible to recover the lists and some detailed information on the participants that attended the event, in general terms. The following numbers give a better idea of the nationalities and religions present at the the first Assembly, as well as to help understand other limitations. First, the chart below displays the numbers of attendees and their formal functions, as well as whether they were Japanese (JP) or not (Non-JP):[29]

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28 WCRP. World Conference on Religion and Peace. (brochure) WCRP, 1969.
29 The complete attendance numbers can be found in: Expected Attendance Numbers 7/10, 1970 – 10, BOX-TRANSCRIPTS. WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

Tab. 1: First WCRP assembly total attendance with category division

	Non-JP	JP	TOTAL
Delegates	156	54	210
F. Delegates	6	3	9
Observers	9	18	27
Speakers	2	1	3
Guests	6	14	20
Press	14	250	264
Visitors	10	190	200
Volunteers	–	150	150
Employees	–	100	100
Others	16	66	82
TOTAL	219	846	1065

In addition, the archives provide data on the religious and national affiliation of those participants that were perceived as formal delegates of religious traditions:

Tab. 2: Delegates divided by country and religion

	INDIA	JAPAN	US	USSR	OTHER
Buddhism	1	19	1	2	15
Christianity	6	12	27	8	44
Confucianism	–	–	–	–	1
Hinduism	–	–	–	–	3
Jainism	1	–	–	–	–
Judaism	–	–	3	–	–
Islam	2	–	–	2	14
Shintoism	2	–	–	–	1
Sikh	2	–	–	–	1
Zoroastrian	1	–	–	–	1
Others	–	7	2	–	1
TOTAL	35	31	31	12	92

What can be most easily deduced from this data is that the number of partici-
pants was high and relatively international. However, while the number of dele-
gates was relatively balanced on the basis of the four main participating coun-
tries, the total number of participants reflects the facts that about one quarter
were Japanese. The data on religious and national affiliations also reflects a pre-
ponderance of Christians and Buddhists, as well as the centrality of only three
countries, Japan, the USA and India, which were the birthplaces of Dr. Jack,
Rev. Niwano, and Archbishop Fernandes.

While not explicit in the available charts, the archival sources show that the
vast majority of delegates and representatives were past their 40's[30], the young-
est official representative being a 22-year-old Japanese Buddhist girl who came as
a substitute for her superior who could not attend. As has been a frequent sub-
ject in the modern religion debates, more than 90% representatives were male
delegates (Hindus and Christians had a somewhat lower ratio, but women
were still in a clear minority).

Finally, it is interesting to observe that scholars were preferred over leaders
of religious communities – who often had lower levels of official education. 80%
of the delegates had a Ph.D. and all belonged to some religious studies branch or
institution.[31] Still, it was a meaningful step to have so many volunteers partici-
pating in the organizing of this event (without any clear information as to
there religious background), which included more women. Plus, strictly speak-
ing, focusing on socially-relevant themes created a time-sensitive need for fast
action to tackle them. To avoid transcendental topics and a drift towards syncre-
tism, no religious matters were discussed directly, focusing instead mostly on the
three chosen themes as well as, to a much lesser extent, on the logistical proce-
dures of each session (prayers, and rest time for praying[32]) and towards the end
on the organizational structure that would eventually turn this conference into
an organization.

From different archival sources, the following challenges emerge: different
letters point to uneasiness with regards to the unbalanced representation of dif-
ferent faiths. Letters from the Organizing Committee concluded that the Muslim

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30 Expected Attendance Numbers 7/10, 1970 – 10, BOX-TRANSCRIPTS. WCRP Japan Archive,
Tokyo.

31 The delegate's profiles are still conserved in the archive files of the WRCP, Tokyo. Delegates
Profiles, 1970-Niwano. BOX-ORGANIZERS, WCRP Japanese Archive, Tokyo.

32 Minutes of Org Committee, 1969. BOX-TRANSCRIPTS-52, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo. The
Committee made sure that the WCRP would focus on social problems rather than related reli-
gious matters. That is why the Conference itself sacrificed discussing religious matters in
order to preserve a focus on social responses to charged content.

world did not then have enough organizations to allow them to invite a figure that could represent a large number of Muslims in a formal way.[33] In addition, the archives document a certain disappointment when it comes to the representation of women and young participants, too few in terms of representation (those who were 35 years or younger). In a letter from Jack to the Officers of the World Conference, there is a strong recommendation to find "more youth, more women, more Mosleems, more Hindus, more Africans, more Latin Americans."[34] This clearly reflects how aware organizers were of the challenges to find representatives from these groups.

Despite the awareness about the above-unbalanced figures, there is yet another dimension of the first conference that has to be mentioned – the polarization of the event that can be seen in certain important episodes, demonstrating the fragility and the complications of coordinating many faiths as well as avoiding putting one in front of the other.

3.4.2 Polarization of the Event

The archival materials suggest a two-fold polarization. The first was linked to the concept of 'syncretism'.[35] Even nowadays, syncretism remains a fear, especially among numerically smaller religions since they can easily fuse and blend into another big one. Even though in terms of theoretical thinking, Unitarians tend towards a syncretistic position[36], the protagonists of the WCRP tried to propose a balanced approach. On the one hand, the first WCRP did not look to include syncretism. "We are not trying to find a common religion [...] This objective has even been rejected,"[37] stated Homer A. Jack in one of his letters when planning the event. On the other hand, the archival materials suggest that there was a need to show the participants that through seeing different religious worship

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33 Org to Jack (letter), 1969. BOX-LETTERS, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

34 Jack to Org-2 (letter), 1970. BOX-LETTERS, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

35 Helmer Ringgren in *The Problems of Syncretism* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1966) points out that syncretism tends to appear 'on interreligious encounter'. I would like to point out that, coming from the base that Unitarians themselves were on the top of this assembly, this could have been supposed as an objective of the conference by the detractors.

36 Different fonts consider the actual UUA (Universal Unitarian Association) a syncretic religion. The official webpage, as well as other studies, consider it a borrower of different religions that tend to *"create a common faith by abstracting and putting together universal elements believed to underlie the outward forms of religion"*. For an extended explanation see Jan Garret, *Universal Religion and Religious Diversity:* http://people.wku.edu/jan.garrett/urrd.htm.

37 Jack to Committee-8. 1970. BOX -LETTERS. WCRP Japanese Archives, Tokyo.

every day, one could learn from different approaches as well as learn what each of the major religions say to the world about world peace in a liturgical dimension.

The second polarization was linked to the tensions between the capitalist and the communist blocs. Some of Homer A. Jack's strategic decisions were criticized along political lines. His attempt to meet both sides without politically aligning himself to either created huge problems., For example, when the *Nihon Shukyo-sha Heiwa Kyogi-kai* accused him of being a communist (also by some of his American fellows) and, conversely, when the USSR and China accused him of being a "splitter"; he stated "I am called an anti-communist and "splitter"[38] by the communists, both the Peking and the Moscow variety, and I am called a "communist" by the rightists both in America and around the World."[39]

These discussions and at times polarized positions affected the early WCRP activities. For example, Beheiren (anti-Vietnam war group supported by the US) was not perceived as an appropriate partner by the Japanese Committee (which was the main organizer), and therefore not invited.[40] The Minutes show that this decision was not only due to a reluctance by the Japanese members but also linked to an anti-campaign by the US. Thus not only social matters, but, unavoidably, also political matters had also to be addressed.

In retrospect, Homer Jack referred to a criticism affirming that the conference was too secular. At some point, delegates felt that the debate lacked enough religious depth and that the language used regarding religious matters was not sophisticated enough and, thus, not adequate for the conference. Some also noted that the conference had too many similarities with the secular peace congresses that the UN had been organizing. As Jack pointed out, "only by the titles or dresses of delegates, or the official name of the conference, could one be sure that it was a religious gathering."[41]

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38 "Splitter" is a concept that was used during the high tension periods of the Cold War (mid 60's until 1971) to refer to a person who wishes or supports the division between China and the USSR in the communist bloc. This concept appears when the relations between the two communist giants started deteriorating during the mid 60's, which is called the "Sino-Soviet split". These terms were used in a variety of textbooks and articles referring to the 'Sino-Soviet tensions'. For further reference, see Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton / Oxford: Princeton University Press).

39 Accusations to Jack (letter) 1970. BOX-LETTERS. WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

40 Minutes-Committee-1–1970. BOX-TRANSCRIPTS. WRCP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

41 Homer A. Jack, *WCRP: A history,* 247.

This close link between religious and secular readings of the situation can also be shown with regards to the proposal to invite the Pope to the WCRP in 1970.

3.4.3 Invitation by the Pope

The archives of Religions for Peace reveal the fact that its protagonists were very much aware of a trip the Pope had planned around Asia and that there was an extended rumor that he really wanted to visit Japan.[42] Internally, the people inside the emerging organization repeatedly raised the point that holding a religious event would be the perfect occasion for his Holiness to join. There would be a no better time for the Pope to visit Japan than when a religious meeting was happening.

The archives reveal how the expectations of a Papal visit increased and to what an extent the Pope himself showed some enthusiasm for having a meeting with these characteristics held for the first time, assuring to Rev. Niwano that he would be in Japan joining the WCRP.[43] Rev. Niwano, advised by the Apostolic Pronuncio to Japan, Reverend Bruno Wuestenberg, convinced the Organizing Committee to change the planned conference from September to October[44] so the Pope would be able to attend.

The hopes were initially high, but a letter written in perfect and polite English[45] confirmed a reversal in the situation. Its contents reveal that Rev. Niwano politely showed his disappointment towards Paul Cardinal Marella, representative of the Pope:

> The Most Reverent Bruno Wuestenberg recently informed [...to the Committee...] that the
> Pope will not come to Japan and nothing more. As mentioned above, I have believed his

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42 The same Niwano states in two different letters that 'His Holiness showed his interest in visiting Japan [...] it would be a fantastic opportunity' (Niwano to Committee 1970 – 2, BOX-ORGANIZATION, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo).

43 There are two full versions of Rev. Niwano's meeting with His Holiness. One can be found in Masuo Nezu, *Kaizo Zuimonki* (Tokyo: Rissho-Kôsei Kai, 2009*)*, 162–183. The second one is in: Nikkyō Niwano, *Lifetime Beginner* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1989), 174.

44 Adjusting the dates (letter), BOX-ORGANIZATION, 1970. WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo. This points out "in order to adapt the schedule of His Holiness we had to promptly cancel and book again the rooms at [...] moving the schedule from mid-September to late-October".

45 Disappointment regarding the non-coming of the Pope (letter), 1970, BOX-TRANSCRIPTS-2, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

> expectation of the Pope's visit to Japan. Contrary to my expectation, I feel it very regrettable to receive Archbishop Wuestenberg's [information that the Pope will not attend].[46]

What was probably even more surprising to the protagonists of the first WCRP was that the Pope visited other Asian countries and finally ended his tour in Manila, Philippines, in November.[47]

> Besides, [...], he [Archbishop Wuestenberg] has been positively promoting the preparation to invite the Pope to quite another conference to be held in May, 1971, in Japan. [...] I hear the announcement of the Pope's visit to the Philippines and Australia this coming November has been made public.[48]

It is most telling at the time that the same Niwano considered the Pope's rationale to reflect world politics rather than religious considerations. He suggested that the visit could have provoked apathy by some states regarding the Pope moving towards the American-led block and leaving behind further chances of dialogue between representatives of both sides. WCRP would have to wait until its 6th Assembly in Italy in 1994 for a direct participation of His Holiness.[49]

In the years after the 1970 event, WCRP tried to address some of the issues outlined above (attendance, polarization or relation with the established powers...) primarily by introducing a stronger programmatic focus into its work.

3.5 Stronger Programmatic Focus after 1970

The first years of the WCRP were backed by the support of a small number of religious organizations based in Japan and the United States. In particular, after Rev. Niwano had been able to gather a great number of volunteers and Japanese religious leaders to attend the first World Conference, he tried to maintain

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46 Niwano to Marella-2 (letter). BOX-LETTERS, 1969. WCRP Japan Archive. Tokyo.
47 Pope Paul VI visited 9 countries in his last international tour. He promoted Christianity in Eastern Asia and Oceania. More information on these travels can be found in the Vatican archives. http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/it.html (accessed 24.05.2020). Japan was finally not included in that trip, which supports the theory stated above.
48 Niwano to Marella-2 (letter). BOX-LETTERS, 1969. WCRP Japan Archive. Tokyo.
49 Pope John Paul II finally attended the opening ceremony of the 6th Assembly of the WCRP which took place in Rome in 1994. More information on the attendance of His Holiness and His address: Religions for Peace, ed. *Sixth World Assembly:* http://religionsforpeaceinterna tional.org/sites/default/files/pubications/Sixth%20World%20Assembly.pdf (accessed 24.05. 2020).

the momentum of the first WCRP. Slowly but steadily, regional and national committees began their activities and spread around the world. After the European Office was established, the Singapore office that served as the Asian Secretariat opened. By 1980, there were 17 offices and many more prepared to open around the globe.

Since the establishment of the WCRP, there have been eight follow-up world assemblies, the next one being scheduled for August 2019 in Berlin, Germany. There has been a steady increase in the number of participants from a growing number of countries (from 50 in the 2nd conference up to more than 120 in the last one held in Vienna in 2013).[50] Additionally, the topics have shifted to allow these assemblies to become more of a working space than the 1st assembly with more time spent in four simultaneous commissions (disarmament and security, economic development and human liberation, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and environment and survival), as well as in working parties and panel discussions.

In addition to holding assemblies of religious leaders on average every six years, WCRP was involved in several education/action/service programs. This made WCRP an outstanding organizational representative of the secular rights at a time when the religious world still was only linked to those who were religionists.

The first of these projects was the Boat People Project in 1976–1977, established by the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace and the World Conference on Religion and Peace early in December 1976. Thich Nhat Hanh was the initial Director of the Project but was relieved of responsibility in mid-February 1977, when the two ships at sea (chartered by WCRP) – with a total of 555 refugees on board – found it extremely difficult to find permanent homes for these "boat people." The Board of the Boat People Project announced in March that the Project would terminate when passengers from both ships were given permanent asylum. It was not until September 1977 that all passengers had disembarked, and many were still living in refugee camps awaiting permanent resettlement. Substantial donations were received from all religions and all continents to meet the costs of this Project. As Rev. Katsuyama stated in one of his declarations, "this was one of the moments where we could really see the power of the WCRP. We were faster and more efficient than any other organization when it came to help the refugees [...]"[51]

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50 More data regarding the countries and the members in: Attendance Final Lists-2–3. 1970. BOX-ORGANIZERS. WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.
51 Katsuyama-Guinovart, audio file, August 17th 2014. WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

A second attempt to help victims of a country affected directly by war came in the form of the WCRP Khmer Fund (October 1979 – May 1980) and the WCRP Khmer Program (May 1980 – May 1981). The project started in parallel to the 3rd assembly when the Board of Directors asked the Secretary-General to explore possibilities for a project related to Kampuchea (Cambodia). Both Homer Jack and Howard Schomer (seconded by the United Church Board of World Ministries to serve WCRP as Associate Secretary for Kampuchean Issues) visited the Bangkok border to seek ways of helping the Khmer people.

Since the establishment of its headquarters near the United Nations in New York City, WCRP has been a close observer of United Nations discussions and activities, particularly in the areas of disarmament, development, and human rights. After being granted consultative status with ECOSOC[52] in 1973, the WCRP and its representatives were allowed, as any other organization with such a status, to submit communications to a variety of UN bodies, thereby participating in a small way in the shaping of certain United Nations policies. Homer Jack wrote many memos, articles and reports on issues collaborating with the United Nations' delegates and to representatives of other non-governmental organizations. Since 1973, WCRP/Religions for Peace has been working closely with other NGOs, both in *ad hoc* committees and in ongoing organizations working at the United Nations Headquarters or closely related to its mission.

4 Conclusions

This article tried to demonstrate how a number of religious leaders and experts came to collaborate closely together not only to establish the first World Conference on Religion and Peace in 1970, but to transform this one-time event into an on-going international interreligious organization that has been acting as a mediator between religious thinking and social action.

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52 The UN Economic and Social Council is one of the UN main organs and focuses on social development. One of its main features is that it allows NGO's to be part of it. United Nations, ed. *About ECOSOC:* http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml (accessed 24. 05. 2020).

4.1 Summary of the Main Findings

First, the present analysis tried to show to what an extent the initial idea of the WCRP was a direct reaction to the conflicts that arose in a triple context: The Cold War, the loss of direct influence of religion on politics in many countries, and the necessity to help solve social, political and moral problems that arose in the 60's. The WCRP established interreligious/interfaith dialogue as a tool that would try to positively influence the way the leaders acted at that time. Accordingly, there was a new eagerness to collaborate among many politicians and people of different religious groups and social strata The WCRP group lead mostly by Homer A. Jack and Rev. Niwano tried to carve a unique space, separate from the main line of traditional religious actions,to establish a new kind of basis for the IRD movement as we know it nowadays, with a focus on addressing contemporary social and political challenges, which had not yet emerged within other interreligious/interfaith efforts existing at the time of WCRP's inception in 1970.

Jack considered the World Conference on Religion and Peace "a first—a trial, a model. Like a baby. If it were given too much responsibility, too fast, the baby could perish, no matter how heralded the birth."[53] Seen in a global perspective today, after 45 years of existence, the WCRP clearly succeeded in a time in which political difficulties and different encounters marked the instability of its first two decades in particular. To tackle social issues arising in the 60's, WCRP started building peace and understanding through dialogue, while opening its doors first not only to members of major world religions, but little by little to all sort of volunteers and secular members.[54] The founders created an environment in which those who were neither religious leaders nor religious experts in any of the proposed areas would be able to openly hold discussions, propose ideas, learn about and work together across religions and also at times including agnostics and atheists for peace through humanitarian and social action.

Religions for Peace acts as a catalyst and a rendez-vous point in which dialogue and identity stand before everything else, working both locally and globally in building projects around the world, in which faiths do not act as moralizers but as a help to address and do something concrete about different social

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53 Jack to Niwano-15 (letter). BOX-LETTERS, 1969. WCRP Japan Archive. Tokyo.
54 The work of the institution can be primarily seen in the five edited volumes that followed the original one (a total of 10 main Assemblies that have been held in all the main continents except South America, with the next to last one held in 2013 in Vienna) and the last one held in Lindau, Germany, in collaboration with Ring for Peace and various German governmental levels. All the volumes are edited by *Religions for Peace.*

problems. To spread peace using these projects and dialogue as a tool has become one of the main objectives of Religions for Peace.

More recently, through holding its 7th Assembly in Jordan in 2013, Religions for Peace has addressed more directly the long term Israel-Palestine conflict as well as the recent rise of various forms of violent extremism done falsely in the name of religion.[55] RfP has hundreds of volunteers and workers working on a variety of on-going projects, although often on a small scale.[56] There is more local aid to be offered. In addition, there is a bigger need to carefully choose the topics for each assembly. Thus, the evolution of the media, the communication systems and the coordination of the different offices has made somehow, unnecessary, to organize such big events every three years, even though it was one of the first wishes of the organizing committee.[57] The budget problems that the WCRP had to face at first, plus the difficulties that it had to face in organizing such a big event every three years (we are talking about the end of the 70's and the 80's) made such a proposal more like an idealistic target. Over almost half a century since its inception, the intervals between each WCRP assembly has now reached an average of 6 years.

Probably the biggest achievements of the first WCRP, in retrospect, is that through its transformation into an organization with international outreach, its impact has lasted now for almost half a century. Moreover, it has been able to create a space for a fairly neutral dialogue between the followers of the major religions worldwide, that come together to try to address and respond constructively to the biggest current issues. It is worthwhile to remember that the most commonly used words in all the speeches of the first WCRP were "fear", "war" and "nuclear power".[58] Those words were triggers for establishing such a historic event. It was then the first time that humankind saw a real chance

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55 Treated in various seminars and texts by RfP. The Seventh World Assembly took place in Jordan. More information: Religions for Peace, ed. *Seventh World Assembly:* https://rfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Seventh-World-Assembly.pdf (accessed 24.05.2020).

56 In terms of local aid, and as a noted example, Religions for Peace-Japan has been working in the Sendai-Fukushima area in order to assist those affected by the results of the great Tohoku earthquake and the following tsunami from March 11th, 2011. The Fukushima Aid Program and the humanitarian activities regarding major natural disasters are listed in http://saas01.netcommons.net/wcrp/htdocs/fukkoushien/ (accessed 24.05.2020).

57 Homer A. Jack, "Declaration of the First Assembly," in *Religion for Peace. Proceedings of the Kyoto Conference on Religion and Peace* (New Delhi: Ghandi Peace Foundation, 1973): 130–134.

58 The main opening addresses and speeches from Kôshô Otani, Rev. Niwano, Dr. Greeley and Angelo Fernandes all of them include "fear", "threat", "atomic bomb" in their contents. It is for sure that it was one of the triggers, to avoid that conflict. Opening Speeches-Conference-Drafts. BOX-TRANSCRIPTS-2. 1970, WCRP Japan Archive, Tokyo.

of being annihilated if one of the major powers had made a move towards a nuclear war. There was a necessity to talk about these issues and find what people of religion could do in order to avoid the outburst of any kind of conflict.

4.2 A Final Consideration

To make sure that the first WCRP assembly would succeed and be free from any kind of conflict (neither political implications nor social demonstrations, as shown in the concerns by some organizers regarding the student demonstrations of Kyoto and Tokyo[59]), it took eight years of preparation to build towards this first event, with plenty of drafts and failed attempts. This path was long and full of hardships.

This paper has attempted to show the eagerness, doubt and even polarization of the first WCRP assembly and the establishment of the following organization that was received with mixed hopes in different religious sectors. Since 1870, assembly after assembly, fears like syncretism and non-inclusivity, as well as nationalism, were set slowly apart.

Rev. Niwano, Rev. Jack, and their fellows encountered plenty of limitations: reduced number of attendances small coverage, not a great acceptance in the international community, initially, and the disproportionate representation of the religions. Nevertheless, the first WCRP became a stepping-stone for the creation of WCRP/Religions for Peace and, what is more, a mirror through which one can also look at one of its most active creation, the Asian Conference on Religions for Peace. This regional WCRP/Religions for Peace branch has become one of its most active. Born in the middle of the conflict era of the Cold War, it grew worldwide to help heal through IRD and collaboration the wounds inflicted to society by war, discrimination and various forms of social dangers that humanity has been facing in more recent history.

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Part 3 **Towards an Increasing Support by Religious Hierarchies**

Jana Philippa Parenti

From a Historical Event to a Modern Institution

Interreligious Dialogue and Global 'Critical Issues' (Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions / 1989 – 1993)

1 The Centennial of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions

1.1 Celebrating a Hundred Years of Global Interreligious Dialogue

Can history be repeated? What do we need to bring the world together? And how does an event become an institution? Let's explore the formation phase of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions to understand the background of its emerging institution: The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.

The 1993 Parliament is the centennial of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, which is commonly referred to as the birth of the modern interreligious dialogue movement. This historic gathering has been described as the first official meeting of Eastern and Western religions and spiritual traditions. It took place in Chicago within the framework of the World Columbian Exposition. The 1893 Parliament was dominated by English-speaking Christian representatives, referring to both its planning committee and its participants. The most re-

markable moment was doubtless the address of the Indian representative, Swami Vivekananda, at the opening session. In his speech, the Hindu monk Vivekananda, only 30 years old and unknown in the USA at that time, introduced Hinduism. Considering the memorable impression that Vivekananda left, it is no wonder that the impetus for a celebration of the centenary of the World's Parliament of Religions came from the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago.

1.2 Moving beyond the Centenary: Creating a Unique Event in 1993

Between 1893 and 1993, several attempts were made to conduct a second Parliament continuing the success of the first event. For example, plans were made to hold a Parliament in 1900 in Bombay (now Mumbai), and later to celebrate its 50th anniversary by integrating it into the 1933 World's Fair meeting in Chicago, and to hold a successor event in 1957. In the early 1980s James R. Thompson, the then-Governor of Illinois made plans for a centennial of the World Columbian Exposition. After an invitation by Mr. Duboq[1], different religious individuals met in his home on Chicago's 56th street in Hyde Park in 1982 and wrote a letter to Thompson, asking him to include a centenary of the World's Parliament of Religions into his plans.[2] A few years passed until the Governor abandoned the centennial plans for the Exposition. The centennial of the 1983 Parliament also almost fell through. But how did the event eventually come about?

The reason for this must be searched for in the planning phase. Was it the tenacity of the group that planned it? Or was it time for another Parliament? The cause may be a mixture of two factors. First, the group decided to not only hold a centenary, but to create a unique event that was in step with the *zeitgeist*. And second, a continuation was implied by the formation of an organization[3] to conduct the event.

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1 More information on the person that hosted this first Hyde Park gathering could not be determined.

2 Carlos Hugo Parra, *Standing with Unfamiliar Company on Uncommon Ground: The Catholic Church and the Chicago Parliaments*. (Toronto: PhD Thesis University of Toronto, 2012), 180–184.

3 While the 1893 event was called the World's Parliament of Religions, the 1993 event was named the Parliament of the World's Religions. The organization operates under the name The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, currently a name change to Parliament of the World's Religions is being discussed. To avoid confusion for the reader, in this essay the events will be referred to as "the 1893 Parliament" and "the 1993 Parliament", while the organization is abbreviated to "the Council".

The hypothesis of this paper is, that this creation of an organization is precisely what fostered the structuralized planning that eventually led to the 1993 Parliament event and beyond. Between 1893 and 1993, the organizations and individuals working in the field of interreligious dialogue changed dramatically. After some hesitations, the organizers of the 1993 event cooperated with the new actors in the field. Due to this, they were able to add a dimension that was more long-term and eventually translated this cooperation into an organizational framework.

Both, the character of the event and the continuation are central themes when dealing with the 1993 Parliament. They were driving issues in the formation phase. Moreover, these issues still build the basis for discussion today amongst the members of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.

1.3 Visiting Chicago

Research has been conducted on two levels to fulfil the *Talking Dialogue Project's* aim to identify a core episode of the formation phase of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions and to analyze it within a wider framework. From the beginning of July until the middle of August 2014, archival research was conducted at DePaul University in Chicago[4] and interviews were carried out with the members of the Council who planned the 1993 Parliament. Furthermore, secondary literature was consulted to frame and contextualize the research findings.

To enable a nuanced view of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, this essay focuses at first on the background of the event (2) describing the establishment of the Council during both the planning phase and the realization of the 1993 Parliament (2.1) as well as the socio-cultural background at that time (2.2). It then outlines the empirical approach of the research (3) by presenting the method of analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis (3.1), and considering the potentials and limitations of the available material (3.2). The analysis of the material (4) portrays the challenges that the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions had to face planning the 1993 Parliament (4.1) and defines a core episode of the formation phase (4.2). To take a close look at this core episode, the challenging period of the episode (4.2.1) and the resolution of this challenging period (4.2.2) are examined separately. Finally, the conclusion (5) sums

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4 The DePaul University Special Collections and Archives hold all remaining documents of the 1893 Parliament, as well as those of the 1993 Parliament and those of the Council's work up to 1998.

up the findings (5.1) and presents an outlook on the progress of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions today (5.2).

2 The Outstrip of 1893

To answer the questions posed in the introduction it is first necessary to provide background information on the pre-history of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions to frame and contextualize the information presented on the core episode in the following chapters. For this purpose, at first, general information on both, the 1993 Parliament and the Council is given. The formation phases of the organization and the event are interdependent since the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions was established to plan and realize the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. This section takes account of this interdependence by describing how the Council's formation was shaped by the planning phase and the actual 1993 Parliament event and how the organization came to proceed after this time. This is followed by the description of the socio-cultural background of their formation time.

2.1 The Formation of an Organization

In the late 1980's, two years after the official plans for a centennial of the World Columbian Exposition were cancelled, the Vivekananda Vedanta Society[5] invited the group that met in Hyde Park. The religious leaders, academics and organizers that formed the group discussed whether they should continue the planning for the second Parliament notwithstanding. "Then, we started to plan it on our own"[6], said Rohinton Rivetna, who had been with the Council since its foundation and served as its secretary and vice-chair, during the time of the interview.

The group decided to arrange a small celebration on the hundred-year anniversary of the World's Parliament of Religions and started to regularly gather in the basement of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society to plan the event. As the project took form, they founded a non-profit organization, named the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions, to implement their plans. The foundation document was signed in 1988 by the group members Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez,

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5 Vedanta Society is the general term for a branch of the Ramakrishna Order that is located outside of India.

6 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

Paul Sherry and Leilani Smith. Charles Nolley was elected to be the first chair. Shortly after the establishment of the Council, the name was changed to the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. "The subtle change in the name of the new council [...] shifted the emphasis from an accent on the global nature of the event itself to the more egalitarian inclusion of all the world's religions and spiritual traditions."[7]

The Council took into account that while in 1893 the religions had to be brought to Chicago and had to get to know each other, almost a century later, most of the world's religions were present in the city, they just needed a place to exchange. Information on other religions was available, and contacts were established. The Board of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions itself was indicative of this change, mainly representing the minority religions such as the Baha'i Faith, Hinduism and Islam. "Not only was the new council representative of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, but the reasons for calling a centennial parliament were now shaped by the spirit of the emerging interreligious movement."[8]

Hence, the aim for 1993 was not only to celebrate the centennial of the 1893 Parliament, but to create a unique event, standing on its own. It was planned that the 1993 Parliament should follow the spirit of 1893, but at the same time fit into its own context, taking current issues and circumstances into account. Moreover, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions agreed that a special focus should be put on integrating the event into its location on a long-term basis. Since the Council felt that "to all appearances, the 1893 Parliament of Religions left no impact whatsoever on the city of Chicago", they decided, their "first focus should be on the religions of Chicago, to assure that the centennial would yield a more vital legacy than its predecessor."[9] Therefore, 14 local religious communities formed host committees "to represent their particular religious and spiritual traditions to the Parliament and, through the Parliament, to the world."[10] The host committees also supported the Council during the planning process in raising funds, advertising the event and acquiring registrations.

Not only should the religious and spiritual traditions meet and exchange, they should also find common ground and collaborate with each other. The

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7 William E. Lesher, "Parliament of the World's Religions", in: *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Edwin Fahlbusch (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1999): 778.

8 Lesher, "Parliament of the World's Religions," 778.

9 Ronald R. Kidd, "Early Dreams and Plans for the Centennial," in *A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions,* ed. Joel Beversluis (Chicago: Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993): 10.

10 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

goal was to bring the world's religions together to highlight the existing consensus between them and to encourage them to work together on the challenges of the 21st century.[11]

As planned, the centennial of the World's Parliament of Religions took place from 28 August to 4 September 1993. The event exceeded all expectations. A total of 195 institutions and organizations co-sponsored the gathering in the Palmer House Hotel in downtown Chicago. It gained worldwide recognition, recording more than 850 press registrations, listing journalists from four different continents. All in all, more than 6500 people from 55 countries attended the Parliament.[12]

At the early planning stages, the Council had never expected the event to attract that many people. Howard Sulkin, who has been a member of the Council since 1988 and was its executive director between 1993 and 2001, remembered during our conversation: "we had the assumption that very few people would come from abroad."[13] The first budget plan counted on 400 participants, the amount of men and women, the 1893 Parliament had brought together. And there were major doubts among the Council's members, if that number could be reached. The former chair and executive director of the Parliament, Gómez-Ibañez, admitted during the phone interview: "if we knew how the Parliament would look like, we would have been too scared to conduct it."[14] The amount of registrations exceeded the Council's estimates various times during the planning phase. "The number was more than double what the planners had anticipated, and consequently they were forced to suspend registration several days before the parliament began."[15] In fact, more than a thousand checks had to be returned.[16]

Because the 1893 Parliament omitted so many religious communities, "effort was made to make the 1993 Parliament much more diverse on all levels, while also keeping the Parliament open to grass roots members – as opposed to

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11 Kidd, "Early Dreams and Plans for the Centennial," 1–10.
12 Specifications concerning the number of participants range from 6500 (Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Ch. 22) to 7000 (Alan Neely, "The Parliaments of the World's Religions," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 18 (1994): 61) to 8000 (Lesher, "Parliament of the World's Religions,": 778).
13 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.
14 Daniel Gómez-Ibañez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
15 Neely, "The Parliaments of the World's Religions,": 61.
16 This information was provided by Constance and Howard Sulkin during our meeting on August 9, 2014.

only leaders."[17] Nevertheless, most attendants in 1993 were Christians, followed by Hindus, Buddhists, Baha'is and Muslims.[18]

However, this did not mean that the assembly was dominated by Christian thought in the same way as its predecessor is commonly described. "It was predominantly 'an other-than-Christian' assembly, with the Christians who were present maintaining a modest profile and assiduously avoiding Christian claims of uniqueness or superiority."[19] Sulkin emphasized during the phone interview: "Our ancestors [of 1893] kept people out. We wanted to preserve the position of inclusion, not exclusion."[20] This striving for inclusion had its seeds also in the diversity of the Council itself, which since its foundation was formed by members of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Zoroastrian communities.[21] According to Gómez-Ibañez, the Council believed that interreligious dialogue does not succeed if simply one religion invites other religions. Thus, they acted upon the maxim that "the decision to do interreligious dialogue has to be an interfaith decision from the beginning."[22]

If not the Christians, did any other religious group leave its imprint on the event? "Given the diversity of traditions represented in 1993, it is difficult to point to a single group that acted as a catalytic agent. However, earth-based spiritualities, foremost among them neo-pagans, formed a significant part of the total assembly."[23] The Council wanted the Parliament to make room for the participants to express their religion and also share religious experiences with people of other faiths. Thus, music, arts, ceremonies, religious services, liturgies and meditation were included in the program. The Council "wanted the centennial itself to be a *religious* event and not just a week of talk *about* religions."[24]

Each day, the 1993 Parliament opened with prayer and meditation, followed by an opening plenary. During the day, three sessions of seminars, workshops and major presentations were held. In the evening the program closed with worship and a thematic plenary. For the last three days, the religious and spiritual leaders gathered separately in the afternoon at the Art Institute of Chicago for

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17 Jon P. Bloch, "A Whisper Toward Peace: A Theoretical Analysis of the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47 (2008): 61

18 Joel D. Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions* (Chicago: Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993) Chapter 22.

