

TOWARDS  
a  
GLOBAL CONGRESS  
of  
WORLD RELIGIONS

*Sponsored by*  
Unification Theological Seminary

*Edited by*  
Warren Lewis

TOWARDS  
A GLOBAL CONGRESS OF  
WORLD RELIGIONS

Conference Proceedings at:  
Boston

*Sponsored by*  
Unification Theological Seminary

*Edited by*  
Warren Lewis

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARK

With this small volume, we continue the history and add to the documentation of an international, interreligious movement, *Towards a Global Congress of World Religions*.\*

The proposal to convene a Global Congress was announced by the Unification Theological Seminary at a conference held just following the sixth annual International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS) in San Francisco, 1977. The history of this interest in a Global Congress is briefly sketched in the introductory remarks to the proceedings of that first Conference, published in 1978, which include as well proceedings of conferences concerning African autochthonous religions held in Barrytown, New York, and Bristol, England. The present volume presents the proceedings of the second Conference, held in Boston, 1978. The third annual Conference is to be held in Los Angeles, in 1979; and the fourth and possibly the last is already being planned to follow the ninth ICUS, scheduled for Seoul, Korea, 1980. It will be the *last*, for, we hope, the Global Congress itself shall, by that time, have become a reality.

The Boston Conference was held on Sunday afternoon and Monday morning following Thanksgiving, 1978, after the close of the seventh ICUS. Approximately one hundred fifty persons attended the first session, and approximately eighty-five stayed on for the second. The first two speakers, Francis Botchway of Ghana and the University of Cincinnati and Ali Mazrui of Kenya and the University of Michigan, continued a previous interest of the Conference in Africa and African religions.

Mazrui, in a swift and pointed overview of Islamic cultural impact, enlarged the perceptions of the audience regarding the mutual influence of African autochthonous religions, sub-Saharan indigenized Islam and Christianity. He suggested the arresting idea of Africa as the religious common ground between East and West, and thus re-confirmed the sense of religious Africa as an equal and potent partner among the world's faiths.

\*See *Towards a Global Congress of World Religions*, ed. Warren Lewis, Barrytown, N. Y.: Distributed by the Rose of Sharon Press, 1978, pp. vii-viii.

Botchway reported the progress of his efforts to establish an African Institute for the Study of Humanistic Values. His co-visionary in this dream, who was also present, is Kwame Gyekye, of the University of Ghana. Were an Institute of this nature to be founded, it could, in addition to serving its own primary intentions, provide the focus and platform in Africa for Global Congress-related activities.

The Monday session was devoted to discussion of the history of interreligious activity in general and Gandhi's contribution in particular. Marcus Braybrooke, Rector of Swainswick, chief administrator of the English World Congress of Faiths, and editor of its journal, *World Faiths*, discussed the less than one-hundred-year-old attempt to foster interfaith dialogue and cooperation among the world's religions. Drawing on his own, unique history of interfaith dialogue,\* he selected two outstanding examples: the World Congress of Faiths, founded by Sir Francis Younghusband in 1936, and the World Conference for Religion and Peace, headed by Dr. Homer Jack at the United Nations. Braybrooke soberly described this history, fraught with as much failure as crowned with success, and hopeful, nevertheless, suggested ways to go in the future in the founding of the Global Congress.

K.L. Seshagiri Rao, of India and the University of Virginia, editor of *Insight*, a journal published by the Temple of Understanding, discussed Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to interreligious toleration and his religious vision and practice of non-violence. Rao showed how political impact and social relevance were immediately forthcoming from Gandhi's religious perspective. Gandhi pursued his religious vision with singleness of heart, never allowing it to become a tool of political activism.

During the discussion periods, the Conference audience were the main speakers. They affirmed again and again approval of the idea of a Global Congress, providing it could be designed as an effective means of further hominization of the world and not "just another conference." Their concern was evident for bringing the resource of the religions in Congress to bear on illuminating and resolving pervasive human problems. One nuclear physicist kept telling us to look above, to the Holy Spirit, for leading.

A number of issues for further consideration were raised.

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\* Marcus Braybrooke, *Interfaith Organizations: A Selective Review of Their Aims, History and Achievements from 1893 to 1976*, Toronto and New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1979.