19 Neely, "The Parliaments of the World's Religions," 62.

20 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

21 Neely, "The Parliaments of the World's Religions," 61.

22 Daniel Gómez-Ibañez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

23 Wayne Teasdale and George F. Cairns, eds., *The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of the World's Religions* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 29.

24 Kidd, "Early Dreams and Plans for the Centennial," 11.

the Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. The programme was shaped by the collective work on the critical issues that challenged the world's religions on the cusp of the 21st century: "the earth, the human community, economics and justice, science and religion and 'Power, Politics and Liberation'."[25] The Council had started to cooperate with the Institute for 21st Century Studies (now the Millennium Institute) in 1991 to prepare this dimension of the Parliament.

The Opening Ceremony of the Parliament of the World's Religions included "music from East and West, an interfaith processional, welcomes, blessings, and invocations."[26] The first major speech was given by Dr. Gerald O. Barney from the Institute for 21st Century Studies. He gave "an impressive speech on the social, economic and ecological state of our globe."[27] The information Barney delivered was not particularly new, what was new was his plea for the world's religions to realize their important influence on the critical issues of the time and to act upon their subsequent responsibility.[28] Dr. Robert Muller, then chancellor of the Peace University established by the UN in Costa Rica, expanded Barney's thoughts and emphasized in his speech that the world is in need of a spiritual rebirth opposed to a "social, economic and ecological fatalism."[29] For Muller, the religious and spiritual traditions have to reclaim their influence in the world by once again being a guide to human behaviour.

The third major speech was held by the Swiss Catholic priest, theologian and author Hans Küng. During his talk, Küng expressed his concern about the same issues as Barney and Muller.[30] His approach to solving the global problems of humankind was interreligious dialogue. Küng believes that there would not be peace on earth without peace among the religions and that peace among the religions would only be possible through dialogue between the religions.[31] Küng also prepared the document 'Declaration of a Global Ethic' at the request of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. Drawing on many of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, the text works on a common global ethic as a basis for interreligious dialogue among the world's religions with the Golden Rule of reciprocity at its center. It was presented as an initial declaration that should function as a "permanent contribution of the Parliament to the global conversation on how human beings should live together with each

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25 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions*, 12–13.
26 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.
27 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 98.
28 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 99.
29 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 100.
30 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 102.
31 Hans Küng, *Projekt Weltethos* (München: Piper), 13.

other and the planet continuation."[32] With a slight name change, to 'Declaration Toward a Global Ethic'[33], the document was approved by the Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders during their last meeting at the Parliament. The endorsement meeting was well-covered by the media, which praised the Declaration as the key outcome of the Parliament. The last day of the Parliament of the World's Religions ended with a keynote address by the Dalai Lama at the Closing Plenary, followed by a concert in Grant Park.[34]

Some conflicting incidents took place during the planning of the second Parliament and the actual event.[35] There were religious groups that did not want to participate in the event in the first place or that withdrew their support during the event. Evangelical and fundamentalist church groups refused to collaborate even in the early planning stages. As one of the reasons they named 'neo-pagan' groups being allowed to hold ceremonies. Four Jewish groups withdrew their support during the Parliament protesting the presence of Louis H. Farrakhan of the 'Islamic Nation', whom they associated with anti-Semitic statements. Furthermore, there was tumult among several Indians in the audience after a speech by a citizen of Kashmir, who described the fate of his land "as 'psychological rape'."[36] Finally, the 'Declaration Toward a Global Ethic' provoked intense discussions including the questioning of its development procedure, doubts about the content and the suggestion to treat it as a working paper only. Nevertheless, it seems that these conflictual incidents did not harm the Parliament's cause. "On the contrary, it became clear that this Parliament was not being held outside our earth in a spaceship – in an atmosphere of artificially contrived harmony – but in the middle of this world."[37]

In fact, "observers and participants hailed it as a pivotal event that gave the interreligious movement global prominence"[38] and voices calling for ongoing work by the Council began to emerge strongly during the course of the Parliament.[39] As early as 1988, at the time of its formation, the objectives of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions did not limit itself to implementing the 1993 Parliament. At this stage already, the Council wanted to "develop and en-

32 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

33 Blouke Carus, interview meeting, August 6, 2014.

34 Donald W. Mitchell, "Report on the Parliament of the World's Religions," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 14 (1994): 207. Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

35 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 95–96.

36 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 95.

37 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 96.

38 Lesher, "Parliament of the World's Religions" 778.

39 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

courage interfaith groups and programs which will carry the spirit of the Parliament into the twenty-first century."[40] Driven by the call for continuation and its own initial intention, the Council decided in 1994 to continue with a threefold international initiative consisting of a continuation of the Parliament of the World's Religions every four years, further work on the 'Declaration Toward a Global Ethic' and a cooperation with the Millennium Institute in Washington, D.C. for the 'Projects 2000', a plan that focused on the potential of the "millennial moment" to inspire individuals to initiate and foster positive changes for the world.[41] Chapter 5 draws closer attention to the continuation of the Council's work.

2.2 The 1990s as a Time of Reunification in the World

"One hundred years ago, Chicago brought the people of the world together. There is no better time than now for this to happen again." – Slogan of the 1993 Parliament

The Parliament of the World's Religions was conducted in a decade that was characterized by fundamental social changes. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in 1991. These events led to a rethinking of East and West and marked the beginning of a time of realignment and reconsolidation in the world. The end of Apartheid in South Africa in 1994 and the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act passed in the US continued this development. The 1990's were also a time of growing economic privatization and rapid electronic revolution with new technology such as cable television and the Internet. This all made way for the rise of multiculturalism and alternative media. At the same time discussions about globalization increased.[42]

The US was shaped by "the dramatic influx of people into America from Asia and other parts of the world following the passage of the historic U.S. Immigra-

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40 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

41 Jim Kenney, "The Parliament Experience: 1993 and Beyond," in *The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, ed. Wayne Teasdale and George F. Cairns, (New York: Continuum, 1996): 138–40.

42 Richard H. Seager, "The two Parliaments, the 1893 Original and the Centennial of 1993: A Historian's View" in *The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, edited by Wayne Teasdale and George F. Cairns (New York: Continuum, 1996): 24.

tion Act of 1965."[43] In 1993, 44% of the population in the United States were Protestants, 26% Catholics, 3% Mormons, 2–3% Jews, 1% Orthodox Christians and 2% belonged to religious traditions outside the Judeo-Christian heritage.[44] Native American cultures were undergoing a manifold revival, the Civil Rights Movement had changed the nation and second-wave feminism had succeeded in putting a wide range of gender issues into the midst of the US society.[45] "The awareness of living in a changed historical era was reflected in the second Parliament in the spectrum of groups which this time were present or fully represented: not only Muslims and Zoroastrians, Jains and Tibetan Buddhists, but above all 'native Americans' and a broad spectrum of the most varied cults, spiritual groups and religious movements."[46] The Parliament of the World's Religions took into account the elements of its time, knowing that by 1993 numerous religions were represented in Chicago and were already in lively exchange with each other. It therefore mainly dealt with "concrete questions of the coexistence of the religions and thus with questions of common convictions, values, and basic attitudes: in short, with questions of an ethic common to all religions."[47]

The organizers of the 1993 Parliament created a unique event that was in step with the *zeitgeist* by considering the changes in the field of interreligious dialogue. They built on the history of the event but cooperated with the new actors in the field and established a continuing organizational framework.

3 Archival Research and Interviews

3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was chosen for this research because both the archive documents and the interviews can be effectively analyzed using this method. Furthermore, the inductive category development fits the exploratory approach of the *Talking Dialogue Project*. The iterative process allows for continuous revision and flexible adjustment to the material which caters to the varying types of material, the diverse perspectives and the broad distribution

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43 Lesher, "World's Religions, Parliament of the," 778.

44 Karl-Joseph Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions, 1893–1993," in *A Global Ethic. The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, edited by Hans Küng and Karl-Joseph Kuschel (New York: Continuum, 1993): 92.

45 Seager, "The two Parliaments," 23–24.

46 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 94.

47 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 93.

of issues encountered during research. Qualitative content analysis also has the advantage of a transparent procedure, making the results comprehensible. It moreover enables both a broad overview and the study of single cases. Because some of the archive material is already ordered by themes, it would stand to reason that qualitative content analysis is used to examine it.

Furthermore, qualitative content analysis was chosen to widen the research perspective. It was used to analyze not only the material of the core episode, but also other documents referring to important information outside of the episode. Therewith, the core episode-approach is thought to be opened, allowing links to the wider context of the 1993 Parliament. The aim is to counteract the narrowness[48] that is inherent in the core episode-approach without exceeding the research framework.

During the phone interview with Howard Sulkin, he challenged the core episode-approach of this work. Sulkin said it included a revision of history, a process he does not support. For him, the 1993 Parliament inherited a greater goal than what is focused on in the aim of the *Talking Dialogue* research project as the Parliament planning follows neither a causal order nor can it be pressed into a scheme of high and low points. For Sulkin, the Council comprises an ongoing spirit that should not be reduced by scandal creation and exaggeration of critical issues. His critique went as far as refusing to answer certain questions, because for him they artificially created or exaggerated themes.[49]

The self-concept of this paper refers to academic and not to journalist work. It is open to discuss its own approach and welcomes challenging remarks as those of Sulkin. During the archival research and the interviews, the core episode-approach helped to determine the scope of study. Nevertheless, the narrowness Sulkin noted, appeared when themes surpassed the boundaries of the chosen core episode, which already encompassed a long period.

Qualitative content analysis was chosen to examine the material to counteract causality and expand the boundaries of the chosen core episode. It was used to open the core episode-approach, allowing links to the wider context of the 1993 Parliament as it also analyzed documents referring to important information outside of the chosen 'core episode'. This allowed for greater differentiation and complexity, as well as a broadening of the research perspective.

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48 Here, narrowness refers to the time restriction that the 'core episode'-approach implicates and the causality that it implies.

49 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

Qualitative content analysis, as developed in the 1980s by Philipp Mayring, "consists in a bundle of techniques for systematic text analysis."[50] It works as an analysis tool for all kinds of recorded communication, so that for this research it can be used to analyze both the archive material and the notes of the interviews. Moreover, it not only counts the ideas of the text itself as content, but also includes latent content into the analysis, namely the communication context of the text. Qualitative content analysis is "an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification."[51] It was developed as a counterpart to quantitative content analysis with the aim "to preserve the advantages of quantitative content analysis as developed within communication science and to transfer and further develop them to qualitative-interpretative steps of analysis."[52]

There are two types of procedures in qualitative content analysis: inductive category development and deductive category application. The former is used to analyze the material for this research and is thus described in detail. Inductive category development gradually generates categories out of the material in a step-by-step process.[53] The research question and research aim usually provide the starting point for category development. Further (sub) categories emerge directly out of the material as words or text passages are multi-linked to thematic keywords. "Within a feedback loop those categories are revised, eventually reduced to main categories and checked in respect to their reliability."[54] As a last step of the inductive category development, all of the material is coded according to the main categories that contain the subcategories.

Through the ongoing comparison and contrasting of the subcategories during the iterative analysis process, the category-based analysis and presentation gains differentiation, complexity and comprehensibleness.[55] The material can now be analyzed, interpreted and results represented along with the main categories while taking the subcategories into account. This also includes the elab-

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50 Philipp Mayring, "Qualitative Content Analysis," in *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1, no. 2 (2000): Art. 20. http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0002204 (accessed: 24.5. 2020).

51 Mayring, "Qualitative Content Analysis".

52 Mayring, "Qualitative Content Analysis".

53 Philipp Mayring, "Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse," In *Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch*, 4th edition 2005, edited by Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff and Ines Steinke (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 2000): 472.

54 Mayring, "Qualitative Content Analysis".

55 Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerstützung* (Basel/Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 2012), 77.

oration of correlations between and within main categories, putting the findings in a wider perspective.[56] Furthermore, interesting individual cases can be presented in-depth.

3.2 Potentials and Limitations of the Material

The material used for the research is described and examined below paying attention to its potentials and limitations. First, the archive material is specified, followed by the unstructured interviews that were conducted.

As agreed in November 1993, the Special Collections and Archives of DePaul University in Chicago were designated to hold the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection with the 1993 Parliament documents.[57] The Collection includes material from 1983–1999 in 60 boxes (16 feet), which is arranged into six branches: Publications, Administration, Biographies, Parliament Planning, Parliament Presentations and Memorabilia. The boxes include official publications by the Council, as well as internal material from the different committees that planned the Parliament such as correspondences, Minutes or handwritten notes. Enclosed are also photographs, audio recordings, videotapes and miscellaneous advertisements.

The contents of 25 boxes were carefully searched, to gather information for this paper focusing mainly on those associated with the planning process of the Parliament. Due to the large quantity of material and the fact that the current archive staff had not worked with the collection before, a significant amount of time had to be spent on orientation. The 71-page-long finding aid for the collection was a great help in navigating through the boxes.[58] The material provided both a good overview and a detailed focus on single aspects of the planning phase. Many of the files are ordered chronologically, whereas others are stored in the order of arrival at the archive. Other files are grouped thematically by issues that occurred during the planning phase or the event itself. The records of the host committees are grouped by denomination, allowing research by religious groups. While some documents are held multiple times, others are missing, leaving fragmentary correspondences and knowledge gaps.

The interview material consists of three interview meetings and three phone interviews with six individuals involved in the planning process of the 1993 Par-

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56 Kuckartz, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*, 95.

57 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Ch. 22.

58 DePaul University Archives, "Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection".

liament. The interviews vitalized the archival findings, adding the different perspectives of the contributors. They were helpful in setting information into context and establishing relations between single findings. Moreover, they bridged gaps by contributing information that was not recorded.

4 The 1993 Parliament – A Manifold Event

In this chapter, the results of the actual analysis of the material are presented. A general description of the planning phase based on the archive material and the interviews is given. The chapter provides an overview of the identified core episode of the formation phase and portrays the challenges that the Council faced while planning the 1993 Parliament. After this, the chosen core episode of the formation phase is examined in detail. Then, the challenging period of this episode and the resolution of this challenging period are examined separately. However, before proceeding with this information, the analysis process, including the finding of the 'core episode' and the coding, is described immediately below.

During the archival research a box list, a research diary and a list of people were kept. The box list kept a record of the documents viewed and digitalized. The research diary linked interesting topics to the respective documents and to further research options that came up. The list of people names the members of the Board of Directors and the advisors of the council, their functions, religious backgrounds and tenures of office.

The research diary enabled a mapping of the topics and issues of the planning process. This mapping shows an interesting episode, the core episode of the formation phase, covering the planning during the years 1989 – 1991, where significant topics accumulate. Moreover, the mapping also facilitated the preparation of the first coding of the qualitative content analysis, providing a range of interesting topics to search for. The keywords that were provided by the research diary and that emerged out of the material during the first coding were:

> 'Küng', 'Finances', 'Kidd', 'Co-Sponsors', 'Organization', 'Aim', 'Cooperation', 'Structure' and 'Declaration'.

During the second and third coding, the codes were grouped, and more keywords were added. Through this, the relationships between the different dimensions were highlighted and the analysis became more specific. Here, the decision was made to differ between a period of challenges and a period of resolving

within the chosen 'core episode'. At this stage, the groups and their sub-key-words were classified as:

Challenges: Aim – 'Chicago vs. World', 'Centennial vs. Redirection'; Finances – 'Kidd', 'Co-Sponsors', 'Office closure'; Content – 'Küng', 'Declaration'; Structure.

Resolving: 'Cooperation', 'Organization', 'New Board Members'.

The fourth and final coding resulted in the following arrangement of keywords. They are presented in a table according to the distinction between a period of challenges and a period of resolving, as well as under the subheadings aim, content, finances, structure, organization, cooperation and reorientation. The table is to be read in rows from left to right:

Tab. 1: Codings, structured by the Author

Challenges	Aim	Chicago vs. World	Centennial vs. Reorientation	Diversity
	Content	Küng	Declaration	Dalai Lama
	Finances	Kidd	Co-Sponsors	
	Structure	Size of Board	Policies	
Resolving	Organization	Financial Recovery	Stop-Gap	
	Cooperation	Institute for 21st Century Studies	New Tasks	
	Reorientation	New Board members	Revision	

4.1 The Challenges of a Centennial Event that was meant to Reach Beyond

This chapter provides general information on the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions and the planning process of the centennial based on the archive material and the interviews. It deals with the challenges the Council had to tackle during the planning of the 1993 Parliament and provides an overview of the chosen core episode.

The Council started off with the Parliament planning solely with a vision. Looking back, Gómez-Ibáñez explained during the phone interview: "We were amateurs at that time. In the beginning, we didn't know where we were

going."[59] After having formed the Board of Directors and some committees during the summer of 1988, the Council organized a weekend-planning retreat at Crystal Lake, Illinois, to widen the initial vision.[60] The conversations at Crystal Lake began "to give shape to the program of the 1993 Parliament."[61] Nevertheless, further development was still quite undetermined. Rivetna recalled: "The Parliament planning happened little by little"[62] and Gómez-Ibáñez explained: "We created the parliament as we went along, it was a learning experience."[63]

The first annual meeting of the Board of Directors, the General Assembly of the Council, consisted of 10–15 members. Rivetna remembered: "We did not really have a good direction and said different prayers at that meeting."[64] By then, the Council was structured as follows: The Board of Directors functioned as the governing body of the Council. Main positions were the Chair of the Board, the Vice-Chair of the Board, the Treasurer and the Secretary. Additionally, an administrative office was established. Ron Kidd was named Administrator and started working "on a deferred pay basis."[65] The Board was supported by local, regional or national institutions that functioned as Co-Sponsors. Furthermore, national and international individuals facilitated the Council's work by becoming advisors. The heart of the Council were the committees, "the place where people transform ideas into decisions and plans."[66] In 1989 two sets of committees had already started working: the internal business committees (Finance, Publicity, Physical Planning, Membership and Nominating), and the Chicago-focused Program committees (Program, Research, Worship, Dialogue, Science and Religion and Social Action).

In the annual report of July 9th, 1989, the then-Chairman of the Board, Nolley, predicted the Council would grow in terms of its members, but also its work in the following year: "Our Board will develop a rather different character as we establish an Executive Committee and the work of the committees develops."[67] Nolley was right, the Council grew, and the work became more serious. Gómez-Ibáñez was elected as the new Chair of the Board. From 1989 onwards the Board

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59 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

60 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989. (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

61 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

62 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

63 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

64 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

65 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

66 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

67 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

Member, Blouke Carus, generously distributed an office to the Council for the Parliament of the World's Religions, enabling operation from a central workspace in downtown Chicago. The number of volunteers involved in the planning of the 1993 Parliament grew to nearly 200. The annual report of 1990 calls the past year "a year when we began to spell out our dreams for the centennial and make them real plans", but also "a year when ideas were tested against the hard surfaces of a real world."[68] Finances were a particular concern for the Council. There was no regular income to pay salaries and other expenses.

Between 1990 and 1991 the situation intensified. In a letter to the Executive Committee dated 3 December 1990, Gómez-Ibáñez wrote "the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religion is at a critical point" and he also clearly called for reorganization: "Unless we make some significant changes, the Parliament probably will fail."[69] The office of the Council had to be temporarily closed in December 1990 due to financial shortages and the expenses were reduced to a minimum, merely ensuring the continuation of the 1993 Parliament planning process. The services of the administrator, Kidd, had to be terminated. The annual report of 1991 talks about this being "a very difficult decision, because Kidd's vision and enthusiasm for the Parliament had been vital to the work and its success."[70] Sulkin recalls: "The biggest problem that had to be faced was money. It was there every second."[71]

Nonetheless, the situation improved between 1991 and 1992 and the challenging episode was resolved. The Council "saw progress on many fronts."[72] Donations were received allowing the Council to regain pace. Gómez- Ibáñez resumed the administrative office, as the Executive Director. The Council could re-open in a new suite of offices donated for two years by the Continental Bank. The number of contributing people shrunk, but there were still more than a hundred volunteers involved in the planning process.

At least 12 people were continuously working for the Parliament, of which four were paid staff and two were funded by grants. People from the influential circles of Chicago were won over for the Parliament idea and joined the Board. The Board of Directors was renamed into Board of Trustees. Gómez-Ibáñez describes this change in the nature of the Board as a turning point in the formation

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68 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.

69 Box 7 A: Correspondence January-December 1990: December 3 '90 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

70 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990–1991: Annual Report 1990–1991.

71 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

72 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991–1992: Annual Report 1991–1992.

phase.[73] From then on, "attention concentrated on the centennial rather than on the various plans for wider local participation."[74]

Another major development during this time was the cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century Studies. In a concept paper dated 5 December 1990, the Council reassures its focus on the critical issues, the celebration of the 1993 Parliament and the aim to bring together the religious communities in Chicago.[75] The question "*What shall we do? How are human needs to be met in the 21st century without destroying the ability of the planet to support life?*"[76], also referred to simply as "What shall we do?", was put forward and the partnership with the Institute for 21st Century Studies was initiated. The Institute had been a co-sponsor of the Council for some time and Barney, the Director, was in contact with the Parliament planning group since 1989. Therefore, the cooperation, settled on 11 May 1991, did not involve a reorientation of the Council, but an upswing of existing ideas. During the phone interview, Gómez- Ibáñez made clear that there was no restructuring during the planning process, but a continuous professionalization over time: "we just got more and more serious."[77]

In 1992, arrangements with the Palmer House Hotel were made. The Council negotiated a room rate for the guests and was not charged for the use of conference rooms and function spaces.[78] The centennial finally had a fixed location. In 1992 and 1993, the plans took form. Speakers were invited, registrations accepted, and the final program was launched. Many decisions were short notice, but major changes were not needed anymore. In the end, the Council managed to keep the budget.[79]

However, the 1993 Parliament event brought about a few new challenges. There were protests outside of the Palmer House Hotel, Jewish and Orthodox groups withdrew their support for differing reasons, the projected key outcome: the 'Declaration Toward a Global Ethic' was criticized and its creation process questioned. On top of that Gómez-Ibáñez resigned.

As mentioned above, the time between 1989 and 1991 was chosen as the core episode of the formation phase of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Regions. Several reasons for this were excerpted from the material and already elaborated

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73 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

74 Beversluis, A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions, 13.

75 Box 7 A: Correspondence January-December 1990: December 5 '90 Draft Concept Paper.

76 Box 7 A: Correspondence January-December 1990: December 5 '90 Draft Concept Paper.

77 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

78 Box 7 A: Correspondence February-August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

79 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

in this chapter. During the interviews, the importance of this episode was reconfirmed. Gómez- Ibáñez called the time between 1989 and 1991 the "period of most intense planning."[80] And also Rivetna sees it as an important stage of the planning process: "Between '89 and '91 we really started to organize, make a program and plan the Parliament, it became an event organization."[81]

4.2 A Core Episode of the Formation Phase

Below, the chosen core episode is described according to the structure of Table 1 on page 14. First, the period of challenges is described and afterwards, the period of resolving is presented.

4.2.1 The Challenging Period

a. Creating an International Event in a Local Context

As the planning for the 1993 Parliament evolved, the members of the Council had two major plans for the Parliament. First, they wanted to plan a big event with worldwide significance and second, they wanted to create an ongoing mechanism for Chicago to deal with interfaith issues. While the former became the principal aspect, the latter became the secondary.[82] This was mainly due to decisions made after the presentation of the concept paper in 1990.

As Gómez-Ibáñez explains in a letter to the Executive Committee, "its adoption implies that our work on the critical issues will be manifestly global, not just local, in that we will seek to involve the world's religions in a dialogue on global problems. So, with respect at least to the critical issues component of our vision, I think we would be deciding that the Parliament was to be an 'international event held in Chicago' rather than a 'Chicago event which might attract international attention and participation'."[83]

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80 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
81 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.
82 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.
83 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: Dec 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

b The Balancing Act between a Centennial and a Reoriented Major World Event

Another major topic concerning the aim of the 1993 Parliament was the management of the balancing act between a centennial and a reoriented major world event. The Council stated in 1990: "We do not see the 1993 Centennial as simply a repetition of the 1893 Parliament."[84]

But the matter was not so easily resolved, as demonstrated in the 1990 Annual Report: "from the beginning our work was seen to have two foci: the centennial in 1993 and the world's religions already assembled day in and day out in the Chicago area".[85] The Vedanta Society especially wanted to emphasize the centennial character of the 1993 Parliament to celebrate Vivekananda's speech at the 1893 Parliament.[86] In the end, also due to the concept paper decisions, the reorientation was emphasized, while at the same time, the spirit of the 1893 Parliament was not forgotten.

c. Striving for Diversity

The third challenge linked to the aim of the Council was the striving for diversity. Because the 1893 Parliament was mainly organized by people of Christian faith and excluded certain religious groups, the members of the Council wanted the 1993 Parliament to be as manifold as possible and organized by people of many different faiths. This thought substantially guided the Council, as Nolley reports: "early on, we made a commitment to ourselves that this Parliament would not be organized by an elite few for the many. Rather, we have set for ourselves the far more difficult task of incorporating as much diversity as possible, not only in our programs but within the very fibres of our organization".[87]

During the interview, Sulkin described that the Council's main concern was to get more and more people involved for the sake of diversity and inclusion. He also mentioned that the result of this endeavor was a tremendous variety of opinions, worldviews and intentions. This was challenging for the Council but did not lead to split-offs or disjunction, because "the spirit of the Parliament left room for everyone to have their own agendas".[88]

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84 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: March 9, 1990 letter from Kenney and Kidd.

85 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.

86 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

87 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989 July: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

88 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

d. The Involvement of Hans Küng

The participation of Hans Küng, the well-known Swiss Catholic theologian, was of vital importance to the 1993 Parliament. Küng contributed not only through an important speech and the key document 'Declaration Toward a Global Ethic', but his participation also showed the openness and courage of the Council to live up to its values. As Sulkin expressed: "Küng was so controversial as a person and as an individual, but still, he contributed so much."[89]

From the outset, Küng's involvement with the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions raised some issues. Kidd invited Küng in a letter dated April 28th, 1989 to get him involved in the 1993 Parliament as an advisor, asking him to write a declaration, to come to Chicago in 1991 or 1992 to lead a group on this issue and to present the final document at the Parliament event[90]. Küng agreed on May 10th, 1989, as a response letter from Kidd on June 1st, 1989 intends.[91] However a memo from May 24th, 1989 speaks about discrepancies in the invitation process: "Ron Kidd simply wrote to Dr. Küng and <u>invited</u> him to come to Chicago and lead a program, write a declaration, etc. However, none of this was discussed among the officers or in committee—i. e. no resolution was made or approved saying the Chicago WPR should do this and Ron should write such a letter."[92]

The memo was signed 'J.' and was most likely written by the then-secretary Judith Lawrence, who had welcomed Küng as an advisor in a letter dated just two days before the memo.[93] The letter raises two issues: First, the decision-making process at the Council at that time: "It's not that Küng should not be invited, etc., but more a question of making an executive decision on <u>when</u> to send and <u>what</u> to say when sending out a letter."[94] And second, the fact that it was difficult for the Council to get the main line churches to participate[95] and Küng was more of a barrier then assistance in this: "I was very concerned, since our group has still not gotten enough broad-based support from all the denominations here (especially, for example, the Archdiocese!)."[96] The Catholic members of the Council

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89 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

90 Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: April 28, 1989 letter from Kidd to Küng.

91 Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: June 1, 1989 letter from Kidd to Küng.

92 Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: May 24, 1989 Confidential Memo.

93 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: May 22, 1989 letter from Lawrence to Küng.

94 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: May 22, 1989 letter from Lawrence to Küng.

95 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

96 Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: May 24, 1989 Confidential Memo.

were very critical and cautious about Küng, because he was stripped of his *missio canonica*, his license to teach as a Roman Catholic theologian.[97] In the end, the Council agreed on Küng and the declaration document and nevertheless managed to have the Catholic Church involved. After the Archbishop Joseph Bernardin declared his participation, the main line churches followed.[98]

e. Establishing the Declaration

While the concerns with Küng's involvement were soon overcome, the criticism of the declaration began during the same time but outlasted the Parliament event. The creation of a document with the intended significance and broad acceptance was a difficult task.

While Küng had agreed on participating in the 1993 Parliament at an early stage, he felt uncertain about the Council's idea of a universal declaration as time passed. Gómez-Ibáñez remembered: "Küng did not want to write the declaration anymore. I went to Tübingen and persuaded him a whole afternoon long"[99] In July 1992, the first draft of the declaration was ready, a revised second edition followed in October the same year. While the Council wanted the document to be called "*Universal Declaration of Human Values*"[100] or 'Declaration of Global Values', Küng strongly recommended choosing 'Ethic' instead of 'Values'. He wrote the 'Declaration of a Global Ethic' as there had already been a conference on 'Global Values' and he felt 'Global Ethic' "is also more precise and not so vague as Global Values."[101]

Several meetings were conducted to discuss the declaration during this stage of its development process. On May 26th, 1993 individuals from several religious groups and academics met to discuss the declaration that they at that time called 'Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic'.

They had the concern that "the document was perhaps too western and relied implicitly too heavy on Judaic, Christian, Islamic structures."[102] They suggested a revision of: "1) the implications of a pledge versus stating the ethic

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97 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

98 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

99 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

100 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

101 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: October 23, 1992 letter from Küng to Gómez-Ibáñez.

102 Box 20: Global Ethic Discussion 1993 May 26: May 26, 1993 A Discussion of "Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic".

as a statement of duty; 2) the need for a more careful delineation of the context for developing the ethic; and 3) general and specific concerns of the language of the ethic."[103]

During the meeting entitled Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, held on 5 December 1992, similar issues were raised; "we need a statement that comes from simplicity and depth, not something coming from the academy."[104] During the meeting, the declaration was called "an ethic from above"[105], referring especially to problems concerning "its tone, its expression, its style and its omissions."[106] Küng himself had advised in favour of "strategic reflections in a very early stage concerning the acceptance of such a declaration."[107] The Council wanted important religious figures to review the document, but time was running out.

Moreover, the Council tried to shorten the document: "What is needed is a declaration that *inspires* while it conveys guiding principles. It shouldn't exceed more than two pages."[108] Küng refused to support the reduction and they agreed to a combined declaration with a short introduction by the Council followed by the longer text from Küng. He expressed his frustration in a letter dated May 7th, 1993. He had not received the promised feedback and corrections; "this is an absolutely impossible situation, which lacks all transparency."[109] His second draft from October 1992 was finally commented on in June 1993, eight months later.

The Parliament moved closer and there was still a lot to do. On July 25th, 1993 Gómez-Ibáñez wrote to the Board: "we are under an extremely tight time constraint because we intend to send the declaration to a number of religious and spiritual [leaders/people] for endorsement *before* the Parliament begins."[110] Already during a meeting of the Executive Committee on December 10th, 1990 sev-

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103 Box 20: Global Ethic Discussion 1993 May 26: May 26, 1993 A Discussion of "Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic".

104 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

105 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

106 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

107 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: May 10, 1989 letter from Küng to Kidd.

108 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

109 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: May 7, 1993 letter from Küng to Ramage.

110 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: July 25, 1993 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

eral people had noted that "it would be impossible to get people to sign such a statement for their faiths without there being time for the judicatures to review the document in detail."[111] But now, this detailed revision had to be cut short: "the document will not be offered to prospective endorses or to the Assembly for modification, but 'as is.' This is appropriate not only for practical reasons, but also because the process up to now has been consultative and broad-based."[112] This lack of revision time was harshly criticized at the 1993 Parliament event.

f. The Challenge of Inviting the Dalai Lama

Another major participant did not make the planning easy for the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. "A major discussion ensued concerning inviting the Dalai Lama to be the keynote speaker; the discussion included an explanation of the need for well-known names to draw attendance."[113] Gómez-Ibáñez tried for more than a year to arrange an appointment with the Dalai Lama. "In September 1990, H.H. the Dalai Lama met with Gómez-Ibáñez and agreed to deliver a keynote address at the opening of the Parliament in 1993."[114] The plan worked out: "when we had his name, others followed."[115]

g. The Debt Owed to the Administrator Ron Kidd

While the plans for the centennial took form and the Council grew, the 1990 Annual Report admitted that "what was not there were a regular supply of operating funds, successful fund-raising efforts, or income to permit salaries to be paid every month."[116] And the financial situation of the Council got worse in 1990. Between January and August 1990, general and administrative expenditures amounted to $29,305.96, the account balance showing a debt of $31,285.50.[117] As an emergency solution, Gómez-Ibáñez reported that "the Council's Executive

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111 Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5 1990: December 10, 1990 Minutes of December 5 meeting of Executive Committee.
112 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: July 25, 1993 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.
113 Box 7 A: Correspondence January-December 1990: April 18, 1990 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.
114 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1990–1991: Annual Report 1990–1991.
115 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
116 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.
117 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.

Committee decided to reduce expenditures to the minimum necessary to preserve the organization until we receive additional funding."[118] The outstanding debt was mostly a liability to Kidd, who had not been paid for his administrative work up to this point. At the end of 1990, the salary owed was beyond $45,000.[119] The Council had to terminate Kidd's employment by 21 December 1990.[120]

As a letter from Gómez-Ibáñez showed, the situation weighed on the Council: "Several of you have said we should take some decisions concerning our debt to Ron Kidd, and so we should. We need to decide what we can do about itself; also how we shall manage the affairs of the Council while the debt is still outstanding."[121] It was decided that "Donations received without restrictions will be used to repay Mr. Kidd."[122] Since it was a very difficult task to acquire donations at short notice and the Council wanted the debt out of the balance, "the Executive Committee decided that all thirty members of the Board will contribute $1500 to the Parliament."[123] At the end of December 1990 the account balance showed $86.97[124] as the debt to Kidd was not listed anymore.[125]

A letter to the Board shows, that the situation bothered Kidd, as well. He tried to avoid an interruption of the Parliament's work: "no one spoke to me about the debt owed. Therefore, let me for the first time make the offer to reduce the amount owed to me by $3,000 so the next Conference on Critical Issues can take place as soon as is practicable."[126]

During the phone interview, Gómez-Ibáñez explained that Kidd had been volunteering before and all of a sudden wanted to be paid for his activities in 1990.[127] The documents on the contrary state, that Kidd had agreed on postponing his salary, but that it was agreed to pay him from the start. "Mr. Ron Kidd was named Administrator in January and has generously worked for the Council on a

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118 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: February 6, 1991 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.
119 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: January 5, 1991 letter from Wurmfeld to board.
120 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: February 6, 1991 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.
121 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.
122 Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5 1990: December 5, 1990 Minutes of Executive Committee meeting.
123 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: January 5, 1991 letter from Wurmfeld.
124 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1990 – 1991: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.
125 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes, March 11, 1991.
126 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: January 27, 1991 letter from Kidd.
127 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

deferred pay basis."[128] After donations came in, Gómez-Ibáñez continued in Kidd's position and was paid.

h. Unused Financial Resources

The perspectives and opinions on the financial situation of the Council differ. While on the one hand, Sulkin expressed that "the biggest problem that had to be faced was money. It was there every second."[129] On the other hand, Gómez-Ibáñez said, they just did not have enough money to pay Kidd. In addition to that, the Council had no financial difficulties. "We were very careful with money in general, it was not the driving issue at all."[130]

In any case, finances were a challenge to the Council, especially because the potential of the Co-Sponsors was not used for a long time during the early planning phase.

The cut-back of costs also left the Council homeless for some time. In the December 5th, 1990 meeting "the Executive Committee decided that the Council must stop spending money or incurring liabilities. This decision requires closing the office."[131]

i. The Growing Size of the Board

A challenge concerning the structure of the Parliament was the fact that people kept joining the Council. Sulkin describes the great number of people involved in the planning of the Parliament as "joy and woe".[132] From 10 – 15 people that gathered for the first annual meeting, the number of people involved increased to more than two hundred.

The Parliament especially tried to win over people from Chicago's influential circles to the Parliament idea. They helped interact with the city and get decisions made in favour of Parliament, for example, the permission to hold the closing ceremony in Grant Park.

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128 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989: Annual Report 1989.
129 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.
130 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
131 Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5, 1990: December 5, 1990 Minutes of Executive Committee meeting.
132 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

j. The Necessity to Establish Policies

As the planning got more serious, the Council had to make some administrative decisions and establish policies.

Kidd called attention to the procedure of recruiting advisors: "We have been adding advisors without any particular effort to enlist people in this category, but without restricting the list particularly, either. In 1898 advisors world-wide totalled some 5,000 people. Do we want to follow their example and sign up any clergy-man or academic or other interested parties?"[133]

To establish a guideline, he suggested to "limit the 'advisors' to men and women of standing locally, regionally, nationally or internationally."[134] Furthermore he recommended to "drop the designation 'Board of Advisors'. There is no Board, never was one, and there is no intention of ever calling the advisors together in a Board."[135]

Lawrence also felt that guidelines needed to be set up. "Up till now, we have been very informal about all of this, even lax. During the past 12 months the Board officers have never met together to discuss policies."[136] In a memo from May 18, 1989, she wrote: "it's time that we get ourselves organized and tackle some of these administrative matters."[137] She expressed: "I feel we need to clarify and establish policy regarding decision-making and governance matters. Not all correspondence is purely informational or routine."[138]

Lawrence clearly also referred to the issues concerning Küng: "If correspondence or meetings regarding issues which will affect the Council's position as a public cooperation are to be undertaken, I feel statements of policies or plans should be cleared by an executive committee in advance of holding meetings or sending letters. If policies have not been officially established, we should not represent in our correspondence that they have been."[139]

At a later stage, a revision of policies and procedures was undertaken. The remarks of Kidd and Lawrence were considered in this process. The revision is described in-depth below.

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133 Box 6B: Correspondence 1989–1990: February 9, 1989 letter from Ron Kidd.
134 Box 6B: Correspondence 1989–1990: February 9, 1989 letter from Ron Kidd.
135 Box 6B: Correspondence 1989–1990: February 9, 1989 letter from Ron Kidd.
136 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.
137 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.
138 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.
139 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.

4.2.2 Resolving of the Challenging Period

a. Financial Recovery

In a letter dated July 31st, 1991 Gómez-Ibáñez finally broke the good news to the Board informing them that "since March, when the Board authorized a fundraising proposal to various foundations and donors, we have been able to raise $176,000 from individual contributors."[140] Up to September 1991, donations were made by Steven Rockefeller ($25,000), Lauren Rockefeller ($50,000 in 1991 and $50,000 in 1992), John Templeton ($10,000 per year for the next five years, starting in 1991) and co-sponsors and individuals (cash donations of $13,000).[141] On August 17th, 1991 the Council's account balance showed $53,919.41[142] and by the end of December 1991, the balance amounted to $60,450.[143] At last, the Council was in the black again.

Moreover, in August 1991, the Gómez-Ibáñez's employer agreed to give him a leave of absence of more than two years, as well as donating the first six-month' salary and benefits to the Council. Thus, Gómez-Ibáñez was able to start working full-time as Executive Director for the Council from September 1991 onwards.[144]

And the financial upswing continued in 1992. "Generous donors gave more than $200,000 in cash and in-kind services during the year."[145] The account balance on August 31, 1992, showed $49,170.14.[146] As Rivetna recounts during the phone interview, the Council reached its goal: "We managed to keep to the budget."[147]

b. Interim Management

During the time between the financial difficulties and the recovery, the Council had to decide on an interim management of its affairs.

Gómez-Ibáñez wrote to the Executive Committee on December 3rd, 1990 that "in the near future we also will need to consider steps to strengthen our

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140 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – October 1991: July 31, 1991 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez to board.
141 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.
142 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.
143 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.
144 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.
145 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.
146 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.
147 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

board."[148] For this, he proposed "the creation of a small ad-hoc board development committee."[149]

During a Board of Directors Meeting in March 1991 this 'Board development committee', then called Coordination Committee, was approved. It consisted of Gómez-Ibáñez, Sulkin and Yael Wurmfeld.[150] The establishment of the Coordination Committee was preceded by a discussion on the need to have an infrastructure in place to be prepared for mobilization, as soon as funds are received and on the role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee until the administrative staff is in place again.[151]

It was only in April 1992, that the Executive Committee was able to advise the renting of a new office space, so the Parliament work could go back to normal.[152]

c. The Cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century Studies

A conference on critical issues, which was organized by the Planning Committee, was held on 13 October 1990 at DePaul University. The conference featured a presentation by Barney, the Executive Director of the Institute for 21st Century Studies with the title *What shall we do?* "Partly as a result of this conference, and partly because the Institute for 21st Century Studies had been searching for a way to introduce its concerns to the communities of faith, the Council's Board of Directors and the Board of the Institute decided to collaborate in organizing the Critical Issues part of the 1993 Parliament."[153] Additionally, the Council admitted that it "is well positioned to reach out to the world's communities of faith, but is less well prepared to undertake the analysis of critical issues."[154] A formal agreement between both parties was signed on March 11th, 1991.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Institute declares that "the Council's plans and the Institute's plans are related and com-

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148 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

149 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

150 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11, 1991: Minutes Board of Directors, March 11, 1991.

151 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11, 1991: Minutes Board of Directors, March 11, 1991.

152 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez on recent developments.

153 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.

154 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

patible. Each can assist the other in achieving its goals. The Institute has a unique set of contacts throughout the world and a demonstrated capacity to prepare analyses and syntheses of critical issues. The Council has excellent contacts with the world's communities of faith and a commitment to hosting the 1993 Parliament."[155] Surely, the cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century Studies has to also be seen in the light of hope for successful "joint grant proposals."[156]

For the cooperation, the Coordination Committee was formed, consisting of both the Council's and the Institute's Executive Directors and two members of each board. The Memorandum of Understanding moreover manifested that "the Council and the Institute intend to collaborate further beyond the date of the Parliament."[157]

d. New Tasks and Perspectives

Due to the cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century studies, the Council had to include the co-sponsors more actively in the planning process and assign new tasks to them: "the increased attention to critical issues will require more specific participation of our religious co-sponsors."[158] The co-sponsors were to especially help with the development process of the religious perspectives on the critical issues and the fund-raising. Prior to this, they were "not contributing much to the effort in part because the Council has not asked them to do specific tasks."[159]

Another area that needed more attention and support was the publicity of the Council, as Gómez-Ibáñez pointed out in a letter dated May 4th, 1992: "this is a weak area for us. I want to get as much publicity as soon as possible, for obvious reasons, and so it will be a priority in May and the months following."[160] The Council finally realized that it was essential for the fund-raising to have a broad public appearance and advertise the goals of the 1993 Parliament. For this, both the co-sponsors and host committees were roped in.

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155 Box 6B: Institute for 21st Century Studies Joint Meeting 1992 September 27: March 17, 1991 Memorandum of Understanding.
156 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.
157 Box 6B: Institute for 21st Century Studies Joint Meeting 1992 September 27: March 17, 1991 Memorandum of Understanding.
158 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.
159 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.
160 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

Co-Sponsors and host committees were also consulted for recommendations of speakers and participants in the plenary, since the Council was short on time. "In some cases they offered to sponsor (pay for the expenses) of the speaker."[161] Nevertheless, it was not until May 11th, 1993 that the invitations for major presentations were sent out.[162] And by May 18th, 1993, Barbara Bernstein wrote, "most decisions as to which speakers will fill these plenary positions have not yet been made."[163]

e. Recruiting New Board Members

As mentioned above, the Council recruited influential people to interact with the city of Chicago. An outcome of this was that more money was raised, but the new members also changed the nature of the Board. Gómez-Ibáñez described this as a turning point during the interview.[164] According to him, the former Board wanted interreligious dialogue, the global issue discussion and was rather liberal, while the new Board members wanted the Parliament to be successful, were not so interested in its continuation after 1993 and more conservative. Gómez-Ibáñez felt that: "this was a more difficult Board to work with."[165] By his own account, he resigned during the Parliament because he felt that the Board was not interested in the continuation and he felt that it was too difficult to work with the new Board. Nevertheless, he continued his interfaith work and remained a member of the Council's Board until 2000.

Sulkin mentioned that the former Board had feared this change. He said there had been the inherent behavior or attitude on part of the Board that it is wrong to get into partnerships with wealthy people as this might undermine the philosophy of the Parliament. Eventually, the majority of the Board, including Sulkin, voted for the cooperation with the influential circles.[166] It seems that the situation required the inclusion of influential circles, as stated by Sulkin himself: "we have a good number of dedicated volunteers. But we need more."[167]

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161 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.
162 Box 36: Correspondence accepted invitations A-G: May 11, 1993 invitation to major presentation.
163 Box 18B: Plenary Programming and Timeline 1993 May: May 18, 1993 Memo from Barbara Bernstein to the Executive Committee.
164 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
165 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
166 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.
167 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez on recent developments.

To familiarize the new Board members with the Parliament planning, an orientation program was held on 1 December 1992. The programme included talks and discussions on the idea of the Parliament, outreach efforts (Host Committees and Co-Sponsors), future planning and administrative issues, as well as an introduction to the committees.[168]

f. Revision of Previous Procedures and Policies

During the next years, a lot of discussion about and revision of previous procedures and policies needed to be done. In April 1990, the mission statement of the Council was revised.[169] Furthermore, it was decided to create a 'group membership' with a fee of $100 per annum. And finally, Kidd's proposal was carried out to change the 'Board of Advisors' to simply 'Advisors'.

During the April 18th Board of Directors Meeting, the Board also decided to eliminate Advisors and Co-Sponsors from Board of Directors, as the Board grew too large. Furthermore, a procedure for Co-Sponsors was adopted: "candidates for co-sponsorship must be proposed by at least three co-sponsors or by at least three members of the Board of Directors and must be approved by a majority of the Board of Directors."[170]

The concept paper of December 5th, 1990 exceeded the focus on the critical issues as they were thought to appeal more likely to funders than interreligious dialogue or the centennial event itself.[171] Gómez-Ibáñez highlighted in 1991 that this reorientation however did not imply a major shift of the Council's original goals. "While the approach to those issues has been expanded, we are convinced that our original vision is still very much in place."[172]

In 1992, a discussion was held about the criteria for Co-Sponsors, on the frequency of Board meetings and on the location of those meetings.[173] Also, the

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168 Box 6B: Orientation for New (and Old) Board Members 1992 December 1: December 1, 1992 Orientation Program Board of Trustees.
169 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: April 18, 1990 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.
170 I Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: April 18, 1990 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.
171 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 5, 1990 Draft Concept Paper.
172 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – October 1991: February 6, 1991 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.
173 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11: March 11, 1991 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.

Board of Directors recommended that "the Program Committee review all plans and submit a revised program proposal to the Board."[174]

5 To Reach Beyond, not Beyond Reach

5.1 From a Centenary to a Continuation

In 1993, Chicago brought the people of the world together for a second time. After many attempts to hold a succeeding Parliament had failed, this one finally bore fruit. The vision of the small group in the 1980s might have seemed beyond reach at first: "organizing an event that although officially identified as local, was global in its proposed content and planned to bring together world religious leaders [...] was an enterprise for which the well-intentioned pioneers had neither previous experience nor proven expertise."[175] However, the Council proved that not only the time was ripe, but their plans to reach beyond were, too.

According to Paul Carus, a participant in the 1893 Parliament, previous planning failed, because the 1893 Parliament was ahead of its time and the people were not yet ready for its thought or because "the successor groups were loosely structured and had vague objectives."[176]

The reasons for previous failures are surely as manifold as those for the success of the 1993 Parliament. The fact is that the planning phase of the 1993 Parliament was still very challenging and the challenges are closely linked to the success of the event.

The qualitative content analysis not only allows for a detailed view of the chosen core episode from 1989 to 1991 with the challenging period and its resolving, but also gives an overview of connections or links between the keywords. It shows that the structural challenges are closely linked to the reorientation process of the Council. Especially the categories 'Policies' and 'Revision' as well as 'Size of Board' and 'New Board Members' are connected. Furthermore, the financial challenges and the resolving organization and cooperation are interrelated. The aim affects all categories of both 'Challenges' and 'Resolving'.

The analysis showed that the three-way approach of the concept paper from December 5th, 1990 leveraged the planning process. The triple focus on the crit-

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174 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11: March 11, 1991 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.
175 Parra, "Standing with Unfamiliar Company on Uncommon Ground", 174.
176 Harold Henderson, *Catalyst for Controversy: Paul Carus of Open Court* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1993), 65.

ical issues, the Parliament event and the gathering of the communities of Chicago, was hard to achieve, but the road to success.[177] Another aspiration was the wish for the 1993 Parliament to continue the spirit of its predecessor. "The outcome we want is a holy gathering. This is not a conference."[178] This also involved to continue the dialogue started in 1893: "as part of the planning process for a centenary observance of the Parliament, it was strongly felt that dialogue, so central to the original gathering, should be a major element of the 1993 Parliament as well."[179] All in all, the hypothesis of this paper that the creation of an organization fostered the structuralized planning that eventually led to the realization of the 1993 Parliament event was confirmed during the research.

While the 1893 Parliament struggled with the task to leave a lasting impression on Chicago, but "remained so vivid in the memories of many religious people in other parts of the world"[180], the second Parliament did not fall short of the first, but also managed to be treasured by Chicago, continuing its work beyond.

The Council did not only hold a centenary, but also created a unique event that was in step with the *zeitgeist*, because the organizers cooperated with new actors in the field of interreligious dialogue. Simultaneously, they managed to establish an organization that fostered structuralized planning. The special character of the 1993 Parliament and the accomplishment to continue the interfaith work locally and globally still form the basis and the stronghold of the Council for the Parliament of the World's Religions today.

5.2 The Parliament of the World's Religions Today

The success of the 1993 Parliament left the Council with the question of continuation. Gómez-Ibáñez said during the phone interview, "we did not want to wait another hundred years."[181] However, he also admitted that: "after the 1993 Parliament, we had no clue to what we should do."[182] Having fulfilled its task, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions had to find itself again. And the

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177 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 5, 1990 Draft Concept Paper.
178 Box 17C: Assembly Concepts 1993 July 17: July 17, 1993 Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders Concepts.
179 Box 13B: Minutes 1990 May 1: May 1, 1990 Minutes of Dialogue Committee meeting.
180 Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and its Legacy.* Eleventh John Nuveen Lecture. University of Chicago Divinity School and Baptist Theological Union, 1983, 1.
181 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
182 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

members lacked not only the capacity to act, but the funds to operate at all. The group "had to get money to continue, so six to seven of the Council's members contributed $10,000 each."[183]

The Council then split into an international and a local branch. The international branch fulfilled its mission by suggesting a continuation with the ideal of the Olympics, holding a Parliament in a (four-) year cycle at different places. Gómez-Ibáñez remembered "that jelled and gave us the impetus to move forward."[184] The local branch dissolved after two to three years, as it did not manage to work out how to continue. Several meetings at DePaul University were held, but "nothing really grew."[185] So the Council continued with a more global focus.

Today, the Council's work includes various programs and initiatives: *Sharing Sacred Spaces* encourages communities to develop positive relationships and the *Partner City Program* connects communities worldwide in a network to foster relationships among different religious traditions. The *Ambassador Program* invites religious leaders to become official spokespeople for the Parliament, while *Educating Future Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* is concerned with the education of the religious leaders of tomorrow. The campaign *Faith against Hate* is "working amid rising hatred and fear to create respect and trust among dissimilar religious communities"[186], whereas the *Women's Task Force* is "dedicated to fostering multi-generational women's groups to engage the intersection of life issues and the religions."[187] The Council moreover offers webinars providing training for interfaith work by passing on experience.

The Council moved the Parliament beyond dialogue into engagement. Abdul Malik Mujahid, Chair of the Board of Trustees (at the time of research), explained the new role of the Council during the interview meeting, "People do not come to the Parliament and then leave spread up. They leave as a well-connected network."[188] He describes the aim of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions today as a strengthening of this network. Between the Parliaments, the Council functions as a resource to other interfaith networks and organizations. Moreover, Mujahid reported that: "the Council is today financially healthier than ever."[189] But the current chair of the Council nevertheless has to admit "fi-

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183 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
184 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
185 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
186 Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. *The Other as Neighbor*, 5.
187 Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. *The Other as Neighbor*, 5.
188 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.
189 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.

nances remain a challenge, because interfaith organizations are not taken as a serious player by society."[190]

Rivetna explained the situation differently: "the model of the Host Committees has disappeared, thus the communities do not feel as part of the Parliament anymore, now it's a Trustee event."[191] He further explained that: "due to this the expenses grew and that made the planning very difficult."[192] Gómez-Ibáñez similarly described the reason for the ongoing financial challenges of the Council: "the Trustees have to contribute as there is never money, because the communities are absent from the Parliament planning."[193] Rivetna explained his concerns further: "things have moved along and they are moving, but we have to learn from the past. We work with universities and centres, but they are not grounded in the communities. We have to integrate a cultural aspect. I would like the different communities to organize the event."[194] And Rivetna further wishes for inclusion of intra-faith dialogue: "we need to do intra-faith dialogue and in order to do it we need an intra-faith dialogue model. There has to be a transformation from within. Without intra-faith dialogue there is no peace among religions."[195]

If the situation, especially concerning the communities, is really that drastic, then this represents an area that requires further research. The former members of the Council remain vividly concerned and involved in its work and today the Council is operating more globally than ever. After 1993, Parliaments were held in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999, in Barcelona, Spain in 2004, in Monterrey, Mexico in 2007, in Melbourne, Australia in 2009, in Salt Lake City, USA in 2015 and in Toronto, Canada in 2018. And looking at the various programs and activities, the Council is also still active in local contexts. Its members continue to live out its mission: "to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities, and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world."[196] They are planning to increase the frequency, holding a Parliament every two years.[197]

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190 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.
191 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.
192 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.
193 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
194 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.
195 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.
196 Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. *Towards a Global Ethic: A Call to Live Out the Vision*, 3.
197 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.

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Box 6B: Correspondence 1989 – 1990: February 9 '89 letter from Ron Kidd.

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Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: May 10 '89 letter from Küng to Kidd.

Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: May 22 '89 letter from Lawrence to Küng.

Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: October 23 '92 letter from Küng to Gómez-Ibáñez.

Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: December 5 '92 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: July 25 '93 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

Box 13B: Minutes 1990 May 1: May 1 '90 Minutes of Dialogue Committee meeting.

Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5 1990: December 10 '90 Minutes of Dec 5 meeting of Executive Committee.

Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5 1990: December 5 '90 Minutes of Executive Committee meeting.

Box 20: Global Ethic Discussion 1993 May 26: May 26 '93 A Discussion of "Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic".

Box 17C: Assembly Concepts 1993 July 17: July 17 '93 Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders Concepts.

Box 18B: Plenary Programming and Timeline 1993 May: May 18 '93 Memo from Barbara Bernstein to the Executive Committee.

Box 36: Correspondence accepted invitations A-G: May 11 '93 Invitation to major presentation

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María Bargo

A Centre for Cooperation

Uniting Interreligious Dialogue Efforts (Oxford International Interfaith Centre / 1993 – 2017)

> "If we can have fellowship and see beyond the label to the person behind it, and the human being with the same joys, sorrows and needs as ourselves, then this surely is true dialogue." (Mary Braybrooke)

1 Introducing the International Interfaith Centre's (IIC) role in the Interreligious Dialogue Movement (IDM)

Throughout the book, it seems clear that cooperation is at the center of almost all initiatives and organizations that see themselves as part of the "Interreligious Dialogue Movement" (IDM). Since the first interreligious events, the idea of bringing together representatives of different religions to participate in dialogue has been central to this movement. This paper, however, makes reference to one of the first interreligious initiatives (the International Interfaith Centre (IIC)) that was created in response to the need for cooperation between interreligious centres and organizations.

After three years of planning for its creation, the IIC inauguration was announced in 1993 at the congresses held to celebrate the centenary of the Parliament of World Religions. Its foundation was based upon the impression that there was a lack of cooperation among the interreligious organizations. The IIC was founded as a center with educational, support, cooperative and spiritual purposes. It was planned by Rev. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke and Robert Traer, and it involved David and Celia Storey, Mary Braybrooke, Peggy Morgan, Sandy Bharat among other people. They wanted to build a center that would focus on conflict resolution, information sharing and should become a home and network for people who worked in religious studies or for those who were involved in interreligious dialogue. The IIC tried to reach these objectives by offering conferences, lectures, tours, publications, activities and encounters in conflict areas.

Based on interviews, as well as archival data collected on these initial years of the IIC's activities, the paper at hand presents three intertwined hypotheses:

This paper first argues that the foundation of the IIC stands for a particular step in the history of the IRDM. The 1990's were a time when the IRDM gained in visibility and increased its internal diversification. The IIC responded to the needs that emerged out of these developments. In the wider socio-cultural context, the IIC has to be interpreted with regard to the much more general processes of globalization that dominated the 1990s. In this regard, the paper presents a two-fold argument: (a) that the IIC was born in response to the need for stronger cooperation among interreligious organizations founded in the 1970s, which can be related to Vatican II; and (b) that religious pluralization and the breaking up of religious monopolies were important for this paradigm shift, thus contributing to the growth of the IRD movement.

Secondly, the IIC was founded in response to needs that appeared to be urgent for the IRDM in the aftermath of the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993. During the planning process of the 1993 events, a commission was created that gathered people from important interreligious organizations. It tried to provide information about interreligious activities worldwide, to trigger cooperation and to be a network to bring together all interreligious initiatives. As this commission would stop operating after 1993, the IIC was founded to continue with its mandate and work towards union and cooperation among interreligious organizations.

Thirdly, one of the characteristics of the IIC was the reflexivity of the actors inside the organization.[1] Its members were constantly rethinking its position in the interreligious movement to refocus its aims when they thought they were going in another direction. The importance of this approach is that it can help us think about interreligious activities today. The protagonists inside the IIC addressed central issues such as: if interreligious dialogue is an effective agent of change; what interreligious dialogue can do towards conflict resolution; and also taking into consideration the fact that some groups are against interreligious dialogue activities, whether interreligious dialogue is as inclusive and open as it is thought to be.

In discussing those hypotheses, this paper is subdivided into the three sections. First, there is a background description of the situation of religions today, seeing religious pluralism as a modern phenomenon and relating this theory to the growth of the IRDM. It also refers to opposition to fundamentalism as a key point that defines the IRDM identity. The second section explains the methods used to collect the data for writing this paper and reflects on the similarities

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1 Hans Georg Gadamer, ed. *Verdad y Método. Fundamentos de una Hermenéutica Filosófica* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1990).

of anthropology and IRDM in which knowledge is constructed in the encounter with the other. The third section presents IRDM activities and topics that inspired the creation of the IIC, the 1993 encounter that gave birth to the IIC; the preparation process of the IIC and how it was built, the structure and the way the IIC was organized, as well as the events the IIC held and the topics that guided those activities.

To properly understand these developments, it is important to take into consideration their socio-cultural context, as well as the internal dynamics that emerged from this context.

2 Background: IRDM Conditions and Concerns

As far as the following empirical analyses are concerned, the present paper argues that they cannot be understood without relating them to the wider socio-cultural context of increasing modernization and the fundamentalist, as well as dialogical dynamics that arise out of this context.

2.1 Interreligious Dialogue as a Modern Phenomenon

Some authors argue that modernity disenchants the world by processes such as secularization[2], however, according to others[3] modernity has led to the breakup of religious monopolies and with this to dialogue and religious pluralism.

What is meant by the break-up of a monopoly is that one single religious system is no longer the interpretative frame from which reality is observed. This also includes a loss of legitimacy, of a place in a faith hierarchy, and that its moral order is no longer dominant. This means that religious pluralism emerges, and that one religion is no longer considered to be the sole official faith of a society. The Brazilian anthropologist Carlos Steil says that the monopoly is broken by the

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2 Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1969); Martin, David, *On Secularization: Towards a revised general Theory of Secularization* (London / New York: Routledge, 2005).

3 Carlos Alberto Steil, "Pluralismo, modernidade e tradição – transformações do campo religioso" In: *Revista da Associação de Cientistas Sociais do Mercosul* 3 (2001): 115 – 129. Alejandro Frigerio and Ari Pedro Oro, "'Sectas Satánicas' En El Mercosur: Un Estudio De La Construcción De La Desviación Religiosa En Los Medios De Comunicación De Argentina Y Brasil," in *Horizontes Antropológicos* 4 (1998): 114 – 50.

growth of secularism and religious diversification that became visible when the religion is separated from the state. Steil (2001, 116–117) argues:

> This is how, loosening the state's control, which would have guaranteed social exclusiveness and reproduction, introduces a structural transformation that redefines the religious role in modernity (...). Plurality and religious transformation, then, are the result of modern dynamics. Secularism multiplies religious universes, in a way that its diversity can be seen as internal or structural of the modernity process. Secularization and religious diversity are directly associated to the same historical process that made it possible to have societies that could work and exist without being founded into one only religious order.
>
> (...) In this way, we think that the religious tolerance that characterizes modern society also allows a revitalization of traditional and/ or individual rituals and beliefs that were withdraw by the dominant system.[4]

The Argentinean researcher, Susana Bianchi, examines the main historical events of the 20th century mentioning what happened after the Second World War (WWII) (2007). According to her, after WWII, a new world order was established under the influence of the USA and the USSR. The Cold War was a consequence of this division of power and was symbolized by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. This is also seen by the huge arms race between both world powers that brought several actions among the world's population to reject these countries control and attitude. On the one hand, different international and civil organizations got together to answer to what they considered a threat to peace. There were, for example, special commissions of the United Nations (UN) that started working during the Cold War. Organizations such as Amnesty International (1961) also appeared on the scene. On the other hand, third world countries reacted through independence and decolonization movements, but these also often had violent consequences.

In some countries, confrontations among religious groups appeared. Christianity was seen, in several cases, as a religion submitting to politics and economics and this was the reason some religious traditions were embraced as nationalist symbols in the fight for emancipation. It was in this context that the Vatican II (1962–1965) took place. This was an inflection point since it changed the Catholic Churches attitude towards other religions, towards political and social involvement and towards modernity. In Marianne Moyaert's words, the Church went "[f]rom the age of monologue to the age of dialogue" and she assures

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4 Carlos Alberto Steil, "Pluralismo, modernidade e tradição – transformações do campo religioso" In: Revista da Associação de Cientistas Sociais do Mercosul 3 (2001): 115–129.

that dialogue "is rooted in the modern ideals of equality, freedom of religions, respect of otherness, and tolerance."[5]

These socio-political developments have triggered dynamic developments that can be further characterized with reference to the relationship between fundamentalism and dialogue.

2.2 Interreligious Dialogue in Opposition to Fundamentalism

In his final publications, the late Peter L. Berger has proposed a concept of interreligious dialogue that *inter alia* juxtaposes IRD and religious fundamentalism[6]. Along those lines, fundamentalism is sometimes thought as a way of preserving identity and tradition.

Under these conditions, Interreligious dialogue has been criticized for bringing what Traer calls a 'religious bazaar', in which each religious expression tries to promote its own faith. According to Sandy and Jael Bharat, people who enter into interreligious dialogue "wonder if their faith will be compromised by contact with others or if they have to promote their own religion at interfaith events."[7] Braybrooke says that "too easily we find ourselves imposing our presuppositions on the conversation" and to participate in dialogue we need to "allow our deepest convictions to be questioned". For this reason, he thinks that those venturing into interreligious dialogue need to "be secure in their own faith."[8]

Another strong interreligious activist who wrote for Bharat's book is John Taylor who thinks that:

> Dialogue does not necessarily hide or weaken one's own sense of identity but it may reveal complexities of indebtedness and of new possibilities of openness. Dialogue is not an exercise of compromise or dissimulation but an adventure in discerning truth wherever it is to be found. Dialogue with our neighbor can lead us to a deeper dialogue with One whom we may address as God or to a deeper awareness of the Ultimate.[9]

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5 Marianne Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," in *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, eds. David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 195.
6 Peter L. Berger, *Dialog zwischen religiösen Traditionen in einem Zeitalter der Relativität* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).
7 Sandy Bharat and Jael Bharat, *A Global Guide to Interfait: Reflections from Around the World* (Winchester/Washington: O Books, 2007), 59.
8 Bharat and Bharat, *A Global Guide to Interfaith*, 12.
9 Bharat and Bharat, *A Global Guide to Interfaith*, 182.

Today, there is still distrust in interreligious dialogue and tension between closing oneself off to preserve tradition and opening oneself to others with the possible threat of losing identity. Aware of this problem, Traer said that the IIC should stand against violence, propaganda and syncretism to achieve true interreligious dialogue. The IIC, besides promoting dialogue and contributing in this way to peace, shared information about religious traditions, about interreligious initiatives and events, so that people involved in the IRDM could work together and organize dialogue encounters in conflict areas to build understanding. Before expanding the information about the IIC, I will explain which methodologies were used for this research.