Among these, Seshagiri Rao suggested, and it was generally agreed, that the name of our undertaking should be slightly modified. Instead of Global Congress of "World Religions," he proposed that we say "of the World's Religions." A decision on this proposed amendment will probably be made by the Committee for the Global Congress when it meets for the first time during the Los Angeles Conference.

The other most significant issue explored in Boston is the formation and function of this planning group, the international, interreligious Committee for the Global Congress, which has now been gathered to take the responsibility for organizing and hosting the next concrete steps towards establishing the Global Congress. The names of the Committee members are to be announced at the Los Angeles Conference. The Committee comprises individuals noted for their active part in interreligious dialogue and collaboration.

In response to a concern of the Conference, persons of acknowledged individuality have been sought in order to insure a posture of independence for the Committee and the Global Congress. Final decisions regarding preliminary policy and the agenda of the first Global Congress lie solely with the Committee for the Global Congress, and not with any supporter of the Global Congress, whether the Unification Theological Seminary or any other. Marcus Braybrooke's discussion of the history of interfaith activity made clear the necessity of the widest possible base of sponsorship and greatest plurality of leadership, keeping the Global Congress free from the slightest hint of partisan influence. In complete agreement with this development, the Unification Theological Seminary has freely relinquished any institutional claims it might have had to control of plans either for the "Conference of the Groups" or the Global Congress itself. The Seminary reaffirms its support of the Committee for a Global Congress, invites others to share in this support, and is prepared to cooperate fully in the direction taken by the Committee.

Plans are now growing for a Conference of the dozens of common-interest organizations around the world involved in interreligious dialogue and cooperation. Invitation to the Conference of the Groups will be extended by the Committee for the Global Congress to dialogue groups, academic societies, peace organizations, health and food groups, and any others whose activities relate to the wholeness of the human family somehow on the base of the world's many faiths. The purpose of the Conference of the Groups is to afford the many similar bodies an opportunity to

communicate directly with one another concerning their work, their ideologies, and their history, as well as to allow them to explore the possibility of closer and greater collaboration. The Committee for a Global Congress expects to be able to announce the first convocation of the Global Congress on this broader foundation of the original bodies of interreligious action worldwide. The Conference of Groups will most likely take place in 1980.

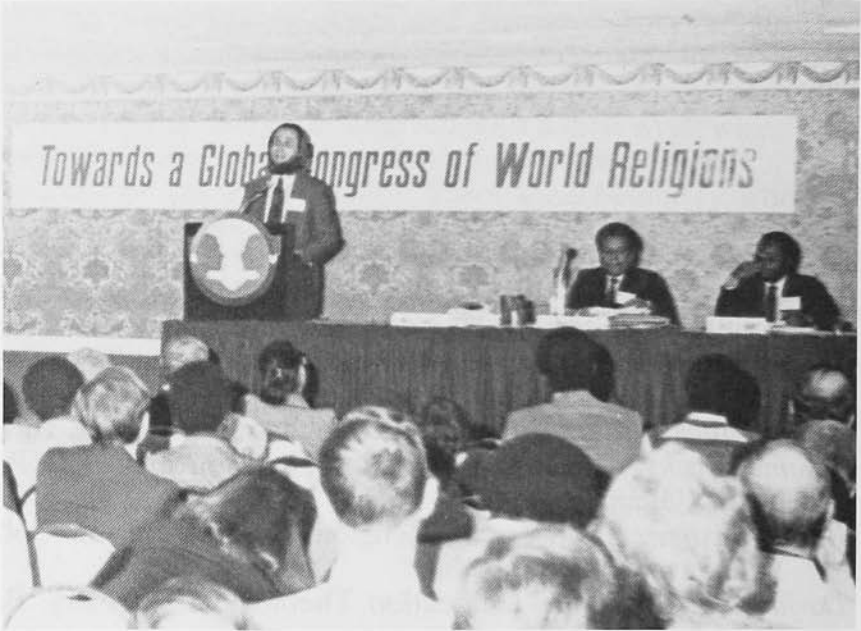
We, the faculty of Unification Theological Seminary, who are responsible for the publication of these Conference proceedings, invite you as a reader of this book to correspond with us and with the Committee for a Global Congress concerning the proposal discussed within these pages. We dedicate these published proceedings to Judith Hollister and her many colleagues at the Temple of Understanding.

Warren Lewis  
for the Faculty  
Unification Theological Seminary  
Barrytown, New York  
Thanksgiving, 1979

## LIST OF SPEAKERS

- Francis Botchway*, Professor of Black and African Studies, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Oh.
- Marcus Braybrooke*, General Director, World Congress of Faiths, Younghusband House, London, England
- Shawn Byrne*, staff member of The National Council for Church and Social Action, New York, N.Y.
- Kasim Gulek*, former Prime Minister of Turkey, Ankara, Turkey
- Kwame Gyekye*, Professor of Philosophy, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
- Irving Hexham*, Professor of Religious Studies, Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., Canada
- David Kim*, President, Unification Theological Seminary, Barrytown, N.Y.
- Myrtle Langley*, Head of Department of Practical Theology and Missiology, Trinity College, Bristol, England
- Ali Mazrui*, Professor of Political Science and Director, Center for Afro-American and African Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mi.
- William Minor*, Director, The Foundation for Creative Philosophy, Inc., Carbonbale, Il.
- Guerin Montilus*, Assistant Professor of Humanities, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mi.
- Robert Moon*, Professor at Large, Physics Department, University of Chicago, Chicago, Il.
- A. J. Ohin*, Medical doctor and Professor of Medicine at the University of Benin, Lome, Togo
- K.L.S. Rao*, Professor of Comparative Religions, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.
- Osborn Scott*, Professor of Black Studies, The City College of New York, New York, N.Y.
- Karifa Smart*, Medical Director, Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Care Center, Roxbury, Ma.
- Jack Waardenburg*, Professor of Phenomenology of Religion and Islamic Studies, Rijksuniversitet, Utrecht, Netherlands.

## BOSTON



Warren Lewis introduces Ali Mazrui and Francis Botchway.



Marcus Braybrooke discussing the history of interfaith movements.



## CONFERENCE



K.L.S. Rao explains Gandhi's contribution.



Speakers respond to a presentation.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE TOWARDS A  
GLOBAL CONGRESS OF WORLD RELIGIONS

Sunday Afternoon Session

TOWARDS A NEW INTERNATIONAL  
RELIGIOUS ORDER: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Ali Mazrui

Kwame Nkrumah once described the African conscience in terms of three strands of moral thought. There was first the traditional heritage of Africa indigenously drawn; there was secondly the impact of Islam; there was thirdly what Nkrumah called 'Euro-Christian influences.' Faced with these three strands of moral thought, contemporary Africa had to find not only a compromise among them, but a synthesis of all three. In the words of Nkrumah:

"Our society is not the old society but a new society enlarged by Islamic and Euro-Christian influences. A new ideology is therefore required, an ideology which can solidify in a philosophical statement, but at the same time an ideology which will not abandon the original human principles of Africa. Such a philosophical statement will be born out of the crisis of the African conscience confronted with the three strands of present African society. Such a philosophical statement I propose to name *philosophical consciencism*, for it will give the theoretical basis for an ideology whose aims shall be to contain the African experience of Islamic and Euro-Christian presence as well as the experience of traditional African society, and, by gestation, employ them for the harmonious growth and development of that society."<sup>1</sup>

But until one day when such a cultural synthesis takes place, the relations between Islam and Christianity are likely to remain basically competitive. The rivalry is partly a continuation of their past history, and partly a logical consequence of the fact that both religions are ambitious enough to want to convert the whole world to their own view of ultimate reality.

Let us first look at the historical background of this interaction between Islam and Christianity before we examine the implications of that interaction for Africa's relations with the Arab world in the present age.



## THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For much of Africa, Christianity is a relatively recent phenomenon. Black Americans, for example, have been Christians for much longer than have the bulk of the African peoples. But there is one major African exception. That is Ethiopia. Ethiopia has been Christian since approximately the fourth century A.D.

Islam came to North Africa in the seventh century, in the first wave of Arab expansion. Egypt at that time was Christian, and was part of the empire of Byzantium. The Arabs captured Egypt and, after many centuries, passed on not only their religion to the Egyptians, but also their language and even the sense of being Arab. The Egyptians began to feel themselves and to see themselves as Arabs. Today there are many more Arabs in Africa than outside Africa. The bulk of the Arab world is now within the African continent.

North Africa on the whole became substantially Islamized and Arabized from the seventh century onward. A substantial part of West Africa also became Islamized but not Arabized. Islam in East Africa spread more slowly.