3 Approaching the Object from an Anthropological Point of View

For my research, I combined different qualitative methods. As my academic training is in anthropology, I tried to meet my interlocutors, not only by reading papers (accessed through the archives), but through live interviews. Although what actually characterizes anthropology is fieldwork, my approach to the "object" could not be through fieldwork because the IIC was barely active during the time I was doing research.

It might not seem important to mention my academic orientation, but the anthropological viewpoint has much to do with interreligious dialogue. The Argentinean anthropologist Pablo Wright wrote that "[a]nthropology would be the only social science in which the researcher is existentially involved in/between its interlocutors; this approach is the central part of its activity. Then, the subject-ethnographer is its own instrument of observation, register and 'data' analysis."[10] Wright describes anthropological activity as an "ontological displacement"[11] and he explains this by saying "it is the context in which knowledge is produced in the active encounter between the researcher and its interlocutors."[12] Interreligious dialogue has to do with an ontological displacement itself where knowledge is constructed with others.

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10 Pablo Wright, "Etnografía y existencia en la antropología de la religión," in *Sociedad y Religión* 16/17 (1998): 180–193.
11 Wright, "Etnografía y existencia en la antropología de la religión."
12 "Etnografía y existencia en la antropología de la religión," 182. Translations by the author. The original text is in Spanish.

Additionally, anthropology is an encounter with otherness, and it demands an effort for "familiarizing with the exotic and make exotic what is familiar".[13] This approach characterizes interreligious dialogue since it also demands openness and decentralization from our own principals to be able to really encounter the religious other.

For this reason, I not only use anthropology to reflect on interreligious dialogue, but also as a way of approaching this "object". Although initially, the research was planned to solely be based on archival work, I was able to combine different qualitative methodologies to study the case of the IIC. I worked in the archives at Southampton University, but also interviewed those who were implicated in the creation of the IIC and those who worked in it. Meeting these people aided my research since they had material that was not in the archives such as some IIC documents, as well as books that they wrote about their experiences or on interreligious dialogue and video records from the different interreligious events in which they participated.

I was able to contact those who were part of the IIC before 'going into the field'. This was also useful because I could interview them before working in the archives. This helped me understand more about the IIC before looking through documents. They also helped me select the material that I wanted to use for my research as it was a huge amount of information and the material that I should use was related to some specific issues about the IIC. It was also helpful to meet them because they were the ones who created the IIC. The guided in-depth interviews sought to understand the reasons why the IIC was created; when, how, where and by whom was it created; which ideas inspired its creation; what the objectives were; and how the founders managed to reach them. There were several opportunities to interview the Storeys, the Braybtookes and Bharat, which helped clarify the information I had. These interviews allowed to add new information to what I found in the archives.

The combination of these sources tells us much more complete picture since sometimes one method cannot provide all the pieces of information. I was able to gain more information about the IIC by combining different sources and analyzing them in a comparative way. The combination of these two main sources helped me reconstruct the IIC's beginnings.

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13 Roberto Da Matta, "El oficio del etnólogo o cómo tener 'Anthropological Blues'," in *Constructores de Otredad: Una Introducción a la Antropología Social y Cultural*, eds. Victoria Arribas, Mauricio F. Boivin, and Ana Rosato (Tres Cantos: Siglo XXI, 2004): 172–178.

As Gaillet recommends,[14] I also "asked questions" regarding the archive survival, categorizing the information I got there after I stayed in the field. The IIC material had been delivered years ago but cataloguing had not been completed. After my first visit, work resumed and after my first week in England, I was able to go through the IIC's material.

I went over different documents related to the IIC. Some of the documents belong to the Braybrookes and others were IIC archive material. Marcus Braybrooke's documents were useful for me to understand how the IIC was created, planned, conceptualized and organized since I could read through the creation process. I saw how the different interreligious events that had happened since the mid-eighties influenced the creation of the IIC. I was also able to see how he got in touch with different interreligious dialogue leaders to plan the IIC and how they built it.

4 Towards the Establishment of the IIC

Due to the growth of the interreligious dialogue movement during the 1970s, there were several encounters and events between 1985 and 1990. Some of these were significant for the creation of the IIC. I focus on some of these events that settled the aims that the IIC would then try to achieve. This will primarily be told from the point of view of one of the main actors during this process, Marcus Braybrooke, who was invited to the meetings I will refer to and was also involved in the creation of a few interreligious organizations including the IIC.

First, it is important to mention the Ammerdown[15] meeting in 1985 that began the planning process for the Parliament of the World Religions centenary celebrations. Those who attended the meeting were determined to concentrate on cooperation among interreligious dialogue organizations. In his book about the interreligious dialogue movement, Braybrooke says that during the meeting they recognized "the need to strengthen links between interfaith organizations"

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14 Lynée Lewis Gaillet, "Archival Survival: Navigating Historical Research," in *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*, eds. Alexis E. Ramsey, Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier, and Lisa Mastrangelo (Illinois: Sothern Illinois University Press, 2010): 28 – 39.

15 This meeting was arranged by the WCF in the Ammerdown Conference Centre near Bath in 1985 and gathered representatives of different international interreligious dialogue organisations.

and that after this recognition "communication between interfaith organizations increased."[16]

One year after the Ammerdown meeting in 1986, Pope John Paul II organized an event named Assisi World Day of Prayer for Peace that took place from 27–29 November. Several high-level religious leaders participated in this event, as well as some representatives of the IRDM. While the prayer was being organized, Braybrooke wrote some letters in response to the invitation and presented the idea of founding an "international committee for interfaith cooperation"[17], a body to gather the efforts of the interreligious initiatives around the world. In these letters, he mentioned his wish to create a center that would function as a network helping interreligious dialogue organizations cooperate among themselves and improve communication.

In 1988, a second Ammerdown meeting took place as a follow up to the one in 1985. After this, cooperation between interreligious dialogue organizations appeared to be an urgent necessity, as well as the building of a new international interreligious dialogue superstructure since there were an increasing number of interreligious dialogue organizations that existed but had no or virtually no contact among themselves. Braybrooke participated in this meeting where he promoted cooperation and closer relations among international interreligious dialogue organizations by writing a paper entitled "Future for Cooperation".[18]

During this meeting, a group called International Inter-religious Co-ordinating Committee (IIOCC) was established collaboratively by members of four organizations: The World Conference on Religions for Peace, World Thanksgiving, the World Congress of Faiths and the Temple of Understanding. The IIOCC was a network that did not want to have power. Rather it aimed to bring together religious bodies, interreligious organizations and networks and provide information about their activities. The IIOCC worked towards the events in 1993 to increase cooperation among interreligious dialogue organizations and religious bodies, with one important point: it was agreed from its inception that the IIOCC would stop operating after the 1993 events.

The emergence of the temporary IIOCC coincided with another process. In 1990, the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) hosted its 27th congress where it started preparing for the 1993 celebrations. There they dis-

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16 Marcus Braybrooke, *Widening Vision: The World Congress of Faiths and the Growing Interfaith Movement* (Oxford: Braybrooke Press, 2013), 239.

17 Marcus Braybrooke letter to the Vatican on October 7, 1986. Harley Library, University of Southampton, MS212 (A814) Box 24. (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

18 Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS265 (A895) Box 21/1.

cussed the themes, the objectives of the events and how it would be organized. The IARF's declaration expressed that religions should work for peace, freedom and justice and that they "welcome a higher cooperation among international interfaith organizations."[19] It was decided that a network to share information about interreligious dialogue activities would be created.

Although building a body to coordinate interreligious efforts were needed, this objective became more visible and urgent during 1993, the Year of Understanding and Cooperation. This was the episode that immediately determined the creation of the IIC and its main aims.

4.1 Giving Birth to the IIC: 1993 Events

In order to understand the events of 1993, it has to be mentioned that the first Parliament of World Religions convened in 1893 and there "the suggestion was made that the next parliament should be convened in India in 1900."[20] Despite these early plans, such a follow-up never took place in India. So that is why the IIOCC decided to prepare its main event to take place there. In between the 1893 Parliament and the various centennial events that were being prepared for 1993, the IRDM had grown to include many international interreligious dialogue organizations. Due to this growth, more dialogue among these organizational initiatives was needed. The IIOCC, which was in charge of organizing the centennial celebrations in India decided to call 1993 "the Year of Understanding and Cooperation" to try to link the centennial celebrations that were being organized in Chicago, but also in Laos, New Delhi, Bangalore and other places around the world to celebrate the 100 years of the IRDM.

From 18–22 August 1993, there was a meeting in Bangalore, India that took the name of "Sarva Dharma Sammelana."[21] This meeting was characterized by discussions about interreligious dialogue in the next century (Programme I), about religious and interreligious cooperation (Programme III), the objectives of religious institutions and religious traditions (Programme II). The importance of using spiritual energy for peace, freedom and compassion and for ethnic and

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19 27th IARF Congress Declarations (1990). Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS212 (A814) Box 13/1

20 Marcus Braybrooke opening speech (1993). Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS265 (A895) Box 1/1.

21 "Sarva Dharma Sammelana" means "Religious People Coming Together." It was a three-day international conference coorganized by the IIOCC and IARF, to coincide with the latter's Congress.

religious conflict resolution seemed urgent – an objective that would be later assumed by the IIC – and the clear future of interreligious dialogue was geared towards understanding and cooperation.

Before the Bangalore meeting, Braybrooke had written that "[c]ooperation between interfaith organizations is still only an *ad hoc* basis. Adequate structures for greater coordination and cooperation are required. There is an urgent need too for a center of information about worldwide interfaith work."[22] Braybrooke gave the opening and closing speeches encouraging the participants to show commitment and have hope. He remarked that there should not be competition among religions but cooperation and universal acceptance. In the opening ceremony, he said: "[o]ur work may 've been for a particular faith organization, but I hope in being together we shall sense that we are all part of a world- wide movement of the Spirit and that we both contribute to and are enriched by the larger whole."[23]

This was in line with some of the general ideas presented in the Declaration towards a Global Ethic and the new world spiritual and moral principles for union and the complement of energy that concluded the Centennial of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in late August, 1993, which also inspired the reaction of IIC. The many 1993 celebrations marking the centennial of the first parliament in Chicago were not only a commemoration of the first formal modern interreligious dialogue encounter, but also an inspiration to many people involved in these activities. It was during these events that the creation of the IIC was announced, responding to IRDM needs.

As already mentioned, the IIC was first conceptualized in the 1980s, but since this was being done while various preparations to celebrate the centennial were being carried out, t it can be said that the IIC was a child of the 1993 events. During the celebrations in Bangalore, Braybrooke together with Traer, announced the "Plans for an International Interfaith Centre at Oxford."[24] As they proclaimed in their paper, it would function as a network, coordinate interreligious activities, gather academic material and publications, support interreligious activities and also be a spiritual centre. They thought it was important for it to be international so as to share information on the interreligious dialogue movement around the world. Their interventions made the creation of the IIC

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22 Paper written by Marcus Braybrooke for the 1993 events on May 24, 1992. See more on *Visions of an Interfaith Future* (1994).

23 Marcus Braybrooke's opening speech (1993). Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS265 (A895) Box 1/1.

24 Braybrooke's and Traer's paper (1993). Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS389 (A3060) Box 2/4.

possible, but also the topics treated and the necessities that emerged during celebrations were some of the matters that inspired the IIC. In one of the leaflets that the IIC used as promotional material, they explicitly said that "[t]his is intended to be a continuing legacy of the 1993 Year of Understanding and Co-operation."[25]

4.2 What do we need the IIC for? The Preparation Process of the Centre

The person who decided to build the IIC was Braybrooke. "Marcus went to Yogaville[26] in the USA and thought that it was a place that symbolized what interfaith dialogue movement should be."[27] He started planning the IIC and with this aim, he contacted Celia and David Storey. He had met them around 1985, while working towards the 1993 Bangalore event. They had entered the interreligious dialogue movement in the 1970s as they had a New Age Centre where they learned about the healing power of meditation and were inspired by the Braybrookes to work together to create the IIC.

The IIC was supposed to be a place for cohesion. The IIC founders wanted union between those involved in interreligious dialogue activities because they felt that too often results were not shared between IRD organizations. They also realized that there were groups that felt isolated. The existing organizations needed to know about others' work. The IIC thus emerged from the lack of shared knowledge about interreligious dialogue activities worldwide. They noticed that interreligious dialogue organizations took jobs and resources away from each other, sometimes due to personal disputes. There were different events that showed the tension among organizations, that there was no cooperation, and that each one cared only about its own activities. In his paper "Is interfaith activity an effective agent of change?" Braybrooke said, that the "lack of coordination means that some of the energy and resources put into Interfaith work are wasted and that the message is not heard distinctly by a wider public."[28]

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25 "An International Interfaith Centre at Oxford," promotional leaflet in the Storeys' personal archives.

26 Yogaville is a spiritual community situated in the USA. For more information see: Yogaville, ed. *Yogaville:* http://www.yogaville.org/. (accessed: 24.5.2020).

27 Celia Storey and David Storey, interview at Petersfield, June 6, 2014.

28 Marcus Braybrooke's paper (N.D). Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS265 (A895) Box 1/1.

The founders of the IIC wanted a physical center "for leaders and scholars of all religions to stay, study, meet and talk together."[29] The IIC would be a safe place to meet people of different religions. They would be trusted and would not be a threat to other organizations because they would work for cooperation. They would not be competitive, and they would not have political positions. The IIC would promote universal values, fight fundamentalism, understand different religious traditions, share about different faiths and teach in global faith.

The planning process of the IIC took three years. During this period, they discussed the organization of the Centre, the topics they would treat, the objectives they wanted to reach, the structure, its name, location and other details. The idea of placing the IIC at Oxford arose after contacting Kenneth Wilson from Westminster College. He said that they could use the college's library for placing their material there, the IIC guests could stay at the campus and they could design and construct a building on its lands. Westminster College had religious study courses, so it was also good for them to have a close link with the IIC. Oxford was "an intellectual center, people would go there for free as it is a prestigious place" and "you could reach it fast from the airport as there is a direct bus so the access was easy." Oxford was also an important religious center and an international city.[30]

In 1991, while Traer was settled at Frankfurt working for the IARF[31], Braybrooke sent a letter to him asking for IARF support in the creation of the IIC and telling him that he had already the support of the World Congress of Faiths (WCF). It was this same year that they started the planning process. They decided that the IIC would be independent, work as a charity organization, coordinate, share and give information about interreligious activities, be a network, create databases, hold meetings, work with leaders in conflict areas and be a spiritual and educational centre. It would work for the union between religious communities, would have fluid contact with libraries and universities and give strength to the interreligious dialogue movement. The centre would work towards interreligious cooperation around the world by being an "organizational and communication center."[32] The building they projected was meant to have guest rooms and a special space for prayer and meditation. They wanted to give accommodation

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29 The Rt. Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford quoted in "Four Million Pound Appeal for Centre" in *The Newsletter of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford*, January 4, 1996.

30 Both earlier quotes and the information in this sentence come from Celia & David Storey interviewed at Petersfield, June 6, 2014.

31 Braybrooke's correspondence (1991) Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS212 (A2000) Box 3/2.

32 Robert Traer's letter to Marcus Braybrooke, March 12, 1992. Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS389 (A3060) Box 3/58.

for researchers and representatives of different religions. The IIC gained the support of several religious organizations, intellectuals, interreligious activists, religious leaders and others.

In 1992, they discussed where the IIC should be located. They rejected the idea of locating it in London because "it would get lost."[33] Birmingham was considered to be a good option since it was an important religious city. The Planning Committee contacted academic institutions for developing the IIC. Some of these institutions were the University of Bristol, Harris Manchester College and Mansfield College in Oxford. The idea of settling it in those places was discarded because some did not have space for the building, others did not have libraries, there was no space for guests, or they were not interested.[34]

During this process, a paper entitled "Why an International Interfaith Centre is needed" was written that discussed the specificities that the IIC would have. As the founders and former employees said during interviews with them "the IIC didn't have power or prestige, this was not its aim."[35] It just aimed to promote understanding and cooperation among the growing interreligious dialogue initiatives. It would share information and be a "home" for those interested in interreligious dialogue. There were many interreligious activities but,

> [n]o Centre holds information on all this varied and creative activity. The need is for an International Interfaith Centre which hold information about the different efforts being made around the world to encourage inter- religious understanding and cooperation. The establishment of one super organization is not the answer, just because the activity is so varied (N.D; 2)[36]

The IIC was conceptualized as a promoter of religious freedom, a place for meditation, worship and prayer that would also develop teaching methods and educational materials. Braybrooke announced its creation in 1993 for union, joint work against conflict, to stimulate interreligious activities and learning about other religious traditions.

In 1993, the trust deed was signed, and it outlined techniques for charity, the money needed for the first three years of work and delivered who would govern the centre and how it would be coordinated. The Deed of Trust declares that the

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33 The Rt. Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford quoted in "Four Million Pound Appeal for Centre" in *The Newsletter of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford*, January 4, 1996.

34 Robert Traer and Marcus Braybrooke correspondence to Manchester College (February 25, 1992), Mansfield College (April 21, 1992), University of Bristol (March 10, 1992), principals (1992) Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS212 (A2000) Box 3/5 – 3/8.

35 Marcus Braybrook and Mary Braybrooke, interview at Oxford, June 8, 2014.

36 "Why an International Interfaith Centre is needed" (N.N, N.D) in Storey's personal archives.

IIC's objectives are: "[t]o advance the education of the public world-wide in its understanding of the different faith traditions and various faith communities and how they might live together in harmony."[37] It aimed to promote interreligious understanding, cooperation, religious respect and freedom by being an educational, support, coordination and spiritual centre. The IIC would be:

> 1) An Educational Centre to promote research into ways of developing interreligious understanding, mutual respect and co-operation. The Centre will help to relate the academic study of religions to interfaith activity, promote research into teaching methods and encourage the production of educational material.
>
> 2) A Coordinating Centre to facilitate cooperation between people and groups actively engaged in interreligious work and to be a source of information about interfaith activities worldwide.
>
> 3) A Support Centre to strengthen personal contact between those engaged in interfaith work and the study of religions. The Centre would gladly offer advice to those who consult it.
>
> 4) A Spiritual Centre to provide opportunities for learning about prayer, worship and meditation in the world's regions.[38]

It is important to mention that the IIC was thought of as a center and not as a formal organization because it wanted to gather and be a source of information about interreligious dialogue activities around the world. It aimed to function as a network of the religious and interreligious dialogue movement. One of its characteristics was that members did not want to have any type of power or prestige in order to avoid being a threat or in competition with other organizations.[39] Another distinguishing feature was that the IIC had members all around the world that helped create it and participated in its activities. All of these different elements constitute the initiative called the IIC.

4.3 IIC Structure and the Functions of its Members

The IIC trustees' legal document was signed on 6 December 1993 at Westminster College. It was settled at Oxford by the IARF, the WCF and Westminster College. The IIC had strong and close relationships with other organizations, reciprocally participating in each other's activities and events.

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37 Deed of Trust signed on December 6, 1993 in Storey's personal archives.
38 Letters & Leaflets Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS212 (A2000) Box 3/2 – 3/3.
39 Deed of Trust signed on December 6, 1993 in Storey's personal archives.

The provisional structure built during the planning process consisted of an Executive Committee Council, an Advisory Committees, the Friends of IIC and the Programme Working Group[40]

The document also explained that the Executive Committee or Board of Trustees would represent the IIC by law and propriety. The Council would be composed of people from supporting organizations and they would supervise the Centre's work. The Advisory Committee would be built by people recommended by members. The Friends of IIC would contribute donations starting from £25 a year and would receive the IIC's publications. The Programme Working Group would implement the projects.[41] The IIC's final structure was made of the International Consultant Team, the Advisory Committee, three patrons and approximately ten Trustees, friends, two staff members and three volunteers, each one with his or her particular role.

To build the IIC, they first consulted international interreligious dialogue practitioners and religious leaders. These people were called International Consultants. Although they wanted diversity inside the group, they were mostly from English speaking countries. They were asked to recommend people and suggest things for the IIC to do. They were also invited to form the Advisory Committee (there were people who could not accept because of their positions on the institution they belonged to). The Advisory Committee members that eventually accepted assisted the IIC by offering resources to give tours, hold conferences, conduct research, create publications, newsletters and other activities. Despite the religious variety in its composition, its membership remained limited in terms of linguistic outreach (most members were limited to English) and geographical spread (most lived in England).

The trustees represented persons whose respective organizations were supportive of the IIC. They gathered together in meetings where they talked about what they did, what they would do and how to raise and spend funds. There were six main trustees and some guests who were religious leaders, academics and cultural leaders. The staff and volunteers worked at the office and administration. Among its members were Celia Storey and Sandy Bharat and three volunteers who worked as secretaries, as well as bookkeepers and friends who donated money. Bharat was the primary full-time member of the staff and Storey helped her as a part-time volunteer. The three volunteers assisted them with the work they did in the office. Years later, Jael Bharat took over most of the

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40 According to the Structure Proposal from March 12, 1993. Hartley Library, University of Southampton, MS389 (A3060) Box 1/1.

41 Deed of Trust signed on December 6, 1993 in Storey's personal archives.

work that Storey did at the IIC. The staff was also involved in event planning, organized or participated in interreligious events in several places and was engaged in fundraising.[42] It is important in the case of the IIC to understand its organizational structure to then make sense of its mission and activities. The IIC was founded responding to IRDM needs in the 1990s, but as the movement vastly increased in the following two decades, it became harder for the IIC to maintain its work, which was based on donations and volunteer work.

From its beginning in 1993, the IIC registered in the Charity Commission. Those who worked for the IIC contacted institutions for material for their library by contacting people from different religious traditions, religious bodies, interreligious groups and networks to create a complete database. These activities show the IIC's interest to promote cooperation and be a source of information about IRDM. They also contacted people for funding and donations: friends provided a regular and steadily influx of funding. But in the office, they also appealed to great funding bodies and organizations to support programs and projects. One year after its foundation, they finished defining the functions of each group that comprised the IIC.

In 1995, the Westminster College at Oxford offered possible sites on its lands for building the IIC. When they were about to start building in October, the "planning permission for the building was refused on the grounds of the new Green Belt restrictions around Westminster College (...) In the view of the high cost of planning appeal, the trustees decided not to go ahead with the proposed building."[43] In spite of this frustrating situation, they continued working in an office at 2 Market Street, Oxford that they shared with the WCF, IARF and a Japanese organization called Rissho Kosei Kai.

4.4 Interfaith Encounters: An Effective Agent of Change

The IIC offered activities such as lectures, annual conferences, meetings and workshops. They also had information, databases, newsletters and contacts with interreligious organizations and religious leaders that made it possible for them to give information and answers about different topics to those who requested such information. The IIC coordinated interreligious activities with aca-

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42 This information was collected during several interviews (Storeys June 6, 2014; Braybrookes June 8, 2014; Sandy Bharat July 8, 2014). It was revised and corrected by the IIC members.
43 IIC Annual Report (1996) in Trustees reports. Storey's personal archives.

demic research exchange and also had a theological perspective in its lectures/conferences.

The activities they hosted took place at universities and colleges as they did not have their own building and their office was not big enough. The work dynamic consisted of forming small groups to encourage people to deepen dialogue and share personal experiences. All their efforts aimed to reach peace, promote dialogue, learn from each other, empower people and push as many people as possible to get involved in the interreligious dialogue movement. They were supportive of what other organizations did and they would promote and share what others did since they were in touch with many interreligious dialogue initiatives.

Responding to the needs of their time, they also held seminars and dialogue encounters in conflict areas. The topics of these events were mainly dialogue, world conflict resolution, and energy for unity. Through many activities, they also tried to show the richness that existed in diversity and religious pluralism. Braybrooke wrote in an IIC magazine that "[t]he first step in ending religious hostility is to dispel prejudice and ignorance by teaching about the religious beliefs and practices of other people and by providing opportunities for members of different religions, especially young people, to meet and get to know each other."[44]

In 1994 and 1995, the IIC offered talks about obstacles to interreligious dialogue and its goals, religious minorities and how to speak for a religion, showing its members the capacity to express reflexivity. The 1994 conference was called: "Religious Practice, Justice and Transformation" and the theme was about how different religions can work together for a better world. They agreed that: "it should begin by acts of service to the local community, but then go to ask questions about what caused the conditions which required relief."[45]

The IIC's objectives in 1996 were to develop strategies for tolerance and mutual understanding between different religious traditions. To follow this aim they held a conference that was called: "From Conflict to Dialogue" in which they asked: what can you reach through interreligious dialogue in places with tensions because of having different faith communities? Or in Braybrooke's words: "what interfaith organizations could do in areas of conflict." (2013: 245) During this event, they focused on interreligious achievements and initiatives around the world. Also, in 1996 the Centre published "Testing the Global

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44 Marcus Braybrooke, "What is Interfaith?," in *Seven Years IIC Magazine* (2002). Braybrooke's personal archives.
45 Marcus Braybrooke, "Religious Practice, Justice & Transformation," in *The Newsletter of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford*, April 1994.

Ethic", showing again its close links to the Chicago 1993 centennial event. This book wanted to see how far these commitments had become true by asking people of different faiths.

The events organized in 1997 were mainly related to conflict resolution. They had a programme linked to this problem, as well as one about community building. The IIC worked in places such as Bosnia and Ireland. It also held meetings about integration from different religious perspectives. These events encouraged participants to think about how dialogue could solve conflicts. Topics such as nationalism, reconciliation, identity, interreligious dialogue and effectiveness of dialogue were predominant.[46]

As already shown, the main concerns of the IIC events reflected IRDM limits (reflexivity), supported other interfaith initiatives (cooperation) and conflict resolution (interreligious dialogue as an alternative to religious extremism). The above are just some examples of IIC work. Through this variety of activities offered and topics treated, the IIC members got involved with interreligious dialogue and took it seriously as they considered (and showed) that these kinds of encounters could be effective agents of change.

5 Concluding Remarks

The IIC was barely active while the research took place. It still helped charitable causes and projects of social service, but it was not working towards the aims it held in the beginning. This might be related to the fact that they achieved their main objectives. It also needs to be considered that from 2000 to 2010 the IIC coordinated the International Interfaith Organizations Network (IION), which linked the main interreligious bodies to each other. Due to the rapid increase of interreligious work around the world, the task of trying to coordinate activities became too big for a largely voluntary group with limited fundraising capacities. That is probably why new initiatives that appeared on the scene were very welcome.

The present analysis proposes that the IIC – in its search for understanding and unity – was able to gather people from different interreligious dialogue organizations, religious groups and worked hard to bring together people in conflict areas where the religious other was considered an enemy. The activities they organized sought for true dialogue encounters and that is why they thought that

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46 Marcus Braybrooke, "The Place of Dialogue in Helping and Healing Conflict," in *The Newsletter of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford*, July 1997.

learning about other faiths was important. Besides providing information about interreligious activities, they shared information about different religious traditions promoting religious studies and research. The IIC also organized trips, lectures, conferences, seminars, symposiums, workshops, online courses, publications and other events.

These overall aims also influenced the processes inside the Centre. As mentioned in this paper, the IIC was founded to try to build dialogue among interreligious initiatives. When the IIC members asked themselves about their mission and their distinctive characteristics, they said that they should remember that their main ideal was working towards cooperation among organizations. Everything should be about cooperation among religions for the same purpose. The IIC wanted dialogue among religions – as sometimes there were some traditions excluded from interreligious activities – dialogue among all interreligious organizations – that in lots of cases competed for resources instead of fighting towards their shared objectives – and dialogue between people of other faiths to achieve encounters beyond differences.

This has much wider implications. The importance of studying the IIC lies in the fact that its objectives were original, and they answered a need that had not been attended to within the interreligious dialogue movement. Instead of being an organization, those who planned the IIC thought it should not be established as an organization because it could be seen as a threat to other interreligious initiatives. As their main aim was to coordinate and give information about the interreligious movement, they decided that by being a center they would be able to accomplish their objectives in a better way, having no power or hierarchy.

In addition, the creation of the IIC inspired new initiatives in the interreligious dialogue movement and was related, since the beginning, to numerous interreligious events and organizations. Some of the main international interreligious dialogue organizations supported and were involved in the creation of the IIC (IARF, WCF) and important academic institutions, such as Westminster College were also implicated in setting it up. The idea of the IIC arose from the events that took place from 1985 to 1993, which inspired the idea of a union inside the interreligious dialogue movement. The main episode that can be named as the one that "gave birth" to the IIC was the Year of Cooperation and Understanding. At the same time, the IIC inspired and promoted international interreligious dialogue organizations and initiatives such as networks to gather these organizations together.

This has to be put into context. The common causes that could threaten religions were also part of the reason why dialogue increased. Working together against poverty, protecting the environment and promoting human rights are some examples of causes that can unite people. Fighting against secularization,

fascism, and communism also make believers get together in spite of differences, for example. Today, one of the main concerns of the interreligious dialogue movement is fanaticism, fundamentalism and religious extremism that is and was responsible for many world conflicts and wars. Some of these common aims and threats already inspired the initiatives that emerged during the seventies and also the ones that guided interreligious dialogue encounters that have taken place since the nineteen-eighties. The IIC, which was created to respond to this growth, also shared these aims and fights, which was demonstrated in many of the topics treated in their events.

This paper tries to contribute to the aim of learning about the history of the interreligious dialogue movement by presenting the IIC as a case study. The IIC is just one example of what interreligious dialogue is about and it shows the importance of networking for the IRDM. Since the IIC started operating, its founders enhanced cooperation among interreligious dialogue initiatives and organizations. However, due to the IRDM growth in the last two decades, its organizational structure did not allow them to continue working towards this aim. Other strong international interreligious dialogue organizations have since appeared on the scene and some of them continue working towards these objectives. Although interreligious dialogue has many difficulties and limits – mainly related to fear of otherness and losing distinctiveness, to power and to religious, social, ethnic or gender inequality – it has proved to be an effective agent of change by encouraging true dialogue encounters among people from different faiths. According to Braybrooke "deep interfaith fellowship has the potential to heal the world's division and to help us create a world of lasting peace and justice."[47]

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47 Bharat and Bharat, *A Global Guide to* Interfaith, 152.

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Sara Singha
Search for Inclusive Language

A New Stage of Awareness Inside the Interreligious Dialogue
Movement (United Religions Initiative / 2000 – 2006)

1 Introduction

Interreligious dialogue first began within the context of ecumenism and then
gradually extended outward from Christian circles to include world religions.[1]
Most scholars agree that the Parliament of World Religions in 1893 initiated
the first step towards interreligious dialogue.[2] Marianne Moyaert argues that
the 1893 meeting symbolizes the "beginning of the interfaith movement" that
was rooted in "positive and constructive relations between world religions."[3]
Moyaert asserts that replacing polemics and apologetics with positive interreli-
gious engagement and 'dialogue' was a representation of modern ideals based

1 Thomas Madathilparampil Mammen, *Towards a Wider Ecumenism* (Bangalore: Asian Trading
Company, 1993).
2 Marianne Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," in *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, ed.
David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 193.
3 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 195.

on "freedom of religion, respect for otherness, and tolerance."[4] The initial movement, then, was motivated by a number of pertinent social factors including the end of colonialism and the rise of post-colonialism, both of which challenged the premise of Christian superiority and exclusivity.[5] Therefore, the early interreligious dialogue movement stemmed, at least partially, from a desire to engage religious diversity from a non-imperialistic theological worldview.[6]

Since its inception, interreligious dialogue has been replete with internal fissures. One aspect of interreligious dialogue that is pertinent to this project is the inherent tension between theological openness and religious identity.[7] Is it possible to maintain one's theological identity while engaging the 'other' in truthful and respectful terms? The interreligious dialogue movement and its proponents have struggled with this question. A strong proponent of interreligious dialogue, American theologian John Hick is often critiqued because his pluralistic approach blurs the lines of religious identity. For example, Hick asserts that all religions have the same soteriological goal.[8] For Hick, every religion is an equally valid path to God and marks a movement from "ego-centeredness to reality-centeredness."[9] Although religions manifest different 'truth claims' for Hick, these are simply indications of historical and cultural distinctions. Therefore, Hick contends that all religions are true.[10] American theologian Paul Knitter agrees with Hick. Knitter asserts that Christian superiority needs to be re-evaluated.[11] Knitter notes that while the New Testament contains 'truth claims', these are 'confessional' and need to be interpreted within their historical-cultural context.[12] As such, both Hick and Knitter claim that exclusivist theology cannot be sustained in an increasingly globalized world.

Knitter, in particular, is a proponent of interreligious dialogue. He argues that such engagement is necessary for the ethical wellbeing of society. Knitter favours an orthopraxic model of dialogue that is motivated by ethical issues in-

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4 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 195.

5 J. Hill Fletcher, "Religious Pluralism in an Era of Globalization: The Making of Modern Religious Identity," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 395.

6 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 197.

7 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 208.

8 John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 36.

9 Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion,* 36.

10 Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion, 36.*

11 Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes towards the World Religions* (New York: SCM Press, 1985), 95 – 93; See also Paul F. Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996).