The Muslim world as a whole passed through a period of glorious eclecticism, receiving from different sources a variety of different stimuli. The Arabs translated from the Greeks important areas of the scholarship of the period. The Arabs assimilated from the Persians their arts and architecture. They borrowed from the Indians in mathematics and were also influenced by them linguistically. They absorbed from the ancient Egyptians astronomy. And they combined them all to innovate in important areas of scholarship and science. Astronomy, mathematics, the nautical sciences reached new levels under the Islamic impact. The invention of the zero and the beginnings of the metric system were witnessed in this period. The words that are borrowed from Arabic today in the English language include algebra, average, amalgam, atlas, cipher, chemistry, zenith, tariff, and a variety of other words signifying an earlier Islamic impact on the history of science.

West Africa experienced quite early some penetration from North Africa and from the Iberian Peninsula. The University of Timbuktu in West Africa became well known in the rest of the Muslim world as a serious center of scientific study and a place where different branches of scholarship were discussed and analyzed. In the words of one Senegalese historian, Cheik Anta Diop:

“Aristotle was commented upon regularly in Timbuktu and the trivium and quadrivium were known, as one does not go without the other. Almost all scholars were experienced in Aristotelian dialectics and the commentaries of former logic.”<sup>2</sup>

The West Africans built hostels of their own in other Islamic centers of learning and sent people there. In return they also received students from those areas. In East Africa there was the growth of Swahili civilization which again constituted a meeting point between Islam and African culture.

Later on, science in Islam began to decline. There were a variety of reasons for that. Among them was political factionalism in the Islamic world and the destruction of the kind of motivation which had led to the initial thrust towards experimentation and scholarship.

Then there was the growth of greater orthodoxy and conservatism. As an aspect of this orthodoxy there was the tendency to argue from authority, to cite one's authority and quote from major scholars of the past as if they were undisputed sources of knowledge. This trend discouraged innovation, reduced dissent, and sanctified what had been arrived at previously as the last word on a given subject. This was fatal for science since it reduced the impetus for new research and numbed the imperative of verification.

The triumph of the Ottoman Empire and the decline of the Arabs led to a partial specialization in the arts of war and of military endeavor. This also discouraged the wider areas of science. By concentrating on military science the Ottomans stagnated in that science as well. With Islam it was science rather than technology that accompanied its moment of glory.

In the case of Christianity, on the other hand, it was *applied* science, *technology*, that became a major factor behind the expansion of Christian civilization.

Christianity did not rise with pure science. On the contrary, the rise of science led to the decline of Christianity in Europe. But the rise of European technology led to the expansion of Christianity abroad. Why did the rise of science lead to the decline of Christianity at home? The Renaissance and the Enlightenment in Europe led to new forms of skepticism, certain areas of secularism. The hold of the churches on opinions within Western Europe began to loosen. On the other hand, the rise of European technology, of *applied* science, strengthened Europe's own capability and its capacity to

conquer others. Europe's industrial revolution resulted in the partial Europeanization of the rest of the world.

The technology of Europe led to the colonization of Africa, and of parts of Asia. With the colonization of Africa came the partial Christianization of the Black races. In fact, today *Christianity is an Afro-Western religion* in a very fundamental sense. Almost all Christian nations are either Western nations or African nations. Asia is full of millions of Christian *individuals*, but it does not have Christian nations except perhaps in the Philippines. Most Asian countries have Christians as minorities. But within Africa there are countries with Christians in effective control or on their way towards becoming the majority of the population. In that sense you might describe Christianity as an Afro-Western religion.

*Islam is an Afro-Asian religion.* Almost all Islamic nations are either African or Asian. There are some Muslims in Europe, especially Eastern Europe, including places like Yugoslavia and parts of the Soviet Union. But on balance, Islamic nations are nations of either the African continent or the Asian continent, whereas Christian nations are nations of either the Western world or the African continent.

What the two religions have in common geographically is perhaps the African continent itself, where Muslim nations and Christian nations operate in joint institutions of collaboration, and where considerable missionary work and proselytization continues to be undertaken on a scale greater than almost anywhere else in the world.