12 Knitter, *No Other Name?*, 93.

cluding poverty, violence, marginalisation, and oppression.[13] "Human beings, as individuals and as communities, have a *global responsibility,* that is, a responsibility to promote the wellbeing and life of a threatened humanity and planet."[14] Similarly, theologian Hans Küng asserts that "one world needs one basic ethic" for survival given the extent of ecological and socio-political deterioration.[15] However, despite Hick's soteriological model and Knitter and Küng's orthopraxic model, some theologians remain suspicious of the pluralistic enterprise. This hesitation, in part, arises from the notion that religions are circumscribed by theological 'truth claims' that, while universal in application, are particular in confession. Therefore, to affirm the truth of every religion, as Hick suggests, is tantamount to denying the 'truth claims' of all religions.

In the American context, most critiques of interreligious dialogue and pluralism tend to emerge from conservative Christian circles. For example, American theologian Harold Netland has multiple concerns about interreligious dialogue. Netland argues that religious pluralism is rarely genuine.[16] He asserts that most dialogue is usually a form of 'pseudo inclusivism' that tends to privilege one worldview over the other.[17] He further claims that the danger of interreligious dialogue and pluralism "strike at the heart of Christian faith, touching every major area of theology, including theological method, revelation, the doctrine of God and, most, obviously, Christology and soteriology."[18] The issue for Netland and other conservative Christians is rooted in the tension between the particularity of Christ and the universality of his message. The concern arises from striking a theological balance between engaging the 'other' while upholding the 'truth claims' of the Christian tradition.

In North America, there is an inherent tension between engaging the religious 'Other' and remaining within the doctrinal boundaries of Christianity. This significant aspect of the interreligious dialogue movement is manifested through the work of the United Religions Initiative (URI). Since its establishment on 26 June 2000, the URI has evolved from a small group of visionary people led

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13 Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth, Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility* (New York: Maryknoll, 1995).

14 Knitter, *No Other Name?*, 70.

15 Cited in Knitter, *One Earth, Many Religions*, 65.

16 Harold Netland, *Encountering Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith and Mission* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 201), 216 – 218.

17 Netland, *Encountering Pluralism*, 216 – 218.

18 Netland, *Encountering Pluralism*, 14.

by Episcopal Bishop William E. Swing into a global interfaith organization.[19] In his monograph, *the Coming of the United Religions*, Swing notes that when he first raised the idea to friends, "not one thought a United Religions could be achieved. Not one advised it. No colleague made partnership with it."[20] The initial response was hence, negative. Swing was attacked by conservative Christians, interfaith leaders, and journalists precisely because of his specific commitment to interreligious dialogue. Many critics argued that the United Religions was an affront to ecumenism.[21] As such, this vision did not have much hope of becoming actualized.[22] However, despite the initial response, Swing pursued his idea. Similar to Knitter and Küng, Swing was rooted in the orthopraxic model of dialogue and believed that interreligious engagement was necessary for the "health of the planet."[23]

Today, URI is one of the largest interreligious organizations in the world. URI has a presence in every continent and is active around the world, in countries such as Cambodia, India, Iraq, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Uganda, and Venezuela.[24] URI has an operational structure based on Cooperation Circles (CCs), which are autonomous units that have signed the URI Charter. Nearly 640 CCs are active in almost every region of the world

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19 The Episcopal Church (TEC) is the American based church of the Anglican Communion. It has nine provinces and dioceses in the United States, Taiwan, Micronesia, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The TEC emerged as its own independent church during the American Revolution when it separated from the Anglican Communion in the Church of England. The TEC is generally one of the more "liberal" mainline Protestant churches in the United States and is active in women's ordination and gay and lesbian ordination. Because of their liberal attitude, the TEC has come under attack from more conservative Christian groups within the United States that do not support gay and lesbian ordination and/or female clergy.

20 William E. Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions* (Grand Rapids: CoNexus Press, 1998), 12–13; Sally Mahé, "United Religion Initiative: Global Community Emerging," *Integral Review* 8 (2012): 96–100.

21 United Religions Initiative Archives, 1995–2013. Box 1, Folder 3, Articles about Swing and the United Religions Initiative, 1996–2000. (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

22 Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing, North American Interfaith Network Conference, Dallas, August 10, 1996.

23 United Religions Initiative Archives, 1995–2013. Box 1, Folder 3, Articles about Swing and the United Religions Initiative, 1996–2000, "The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing, 'Uniqueness of the United Religions.'"

24 The most current figures for Cooperation Circles (CCs) in the URI include the following: African Continent: 145 CCs; Asia: 228 CCs; Europe: 46 CCs; Latin America and the Caribbean: 38 CCs; Southeast Asia and the Pacific: 37 CCs; North America: 62 CCs.

engaging over 88 faith traditions and 84 countries.[25] Most CCs function independently in their individual countries but in order to become part of the URI global structure, they are required to sign the Charter. Multiple global religious representatives serve as contributors and project affiliates for URI. Local and global interfaith leaders are also actively engaged with the organization.

What is unique about the structure of URI is its localized nature. URI projects are diverse and range from youth leader programs to peace initiatives, and many more, such as: interfaith solidarity networks, women's empowerment movements, civic engagement, environmental protection, and interfaith dialogue. Projects are context-sensitive and localized. This means that there is no singular reason why an organization chooses to become a URI member. Local needs determine the desire to participate in URI and each CC operates independently while under the URI organizational umbrella. The head office of the URI, based in San Francisco, offers support and training to CCs across the world and connects people with similar interests. The structure of the URI is thus fluid yet maintained through a sustained belief in the core values of the organization.

In this paper, I analyze the dialogical process involved in creating the URI Charter, particularly the Preamble, as well as relevant documents at the center of these developments. I argue that the Preamble marks a shift in the interreligious dialogue movement that is punctuated by the search for truly inclusive language. After the initial idea to create a United Religions, one of the first challenges Swing encountered was creating a Charter to reflect URI's values. He also wanted the Charter to encapsulate the theological and religious diversity of its supporters, the myriad social issues in need of redress, and define URI's role in the process. A draft committee was selected. Together, they worked to create a Charter that was inclusive of multiple, religious voices while remaining rooted in the core principles of URI. Because of a commitment to inclusive language, the Charter took almost three years to articulate.

During the Charter development, two dialogical strategies were introduced to URI that helped to articulate the values of the organization. The first strategy was introduced by David Cooperrider, an organizational behaviorist. Cooperrider's methodology, called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) focused on the concept of "sacred listening" for fostering interreligious engagement. A second methodology emerged through the work of Dee Hock, the founder of VISA. Hock introduced 'Chaordic Organisation' which was a system based on democratic, non-hierarch-

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25 At the time this book is going to press, the number of CCs worldwide has now reached one thousand.

ical dialogue. I analyze further below these strategies to explore the dimensions and boundaries of inclusive language in the URI Charter. As I describe, these methodologies were the integral components for the development of this Charter. Utilizing these strategies enabled URI to engage in interreligious dialogue that was defined by inclusive language.

What emerges from this analysis is the distinct contribution of URI to the field of interreligious dialogue. I argue that URI created an environment were all peoples, religious, spiritual, or secular who shared their principles could participate equally. This is particularly illuminating for interreligious dialogue. As Netland and Knitter indicate, dialogue is often limited in size and scope.[26] Ecumenical dialogue is restricted to Christian circles. And, often, 'interfaith' communities do not reach out to fundamentalist, extant, secular, atheist, or humanist adherents.[27] In contrast, URI offered everyone an invitation to "co-create" the Charter. This is evidenced by Swing's effort to reach beyond interfaith and religious leaders to grass-roots activists, secularists, pantheists, Wiccans, and theosophists. In his commitment to interreligious dialogue, Swing opened the door to people who are not usually invited to the table; and, he opened the door wide. The commitment to interreligious dialogue was manifest during the Charter development. Each word was analyzed, edited, and reevaluated to ensure that no voice was marginalized or overlooked. For URI, this process of dialogue emerges as the foundational principle of true interreligious engagement, which is illuminating for both practitioners and academics in the field.

2 Methodology and Analytical Sources

For this project, I utilized qualitative analysis and focused on interpreting 'texts.' Often, 'texts' are limited to transcripts or notes but can also include pictures and images. The most relevant part of the Charter for the broader discussion of the interreligious dialogue movement is the emphasis on inclusive language. Therefore, I utilized meeting Minutes, notes, and transcripts that focused on the linguistic debates that occurred while the Charter was being formalized. Michael Quinn Patton argues that textual interpretation can never fully be judged as

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26 Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names*; Netland, *Encountering Pluralism*, 216–218.
27 Gerald Hall, "Interfaith Dialogue," in *Dreaming the Land: Theologies of Resistance and Hope*, eds. Hans-Georg Ziebertz and Friedrich Schweitzer (London: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 99–101.

'true' or 'false.'[28] Instead, 'texts' are negotiated among a community of interpreters in a particular context.[29] This means that analyzing 'texts' has certain limitations for any researcher. From a hermeneutic perspective, a researcher tries to engage with 'text' in a non-judgmental manner with an acknowledgement that his or her own socio-historical 'context' is always part of the interpretive process. Therefore, two researchers with different histories could reach very distinct conclusions while analyzing the same 'texts.' This limitation is acknowledged by the present researcher.

In an effort to be 'unbiased', several archival sources were consulted to analyze the development of inclusive language in the Charter. The sources varied in size and scope. The URI archives include several kinds of 'texts': Swing's diaries and travel accounts, newspaper articles, correspondence from supporters and dissenters, meeting Minutes, speeches, and budget reports. Diaries and travel accounts provided a useful description of the socio-political environment into which URI emerged. Newspaper articles and correspondence from supporters and dissenters provided a broad range of criticisms of URI during its foundational period. These critiques are pertinent because they reveal how much opposition Swing faced from conservative Christian circles in the United States, among others. Through analyzing these documents, I argue that these events were integral to Swing's commitment to creating a Charter that was rooted in inclusivity and mutual respect.

Two books that are part of URI archival sources were also consulted for this project. The first book, *the Coming of the United Religions* is by Swing and delineates the theological commitments that inspired URI. He also writes with candor about the criticism and censure that URI received during its foundational period. The second book, *Birth of a Global Community: Appreciative Inquiry in Action*, was written by Charles Gibbs and Sally Mahe, two members of the URI team. Gibbs and Mahe describe in detail the initial difficulties over inclusive language that emerged during Charter development. This book also examines Appreciate Inquiry (AI), the primary dialogical methodology utilized in creating the Charter. Both books provide significant information for analyzing the structure and function of interreligious dialogue during the foundational period of URI.

The central methodology for this paper was the linguistic analysis of the Charter, particularly, the Preamble. The Preamble was the 'purpose statement' for the United Religions. It, therefore, had to answer many questions. What

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28 Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (New York: Sage Publications, 2002), 114.

29 Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 114.

was the concept of 'United Religions'? Who were the members? What were their religious, spiritual, and socio-political goals? Who was invited to participate and whose voices were absent? The draft committee hypothesized that diverse people and opinions would stimulate respectful dialogue and that this dialogue would lead to a Charter that was theologically and linguistically inclusive. The draft committee began working on the Charter in June 1997 and ensured that diversity was part of the development process. Scholars, writers, interfaith activists, developmental organizers, futurists, business consultants and multiple, religious adherents were invited to participate in the process.

In the next section, I describe how Swing first developed the idea to create a United Religions Initiative. Next, I describe the initial response to Swing when he decided to create a global interfaith organization. After this brief examination, I turn to an analysis of Appreciative Inquiry (AI), the first dialogical methodology that was utilized by URI in engaging fruitful interreligious dialogue. I then analyze a second dialogue strategy, Chaordic Organization. My analysis reveals how these two strategies functioned during the development of the URI Charter. Utilizing archival sources including meeting Minutes, transcripts, and notes, I provide salient examples of how language was amended to represent religious inclusivity and diversity.

3 A Floating Vision: "Come, Let's Fly!"

In 1993, Swing, the Episcopal bishop of California received an unusual phone call from the United Nations (U.N.).[30] Swing was asked to host an interfaith ceremony at Grace Cathedral scheduled for June 1995 to honour the 50th anniversary of the U.N. Charter. Because the U.N. Charter was originally signed in San Francisco, the city was a natural choice for the fiftieth-anniversary celebration. Grace Cathedral, with its diverse and socially active congregation, was also a poignant selection. Swing, a progressive Episcopalian was asked to create a liturgical service that was theologically inclusive and respectful of the representatives of the world religions who would attend the ceremony.[31] The United Nations would

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[30] Katherine Marshall, *Global Institutions of Religion: Ancient Movers, Modern Shakers* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 141–142.

[31] As a member of the Episcopalian Church, Swing was known for his progressive attitude towards gay and lesbian ordination as well as women's ordination. This ideology was largely favored in the Episcopal Church in the United States and was often critiqued by more conservative mainline Protestants who do not support female or gay and lesbian clergy.

bring 183 ambassadors to San Francisco in honor of the 50th anniversary; Swing was asked to gather the 'world religions.'[32]

In his monograph, Swing writes that after agreeing to host the interfaith service, he was immediately "stirred, haunted, and convicted by one thought."[33] Swing was struck by the role of religion(s) in the socio-political engagement of the world. In his diary, Swing writes, "In the 50 years that the nations have gathered permanently and daily to strive for global good, the religions have not done the same. Here we are on the verge of global interfaith living and the religions still do not have the vision and the moral courage of the nations."[34] This led Swing to ask a series of questions. Why were nations so different from religions? Did religions lack the moral courage to strive for the global good? Did the teleology of religions include the global good? Captivated by these ideas, Swing awoke the next day with a newfound sense of determination. Swing decided to create an organization that would change the role of religion(s) in the world. He contemplated calling this organization the "United Religions" which would, "in appropriately spiritual ways, parallel the United Nations."[35]

Inspired by his conviction, Swing began to lay roots for the United Religions almost immediately. He gathered the names of international interfaith leaders and scheduled a conference in New York on 21 June 1993. Following the recommendations of these interfaith leaders, Swing conducted an Interfaith Youth Conference in June 1995 for 200 young people of 46 religions. Prominent speakers included Desmond Tutu and W.D. Mohammed.[36] A day after the conference, the interfaith service for the 50th anniversary of the U.N. Charter was held at Grace Cathedral in 1995. The liturgy took Swing almost two years to prepare.

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32 United Religions Initiative Archives, 1995–2013. URI General History, Box 1, Folder 1, General History and Descriptions of the URI, 1995–1997; Box 1, Folder 2, "Interfaith Service for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations Charter, 1995."

33 United Religions Initiative Archives, 1995–2013. URI General History, Box 1, Folder 1, General History and Descriptions of the URI, 1995–1997, Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing, North American Interfaith Network Conference, Dallas, August 10, 1996; This story is also paraphrased in Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 12–13.

34 Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing, North American Interfaith Network Conference, Dallas, August 10, 1996.

35 Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 4, "Swing's Pilgrimage Around the World," 1996; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 5, "Articles on 's Pilgrimage from San Jose Mercury News," 1996.

36 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 20, "UN50 Interfaith Youth Conference: Correspondence, 1993–1995"; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 21, "UN50 Interfaith Youth Conference: Correspondence, 1995"; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 22, "UN50 Interfaith Youth Conference invitations 1994–1995."

In September 1995, Swing presented his idea of a United Religions to the U.N. in New York. A month later, he introduced his concept in Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. On each occasion, Swing met with resounding support. This bolstered his resolve and in 1996, Swing embarked on a journey around the world to meet with religious leaders and discuss the formal establishment of the United Religions.[37]

The world tour began with the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala, India.[38] Swing then met with Mother Teresa in Kolkata, discussed his ideas with the Dalai Lama, and engaged Baha'i, Sikh, Jain, Muslim, and Zoroastrian religious leaders in India.[39] He then traveled to Pakistan and met with Javid Iqbal, various Muslim religious leaders, writers and Supreme Court Justices.[40] Next, he went to Egypt and met with Orthodox Coptic Pope, Shenouda III and the Grand Mufti, Mohammed Syed Tantawi.[41] In Jerusalem, Swing met with Rabbi Mordechai Peron. In Jordan, he discussed the United Religions with the Crown Prince and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul.[42] Next, he went to the World Council of Churches (WWC). After meeting with Hans Küng in Tubingen, Swing discussed his ideas with Cardinal Arinze and Pope John Paul II in Rome.[43] After a brief meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Swing went east to Japan and Korea. It was a year of high-level dialogue and the "floating vision" of the United Religions was met with both support and encouragement.[44]

In 1996, the United Religions established its first physical office through monetary donations from supporters in San Francisco and across the world. A staff of 5 full-time employees and 37 volunteers were ready to actualize the

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37 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 4, "Swing's Pilgrimage Around the World," 1996; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 5, "Articles on 's Pilgrimage from San Jose Mercury News, 1996.
38 The Mar Thoma Church in Kerala, South India is the Syrian Church traditionally believed to be founded by Saint Thomas, one of the 12 apostles of Jesus of Nazareth. The Church defines itself as "Apostolic in origin" and tradition suggests it was established in 52 CE.
39 URI History, Box 1, Folder 1, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 34, Oxford Talk: "Interfaith Achievements? Initiatives Around the World, 1996."
40 Javid Iqbal is the son of poet laureate and philosopher Mohammed Iqbal.
41 URI History, Box 1, Folder 1, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 34, Oxford Talk: "Interfaith Achievements? Initiatives Around the World, 1996." URI History, Box 1, Folder 38, "Swing's travels to visit World Religious Leaders, 1996."
42 URI History, Box 1, Folder 38, "Swing's travels to visit World Religious Leaders, 1996."
43 URI History, Box 1, Folder 38, "Swing's travels to visit World Religious Leaders, 1996."
44 URI History, Box 1, Folder 40, "Responses from religious leaders, 1996."

"floating vision."[45] First, the staff worked to complete the 501 (c) 3 application which enables non-profit, tax-exempt organizations to legally function in the United States. Next, they designed a website. With these changes, the United Religions entered the development stage.[46] In June 1996, at the first United Religions Summit, in his opening speech, Swing said, "Today indeed is a special moment. Credulity trembles. And delirious hope gasps for a first breath. An entire new life for the world beckons us to step ahead."[47] He reminded the crowd of his "floating vision" that had now been shared with international religious and political leaders.[48] He next issued the following invitation:

> At the first of this century, there was a time when human beings knew in their bones that we should fly. So all kinds of people glued feathers to their arms, climbed to the top of the barn, began flapping, and jumped off. And sure enough, right around there, we learned to fly. I don't mind standing in front of you today smelling of feathers and sticking with glue. I'll tell you right now, I'm jumping. This Summit comes down to one invitation to you around the creation of the United Religions. 'Come, let's fly.'[49]

4 The Dialogue Begins: Challenges of Syncretism, Inclusivism, and Proselytizing

Within weeks of establishing a physical presence in San Francisco, the negative responses came pouring in Swing's office.[50] In contrast to the warm support he encountered overseas, in the United States, conservative Christians were less keen on the United Religions. In his book, Swing writes, "Placard carrying folks picketed us. One group wrote that I was the anti-Christ."[51] Journalists noted that many conservative Christians accused URI of being a syncretic organ-

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45 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005" "United Religions Summit, June 24 – 28, 1996, Opening Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing."
46 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005" "United Religions Summit, June 24 – 28, 1996, Opening Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing."
47 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005" "United Religions Summit, June 24 – 28, 1996, Opening Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing."
48 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005" "United Religions Summit, June 24 – 28, 1996, Opening Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing."
49 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005" "United Religions Summit, June 24 – 28, 1996, Opening Speech by The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing."
50 The United Religions established its first physical office in the Presidio, a former military base in San Francisco which is now part of the Golden Gate National Recreational Area.
51 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 19 – 20.

ization.[52] Newspaper articles claimed that many Christians were offended by Swing's inclusive attitude. For example, the U.N. interfaith service at Grace Cathedral was heavily critiqued because of Swing's interreligious attitude. Some argued that during this service, "prayers, chants and incantations were offered to a dozen deities", which offended the sacredness of the Church.[53] Others said the United Religions was guilty of promoting a "one-faith fits all mentality."[54] In his book, Swing writes that he was accused of creating a religious "conspiracy which aims at joining with the United Nations to form a single world government and a single world religion."[55]

Some observers also critiqued Swing's open-door policy towards diverse religious and spiritual communities. One particular critic, Lee Penn, was most vocal in his contempt for URI. Penn argued that Swing had supporters among extant and esoteric groups that were dangerous to the Christian faith.[56] Indeed, the United Religions did find resounding support among New Agers, Wiccans and theosophists, including the Rudolph Steiner Foundation.[57] When the Rudolph Steiner Foundation, in particular, pledged its financial support, it invited the ire of conservative Christians. Wiccans, New Agers, and Pantheists were also anathema to many conservative Christians and secured their distrust of URI and Swing. A further rift was created by Swing's unwavering support of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community in San Francisco.[58] This coupled with the bishop's support of gay ordination led many conservative

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52 Trudi Lawrence, Theosophy, Ecology, & Pan-Religion: https://www.traditioninaction.org/History/G_011_PanReligion.html (accessed: 24.5.2020).

53 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 4, "Swing's Pilgrimage Around the World, 1996; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 5, "Articles on Swing's Pilgrimage" from San Jose Mercury News, 1996. Trudi Lawrence, "Theosophy, Ecology, & Pan-Religion" *Tradition in Action*, January 11, 2011.

54 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005"; "Bridge to the One-World Religion: The Foundation" *Times Digest and Newsbytes*, February, 2000.

55 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 60.

56 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 12, "Negative Responses to URI, 1996 – 2000, Lee Penn, "Midwives of a Common Good: The Myriad Friends of the United Religions Initiative", *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, June, 2000."

57 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995 – 2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 12, "Negative Responses to URI, 1996 – 2000, Lee Penn, "Midwives of a Common Good: The Myriad Friends of the United Religions Initiative", *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, June, 2000."

58 LGBTQ is the acronym most commonly used in the United States to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning community. 'Questioning' refers to people who are unsure about their gender or sexual orientation.

Christians to conclude that the United Religions was itself a deviant organization.

A second issue during this foundational period stemmed from Swing's commitment to inclusivity. While tolerance of the 'other' was respected in the Christian tradition, inclusivism brought with it some cumbersome theological baggage. While ecumenical dialogue was valued, *interreligious* inclusivism heightened fear and suspicion.[59] There was a notion that inclusivism had the potential to gloss over Christian 'truth claims' including the particularity of Christ. This indicates, as Netland suggests, that for many Christians, interreligious dialogue had boundaries. The general complaint against Swing was that he was *too* interreligious. Swing's 'interfaith-ism' was construed as a dismissal of Christian doctrine and ecumenism.[60] Further, engaging 'interfaith-ism' so inclusively was interpreted as a disregard for orthodoxy. As Swing reports in his book, some thought he "was the anti-Christ."[61] This crucial point proved insurmountable for many conservative Christians and bolstered their dismissal of URI.

In his monograph, Swing relates an episode when his personal conviction to pluralism and inclusivity were virulently rejected. Swing was invited to participate in a long-distance radio program. The interviewer asked him whether there was only *one* way to God. Swing replied that there were many distinct ways to reach/see God, for example, "in the birth of the child, in a sight of nature, in a piece of music, in an enduring relationship."[62] The bishop reports that his response created such consternation and caused the interviewer to "scream so loudly that the radio station insisted he come back the next day and apologize."[63] The source of this outrage can be traced to a feeling of betrayal among particular Christians who held the veracity of Christ and its source, the

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59 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 12, "Negative Responses to URI, 1996–2000, Lee Penn, "Midwives of a Common Good: The Myriad Friends of the United Religions Initiative", *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, June, 2000."

60 URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 12, "Negative Responses to URI, 1996–2000, Lee Penn, "Midwives of a Common Good: The Myriad Friends of the United Religions Initiative", *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*, June, 2000."

61 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 19–20.

62 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 60; URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 8, "Writings by Swing about the URI, 1996–2005."

63 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 60; URI History, Box 1, Folder 32-A, "Writings about URI by Swing and others, 1995–2005"; URI History, Box 1, Folder 8, "Writings by Swing about the URI, 1996–2005."

Bible, as a singular truth that was irreproachable. For these Christians, the notion that one could reduce revelation to the "birth of a child or a piece of music" was both heretical and discomforting.

A further issue related to biblical truth(s) emerged when Swing expressed his views on exclusive religious claims. Swing firmly believed that exclusivity had the potential to create disagreement and contention among different religions. While not *against* exclusive truth claims, Swing demarcated clear boundaries about their function in URI. In his book, Swing argues, "the absolute exclusive claims of each [religion] will be honored but an agreed upon neutrality will be exercised in terms of proselytizing, condemning, murdering, or dominating. These will not be tolerated in the United Religions zone."[64] There was no internal debate in the United Religions on proselytizing; it was simply not part of the ethos of the organization. This commitment to inclusivity was interpreted by conservative Christians as an affront to evangelism. Despite these difficulties, Swing forged ahead bolstered by a commitment to create a global interfaith organization.

5 The Dialogue Develops: Introducing Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

A key issue in interreligious dialogue often relates to who is invited to participate in 'dialogue.'[65] Religion scholar Leonard Swidler argues that: "It is important that interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue not be limited to official representatives or even to the experts in the various traditions, although they have irreplaceable roles to play in dialogue."[66] This became pertinent within a few months of the establishment of URI when Swing and key members of his team focused on creating a Charter. A host committee was selected and began compiling a list of participants to invite to a Charter Summit. The list reflected religious inclusivity and included Brahma Kumaris, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Native Americans, Sufis, secularists, and humanists. Positive responses were received.[67] Budget and lodging issues soon surfaced. The initial idea was to host the Summit at the Presidio in San Francisco, a former military base where URI had secured their office. This decision proved both impractical and expen-

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64 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 31.
65 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 31.
66 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 12.
67 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 18.

sive.[68] Eventually, the host committee selected the Fairmont Hotel where the original U.N. Charter was signed as the location for the Summit on June 24, 1996.

Once the logistics were arranged, there still remained the daunting task of constructing a meaningful dialogue with an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse group of people.

This is often a practical difficulty in the field of interreligious dialogue.[69] To structure the dialogue, the host committee raised several questions to guide Summit participants. Would the United Religions have a logo? What would the letterhead and logo look like? Would it feature words or just symbols? In their book, Gibbs and Mahe, two URI team members argue that host committee viewed its contributions to the Charter development as "an act of service" and wanted to guide the process with trying to "control the forum."[70] As such, the host committee was conceptualized as a "midwife" or "scaffolding" which would dismantle after the Charter was formulated.[71] Their main concern, however, was to structure an effective and constructive dialogue between Summit attendees.

Practitioners of interreligious dialogue argue that there are many forms of 'dialogue.' For example, Swidler argues that: "While the intellectual and verbal communication is indeed the primary meaning of dialogue, if the results therefrom do not spill over into the two areas of action and spirituality, it will have proved sterile."[72] This quickly became a concern for the host committee. Gibbs and Mahe describe that initial Charter development sessions had a serious lack of cohesion. Mahe writes that the first discussions over letterhead, logo, and language often "plunged the group into a swirling chaos of seemingly competing visions and values."[73] These issues were punctuated because many of the participants had varying degrees of interfaith and organizational experience. "Some brought deep experience of interfaith work; some, deep experiences of exclusion; some, fervor for the cause but no real interfaith experience or sensitiv-

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68 Charles Gibbs and Sally Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community: Appreciative Inquiry in Action*, (San Francisco: Lakeshore Communications, Inc, 2004), 25.

69 Leonard Swidler, Khalid Duran, and Reuven Firestone, *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Dialogue*, (New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007), 11.

70 Swidler et al., *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 11.

71 Swidler et al., *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 11.

72 Swidler et al., *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 14.

73 Charles Gibbs and Sally Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community: Appreciative Inquiry in Action*, (San Francisco: Lakeshore Communications, Inc, 2004), 15.

ity."[74] Each step was tentative because the emphasis was on inclusivity among a religiously diverse community.

As the host committee was deliberating the best methodological approach to the Summit dialogue, a solution was presented by David Cooperrider, a professor of Organizational Behavior. Cooperrider was the creator of a developmental methodology called, Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The foundational structure of AI is based on democracy and conceptualized around the practice of "sacred listening."[75] AI has four components: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny.[76] This "4-D process" created the building blocks for "sacred listening." Hence, the process was immersive but not *coercive*. In other words, this was a true 'dialogue' where each participant was a "co-creator" in the process. Struck by the structure of this method, URI adopted AI as their dialogical strategy for the Summit.[77] At the Summit, 55 people assembled in the Fairmont Hotel including religious adherents, futurists, interfaith activists, philanthropic consultants, scholars, and leaders of various NGOs.[78] Conversations were framed through AI. First, questions focused on part one of the 4-D process—Discovery. This dialogue centered on participants 'discovering' each other through "Appreciative interviews."[79] These interviews explored individual goals and served to bring diverse people closer to each other through "sacred listening."

After completing the first part of 'Discovery', participants focused on "Dream." Gibbs and Mahe write that some conceived of the United Religions as the spiritual counterpart of the United Nations with a "Bill of Spiritual

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74 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community: Appreciative Inquiry in Action*, (San Francisco: Lakeshore Communications, Inc, 2004), 15; URI General History, Box 2, "Appreciative Inquiry, 1997–2001"; URI General History, Box 2, "Organisational Design Team, 1997–1999."

75 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 18.

76 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 29. The authors describe the 4-D process in the following way: "Discovery calls people to share with each other what is most deeply meaningful to them, to appreciate the gifts they and others bring, and to cocreate a share sense of historical trends. Dream invites people to envision a positive future built of experiences of the past, a future where the world's religions are working for global change. Design challenges people to engage wisdom from related fields; to develop consensus around common themes such as the organisation's mission, vision, values, structure, and actions; and to create plans for future work. Destiny invites people individually and collectively to make specific commitments to work toward the realization of their dreams and plans."

77 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 31.

78 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global* Community, 31.

79 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 35; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 42, "United Religions Summit, 1996; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 43, "Summit Register and Agenda, 1996; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 44, "Summit press packet, 1996; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 45, "Conference Summary, 1996.

Rights."[80] Meanwhile, others dreamed of mobilizing people and nations for justice and peace.[81] The third 'D' in the "4-D" of AI was "Design." During this section, participants mapped an organizational structure and generated guidelines for URI. In the fourth AI segment, "Destiny", participants described their future vision of URI. During this process, Gibbs and Mahe note that Summit attendees decided three things. First, URI would actively engage grassroots people and projects. Second, they would welcome people of all spiritual backgrounds and third, focus on social justice. Over the next three years, the United Religions held more summits to define their ideology and create an inclusive Charter.

As this brief description reveals, this Summit resonated with many issues that concern interreligious dialogue practitioners today. Namely, how a 'dialogue' is structured and framed. What is distinct about AI methodology is "sacred listening." Swidler argues that this spiritual dimension of interreligious dialogue is often overlooked to its detriment.[82] "Because religion is not something of the head and the hands, but also of the heart—of the whole human being—our encounter with our partner must also eventually include the depth or spiritual dimension."[83] This observation is precisely why AI was so successful. Therefore, the "4-D" process enabled participants from diverse traditions and cultures to 'Discover' and 'Dream' together and then 'Design' the 'Destiny' of URI. Therefore, people were not 'observers' but rather "co-creators" in Charter development. In this way, the Summit engendered a cohesive 'dialogue' instead of multiple 'monologues.' As I describe in the next section, AI was further strengthened through the introduction of another methodology called Chaordic Organization.

6 The Dialogue Expands: Chaordic Organization and the Charter

In June 1997, the United Religions convened a Global Summit to begin officially drafting a Charter. Three months after the Global Summit, URI staff was joined by Dee Hock, the founder of VISA. Hock was the creator of a developmental strategy called "Chaordic organizing." 'Chaordic' is a fusion of the words, chaos and order. This developmental strategy joined together two competing visions: the

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80 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 35.

81 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 35

82 Leonard Swidler, Khalid Duran, and Reuven Firestone, *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Dialogue* (New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007), 14.

83 Swidler et al., *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 14.

chaos of unlimited contributions and the *order* of structured principles.[84] In other words, Chaordic Organization promotes an open dialogical process, which is non-hierarchical and co-creative.[85] As Hock described this strategy, key members of URI found it was a perfect complement to AI dialogue. Gibbs and Mahe write that Chaordic Organization was coupled with AI and emerged as a central component of the Charter process.

The ultimate goal of the Chaordic organization was the creation of a Charter that reflected inclusivity. As such, the draft committee encouraged participants to express their critiques, however small. No voice was marginalized, and no opinion excluded. Gibbs and Mahe describe this editing process in their book. Several archival sources including meeting Minutes and notes also indicate the re-writing process. These sources do not mention people by name, but they do record objections to a particular language. The original Preamble of the Charter stated:

> We, people of many faiths, called by our traditions to compassion in response to the suffering of humanity and the crises, which endanger our Earth community, wish to create a permanent forum where we gather in mutual respect, dialogue, and cooperative action to foster peace and the flourishing of all life.[86]

One of the first critiques centered on the opening sentence, "We, people of many faiths." Gibbs and Mahe note that one critique noted that "many faiths" implied that *some* faiths were not invited to URI. This raised an issue that became a prevalent theme during the establishment of the organization: Who could participate in the United Religions? As the United Religions was centered on inclusivity, the committee decided to revise the opening statement. The new statement said, "We, people of *diverse* faiths."

In this manner, the incorporation of Chaordic Organization with AI "sacred listening" ensured that all critiques, regardless of size were addressed. Through this process, each line of the Preamble was critiqued. The second line of the Pre-

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84 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 129; URI General History, Box 2, "Appreciative Inquiry, 1997–2001"; URI General History, Box 2, "Organisational Design Team, 1997–1999." URI General History, Box 2, "Chaordic Design Work, 1997–1999."; URI General History, Board of Directors/Global Council, Box 3, "URI Board Meetings"; URI General History, Board of Directors/Global Council, Box 3, "URI Corporate Minutes."; URI General History, Board of Directors/Global Council, Box 3, "URI Transitional Advisory Group, 1999–2000."
85 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 129.
86 Draft Preamble—Affirmed at Global Summit, June 26, 1998. URI General History, Box 1, Folder 18, "Preamble, Purpose, and Principles, 1999"; URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999".

amble stated: "called by our traditions to compassion." Meeting Minutes indicate that the word "traditions" was not perceived as being adequately inclusive. This is because it disregarded 'culture and values' that might not emerge from religious traditions.[87] Some participants noted that many people uphold 'values' instead of 'traditions.' While the former is more inclusive, the latter has a historical connection to 'religion.'[88] Archival notes indicate that the word 'traditions' had the potential to exclude supporters who do not prescribe to a religion but still share the core values of URI. The language was soon amended. The revised text of the Preamble stated: "We, people of *diverse* faiths, called by our *values* and traditions to compassion."[89]

The second line of the Preamble elicited further debate because of the implicit tone of negativity in the language. The second line stated, "in response to the suffering of humanity and the crises which endanger our Earth community." Participants critiqued the word "crises" so early in the Charter. If the United Religions was going to inspire change; where was the evidence of hope? Some motioned to remove the word "crisis", however, this was dismissed. This is because the foundational theory of URI was that the world was in crisis.[90] Poverty, alienation, marginalization, and oppression were part of socio-political reality.[91] As Swing notes in his book, this was not debatable.[92] What needed clarification was the role of URI in these crises. The linguistic challenge was to strike a balance between despair and hope.[93] After much discussion, a revision was proposed. The new text stated: "in response to the suffering of humanity and the crises which endanger our Earth community *and to the rising hopes of humanity.*"[94] This revised language struck the right tone between reality and hope.

As the dialogical process continued, AI methodology and the 4-D model of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny was more crucial to the revision process.

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87 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999." Emphasis Added.

88 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

89 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

90 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

91 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.

92 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.

93 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

94 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999." Emphasis added.

During the initial Global Summit, Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny focused on the future vision(s) for URI. However, during the Charter development, 'Discovery' centered on 'locating' and 'creating' inclusive language.[95] The committee believed that this language would enable the accurate reflection of the 'Dream (s)' of the United Religions. Engaging the 'Design' and 'Destiny' of the Charter led the draft committee to engage the 'text' and 'context' of the Charter. Meeting Minutes indicate that the Charter had to include those who were unable to participate because of economic, religious, political, and social restrictions.[96] As such, the draft committee cultivated a keen awareness of absentee voices and their role as silent co-creators of the Charter.[97]

A refined awareness of absence and presence meant the need to further hone inclusive language. A new linguistic problem emerged with the second line of the Preamble, "in response to the suffering of humanity and the crises which endanger our Earth community and to the rising hopes of humanity."[98] Gibbs reports this issue was connected to capitalizing the word "Earth." Critics argued that capitalizing "Earth" was not inclusive because it privileged Inuit traditions.[99] Others suggested that capitalizing "Earth" was the same as including 'Jesus Christ' or 'Allah' in the Preamble.[100] Some asserted that the Charter should not privilege any tradition or culture and remain theologically neutral. Gibbs notes that in contrast, a few raised a counter-argument that capitalizing "Earth" indicated a profound "sense of interconnectedness and a sense of accountability" that belied the boundaries of any tradition.[101] Eventually, the word "Earth" remained capitalized because of an emergent need to recognize the human impact on the planet.[102]

Through AI and Chaordic Organization, each part of the Preamble was thoroughly analyzed for inclusive language. For example, the third sentence of the Preamble stated: "We affirm that, in spite of differences of practice or belief,

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95 Gibbs and Mahe, *Birth of a Global Community*, 60 – 107.
96 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."
97 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."
98 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999", "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999." Emphasis added.
99 Charles Gibbs, "Overview of Work on Charter/Detailed Description of Purpose Statement Development from June 1999 Summit to Present 10/11/99." URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999."
100 Gibbs, "Overview of Work".
101 Gibbs, "Overview of Work".
102 Gibbs, "Overview of Work".

our faiths call us to care for one another." While this language might appear benign to outsiders, the words "in spite" created much consternation.[103] Meeting notes suggest that some participants thought "in spite" was an acceptable phrase.[104] However, others pressed for a better way to affirm religious diversity. The draft committee soon offered a revision, which stated: "While *honoring* our differences of practice and belief, we affirm that our faiths call us to care for each other."[105] The omission of the words "in spite" created space to honor religious diversity as a defining principle of URI. Further, the revised language also highlighted that the connective thread among disparate religions was the affirmation to care for each other.

Other sections of the Preamble raised concerns about the role of URI in peace-building. The original Preamble stated: "We unite to pray for peace, to practice peacemaking, to be a force for healing, and to provide a safe space for conflict resolution." Some participants raised concerns about the ability of URI to "provide a safe space" for people in conflict zones. Was this a reasonable goal or an impossible promise? How would such promises become actualized in the geopolitical context? After several revisions, the language was amended. The new statement read: "We unite to build cultures of peace. We unite to *build* a safe place for conflict resolution and healing."[106] The draft committee commented in the margins, in handwritten notes, that this version identified a more achievable goal.[107] The emphasis was on *building* sustainable structures for future peace-building efforts.[108] This amendment also indicates that URI was in the process of identifying institutional boundaries.

In this early stage, while all aspects of the Charter were open for discussion and debate, it is significant to note that some parts of the Preamble remained unchanged. For example, the original draft stated; "We believe that the wisdom of our religious and spiritual traditions should be shared for the health and well-

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103 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999." Emphasis added.

104 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

105 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

106 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999." Emphasis added.

107 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

108 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

being of all."[109] This language, at least in the early sessions, remained the same. This is pertinent because this statement succinctly states the primary function and purpose of URI. The core values of people engaged in the Charter process was the belief that religions should be shared with others. In addition, as Swing writes in his book, there was the theological commitment that religion(s) was capable of providing hope and creating peace.[110] That such a diverse group could agree on this dimension of religious faith is perhaps the reason that URI membership continued to grow in subsequent years.

As membership expanded, so did reflections on the Charter. Although people who joined the organization were from increasingly diverse traditions and cultures, the uniting theme was a belief that religion has the power to heal. In the final articulation of the Preamble, the draft committee included the following declaration: "We believe that our religious, spiritual lives, rather than dividing us, guide us to build community and respect for one another." For URI members, this statement captured the deepest truth: religious and spiritual commitments are rooted in social justice and human dignity. This was further clarified in the final version of the Preamble, which states; "We unite to use our combined resources only for nonviolent, compassionate action, to awaken to our deepest truths, and to manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community."[111]

In his analysis of interreligious dialogue, Swidler notes that an effective dialogue has the potential to create transformation for participants. "In the very process of responding to the questions of our partners, we look into our inner selves and into our traditions in ways that we perhaps never would have, and thus come to know ourselves as we could not have outside the dialogue."[112] What is distinct about URI is that this 'interreligious dialogue', which focused on Charter development, occurred with religious and non-religious people, as evidenced by Summit participants, and through the utilization of AI and Chaordic Organization, two different behavioral and business strategies. The notion that URI utilized two theories from outside the field of interreligious dialogue is particularly significant to the field of interreligious dialogue itself, for two reasons. First, it is a testament to the methodological inclusiveness of URI. Second, it enabled this organization to engage in deep self-reflection. The notion of self-

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109 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

110 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.

111 URI General History, Box 1, Folder 19, "Draft Charters, 1999" "United Religions Initiative Proposed Revised Draft Charter, May 20, 1999."

112 Swidler et al., *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 15.

reflection is one aspect of interreligious dialogue that Swidler particularly values. He argues that: "If we are not willing to look self-critically at our own and *our tradition's* position on a subject, the implication clearly is that we have nothing to learn from our partner."[113] As this analysis depicts, URI was not afraid to engage self-critically with their organization or tradition. Hence, the Charter that emerged was the result of an effective and transformative dialogue.

The URI Charter was formally signed on 26 June 2000 after almost three years of revisions. The developmental strategies of AI and Chaordic Organization were not abandoned once the Charter was signed. Instead, these dialogical models continue to inform the structure and growth of URI. Choardic Organization enables Cooperation Circles (CCs) all over the world to work independently in their local contexts while remaining rooted in the principles of the Charter. Further, AI methodology and "sacred listening" continue to influence URI as it expands its reach. For the United Religions, AI enables true empathy with the 'Other', the less fortunate, the marginalized and the voiceless. As Swing indicates many times, that the world is in crisis is not debatable.[114] What is under negotiation is URIs role in the process. While URI is active throughout the world, the uniting force of the global community is the Charter. Therefore, the only formal requirement for membership in the URI is to sign the Charter. And each year, membership continues to grow.

7 The United Religions Initiative: A Restless, Young Voice

Dialogue is not a new phenomenon. People and religions have always engaged in some form of dialogue. As interreligious scholars and theologians indicate, dialogue is not always inclusive and affirming. The history of the interreligious dialogue movement was at times motivated within the contexts of colonialism and imperialism.[115] As Knitter argues, dialogue is often coercive and retaliatory.[116] The social reality of the interreligious dialogue movement is that not every-

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113 Swidler et al., *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 19.
114 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.
115 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 193.
116 Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names*.

one is invited to dialogue and when present, not everyone is equally heard.[117] The significance of URI to the field of interreligious dialogue is what Moyaert describes as the "process of reflection."[118] She argues that in a true dialogue, there must always be "intra-religious dialogue."[119] This is the core value of URI that is pertinent to the interfaith field. Through interreligious dialogue, before one can meet the 'other', the process of reflection should emerge in an intra-religious context. Moyaert argues that this enables "shifts in meaning, new interpretations, [and] unexpected insights."[120] Such engagement is necessary in order for the interreligious encounter to be reflected "upon in an intra-religious way."[121] This is how URI reveals its strength as a global interfaith organization.

A second contribution of the United Religions to the interreligious dialogue movement is related to the first and that is a keen awareness of the *excluded*. Because of AI and Chaordic Organization, URI was able to carve a space for inclusive language to encourage a democratic engagement of diverse faiths and cultures. This success is partially related to the incorporation of these strategies into the developmental model of URI. These dialogical models and the commitment of URI to create inclusive language reveal the strength and power of the organization. In his monograph, Swing argues that the "presupposition in all of this that religion, in all its totality, has a vocation."[122] Similar to Knitter, this vocation for Swing is rooted in the belief that religion is healing and can be a source of good in the world.[123] This conviction led Swing to forge a path of dialogue that fostered critique among conservative Christian circles in the American context but also engendered a spirit of intra and inter-religious engagement with the 'other.'

Swidler notes that there are times in the interreligious dialogue movement when one encounters differences that are so vast that they require opposition. Indeed, Swidler argues that at times, particular religious ideologies are antithetical to human dignity and justice. "Important and contradictory differences between religions-ideologies do exist and at times warrant not dialogue but oppo-

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117 United Religions Initiative Archives, 1995–2013. Box 1, Folder 3, Articles about Swing and the United Religions Initiative, 1996–2000, "The Rt. Rev. William E. Swing, 'Uniqueness of the United Religions.'"

118 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 210.

119 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 210.

120 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 210.

121 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 210.

122 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 210.

123 Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue," 210.

sition."[124] Swing, not a novice in the interreligious dialogue field, is aware of these aspects of interfaith engagement. His personal experience indicates that interfaith engagement is not always pleasant and often includes criticism and censure. However, despite, these negative experiences during the foundational period of URI, Swing maintains, that dialogue is a *necessary* part of religious engagement.[125] This necessity for him is related to his worldview that is ultimately theological and arises from his spiritual commitments. Swing believes that religion, as a whole, "has a discrete function to perform for health of the planet and all its life."[126]

For Swing, this theological notion is the driving force behind the creation of a 'United Religions.' Instead of remaining in the confessional realm, Swing argues that religion has a global responsibility. Religion and religious people have the potential to usher change and offer hope to the marginalized and oppressed. This orthopraxic commitment to interreligious dialogue has led URI down a path of spiritual discovery about the role of religion generally, and about their organization in particular, in healing global problems. Swing believes that multiple world issues can benefit from interreligious engagement. For example, women's empowerment, peace-building, youth initiatives, poverty alleviation, hunger, and abuse can all gain from the work and service of religiously committed individuals. However, Swing argues that while the United Religions is a step in the right direction, it is still a "young voice that belongs to coming generations."[127]

Although Swing initially conceived of his organization as the "United Religions", after the Charter was created, it was officially named the United Religions *Initiative.* This name is an indication that for Swing, interreligious dialogue is still an evolving process. In his monograph, Swing writes that religious violence, hatred and strife continue to inform geopolitical infrastructure of the world. Despite the movement towards pluralism, in many regions, religious exclusivity still prevails. Despite these instances of violence and exclusivity, Swing finds hope in the youth. The youth, he argues, "heard something in the United Religions vision that resonated with their secret and higher hopes."[128] For Swing, the youth are defined by their acknowledgement of theological unity. This hope is what affirms for Swing that the youth will become co-creators of

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124 Swidler et al., *Trialogue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, 23.
125 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.
126 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.
127 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.
128 Swing, *The Coming of the United Religions*, 76.

an ongoing dialogical process. And one day, this small *initiative*, this "restless, young voice" will finally emerge as the United Religions of the world.

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9 Annex: United Religions Initiative Charter Preamble

We, people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions throughout the world, hereby establish the United Religions Initiative to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

We respect the uniqueness of each tradition, and differences of practice or belief.

We value voices that respect others and believe that sharing our values and wisdom can lead us to act for the good of all.

We believe that our religious, spiritual lives, rather than dividing us, guide us to build community and respect for one another.

Therefore, as interdependent people rooted in our traditions, we now unite for the benefit of our Earth community.

We unite to build cultures of peace and justice.

We unite to heal and protect the Earth.

We unite to build safe places for conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation.

We unite to support freedom of religion and spiritual expression, and the rights of all individuals and peoples as set forth in international law.

We unite in responsible cooperative action to bring the wisdom and values of our religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions to bear on the economic, environmental, political and social challenges facing our Earth community.

We unite to provide a global opportunity for participation by all people, especially by those whose voices are not often heard.

We unite to celebrate the joy of blessings and the light of wisdom in both movement and stillness.

We unite to use our combined resources only for nonviolent, compassionate action, to awaken to our deepest truths, and to manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community.

The purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living.

Minjung Noh

Implementing Interreligious Dialogue

A Solution for International Challenges? (Universal Peace
Federation / 2005 – 2009)

1 Introduction

In the landscape of contemporary interreligious dialogue, the Universal Peace
Federation (UPF) takes up a unique place. Founded in 2005, it is one of the new-
est organizations in this field. Moreover, UPF is run, unlike other international
interreligious dialogue (or interfaith) organizations, by one religion: The Unifica-
tion Church, a new religious movement started in South Korea by Rev. Sun
Myung Moon in the mid-20th-century. Considering the fact that most interfaith
activities have thus far been performed by "mainstream" religious entities inside
Islam and Christianity, the two above facts allow us to fathom how UPF is differ-
ent from other interreligious dialogue organizations.

Although UPF carries distinctive characteristics of its own, it also has deep
continuity with the history of interfaith dialogue made clear when examining its
foundational works on interfaith enterprise as early as the 1970s. This is due to
the idea of interreligious dialogue being embedded in the doctrine of the Unifi-
cation Church. At the same time, its initiatives and projects are also closely tied
to UN engagement. As a non-governmental organization (NGO) with religious
voices among its representatives, UPF has actively participated in the Economic
and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

From these above basic facts, we can clearly see that UPF has complex fea-
tures that need examining. Therefore, this chapter primarily aims to analyze the
background and foundation of UPF. In the course of the investigation, this study
finds that the inauguration of UPF reflects the situation after 9/11. That is to say,
the radical change in international politics and religious field since 2001 propel-
led the foundation of UPF. This new organization did not start out of nowhere;
the historical context of interfaith dialogue and the previous activities of the Uni-
fication Church buttressed its foundation.

Hence, this chapter posits that there are the two major factors that led to the
foundation of UPF: (1) the historical changes that influenced and formed the mi-
lieu for this new interreligious initiatives; and (2) the existing agents who were
already devoted to interreligious dialogue and had the know-how regarding in-

terfaith activities. UPF is a new organization that must be understood as part of a continuum, having been preceded by the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP), which is a specialized organization with highly experienced staffs in the realm of international NGOs. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the transition from IIFWP to UPF in relation to the above two factors.

This study is composed of three parts. The first section is a preliminary account on the background of UPF and an explanation about its methodology. This includes a brief history of UPF, clarifying the place of UPF within the overall history of interfaith dialogue. Also, it describes the socio-political surroundings. Then, the methodology and materials that are used in the report are introduced; this report predominantly relies on empirical and historical research based on written documents; the interviews with the members of the organization were also used to structure this research. This methodology is necessary to probe the hypothesis on the interaction of historical settings and the existing agents in the organization. In the second section, which is the main part of this chapter, the foundation phase of UPF is analyzed in detail. Several important episodes found in the archival documents and interviews with people in UPF formed the basis of this chapter. The final section summarizes previous parts and also compares the initial hypothesis and the research results. They will illuminate the implications and the context within which UPF was founded and its place within the contemporary IRD field.

2 Understanding the Universal Peace Federation: Background and Methodology

2.1 The Unification Church and the Universal Peace Federation

Before getting into the details of UPF, it is essential to understand that this organization is one of the enterprises that the Unification Church has been running for a long time. Thus, it is necessary to first take a brief look into the history of the Unification Church and determine the status that UPF takes on inside this new religious movement. The Unification Church was founded in 1954, in Seoul, South Korea, under the name of "Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity" by Rev. Sun Myung Moon. According to Frederick Sonntag, a philosopher and writer who conducted an expansive interview with

Rev. Moon in the 1970s, the founder of the Unification Church received a revelation from God on an Easter morning 1938 and maintained his vision since then.[1]

The founder's vision has always been one of the most important motivations of the Unification Church. Rev. Sun Myung Moon was born in 1920 in a rural town of what is now North Korea. His family had a Presbyterian background.[2] His life became traumatic during the Japanese occupation and the subsequent Korean War. He was educated in Korea and then in Japan. Later he returned to Korea to spread his religious vision. However, in 1948, he was imprisoned in North Korea for not conforming to communist ideology under the Soviet occupation. From that experience, he expressed a clear anti-communist stand, which always persisted in his speeches and arguments subsequently. He was liberated by the United Nations (UN) forces and moved to South Korea in 1950.

In the 1950s, Rev. Sun Myung Moon formalized his religious movement into a church. Along with the official establishment of the Unification Church in 1954, he gradually developed his interpretation of the Bible and started to publish his own independent scripture from 1952 onwards. The completed version of 'The Divine Principle', the central scripture of the Unification Church, appeared in 1966 (the English version appeared in 1973).[3] This scripture was largely based on the interpretation of the story in Genesis and the role of the founder as a Messiah. In his interpretation, the story of Adam and Eve represents the failure to accomplish a harmonious family. Also, in his opinion, Jesus failed to complete the mission of God, since he was murdered before establishing a God-blessed family. Therefore, the founder has carried this mission to complete unfinished work of the previous prophet, namely Jesus, from which the famous mass marriage ritual of the Unification Church is derived.

After increasing its power and size in Korea throughout the 1960s, the Unification Church actively started to spread its ideals around the world.[4] Pointedly, Rev. Moon moved to the US in the early 1970's and embarked on this mission. The Unification Church's lucrative business, mode of mission and Christian-de-

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1 Information on the foundation of Unification Church is from Frederick Sontag, *Sun Myung Moon and Unification Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), 78.

2 Sontag, *Sun Myung Moon*, 77–80.

3 George D. Chryssides, *The Advent of Sun Myung Moon* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 23.

4 The early missionary activities of the Unification Church are well accounted here: David G. Bromley and Anson D. Shupe, Jr, *"Moonies" in America* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication, 1979), 57–82. Also, detailed description on the movement's early activity and organization can be found in here: Rodney Stark and John Lofland, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," *American Sociological Review* 30/6 (1965): 862–875. The research subjects are mentioned under pseudonym.

rived doctrine have aroused much debate, controversy, as well as questions of heresy in the United States (US). For instance, Rev. Moon's alleged involvement in politics in the 1970s and his imprisonment due to tax evasion in the US (1984) shows the fact that he and the movement were 'issue-makers' in the USA during the 1970s – 80s.[5] In this period, there was a large number of converts worldwide and the size of the Unification Church reached its peak.[6]

After those heydays in the US, the Unification Church has somewhat diminished in size, but still remains as one of the most prominent new religious movements in the world. In 1997, the Unification Church internationally re-launched under the name "The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification" (FFWPU). This change gave the movement less of a religious overtone since it does not explicitly proclaim to be a religious organization.[7] It appeared that the movement tried to embrace a more comprehensive scale of groups and individuals beyond religious institutions. Although hundreds of local branches still definitely see themselves as churches and "congregations" and the movement is still largely motivated by its religious agenda, the name change into FFWPU reflects the more recent vision of the movement.

With this brief history of the Unification Church in mind, this chapter now moves to examine what place UPF occupies in the overall picture of the movement. To understand the characteristics of UPF, it is necessary to understand that the whole movement consists of various organizations and businesses that can be compared to a conglomerate company: according to the entry on the Unification Church in the *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*, the number of business or organization linked to the Unification Church amounts to 1,000 worldwide. They include "Ambassadors for Peace: Bridgeport University; CARP; Il Hwa; International Cultural Foundation; Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace; Professors World Peace Academy; Tong Il; and Women's Federation for World Peace, and so on." [8] Hence, UPF can be considered one of the organizations run by the Unification Church today.[9]

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5 Bromly et al, *"Moonies" in America*, 149 – 167.
6 Dawn Hutchinson, *Antiquity and Social Reform* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 26 – 42; *Sun Myung Moon and Unification Church*, 44 – 69.
7 "Many members of the FFWPU accept and follow Reverend Moon's particular religious teaching, the Divine Principle, and are known as Unificationists. The FFWPU was founded in 1997 by Reverend and Mrs. Moon in order to expand the mission of the Unification Church to create an alliance of people who generally share their vision of building God-centered families as the basis for healthy communities, stable societies and a peaceful world." https://ihq.ffwpu.org/who weare/ (accessed: 24.5.2020).
8 Eileen Barker, "Unification Church," in *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof (Thousand Oaks Sage Publications, 2012): 1319 – 1321.

What distinguishes UPF from other organizations of the Unification Church is the fact that interreligious dialogue and "unification" among the religions have been major concerns of the movement based on its doctrine. According to Marcus Braybrooke, a noted Anglican interfaith scholar, the Unification Church has advanced its interfaith dialogue project to realize its ideal "toward the restoration of one unified world."[10] According to the Unification Church a unified world will be made possible by creating a unified cultural sphere. Thus, the role of religions and their unification is essential for the agenda. Braybrooke quotes Rev. Moon's words on this vision:

> ... as representatives of the world's religions, you are called to bring your churches, mosques, synagogues, ashrams, and temples into a cooperative unity for the sake of world peace and human freedom, centered on God.[11]

Braybrooke traces the interfaith activities of the Unification Church back to as early as 1977. Starting from the Global Congress of the World's Religions held in San Francisco (1977), several congresses and councils were founded and funded by the Unification Church. Those include the Global Congress of World Religions, and the Council for the World's Religions (1980). In this formative period, the New Ecumenical Research Association (the New ERA) conferences with other Christian academics and the organization of the International Religious Foundation (IRF) were precursors of later Unification Church interreligious dialogue activities. The Unification Church's interfaith work continued with the Assembly of World's Religions, which started in 1985, with a large conference and event with religious leaders from other religions. Braybrooke describes the group discussions in the Assemblies as one of the most fruitful dialogue experiences.[12]

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9 There has been a few researches on the Unification Church in the latter half of the 20th-century Anglophone world. For the general list of research, see *Antiquity and Social Reform,* 23–26. Here, Hutchinson lists existing scholarship on the Unification church. However, there have been many works that are largely derogatory to the movement, and they usually name the movement as "moonism." The exception is *"Moonies" in America.* Here, Bromley and Shupe analyze the movement from a sociological standpoint. I think that *Sun Myung Moon and Unification Church* provides a relatively objective and accurate picture on the movement in the late 70's. More elaborated and multi-dimensional work on the Unification Church from an academic perspective is *The Advent of Sun Myung Moon,* which studies the Korean traditional context and its interminglement with Christianity as the background of Unificationism.

10 Marcus Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 270.

11 Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope,* 270. He mentions that this is from The Fourth International Conference on God, which was held in Seoul, August 11, 1984.

12 Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope,* 276. Adding to this, we can refer to the remarks of Dr. Walsh in an interview that I conducted in July 10, 2014: "There were also an interest in Unification

As we can see, there were a lot of interfaith organizations, seminars and conferences promoted by the Unification Church. This fact proves that interreligious dialogue was not a one-time subject for the movement. Intertwined with its doctrine and ideal for a unified culture and the world, the Unification Church developed its agenda of interfaith dialogue. It seems that its activities from the 1970s to 1980s focused on academic interchanges, opening up the doors for interfaith conversation and promoting its agenda and initiatives to various religious entities. In 1991, the foundation of the Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace (IRFWP) by Rev. Moon was an organizational shift to realize the existing agenda with a more systematic effort.

However, from the late 1990s, Unification Church started to promote another project: a vision of a religious council in the United Nations. Building on its previous work for interreligious dialogue, the Unification Church started to exert its efforts in creating a new and more effective sphere for interfaith dialogue and engagement. The foundation of (Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace, 1999 (IIFWP) and its 2000 Assembly, "Renewing the United Nations and Building a Culture of Peace" clearly show these new objectives. Let us observe a part of the proceedings of the conference. First, the keynote address of Rev. Sun Myung Moon is as follows:

> ... one of the reasons I founded the Interreligious and International Federation of World Peace was to help create an interreligious assembly to serve as a senate or council within the United Nations. To implement that plan, I propose that each nation, in addition to its

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Church, this new religious movement. And that involvement gave birth to the first interfaith organization, that Rev. Moon established in the West called The New Ecumenical Research Association, for short, NEW ERA. (...) And one of the flagship project of the New ERA that began on the 1980's something called, it was a conference series, on "God: the contemporary discussion." So for about ten years, every year there was a God conference. It was interfaith. And I would say new ERA tended to be scholarly. Little more than clergy centered. There's a difference between academicians who may be Jewish or Buddhist or they teach Buddhism, they love Buddhism, but they are academics. like even Leonard Swidler type, he's roman Catholic, and still Roman Catholic, when he talks in a conference, he doesn't say this is what the Pope believes, this is what the catholic believes, he's a broader, because his mind is filled with, and this is what characterizes, many, this Western academics, in some ways academic community globally tends to observe religion a little more objectively, and can differentiate between their own faith and their professional responsibilities. Then so it started to create, that's why an idea, that's why I used the family of a tree almost like a genealogy of tree or something. Kind of UTS, New ERA, The God conference series started then out of the God conference."

current ambassador, send a religious ambassador to the United Nations to serve as a member of the religious assembly, or U.N. senate.[13]

Here, Moon's vision is clearly articulated. He insists that a distinctive and independent council be implemented inside the UN system. To realize this goal, he called for the participation of other religious entities as well. This goal was highly ambitious since it asked for the UN, a nation-state based international organization, to embrace a new set of influence within its structure: religious groups. In this context, IIFWP was founded. The launching of IIFWP is one of the pivotal background events of UPF, upon which I shall expound more in section three further below.

2.2 Remarks on Methodology

2.2.1 Material Used for the Analysis

The methodology of this analysis largely relies on the documental resources found at the UPF's office: e.g. official proceedings of various conferences, documents on the logistics of each of the events UPF held, seminar materials, etc. Additionally, this analysis includes interviews with the core members of UPF who worked for the organization and interreligious dialogue for more than 15 years. These two kinds of sources—office documents and interviews—help to examine the core episodes behind the foundation of UPF.

To understand the characteristic of the materials used in this research, it is necessary to understand the organization's activity. So far, the organization has not been the subject of any academic study or research, probably due to its relatively new foundation. But it may also be because it falls outside the mainstream Western religious entities. The organization can be said to be the first of its kind in the history of interreligious activity. Hence the observations about this organization found in this chapter are primarily based on the UPF website and my own experience interacting with members of this organization.[14]

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13 IIFWP, *Renewing the United Nations and Building a Culture of Peace: A Report from the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace Assembly 2000* (New York: IIFWP, 2000), 58.

14 The official Web site of Universal Peace Foundation, ed. *Universal Peace Foundation:* http://www.upf.org/ (accessed: 24.5.2020). However, the considerable volume of the materials is still not digitized, hidden in a staff's hard drive, or lost with a broken Web link. However, in the course of my research, I requested certain materials and one staff person found them in his

The UPF headquarters is located in an office complex in Tarrytown, New York. As mentioned earlier, the office is the workplace of an NGO, not a library or an archive.[15] There are about 9–10 regular staff-members in the organization, working for specific events and convocations of the organization.[16] They manage the planning and implementation of the events over which the organization presides. For example, UPF holds a number of international conferences, including the largest World Summit in Seoul twice a year, participates in ECOSOC meetings, leads World Interfaith Harmony Week, organizes Religious Youth Service, etc. The organization's scope of activity is fairly expansive, and it requires much effort to thoroughly understand them.

2.2.2 Potentials and Limits

Since UPF is a recently founded organization and still active, there is a constantly growing body of sources that can be utilized for the analysis of the organization. Though they are well maintained in the office and in the warehouse of UPF, they are not well organized or classified for any archival purposes. Admittedly, UPF owns a powerful online archive that contains most of its important conference materials (http://archive.upf.org/). However, this archive has been recently constructed and does not include exhaustive sources concerning the period between 2000 and 2005.

As an international NGO, UPF owns an office that handles the practical and specific tasks of the organization. This means that they do not particularly aim at archiving and sorting materials for research. The materials were reasonably organized, but mostly for practical usages, and the online archive did not allow for access to the period of the research's interest. Therefore, there are certain limitations on the available sources on the foundation of UPF. The researcher had to resort to searching for boxes of documents and then sort them from the start. The

hard drive. I also reported several dead links on the Web archive to Mrs. Pople. Moreover, as dates go back to around 2005, the amount of materials uploaded on the Web archive decreases. For example, between 2000 and 2005, the period during which the important foundation events of UPF occurred, only a small number of documents are to be found on the Web, compared to the later dates. I did my fieldwork in the office of UPF from July 6–23, 2014.

15 When I arrived at the office, the staff members were busy preparing the World Summit 2014 in Seoul. They were inviting dozens of VIPs from all around the world and making appointments for various transportations.

16 The number of staff in other branches of UPF needs to be counted separately. For example, in the 2014 World Summit held in Seoul, I encountered dozens of UPF staffs working for the logistics and practical aspects, from all around the world.

following are most of the documents that deal with logistics: the reservation of venue of the event, booking flights for the guests, the design drafts for the catalogue, the list of participants, etc.

To navigate among these sources, the interviews with the people in the organization were helpful. Since UPF is a relatively new organization, most of its members who witnessed the foundation of UPF, or the transition of IIFWP to UPF, are still working in the office. They know which files contained the information needed for this study and even, in some cases, became primary sources when interviewed by me. By closely communicating with them, this paper has greatly benefited from their navigation.[17]

2.2.3 Process of the Analysis

This research is primarily based on the aforementioned documents and interviews. The two kinds of materials serve each other in a complementary manner. As qualitative research methodology was employed in dealing with the documents, the context and environment that produced the document needed to be considered.[18] In fact, the single documents only tell us the basic and superficial information on the events. Analyzing the characteristic of the documents gave further insight.

To be specific, the materials from the archive and the office of UPF can be categorized as public/private or firsthand/secondhand document.[19] Moreover, the implied readers of the documents also need to be considered. These aspects create a contextual environment that can be utilized to recount the story behind the materials.[20] To analyze an interreligious movement, the motivation and symbolic system of the actors in the organization and the event needs to be considered with great attention since the interreligious activity itself can also be seen as

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17 My core interviewees were: Dr. Thomas Walsh, Mr. Taj Hamad, Ms. Genie Kagawa, and Dr. Frank LeGroterria.

18 Amanda Coffey, "Analyzing Documents," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis,* ed. Uwe Flock (London: SAGE Publications, 2014), 368.

19 Coffey "Analyzing Documents," 377.

20 That is to say, I try to figure out what Coffey said as "representative of the practical accomplishments involved in their production" in the below quotation: "All documentary accounts are just that – a constructed account rather than necessarily an 'accurate' portrayal of complex social reality. [....] It is therefore important that we approach documents as texts and as representative of the practical accomplishments involved in their production." Coffey, "Analyzing Documents," 377.

a religious phenomenon. Hence, considering contextual factors is essential to illuminate the religious dimension and accurately account for them.

Handling interview materials calls for another methodological delineation. Dealing with the interviews regularly requires a whole other set of methodological considerations.[21] However, this analysis only utilizes interview materials as an orientation for documental research. This essay mainly consists of the analysis of the archival sources, rather than regular analysis of the interviews. Thus, the interviews illuminate the exact context of the documents, helping this analysis to avoid misinterpretation. In-depth analysis of interview scripts is not conducted here, but they are used as an index of this essay for investigating core episodes behind the foundation of UPF and the involvement of each agent in the organization.

Three episodes are chosen as subjects of analysis[22]: the 2000-Assembly (Renewing the United Nations and Building a Culture of Peace), the organization process of the 2001-Assembly (Global Violence: Crisis and Hope) and its organization process, and the inauguration event of UPF in 2005. They are not in a cause-and-effect relationship, but certainly represent the pivotal concepts of the organization respectively. When they are juxtaposed with the historical context, such as the situation following 9/11, and the existing agents of the organization, they help us interpret the interfaith work of UPF and answer any questions regarding the transition from IIFWP to UPF.

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21 According to the Marvasti, there are three kinds of interviews that are widely used. First is the structured interview, which sees interviewees as 'vessels of answers' and does not allow them to get away from the subject and the predetermined research categories to address it. Second, the unstructured interview allows interviewees to expand and advance their answers. The third sort of interview is a focus group interview which encourages a group of interviewees to interact and stimulate their answers. In this respect, I employed the unstructured interview method which contains an expanded personal narratives of research subjects. Amir B. Marvasti, *Qualitative Research in Sociology* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 14–34.

22 This is how I chose the episodes: first, with field meetings and readings of primary materials, I chose several potential time points that could be starting points to find the core episodes of the foundation phase of UPF. Second, by interviewing key members of UPF, I narrowed down the core episodes to three.

3 A Closer Look at the Foundation of Universal Peace Federation: The Three Episodes

So far, we have seen the background and context of UPF. It is now clear that as an organization, which stems from the Unification Church, UPF is in continuity with the vision in development over four decades since the 1970s, and it is due to the doctrine of the movement that the legitimacy of interfaith enterprise was bolstered and supported. Its direct precursor, IIFWP, was started after the religious resurgence witnessed internationally during the 1990s. As the Unification Church and its leader started to promote the participation of religious bodies in the UN, the initiative of IIFWP focused on this agenda around the turn of the century. The active participation of the Unification Church in the UN, under the name IIFWP, was deemed to be successful enough to gain the Special Consultative Status with the ECOSOC.[23] In 2005, the organization participating in the UN changed its name to UPF. UN paperwork shows that the former IIFWP and the new UPF has consisted of the same body, namely, the same staff and agenda. This relaunching into UPF is an important point that will be explained further below.

Another characteristic of UPF that we need to acknowledge is that it is a practically oriented organization. The interviews with the protagonists inside UPF suggest that the organization does not particularly emphasize the theoretical dimension of interfaith activity. For them, interfaith cooperation and coexistence is a basic fact of life, and without a doubt, a firm premise. Therefore, the focus here is what religions gathered under the interfaith flag can do for peacebuilding and resolving the problems that the world faces. I saw UPF centralizing the practical and actual effectiveness of religions in harmony. This is due to its prehistory of studying and researching the legitimacy and importance of interfaith dialogue. Dr. LaGroterria, the Director, Office of Operations, Finance, Legal Affairs, and Human Resources of UPF, mentioned that there has been enough debate on the interfaith dialogue *per se*. It is now time to embark on making an actual change in the world.

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23 There are three kinds of consultative status: General consultative status, Special consultative status and Roster status. General status is assigned to "large international NGOs whose area of work cover most of the issues on the agenda of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies." However, Special status is given to "NGOs which have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the ECOSOC." http://csonet.org/?menu=30 (accessed: 24.5.2020). For more detailed regulations, see ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31.

I understand that the practical orientation led UPF to focus on participating in the UN, the effective and actual entity that is considered able to bring about a change. UPF has built a successful history of UN involvement. Mrs.[24] Genie Kagawa, Director, Executive Office, emphasized that a few resolutions of the UN General Assembly actually made changes, and UPF made some contribution to the resolution along with allies in the UN.[25]

3.1 Episode 1: The Foundation of the Precursor, IIFWP

Let us first start with the name of the organization, IIFWP, as mentioned before, which is the acronym for "International and Inter-religious Federation for World Peace." By juxtaposing "international" and "interreligious," this organization tries to bring together the secular and the sacred sphere[26]: this agenda is speci-

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24 I intentionally use "Mrs." here because Unification Church and its members put great value in (heterosexual) marriage due to its doctrine that emphasizes family. I observed that most married women members of the movement do not have qualms about the title "Mrs." indicating their marital status and the movement's official documents frequently use "Mrs."

25 Accordingly, the nation-states, which are based on secularism—especially the major Powers from the West that significantly influence the UN—will not be able to succeed in dealing with problems that our world faces today. This is the second pretext on participation of religious NGOs in the UN. The clear demarcation between the religious and the secular is the legacy of western Enlightenment period. This influenced the major participants of the UN, and until mid-90's, religion was not so much of a concern for this organization. The assembly of secularist states: this has been the basic premise of the UN. Nevertheless, the changing landscape of the global strife calls for the reconsideration of the very premise of secularism, and the cooperation of the religious and the secular. See Thomas Walsh, "Religion, Peace and the Post-Secular Sphere," *International Journal on World Peace* 29 (2012), 35–61. Dr. Walsh is the president of UPF and has been engaged in the interfaith movement for more than 30 years. He did his PhD in Vanderbilt University with a dissertation on the public sphere according to Jurgen Habermas. It can be said that Dr. Walsh's article represents very well the theoretical background of UPF and its activities. In terms of the perspective on the relation of religion and the UN, there has been a body of academic work. Lehmann summarized the academic works on this subject demarcating two currents of religious studies and socio-political studies. See Karsten Lehmann, "12.2: Religious Presence in the Context of the United Nations Organization" in Stanley Brunn ed., The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred Places, Identities, Practices and Politics vol. 4 (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2015).

26 The president of UPF, Dr. Thomas Walsh, has also argued for the overlapping of the secular and the religious spheres. His article on international politics and the role of religion after 9/11 highlights this line of argument. For the summary of the argument, see Thomas G. Walsh, "Religion, Peace and the Post-Secular Public Sphere," in *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2012), 57–59.

fied in the vision for the UN involvement, already discussed above. In this context, its launch needs to be understood in relation to the aforementioned Assembly 2000 (Renewing the United Nations and Building a Culture of Peace), one of the remarkable events convoked in the early period of the organization. In the proceeding of this 2000 assembly, the need for religious participation in the UN is buttressed in many ways as various experts in international relations, UN studies, NGO studies, etc. participated in the Assembly in 2000.[27] According to the executive summary, the four major themes regarding renewal of the UN, which is under the major agenda on the cooperation of religious and political leaders for world peace, was discussed:

(1) The role of NGOs in the UN
(2) Conflict resolution and the role of religion and ideology
(3) The significance of family
(4) The concern for global environment.[28]

At this stage, the points (1) and (2) need particular attention since they represent the context of IIFWP and UPF. Religious NGOs, not nation-states that originally constitute the UN, are the point of interest in that they can offer solutions to the conflicts in the world.

Under auspices of these two causes, IIFWP was founded and has been actively engaged in international initiatives on the renewal of the UN. Starting from the ideal of the unity of cultures and various religions, the efforts for realizing the ideal were put into action in various ways since the mid-20th century. With the foundation of IIFWP, the action has been specifically aimed at implementing the religious council in the UN. IIFWP convened an international summit every year, contributed to UN resolutions and held countless events regarding issues on women and children in the late 90s and the year 2000. However, IIFWP soon went through a significant change on an organizational level: it was renamed as UPF in 2005.

Looking at the difference between the two sets of documents related to the foundation of IIFWP—unofficial and official—is helpful to understand the IIFWP's orientation and how this organization centralized its involvement with the UN. On the one hand, the 'unofficial', document internal to the organization has a strongly religious overtone. By 'religious', I mean that the members and actors in the organization are deeply embedded in a particular symbolic system

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27 IIFWP, *Renewing the United Nations and Building a Culture of Peace*, 219 – 235.
28 IIFWP, *Renewing the United Nations and Building a Culture of Peace*, 219 – 235.

and their motivations and activities are influenced by this system.[29] On the other hand, the official and public version of the document shows a different tone.

First, there is a set of documents for people within the organization, containing the structure of the organization, personal mission statements, statement of purpose of the organization and the list of VIPs who could attend its conferences.[30] The date is not specified in the documents, but they are found in the year 2000 cabinet in the UPF office. Here, the relationship with other existing organizations within the Unification Church – such as WANGO and Ambassadors of Peace – and IIFWP is specified as above.

Although a total of 22 organizations are listed as associates of IIFWP, only four organizations are directly connected to the secretariat of IIFWP. It seems that in the Unification Church, there had been numerous organizations that dealt with the interreligious and peace-building agenda. Therefore, it was necessary for them to delineate the role and area of the new organization, IIFWP. Keeping into consideration the four main organizations that IIFWP relates to, helps us create a sense of what IIFWP aims for. These four organizations are: WANGO (World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, Inc.), WCSF (World Culture and Sports estival), Ambassadors for Peace, and the World Peace Research Institution. [31] Each stand for the area of NGO activity in the UN (WANGO), cultural and sporting events (WCSF), the network of international peace leaders (Ambassadors for Peace), and finally, the academic research on the subject.

However, the statements in the internal document are slightly different from the other two official and public statements in so far as they directly mention the religious theme in the Unification Church.

> The IIFWP is not-for-profit educational corporation dedicated to sponsoring and organizing programs, seminars, publications and activities aimed at promoting respect, harmony, co-operation and peace among religions, nations, races, and culture around the world, and to cultivating a global network of individuals and associate organizations representing religion, politics, media professionals, scholars and educators, and representatives of civil society who work together in efforts to solve the critical problems which block the way to peace for individuals, families, societies, and nations.

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29 This essay follows the Geertzian definition of religion as a working definition. See Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (Waukegan: Fontana Press, 1993), 87–125.

30 N.A, N.T., N.D.

31 On a Web site of Unification Church, the relationship between these organizations from the perspective of the church is described. http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Publications/Smm-Org/works_world_peace.html (accessed: 24.5.2020).

> The IIFWP seeks to restore nations, by building on True Father's worldwide movement in every nation and the side range of organizations, each with a specific focus for the sake of establishing world peace. Internally IIFWP is guided by Divine Principle, Father's Words, and Unification Thought. The IIFWP Godism and a Heading Approach to solving problem.[32]

The first paragraph does not particularly contain a religious element since it deals with the practical aims of the organization. However, the second paragraph explicitly shows the governing principle under the organization. Here, the "True Father" denotes the founder of the movement, Sun Myung Moon, and the script or the movement is mentioned. Moreover, directly mentioning the religious orientation is "internally" effective; this document clearly implies that its readers are the members of the organization.

However, those religious statements are diluted in public statements. Let us look at the other two official statements, which appeared around the foundation of the organization.

> The Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP) is dedicated to the promotion of world peace through education programs, workshops, conferences, and publications. The IIFWP seeks to encourage and support the efforts of world leaders from all disciplines and the build coalitions among a wide range of non-governmental, religious, cultural, and educational institutions in advancing solutions to pressing world problems.
>
> Of particular concern to the IIFWP are two serious and growing problems. The first revolves around family instability and breakdown and the serious social, economic, and cultural problems that family decline generates. The second concerns ethic, racial, and religious conflict in many parts of the world. There is a critical need for political, religious, and educational institutions to work together, not only to reverse the decline of the family, but also to promote greater understanding and collaborate among diverse communities.[33]

The first paragraph has similar phrases and structure than those found in the internal document. However, the second paragraph is completely different. It emphasizes the importance of family and the need for cooperation in every realm of our lives, such as the religious and political, to solve exigent problems that humanity faces.[34] The second paragraph appears to be subtly written to re-

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32 N.A, N.T., N.D. The quote is from the office document found in the year 2000 cabinet, which is a part of the preparation document for the launching of IIFWP.

33 N.A., IIFWP official booklet, page 1, published in 2000.

34 The ensuing paragraphs are as follows: The IFWP supports the mission of the United Nations and actively collaborates with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations dedicated to the cause of achieving justice, world peace, and human prosperity. The IIFWP supports the involvement of religious communities and organizations worldwide in coop-

flect the organization's religious ideal and the UN participation simultaneously. The doctrine of Unificationism spotlights the recovery of family values, which, according to the founder, has remained destroyed since the time of Adam and Eve; however, this doctrine is also presented as compatible with the secular values of family, that is, it does not look particularly "religious." This statement promotes the vision of the organization, evading the overtone of particular religious movement in listing the movement's core doctrine of family values and mentioning the reason why the organization stresses the interaction of different realms to solve conflicts and problems in the world.

The difference between the two documents is the result of realistic concerns and experiences in the field that require subtle treatment regarding, in particular, religious statements. There are always dangers in mentioning religious values and doctrines in the field generally deemed to be 'secular'. Nevertheless, there are underlying religious motivations and convictions that played a role here, and this can be observed through the difference between the internal and public statements of the purpose of the organization. The first episode and materials produced in this context show us how IIFWP endeavored to balance religious motivations and realistic concerns in the field of IRD in the UN. Though interreligious dialogue is performed under the name of international cooperation and other humanitarian agendas, it is conducted by agents who are highly motivated by religious ideals.

Taking this into consideration, let us move to the second episode, which shows more specifically the engagement of the people in the organization.

3.2 Episode 2: Immediate Action after 9/11, and the Muslim Network

This section is still concerned with IIFWP, not UPF. To investigate the foundation of UPF, there is another set of episodes that need our attention. It represents the network and the investment in the human resources that the organization holds. One of these is our second episode, focused on the vitalization of religious debate in international politics. 9/11 shocked the entire world. What Samuel Huntington had argued seemed to be realized as a conflict between religions and cultures, not ideologies appeared to ensue. The Christian West and the Muslim

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erative efforts for global peace. The IIFWP holds, furthermore, that international efforts for world peace on the part of the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations need to be enhanced by the unique e wisdom and insight of the world's great religious traditions.

world were deemed to be opposing sides and the conflict became more palpable than ever. Right after the 9/11-events, IIFWP convened two events directly related to it – one in New York (in October) and the other in Jakarta (in December). People in the organization recollected the experience on two levels: the charisma of the founder that propelled the events; and the network with the Muslim world which IIFWP was able to make use of.

Conference proceedings and records are also helpful for understanding the two levels. First of all, the Assembly 2001 was held from 19 to 22 October in New York. It was right after the tragic attack in the very same city, and the staff recalled that nobody actually wanted to fly to New York. Conscious of the matter but not explicitly mentioning it, the Chairman's welcome remark in the official brochure is as follows:

> As the twenty-first century began, at a time when the Cold War had ended, there was great hope that humanity might see a new millennium of greater peace, prosperity and happiness. However, recent events reveal the existence of many unresolved and unrestored problems, indicating that in this new century we face challenges as serious as in the past. We have gathered here to address these challenges.[35]

Mentioning the end of the Cold War as a background, and implying the current 9/11-event, the remarks open up the problems to be solved: it is the sphere of religion and culture that needs to be dealt with when we try to resolve an international crisis.

According to the online archive of UPF, this Assembly was successfully convened with 427 participants from all around the world.[36] The agenda and initiatives of the Assembly were not so different from the previous year, the renewal of UN involvement, but focused more on the practical solution for violence under the name of religion. 12 conference reports from the event can be found on the Web archive of UPF and they try to sketch the general atmosphere of the conference. Unlike the reserved tone of the official welcome remarks, the reports present somewhat intense and strong emotional statements of the participants. For example, Rev. Moon invited 21 religious leaders[37] to a private luncheon and

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35 N.A., IIFWP Assembly 2001, Global Violence Crisis and Hope, official booklet page 2.

36 N.A., UPF Online data center: Conference List, page 2. Intranet material, not eligible for an external internet access.

37 Minister Louis Farrakhan (Nation of Islam), and his son, Mrs. Mohini Giri (Guild of Service, India), Chief Rabbi Izhak Bar-Dea and wife (Ramat-Gan, Israel), Dr. Manjit Singh Jathedar (Anand Pur Sahib, India), Reverend Junsei Terasawa (Nipponjan Myohoft, Russia and Ukraine), Chief Reuben Silverbird (Nedni Apache, Cherokee, Navajo), Father Nithya Sagayam (Bishops Council, India), Imam Muhammad Maqsood Ahmad Qadri (Dept. of Religious Affairs, Punjab,

shared his opinions. In this luncheon, the reporter, Nadine Andre, recounts the exchange between Moon and the Honorable Minister (Louis Farrakhan Sr., 1933 –) the leader of an American Islamic movement called the Nation of Islam. Before the conversation started, Moon gave the speech on "loving the enemy," in the aim of asserting that there should not be any concept of "enemy":

> [There was then a brief, almost personal exchange between Dr. Moon and the Honorable Minister Farrakhan]
>
> [The Minister responded]
>
> But look at how you are speaking to us. You are passionate, not angry. That is how I speak. I am passionate too!
>
> [Dr. Moon, smiling said]
>
> Yes, but I am speaking of something different. I mean we should never point our finger to other groups. The highest way is to take responsibility; that is the only way.
>
> [Then again to everyone present]
>
> Pray to God to see if I am telling you the truth. If I am lying, come and destroy me. If you cannot get an answer easily, then do what I say, and see if that helps you find out. If I am wrong, come to me and we will repent together.
>
> We do not need religious wars and denominationalism. Without denominationalism we must go to God.
>
> If you don't believe what I'm saying, go to the spirit world; you will see I am telling the truth.[38]

By reading this report, we can recognize that there had been personal exchanges among the religious leaders just a month after the 9/11 in the same city. In the other report, a heated debate is also documented. After Dr. Khalid Durán, a Muslim scholar who was recently expelled from the New Jersey Muslim association because of his academic work endorsing the expansion of the War in Afghanistan and condemning the contemporary situation in Sudan. Consequently:

> This precipitated an outburst from several in the audience and an intervention from the session chair, who offered his profound apologies and stated that neither he nor the conference organizers were cognizant of the truth or falsehood of Dr. Duran's claims. On resum-

Pakistan), Dr. Allama Muhammad Idara Minhaj-Ul-Hussain Akbar (Idara Minhaj-Ul-Hussein, Pakistan), Chief Rabbi David Brodman (Savion, Israel).

38 Nadine Andre, *Loving Your Enemy In The Face Of Terror: 21 Leaders of the World's Religions Meet United States:*. http://hoondok.ru/tfs/eng/2001/loving-your-enemy-in-the-face-of-terror—twenty-one-leaders-of-the-worlds-religions-meet (accessed: 24.5.2020).

ing, Dr. Duran said the real problem was terrorist infiltration to the U.S. and the misuse of Islamic terminology and symbols. He said that the American Muslim majority would "not be a silent majority any longer" and would no longer be intimidated by the terrorist element.[39]

This part shows that the conference included a spectrum of Muslim participants and that they were deeply conscious of the situation they faced. In this respect, the conference was an intense experience for the participants at that time. However, the Unification Church propelled further effort to foster dialogue with the Muslim world, convening another conference.

Mr. Haj Hamad, the Secretary General of UPF, recollects that the founder wanted immediate action and called for the comprehensive gathering of Muslim leaders. It was not easy work, but fortunately, IIFWP was equipped with the staff that had already built a global network in the field. Dr. Hamad was one of them and he has been forming friendships with members of the NGO community. In 1998, he was even elected to a two-year term as Secretary of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, the official umbrella group of NGOs in association with the UN Department of Public Information.[40] Additionally, he had a personal friendship with the former president of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid and other important figures. The Jakarta Summit of Muslim leaders, which was held from 20 to 23 December 2001, was realized with the existing relationship and organization's network. According to Dr. Hamad, it was "a phone call" that initiated the summit, and Rev. Moon offered to fund every expense of the summit.[41]

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39 Michael Mickler, *Global Violence, Crisis and Hope: New Demands for Interfaith: Religions Must Take Greater Responsibility:* https://www.tparents.org/UNews/Unws0111/IIrfwp_report. htm (accessed: 24.5.2020).

40 Harold Paine and Birgit Gratzer, *Rev. Moon and the United Nations:* https://www.global policy.org/component/content/article/176/31366.html (accessed: 24.5.2020). Also it is necessary to note that this report is written in highly derogatory tone to accuse Unification Church's participation in the UN in the respect of secularism, blaming the movement for "illegally" occupying the part of the UN. Nevertheless, it is one of the most detailed description on the activity of Unification Church in the UN.

41 Interview with Mr. Hamad, July 2014: "Also, the remarks of Dr. Walsh also help us understand the movement has built close relationship with a part of Muslim leaders in the world. In terms of Islam, I mentioned that one of the key points is this the grand mufti of Syria, Ahmed Koutaro, who I write about it in one article you have. And he formed a close relationship with Father Moon. And they had a strong mutual appreciation and respect. Because Koutaro was also a visionary. And at that time you know, Father Moon really emphasized the relationship and in 1990, at the Assembly, Father Moon said send me a group of fifties of your best leaders from Syria, in Islam. And bring them to New York, we will put them up in our hotel, the New Yorker Hotel, and that was something that Mr. Hamad can tell you about since he organized the pro-

The ensuing summit following 9/11 and the passionate participation of Muslim agents show us the international conflicts come to appear in religious forms, not in ideological forms. Talking about religion in the public sphere – the UN and international politics– had been a taboo under the principle of the secularism. However, after 9/11 and its rupture, discussions on religion in the public sphere became inevitable.

3.3 Episode 3: The (Re)birth of UPF and its Symbolic Meaning

The last episode, the renaming of IIFWP to UPF can now be interpreted as an attempt to re-ignite the ideal for an interreligious council in the UN. Indeed, Rev. Moon founded UPF and specified the concept of the "Abel-type" and the "Cain-type" UN. The trope of Cain and Abel is from the biblical reference: the Cain-type UN refers to the existing secular UN system, which acts "selfishly and independently of God" while the "Abel-type" UN is said to have "an attitude of service to God and living for the sake of others."[42] Hence, UPF was not a sudden and new idea for a completely new vision. It is in continuity with the vision that had been developing over four decades, from the start of the movement. It seems that this was an invented rupture to advance its existing vision for UN engagement in a more compelling way. The staff, structure and the way they performed tasks remained the same. Only the name changed. This is thus a symbolic rebirth of the same agenda.

Mr. Hamad's personal network was an essential factor in the organization's capacity to carry out its mission. Considering the background and vitalization of religious voices in international politics and the UN, one can say that the involvement of IIFWP in the UN had been successful. Between 2001 and 2005, the organization held many activities as an NGO in the UN, by exerting efforts with allies in the UN to deliver the resolutions promoting and securing the status of religious NGOs. There are several important resolutions that promote the partic-

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gram, they called the Interreligious Leadership Seminar. It was just a name, but they were primarily for Muslim leaders from Syria initially, then from Jordan, Egypt, from Yemen, 5 or 6 Muslim countries. And to build this relationship with Islam, also try to encourage this broader vision that both Rev. Moon and mufti Koutaro shared. So, way I interpret that is a form of preventive peace building."

42 Michael Mickler, "Toward an UN?: The Unification Movement and the United Nations," *Journal of Unification Studies* 9 (2008).

ipation of NGOs and interreligious activity.[43] Among them, the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2003 is important. It requested the UN Secretary General to disseminate the contents of the resolution, which welcomes the NGO's role and effort in interreligious dialogue.[44] The term "request" designates a little stronger responsibility to the Secretary General than other resolutions.

Despite the vital and enthusiastic activities of IIFWP, the organization went through the renaming process from IIFWP to UPF. This move was an onerous job for an organization that already has a vast array of networks and a legal registration. They had to go through much paperwork to change the name into UPF. It seems that the motivation of this challenging transition is the need for further advancing the "Abel-type" UN vision. In this vein, the people in the organization referred primarily to the vision of the "Abel UN" as a core concept of the new UPF. Around 2005, Rev. Moon started to introduce this concept, which is the opposite concept of the "Cain UN," indicating that the secularized UN structure that cannot effectively deal with the current problems in the world, requiring regular participation of religious bodies. The structure of his argument is similar to the 2000 UN renewal Assembly, which initiated IIFWP.

> All the conflicts and wars in history have been essentially battles between a Cain camp, relatively tending towards evil, and an Abel camp, relatively tending toward goodness. Humanity must end these struggles between Cain and Abel camps and restore the original state of harmony and love. To do this, each of us must end the conflict between our mind and body, and bring them into harmonious union. [...]

> The existing United Nations structure, composed of national representatives, may be regarded as a congress where the interests of each member nation are represented. However, I submit that serious consideration should be given to forming a religious assembly, or council of religious representatives within the structure of the United Nations. This assembly or council would consist of respected spiritual leaders in fields such as religion, culture, and education. Of course, the members of this interreligious assembly will need to have

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43 To list them: Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding, and Cooperation for Peace, GA 60/10, adopted 3 November 2005; Promotion of Interreligious Dialogue, GA 59/23, adopted 11 November 2004; Promotion of Religious and Cultural Understanding, Harmony, and Cooperation, GA 58/128, adopted 19 December 2003.Moreover, at the center of the realization of these resolution and the cooperation of IIFWP and other NGO, one should not omit to mention Mrs. Kagawa facilitation during the whole process in the UN.

44 UN General Assembly, *Resolution: Promotion of Religious and Cultural Understanding, Harmony and Cooperation:* A/RES/58/128.

demonstrated an ability to transcend the limited interests of individual nations and to speak for the concerns of the entire world and humanity at large.[45]

Here, the trope of Abel and Cain is used, as well. However, the trope has not advanced to the concept of the "Abel-type" UN. In 2000, Moon only argues that an interreligious council is essential in the UN, since the conflicts in the world after the Cold War called for the reconsideration and recognition of religious powers. This logical sequence is not so much different in 2005.

> The United Nations has made important contributions for peace. Nevertheless, at its 60th anniversary there is a broad consensus, both inside and outside the organization, which the U.N. has yet to discover the way to fulfill its founding purposes. The number of member states is approaching 200, but the offices of these states do little more than represent and even insist on their own interests. They seem inherently unable to resolve conflicts and achieve peace.

> For these reasons, I declare today before all humanity the founding of a new international organization, the Universal Peace Federation. Its mission is to renew the existing United Nations and provide a new level of leadership as an "Abel-type" United Nations, that is, a United Nations whose efforts for peace are offered to Heaven, investing itself ceaselessly in living for the sake of others.[46]

Finally, this section analyzes the inaugural conference of UPF in 2005 Seoul, along with the interview with Dr. Frank LaGrotteria who delivered the practical and logistical dimension of the conferences and summits that UPF often held. He described how he was impressed by the grandiose nature of the inaugural events carried with ritualistic ceremonies and showed me various media clips recorded at the event: the sound of a huge Chinese gong, the prayers, and the atmosphere of the ceremony was different from previous ones. Moreover, the founder started to travel to 120 nations in the world to commemorate and promote the UPF launch and Dr. LaGrotteria recalled that it had symbolic importance for the members of the organization.[47]

In sum, it appears that this re-launching of the same body with a different name has a symbolic meaning for the members of the organization. Finally, the fact that around 2005, at the transitional moment of the IIFWP to UPF, the two names appear simultaneously on the brochures and posters of events the or-

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45 N.A. "S.M. Moon Address: Renewing the United Nations to Build Lasting Peace, August 2000.

46 N.A. "S.M. Moon Address".

47 From my personal exchange with Dr. LaGrotteria. in UPF headquarter on July 8th 2014.

ganization held gives us strong confirmation that the foundation of UPF is in deep continuity with the IIFWP.[48]

What this rebirth means can be interpreted in many ways. However, considering the IIFWP's previous work and the religious turn following 9/11, the renaming seems to aim at advancing the religious agenda and propelling the organization's religious ideal within the context of its UN participation. As religious entities and agents begin to be granted admission in the realm of international relations and politics in early 2000, UPF attempts to reignite its activity by relaunching the organization. Moreover, what promoted the rebirth of UPF is the fact that the IRD movement became an agenda that draws attention from major entities of international politics and thus, expanded its influence in the public sphere in general. The two previous episodes mark the starting point of this trend and UPF's launch shows us continuing efficacy of the religious agents and values in the public sphere, especially that of the U.N. The 9/11-events were a watershed moment that led to the convergence of religious and secular dynamics within international politics. It opened up a new stream of IRD. IIFWP and UPF are at the heart of this trend, and their foundation and activity give us an emblematic example of IRD in the public sphere, especially in the realm of international relations and cooperation.

4 Conclusion

A significant advance in the UN resolution was brought about under the name of UPF. A resolution, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2006, directly requests the Secretary General to include interreligious matters:

> 16. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure the systematic and organizational follow-up of all interreligious, intercultural and inter-civilizational matters within the United Nations system and overall coordination and coherence in its interreligious, intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue and cooperation efforts, inter alia, through the designation of a focal unit in the Secretariat to handle these matters.[49]

Mrs. Kagawa, who is in charge within UPF of UN relations and resolutions, said that this request "ensuring" supporting interreligious with the "focal unit" ac-

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48 International Interreligious Federation for World Peace, ed. *The World Leadership Convocation.* N.P. 2005. Universal Peace Federation, ed. *The World Assembly.* N.P. 2006.
49 UN General Assembly, *Resolution: Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace :* A/RES/61/221.http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/589511/files/A_RES_61_221-AR.pdf (accessed 23.10.2020)

tually calls for the institutional support for the interfaith NGOs in the UN. This is considered to be a decisive step forward in the field.

As we have seen above, UPF is an active and living organization in the field of international NGOs that specializes in interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution. The important thing is that not only the fact that the three episodes took place, but also the fact that people in the organization affirmed that these episodes are important and meaningful to them. This approach, which focuses on the accounts of the participants, is crucial for understanding interfaith activity as a religious phenomenon. This is a dimension that can be observed at a microscopic level, focusing on the activity of individual agents in the organization.

In addition, we can analyze the background and effective activity of UPF in terms of shifting landscape of the religious and the secular. To be specific, the success of UPF is largely in accordance with the contemporary adaptation of religious organizations integrating into or appropriating the realm of the secular such as the UN. As Lehmann earlier observed in the cases of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, *Pax Romana*, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation,[50] Religious NGO's participation in the secular realm, such as the UN, implies the contested distinction between the religious and the secular, and thus shows new possibilities for religious NGOs. These organizations respectively pursue their religious goals by way of engaging in NGO activities, taking part in secular institutions such as the UN.

UPF can be considered a case of the above tendency. By investigating the foundation background of the UPF, this analysis made connections between ideas of religious actors, historical context and the contemporary interreligious dialogue movement within particular developments in international relations, especially within the United Nations. Now it is clear that UPF effectively attended to its agenda, showing a compelling possibility and example of interfaith dialogue in the contemporary world by adapting to the structure of secular organizations, i.e. the UN. UPF, after its major 2000 conference and the two that immediately followed 9/11 in 2001 shows regular participation in the UN and in the realm of international politics. The case of UPF strongly underlies the fact that the status of the IRD movement has been elevated to the level of general international politics and cooperation. Listing and arguing the legitimacy of IRD is not the only aim of the IRD movement anymore. Interreligious dialogue is now an indispensable part of human lives and a simple fact of life in the post-globalization era. Taking actions at an international level in specific agendas — pro-

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50 Karsten Lehmann, "Shifting Boundaries Between the Religious and the Secular: Religious Organizations in Global Public Space," *Journal of Religion in Europe* 6 (2013): 1–28.

moting rights of women and youth, and international peace-building, etc. — became major concerns of the IRD movement. The increasing importance of the religious sphere after 9/11 and this change in the setting of the IRD movement was the catalyst for the foundation, or, the symbolic rebirth of UPF. Thus, UPF shows us compelling evidence of this trend, namely, the collapsing of the wall between secular and religious discourse in the public sphere as reflected in particular in the UN international public space.

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Karsten Lehmann / Patrice Brodeur

Final Remarks

Insights into the Interdisciplinary Field of the Study of Interreligious Dialogue

The present book started from a two-fold observation: On the one hand, the last two decades have seen a dynamic increase in the mere numbers of activities that are explicitly labeled as Interreligious Dialogue (IRD). On the other hand, research in the field is widely focusing on the general, conceptual level. As described in greater detail in the introductory chapter, we so far have primarily anecdotal evidence to understand concrete IRD activities in their socio-cultural contexts.[1] At the moment, there are primarily two exceptions to this rule: First, those analyses dealing with the history of IRD in different (national) contexts that underline the significance of the different actors in the field as well as their reactions to their respective socio-cultural settings.[2] Second, those analyses working on the significance of IRD in the wider field of religious encounters that elaborate on the specific characteristics of IRD in front of the much wider set of encounters between religions in history.[3]

Accordingly, the case studies that form the center of the present book all set out to answer a number of very basic questions that focus on the understanding of IRD activities in their respective socio-cultural contexts – such as: What are those groups active in IRD actually doing? Are there groups and individuals that are systematically excluded from IRD activities? What socio-political motives underlie day-to-day IRD activities? What happens inside the organizations that form the centre of most IRD activities? To what an extent are they able to implement the general ideals of IRD into their concrete activities? What can we learn from success and failure in the field?

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1 Mar Griera and Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, "Interreligious Relations and Governance of Religion in Europe: Introduction," *Social Compass* 65 (September 2018): 301–11; Magdalena Nordin, "Secularization, Religious Plurality and Position: Local Inter-religious Cooperation in Contemporary Sweden," *Social Compass* 64 (2017): 388–403.
2 David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas, eds., *Understanding Interreligious Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). See for example the respective research undertaken at the Center for Religious Studies at the University of Bochum, ed., *Religions, Encounters, Traditions:* https://ceres.rub.de/en/research/profile/religions-encounters-traditions/ (accessed: 24.5.2020).
3 Catherie Cornille, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-religious Dialogue* (Oxford / Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

Following these general questions, the preceding chapters provide their readers with a wide range of insights into the early history of several important international IRD organizations. Together, they cover a wide range of major individual and organizational actors that have shaped the modern development of interreligious dialogue up to the present. Using an empirical approach, they describe, on the one hand, how these actors put their ideals of IRD into practice. On the other hand, they highlight some of the challenges they were confronted with, while implementing their understanding of IRD, especially when working as pioneers in the establishment of organizational structures to promote their activities.

It is now time to compare the results of these separate case studies in order to provide a broader historical and sociological understanding of the phenomena in question. We do so through a three-step argument: First, we describe the over-all social forms international IRD activities have been taking from around 1900 up until today. Second, we present two trends that have shaped the modern history of these activities – (a) a trend towards public activism and (b) a trend towards official representation. Third, we discuss a set of recommendations that draw upon these observations to better understand present-day IRD activities within the framework of their organizational development.

1 Early Establishment of a Loose IRD Movement

To take the first of these three steps, the present chapter returns to the concept of the 'IRD movement' that has already been discussed in section 2.2 of the introduction. It refers to the predominant conviction in present-day IRD-related research that the century-old history of interreligious encounters gained new momentum in the late 19th century with the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions. In this literature, the so-called 'Parliament' is often referred to as the starting point of the modern IRD movement.[4]

Notwithstanding a few references to older examples of dialogue, almost all analyses in the preceding chapters point to the 1893 *'World's Parliament of Religions'* as the initial reference for the work of the organizations and individuals they have been studying. They do not, however, refer to any form of personal or structural continuity. The 'Parliament' serves as an ideal point of reference.

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[4] Anna Halafoff, *The Multifaith Movement: Global Risks and Cosmopolitan Solutions* (New York / Heidelberg: Springer, 2013); Vladimir Latinovic, Gerard Mannion, and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Pathways for Interreligious Dialogue in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

This confirms to what an extent this side event of the Chicago World's Fair has become the symbolic starting point for the activities of the modern twentieth, or twenty-first century organizations that self-describe as doing IRD. And it makes it even more unfortunate that we are actually lacking major archival material on this event (see chapter 2 of the present volume).

In addition, the first set of chapters highlights the loose character of this initial phase of IRD activities. On the one hand, the first half of the 20th century saw the gradual establishment of IRD organizations with a particular focus on theological discussions – some of them rather short-lived (e. g. the '*Religiöse Menschheitsbund*', see: chapter 3 of the present volume) and others still in existence today (e. g. the '*World Congress of Faiths*', see: chapter 4 of the present volume). On the other hand, it is interesting to see from the present archival work that there were almost no quarrels about the boundaries of what constitutes an IRD organization. The organizations analyzed in this book were rather open and/or unobservant vis-à-vis each other, and there were no explicit attempts to define boundaries in a way that would lead towards the exclusion of one another organizationally.

These observations further support two classic interpretations of the early modern history of IRD-activities: First, they support the idea that the 'modern dialogue movement' started off as an amorphous group of people trying to implement a general idea of IRD. The inclusive character of the organizations that were established to implement this general idea stands for a rather broad understanding of the activities in the field. Second, the above observations underline that the initial history of international IRD activities and organizational development was confronted with a particular resistance on the part of traditional religious hierarchies and institutions (mostly Christian). There seems to have been also very limited support from political parties or parliaments. And this has further shaped the character of IRD activities.

On top of this, the case studies underline a third aspect of IRD activities that has so far been frequently neglected: It is interesting to see that in a time of increasing globalization and the expansion of secular ideas[5], most protagonists of the early history of the IRD movement perceived themselves as adding 'a religious voice' against what they characterized as an increasing secularization. This adds a whole new dimension to the analysis of IRD activities. Almost all IRD practitioners studied in this book follow – at least implicitly – a religious

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5 Steve Bruce, *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Hans G. Kippenberg, *Entdeckung der Religionsgeschichte: Religionswissenschaft und Moderne* (München: Beck, 1997).

agenda in a context they perceived in the widest sense as secular, although this does not imply that this religious agenda was automatically anti-secularist from a political perspective.[6] Sociologically speaking, this suggests a correlation between the emergence of IRD organizations, especially in the West, and the rise in secularization processes.[7]

As far as future research is concerned, it would be interesting to analyze more systematically IRD-activities as a reaction against processes of secularization and to see to what an extent the differentiation of the manifold strands of secularization helps to understand multiple forms of IRD activities around the world.[8] In this respect, it could be argued that changes in the form of secularization processes, while they have often disempowered mainstream religious institutions politically, they have also triggered new forms of religious identities and dynamics, especially interreligiously (see: chapter 5 on the *'WCC-Committee on the Church and the Jewish People'* of the present volume). This will provide the basis for much more dynamic analyses of IRD activities.

And this is exactly the point where the second part of the present analyses comes in: The identification of two major trends in the modern history of IRD activities.

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6 Indeed, the philosopher Charles Taylor has called this age the 'secular age', in which he demonstrates clearly that 'religion' and 'religious actors' did not disappear from the public space (as the secularization theory might have lead people to believe), but that religions and religious beliefs and practices were transformed. One such transformation is precisely the emergence of IRD activities and organizations at both grassroots and highest institutional levels in the course of the second half of the twentieth century. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age.* Cambridge / London: Harvard University Press 2007.

7 Lehmann, Karsten, "Interreligious Dialogue in response to secularization," *Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Societies* 7 (in print); Peter L. Berger, ed., *Between Relativism and Fundamentalism, Religious Resources for a Middle Position* (Cambridge: Grand Rapids, 2010); Peter L. Berger. "A Market Model for the Analysis of Ecumenicity," *Social Research* 30 (1963): 77–93.

8 Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Johathan van Antwerpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, eds., *Multiple Secularities beyond the West, Religion and Modernity in the Global Age* (Boston / Berlin / München: Walter De Gruyter, 2015).

2 Two Major Trends in the Modern History of IRD Activities

Despite the manifold observations that have so far highlighted the loose character of the early IRD movement, it would be misleading to reduce IRD-activities to one single type of actions. Especially with regards to the 1970's and 1990's, the analyses of the case studies in this book underline two strands that have shaped the more recent history of the IRD movement and our understanding of it today: first, this movement reflects a trend towards 'public activism' at the same time as it also shows, paradoxically, a trend towards 'formal representation'.

2.1 Trend towards 'Public Activism' in Civil Society

The first of these two trends started during the decade from the late 1950s to the early 1970s that has been described as the 'Long Sixties' as well as a time of 'Religious Crisis'[9]. It can be said to correspond to a second phase in the development of the international IRD movement, associated with the foundation of organizations such as the Temple of Understanding (1960), the internal developments that changed the very character of the International Association for Religious Freedom (1969), and the organization of the first World Conference on Religions for Peace (1970). All these developments show how new IRD actors emerged in the field and how the focus of IRD activities moved away from primarily conceptual and theological discussions towards a wider socio-cultural engagement in topics such as international politics (Temple of Understanding), human rights (International Association for Religious Freedom), or peace and disarmament (Religions for Peace).

The complexity of these developments can be illustrated with a variety of examples from the case-studies: If one examines more closely the chapter on the *'Temple of Understanding'* (see: chapter 6 of the present volume), it is fascinating to see how early fund-raising documents of this organization describe their founder, Juliet Hollister, not only as an important integrative figure, but also underline her role as a female figure that provided input to the IRD movement without having substantive theological training. In other words, the documents pre-

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9 Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958 – c. 1974* (Oxford / New York: A & C Black, 1998); Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

sent Hollister as an opposition to traditional clerics, pastors or priests. They rather present her as a figure outside traditional religious hierarchies.

The emergence of what turned into the organization more recently called *'Religions for Peace/International'* provides another example (see: chapter 8 of the present volume). This organization started around an international event that wanted to illustrate how religions play a leading role for peace around the world, especially in the context of the Cold War, i.e. the war in Vietnam. In a very complex process, the emphasis of its activities diversified to include not only broader international questions related to the promotion of peace throughout the International Community (Disarmament, Peace Education, Sustainable Development, Women and Youth), mostly through the United Nations, but also a commitment to work *interreligiously* towards peace in a more concrete way from the ground up (i.e. local and national levels).

And finally, the changes inside the *'International Association for Religious Freedom'* also add a significant dimension to those important developments towards public activism in civil society. Starting out in 1901 as one of the first international IRD-organizations, the IARF is the first IRD organization that put human rights into the very center of its activities (see: chapter 7 of the present volume). In 1969, the protagonists inside the organization re-positioned IARF in the context of the expanding international debates on human rights.[10] From this time onwards, references to human rights form an integral aspect of this strand of IRD activities.

All of these organizational developments can be interpreted within the context of a newly emerging public activism[11]. On the basis of rather open networks, the local groups of the respective organizations have been involved in manifold concrete activities around the world and have developed various internal implementation structures. These organizations no longer exclusively focus on dialogue between religious experts; they rather propose the grass-root implementation of IRD as a particular tool to tackle a wide variety of socio-political problems – with various actors from all social and institutional levels. They also start to prioritize middle- and long-term programmes over singular events.

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10 Samuel Myon, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge / London: Belknap Press, 2010); Stephen Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2013).

11 On the origins of this concept, see: Christian Smith, *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism* (New York / London: Routledge, 1996); Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (London: Ithaca, 1998).

These observations suggest linking the analysis of IRD to a more general process that has been dominating the recent academic debates on the History of Religions. Authors such as José Casanova and Jürgen Habermas have described this process as the establishment of religions in public space or the emergence of a post-secular society.[12] As far as the IRD organizations in this book are concerned, this means that they are more and more organized along the lines of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).[13] A strong group of actors inside those organizations tend to perceive themselves as activists in civil society – first with regard to formal structures, and second with regard to human rights such as religious freedom, freedom of expression and a large variety of peace activities.[14]

However, this is only half of the story. In addition to this, our case studies help to identify a second trend that is in a way counteracting the first one – a trend towards 'formal representation' part of which is linked to policy-making.

2.2 Trend towards 'Formal Representation'

Once again, this trend cannot be properly assessed without first looking back into history. As soon as one goes back to the early years of the modern IRD movement, it becomes clear that these activities were primarily shaped by individuals of rather small (and sometimes marginalized) groups within different religious traditions – in the earliest days, this frequently equated with Christian traditions in the West. Unitarians played, for example, a role in the early days of the IRD movement that is certainly greater than their numbers. Similar was the role of the modern lay Japanese Buddhist organization Risshō Kōsei Kai in the leadership of the World Conference on Religions for Peace. And the same is also true for religious ideas in the traditions of Christian mysticism as well as peoples

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12 Jürgen Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001); José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan van Antwerpen, eds., *Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).
13 Josef Boehle, *Inter-Religious Co-operation in a Global Age* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2010); Jeffrey Haynes, *Religious Transnational Actors and Soft Power* (London / New York: Routledge, 2012); Karsten Lehmann, *Religious NGOs in International Relations: The Construction of 'the Religious' and 'the Secular'* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).
14 Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey, eds. *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); David Herbert, *Religion and Civil Society: Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World* (London / New York: Routledge, 2003).

and organizations committed to religious pacifism that were highly significant for the early IRD movement.

Against this socio-cultural background, it is interesting to see that the case analyses that follow the breakdown of the bi-polar world-order suggest an increasing focus on formal religious representation,[15] especially with the consolidation of the World Conference on Religions for Peace. In a less systematic way, the *'Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions'* is another good example for this trend, through not as successfully (see: chapter 9 of the present volume). It illustrates to what an extent its organizers were able to add representative voices to the celebration of this foundational event of the IRD movement. The history of the *'Oxford International Interfaith Centre'* leads into a similar direction (see chapter 10 of the present volume), in as much as it focuses on the Centre's major aims to bring together leading academics from different religious traditions in a joint middle- to long-term program.

The two most recent cases in this publication – the *'United Religions Initiative'* and the *'Universal Peace Foundation'* add further complexities to this trend. The first stands for an organization (or rather a movement) that has been established from within traditional church-hierarchies to explicitly work on the grassroots level (see: chapter 11 of the present volume). The second stands for the commitment of a new religious movement that has frequently been described as a 'sect' or a 'cult'[16] in a very specific section of IRD activities – the lobbying in the context of International Organizations such as the UN (see: chapter 12 of the present volume).

All these observations highlight a frequently neglected dimension to the analysis of IRD-activities – the question of representation. First, they provide further examples on the dynamic character of any type of formal representation – including the respective processes of inclusion and exclusion. Second, they underline that formalized representation is more easily achievable when religious traditions had developed more centralized religious institutions over centuries. However, since a majority of religious traditions tend to be more decentralized

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15 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York / London / Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the twenty-first Century* (New York: Houndmills, 2005); Monica D. Toft, Daniel Philpott and Timothy Shah S., *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York / London: NW Norton & Company, 2011).

16 James A. Beckford and James Richardson, eds., *Challenging Religion: Essays in honour of Eileen Barker* (Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2003); Eileen Barker, ed., *Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious Movements* (London / New York: Routledge, 2013).

than centralized, this may explain why Christian institutions played a more prominent role initially in the emergence of those worldwide IRD organizations that were more top-down in their approach.[17]

As far as the present day is concerned, the interesting thing is that the two above trends form two major strands in contemporary IRD activities. At times, these are simply seen as complementary to each other; at other times, they give rise to strong tensions between organizations and actors who may want to put more emphasis on some themes over others. The establishment of international organizations dealing with interreligious and intercultural dialogue represents perfect examples of this development. They are no longer only dominated by religiously motivated individuals that are primarily legitimated by their personal commitment to IRD. In addition to the voices of official representatives of major religious communities, these IGOs rather prioritize the voices of official representatives of governments or other international organizations, coming into conflict with the aims of the more activism-oriented initiatives.

To finally put all of this into a nutshell: Based upon the self-descriptions in the field, the analyses brought together in the present book, describe the more recent history of IRD activities along the lines of an increasing establishment of a rather loose movement that emerged around the turn from the 19th to the 20th century. On this basis, they underline the dynamic developments of this movement with regards to two entwined trends towards 'public activism' and 'formal representation'. These trends shape the field of IRD activities today. They explain the emergence as well as the disappearance of specific topics and actors in the international field of IRD-activities.

These observations finally open up an opportunity to formulate practical proposals to the field of interreligious or interfaith dialogue.

3 Proposals to the Field: Learning from International IRD Activities

Expanding on the above action-focused approach this section identifies five concrete, present-day challenges that seem to be constitutive of the IRD movement in general:

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17 John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, and Todd T. Lewis, *World Religions Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Charles Taylor and Karin Wördemann, *Die Formen des Religiösen in der Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001); John Fahy and Jeffrey Haynes, "Introduction: Interfaith on the World Stage," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16 (2018) 1–8.

3.1 Look at History

Our first suggestion is linked to the ongoing efforts among IRD activists to promote peace – at least starting from the 1960s onwards. As the case studies analyzed in this book clearly show, the establishment of the IRD organizations from that second period onwards is strongly linked to the lofty ideal of 'world peace'. Since the turmoil of the First and the Second World War, the idea of world peace has been a significant part of most – if not all – IRD encounters, directly or indirectly. Not only because people identified in one way or another religion as a basis of many violent conflicts, but also because many religious leaders and communities active in interreligious dialogue (from the local level to the global level) seek to promote peace through interreligious collaboration.

On the one hand, this increased interreligious collaboration has attracted more and more public attention, with the effect that IRD has begun to carry more power and influence on politics, especially in areas of conflicts. On the other hand, especially when IRD is practiced according to a harmony model of dialogue rather than a liberation one,[18] the general idea of world peace pushes other dimensions of present-day society in the background – such as the injustices of global economy or the ongoing violations of human rights. This might bring a difficult bias to some of the IRD activities happening today, if they do not use a transformative, 'positive peace' framework.[19]

Our first recommendation is therefore that scholars and scholar-practitioners can look at the history of the IRD movement to capitalize on the concrete experiences that have already been made in the direction towards world peace. While there is a handful of books that each provide a valuable perspective on the history of this movement,[20] although they each cover only a segment of it, there is no book to date that includes an extensive and relatively inclusive coverage of that history. However, there is an increasing number of empirical sources of data on organizations currently working internationally in the promotion of

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18 Mohammad Abu-Nimer, Amal I. Khoury and Emily Welty, *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 64–65.
19 For more on the framework of 'conflict transformation', see John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Brattleboro: Good Books, 2003). For more on the framework of 'positive peace', see Johan Galtung, "Editorial", *Journal of Peace Research* 1 (1964): 3–16; in which he first used the expression 'positive peace'. For a more detailed theoretical analysis, see also Johan Galtung, *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 1996).
20 For further examples, see Marcus Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope: One Hundred Years of Global Interfaith Dialogue* (London: SCM Press, 1993).

IRD in a variety of fields, including peace and reconciliation. Through future analyses of such new contemporary data as well as more archival research, the time is ripe for the production of a history that can reflect on the accelerating complexity of recent and current IRD activities – highlighting focal point of co-operation as well as conflict.

3.2 Discuss Tensions

The second recommendation builds upon what has been said earlier about the question of religious representation. The case studies included in this book have made it clear that, while the first period in the development of the modern IRD movement was dominated by a very specific group of individuals that were (a) highly interested in theological questions and (b) did not necessarily perceive themselves at the center of religious traditions, the second period has challenged this setup significantly through the emergence of the two concomitant and in a way complementary trends of 'public activism' and 'formal representation'.

If it is possible to think of these two trends as complementary in some ways, they have considerable consequences for today's IRD-activities. On the one hand, this 'formal representation' strand of IRD has led to more institutionally formalized structures both within some religious institutions and in an international NGO such as Religions for Peace/International. On the other hand, the 'public activism' approach tends to be critical of most forms of formal representation, rooted in more grassroots and progressive wings of some religious communities. At the moment it seems to be difficult to integrate these two strands of developments.

Our second recommendation is therefore that all actors within the IRD movement, wherever they may find themselves on this spectrum between 'public activism' and 'formal representation', need to get together to discuss where and when this tension results in counterproductive competition and misjudgment about each other, and where and when it might be the source of creative new methodologies to ensure greater conflict transformational impact for the IRD movement as a whole. In preparation for such discussions between all kinds of IRD actors, it would be useful to produce numerous case studies[21] of these di-

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21 For example, see Heinz Streib, "Inter-Religious Negotiations: Case Studies on Students' Perception of and Dealing with Religious Diversity," in *Towards Religious Competence: Diversity as a Challenge for Education in Europe*, ed. Hans-Guenter Heimbrock, Christoph Scheilke, and Peter Schreiner (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001): 129–149; for several examples of case studies based in the

verse IRD activities and knowledge production forms in order to first understand better the fields of tension and cooperation among what is 'out there' (i.e. monitoring the field), as well as to begin to analyze what impact each kind of IRD activities may or may not have had so far (i.e. evaluation).

3.3 Approach the Challenge of Inclusiveness

A third ongoing challenge, discussed from the beginning of the modern IRD movement in all IRD organizations studied in this book, relates to the notion of inclusiveness for at least three identity markers: gender, religion, and nationality. While the first period in the modern IRD movement was led by mostly Christian men coming from countries of what we call today the 'global North', the second period diversified to include still mostly men, but from more diverse religions and from a much broader variety of national backgrounds, including the 'global South'. In the current third period of the IRD movement since 2001, the need to diversify the composition of who participates and organizes IRD activities becomes even more urgent.[22] For example, there is a growing awareness about such challenges surrounding the inclusion of a wider variety of identities as well as more balanced numbers has resulted in some improvement in representation of more people from the 'global south' as well as more women religious leaders and, at times, younger religious leaders and activists too.

   The challenges remain big when it comes to the presence of these groups in most IRD organizational structures. Up to now, the issues of inclusiveness – so important to IRD practitioners – are mostly not reflected in the formal structures of religious traditions. To give but very few examples: Men are still overrepresented in formal IRD-activities. Organizations from the global north are widely perceived as the central hubs of IRD-infrastructure. Buddhist and Hindu activities in IRD are under-represented on the international arena. To overcome these biases will be one of the most urgent medium-term issues for those active in interreligious dialogue.

   It is, therefore, our third recommendation to use the insights that have emerged from the historical vignettes of this book to increase further under-

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United States of America, see the following link within the website of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University: http://pluralism.org/casestudy/selected-case-studies/ (accessed: 24.5.2020). **22** This call for greater inclusion, in terms of both women and indigenous traditions (often referred to as 'First Nations' in Canada) was taken up by the latest Parliament of the World's Religions, which took place in Toronto, Canada (1–7 November, 2018).

standing that awareness about these challenges of inclusiveness are not recent in the IRD movement, and while changes have sometimes been slow in addressing the dominant patriarchy in many traditional religious institutions, it is clear that many IRD organizations have taken a lead towards greater inclusiveness in a variety of ways that are part of promoting sustainable positive peace. This might have repercussions on the religious traditions as well as the wider field of state- and NGO-activities around the world.

3.4 Enhance inter-organisational Cooperation

A fourth challenge, somewhat related to the preceding one in the form of social class inclusiveness, has been identified in many chapters under the topic of 'financial resources'. Almost all the present case studies include stories about significant lack of monetary resources to carry out, at one time or another, the IRD activities as envisioned by each IRD organization.[23] Here, the distinction between 'public activism' and 'formal representation' is of particular significance, in as far as it stands for a particular type of access to economic resources – especially in the case of various efforts at decolonializing parts of the IRD movement.[24]

In this respect, our fourth recommendation is that this recurring financial challenge can best be addressed through inter-organizational cooperation that seeks to first clarify the strengths and uniqueness of each IRD organization in order to then understand better their complementarity and respective comparative advantage. Once this is done, it then becomes possible to imagine a number of ways inter-IRD organizational collaboration may lead to funding key collective activities that would benefit the image and impact of the IRD movement as a whole, thus increasing outside positive perceptions about the importance of IRD for world peace. Such improvement in the general perception about IRD might, in turn, open up new avenues for funding more impactful IRD activities.

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23 See also Bud Heckman, "Funding for the Interfaith Movement," in *The Interfaith Observer* (15 May, 2014): http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2014/5/15/funding-for-the-in terfaith-movement.html (accessed: 24.5.2020). In addition: Paul Hedges, "Setting the Scene: Interrreligious Dialogue in Plural Societies," in *Commentary in Interreligous Dialogue* (Singapore: RSIS Commentary, 2018): https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/co16222-setting-the-scene-interreligious-dialogue-in-plural-societies/#.XOuKBa35xsM (accessed: 24.5.2020).
24 See: Teresa Crist; *Decolonizing Interfaith: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Operative Assumptions and Categories of Interfaith Interaction* (Denver, CO: PhD-dissertation Iliff School of Theology at the University of Denver, 2017).

3.5 Undertake longitudinal Research

A fifth challenge comes with the organizational change from a focus on IRD events to IRD programmes. While this transformation has opened up new salutary avenues of funding, it has also made IRD organizations more dependent on increasing expectations that good practices in monitoring and evaluation must accompany programmatic development of any kind. Recently, a few manuals to train IRD actors in this direction have been published.[25] It marks a watershed new departure in making publically available a tool that can significantly improve the quality of IRD programmes so that they can eventually be evaluated better as to their real impact on the ground.

These developments are essential to work towards a more long-term commitment to dialogue around the world. They are, however, confronted with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, they are necessary to attract new or consolidate existing sources of funding. On the other hand, most IRD initiatives are not in the position to adequately support such a medium- or long-term commitment.

Our fifth recommendation is therefore that academics and IRD actors on the ground work together to develop case studies and longitudinal research, from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, on the impact of IRD activities and programmes.[26] The results of such studies will undoubtedly enable improvements in IRD programmes. It will hopefully also allow for a consolidation of the IRD movement so as to make all IRD organizations more effective and impactful in the long term, in terms of their own respective mission as well as those elements they share with other IRD organizations across the IRD movement worldwide.

We hope that this concluding chapter has helped the reader understand that from the unique learnings emerging from each case study included in this book emerges a broader picture of a dynamic modern IRD movement, even though the

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25 These include manuals to train the KAICIID Dialogue Fellows, as well as those to promote capacity-building in IRD for Peace and Reconciliation adapted to Nigeria, CAR, and Myanmar. Another manual has been produced that includes how to use IRD in Social Media, both in English and Arabic. In addition, a manual has been jointly produced in 2017 by the International Dialogue Centre and the World Organisation of Scouts Movement (WOSM). https://www.scout.org/node/428031 (accessed: 24.5.2020).

26 The best recent example is the development, funded by Gerald and Henrietta Rauenhorst (GHR) Foundation, of the manual: Peter Woodrow, Nick Oatley, and Michelle Garred. "Faith Matters: A Guide for the Design, Monitoring & Evaluation of Inter-Religious Peacebuilding." CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and Alliance for Peacebuilding, September 2017. https://www.dmeforpeace.org/resource/faith-matters-guide-design-monitoring-evaluation-inter-religious-action-peacebuilding/ (accessed: 24.5.2020).

scope of those case studies does not reflect the complexity of the rapid growth in IRD organizations in the last two decades or so, especially at the local and national levels. What our collective comparison has allowed us to do, though, is to present a few trends that can respectfully paint the broad strokes for a general picture of the modern IRD movement. Of course, more strokes can be added at a later stage with the addition of many more case studies. But suffice it to say for the moment that our concluding analysis hopefully provides not only conceptual tools to understand better the emergence and many current challenges of the IRD movement, especially through some of its main organizational development over the last century, but also useful recommendations for all IRD actors and stakeholders at large.

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List of Authors

María Bargo, M.A. (Universidad Nacional de San Martín): María Bargo has a degree in Anthropology and is doing her PhD thesis about the link that Catholicism establishes with poverty in Argentina and focusing on the actions the respective actors take in order to solve this issue. She studies at the IDEAS (Instituto de Altos Estudios Sociales) of the UNSAM (Universidad Nacional de San Martín) – where she is also working as a teacher with a doctoral scholarship provided by CONICET (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas). Contact information: merybargo@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Patrice Brodeur (University of Montreal): Patrice Brodeur is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Religious Studies at the University of Montreal, as well as Senior Adviser at the KAICIID International Dialogue Centre in Vienna, Austria. He has over 30 years of experience in interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Contact information: patrice.brodeur@kaiciid.org

Josep-Oriol Guinovart-Pedescoll, M.A. (Barcelona University): Josep-Oriol Guinovart-Pedescoll is a linguist and professional translator and interpreter of Japanese and English based in Japan. He holds an MA in Cultural and Linguistic Studies (Kansai Gaidai University, Japan) and is currently finishing a Master's in Business and Culture in East Asia (Barcelona University, Spain). His research interests focus in Modern Japanese Culture and Sociology and late 20th century Japanese Literature. Contact information: joguinovart@gmail.com

Dr. Evgeny Khamidov (Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan): Evgeny Khamidov is a graduate of a postgraduate school at the Institute of History named after Sh. Marjani of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (Russia) and currently in the process of obtaining a research doctorate. He is a lecturer at the Department of Oriental and Islamic Studies of the Institute of International relations, History and Oriental Studies (Kazan Federal University). His main research interests include Sufism among Tatars, Islam in Volga region, Sufism and Modern Islam, Interfaith dialogue. Also, Khamidov is a participant of the IIIT European Summer School. He is the author of two Arabic language workbooks: "The story of the beautiful Souad" as well as "Translation Practice from Arabic to Russian. Science, Geography, Linguistics. Part I". Contact information: evgeniy.khamidov@kpfu.ru

Mag. Phil. Verena E. Kozmann (University of Vienna): Verena E. Kozmann is a PhD candidate at the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Vienna, specializing in medical anthropology. Her doctoral research, was executed in affiliation with the University of Toronto (2017–2018). In 2014/2015 she was a Visiting Assistant in Research at Yale University and an adjunct faculty at Trinity College, CT. Her current research interests include anthropology of the body, applied medical ethics, women's health, immigration, and medical technologies in North America, Western Europe, and the Middle East. Contact information: verena.kozmann@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Karsten Lehmann (Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien / Krems): Karsten Lehmann is a Sociologist as well as a Scholar of Religion, presently working as a Research Professor at the Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien / Krems. He holds an MA in Religious

Studies from Lancaster University / Great Britain, a PhD in Sociology from Tübingen University / Germany as well as Post-Doctoral Degree from the University of Bayreuth / Germany. His fields of interest cover: Method and Theory in the Study of Religion, Migration and Religious Plurality, Religion in International Politics as well as the empirical analysis of Interreligious Dialogue-activities. Contact information: karsten.lehmann@kphvie.ac.at

Mag. Dr. Rebecca Loder-Neuhold, MA (Uppsala University): Rebecca Loder-Neuhold studied History and Religious Studies at University of Graz (Austria) as well as Exhibition and Museum Design at University of Applied Sciences JOANNEUM Graz (Austria). The ERASMUS programme allowed her to study at Uppsala University (Sweden), mainly at the Hugo Valentin Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, as well as to complete a ERASMUS internship at the Werkbundarchiv – Museum der Dinge Berlin (Germany). She worked as a diploma assistant at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). From 2014 to 2020 Rebecca Loder-Neuhold held a doctoral position at Uppsala University (Sweden). She defended her PhD thesis "Crocodiles, Masks and Madonnas: Catholic Mission Museums in German-Speaking Europe" in 2019. Contact information: rebecca@lodernet.com

Dr. Maryam Mouzzouri (University of Sorbonne): Maryam Mouzzouri is doctor associate at GSRL-CNRS / EPHE-PSL in Sociology. She works on religions in international relations. More precisely she focuses her attention on the relationship between religious actors and international organizations such as Unesco and the Council of Europe. Contact information: maryam.mouzzouri@etu.ephe.psl.eu

Minjung Noh, M.A. (Temple University): Minjung Noh is a doctoral candidate of Religion at Temple University. Her interdisciplinary research concerns transnational Korean evangelical Christianity and its gendered missions in the North America, including the United States and Haiti. Contact information: ilfautvivre@gmail.com

Jana Philippa Parenti, M.A. (University of Hamburg): Jana Parenti is a doctoral candidate at the Academy of World Religions at the University of Hamburg. Her dissertation focuses on contracts between the state and religious communities in Hamburg as well as their impact on Dialogical Religious Education public schools. Her current research interests are Religion-State Relations and Religious Education. Contact information: jana.parenti@gmail.com

Semiramis Rodríguez, M.A. (International University of the Rioja): Semiramis is a Summa Cum Laude Anthropology graduate of the Central University of Venezuela. Her graduate thesis "Study of the Cognitive Construction of Prejudice: Exploration of the Santero Category among Santeria Practitioners", accomplished the honorific mention for the highest grade. She is currently working to obtain her master's degree in Digital Marketing with a specialization in Neuromarketing at UNIR. Contact information: semi.rv3@gmail.com

Sana Saeed, M.A. (University of Pennsylvania): Currently, Saeed is the Associate Director and Associate Chaplain for the Office of the Chaplain and the Spiritual and Religious Life Center at the University of Pennsylvania. Saeed graduated in May 2018 with her third graduate degree, a Masters of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School (HDS). Saeed has eleven years of work experience working with youth development, religious discrimination and interfaith dialogue, youth leadership and conflict resolution with organizations including the Interfaith Alli-

ance and International Organization for Migration (IOM). From 2013–2014 Saeed lived in Tokyo, Japan and Yangon, Myanmar as a Rotary Peace Fellow documenting ethno-religious tensions and discrimination between Burmese Muslims and Buddhists, which was published in 2016 in the book, Practical Approaches to Peacebuilding: Putting Theory to Work. Contact information: ssaeed01@gmail.com

Sara Singha, PhD (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs): Sara Singha has a PhD in Comparative Religion (Islam and Christianity) from Georgetown University. In her writing, she focuses on Christian minorities in Pakistan and low-caste Muslim communities in India. Her research interests include politics of marginalization, Subaltern Studies, and Dalit Studies. Contact information: singha.sara8@gmail.com

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