European technology had other consequences, too, including its effect on the slave trade. European technology, when it was more modest, encouraged the slave trade. Europeans raided Africa for human beings and exported them by the millions. But when European technology became more sophisticated, that technology itself was in opposition to slavery. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, European capitalist technology was becoming hostile to slavery as a mode of production. The major nations in favor of abolition were precisely the most industrially developed and most capitalistic. Britain's leadership in the abolition first of the slave trade, and later of slavery itself, was undertaken at a time when British technology was the most sophisticated of its kind. British capitalism had attained new levels of sophistication. Capitalist production had first started as hospitable and congenial to slavery. It later became hostile to slavery.

Similarly in the United States it was the northern states of

greater industrialism and more sophisticated capitalism which developed abolitionist tendencies in their ideologies while the south, which in some ways was almost pre-capitalist, continued to be attached to the notion of slave labor.

In the case of the Arabs in Eastern Africa, they engaged in slave trade on a smaller scale, partly because they did not have huge, fertile areas in the Arabian peninsula for plantation. Arab technology was for a while backward enough to be still congenial to slavery. It was thus possible for the European imperial powers to move towards suppressing the Arab slave trade in Eastern Africa, and then use that as the moral legitimization for their own colonization of East Africa.

Islam, meanwhile, was declining. The prestige of Christianity rose higher because of the triumphs of Europe. The missionaries came to the Afro-Asian world, and certainly to Africa. They established new arenas of conversion, consolidated new centers of the Christian faith and started major extension of the concept of Christendom itself. Islam under the Ottoman Empire continued to go further and further down in prestige and influence. The Ottoman Empire as the sick man of Europe stumbled into the twentieth century. The Ottomans were finally defeated after World War I, and Islam went into even further decline.

For a while after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire the leadership of the Muslim world was uncertain. There did not seem to be any caliph or any globally recognized imam. Was Muslim leadership going to return to the Arabs after centuries of Turkish initiative?

Some of the Arab royal houses—especially the Hashemites—made a strong bid for a re-Arabization of Islamic leadership. But they themselves were still strongly under Western influence. Islam seemed to have become a creed of dependency, a community still under the shadow of Christian power.

#### THE RISE OF OIL POWER

But a new question has now arisen. To be leader of the Muslim world is one issue; to be leader of the whole of the Third World is quite another. Would oil power not only re-Arabize Islam but give the Arabs leadership in the Third World as a whole? There was a time when leadership of the Third World was in fact held by India. India under Jawaharlal Nehru virtually invented the concept of non-alignment. Nehru managed to arouse enthusiasm for the con-

cept among some of the other Asian countries, among the Arabs, and then among the newly liberated African states. For a while the Third World as a whole was under the active intellectual leadership of Pandit Nehru.

Nehru died in 1964. India by that time was already in diplomatic decline. One big question which arose was who was going to lead the Third World next.

The People's Republic of China—though on its way towards becoming a super-power—is still widely accepted as a partner in Third World struggles. Was China going to capture the leadership of the developing world as a whole? Her credentials were strong. She was still excluded from the United Nations, but she was already active in global politics.

For a while it seemed almost logical that the mantle of Third World leadership should pass from India to China. After all, these two were the largest countries on earth—and they were both committed to the anti-imperialist struggle.

Until 1970 the Arabs did have Nasser—but he had been defeated even more decisively by Israel in 1967 than India had been defeated by China in 1962. The credentials of the Arabs for Third World leadership seemed rather modest by comparison with China's credentials.

Suddenly things began to change from 1973 onwards. If China thought that power resided in *the barrel of a gun*, the Arabs discovered that power could also reside in *a barrel of oil*. The application of the Arab oil boycott against the United States in the course of the Middle East October War revealed new potentialities of political leverage.

Since 1973 there has been emerging an Arab leadership within the Third World. Major diplomatic initiatives since that year on a wide range of issues relevant to the Third World have in fact originated from the Arabs. Countries of the Third World are producers of raw materials and other primary commodities. The whole struggle for a new international economic order has to some extent been led by the Arabs. Third World causes are being championed by some Arab countries and are being pushed by them into main arenas of international discourse. Algeria virtually initiated the raw materials debate at the United Nations in 1974. This was followed by the Special Session of the General Assembly in 1975. We are witnessing the beginning of serious consideration of the issue of restructuring the world economy. The diplomatic triumph of the Palestinian cause, as symbolized by the arrival of



Yasir Arafat (leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization) in the U.N. General Assembly in 1974, was again the result of substantial effort by the Arab world to give this particular movement the kind of global legitimacy which had eluded it since the 1940s. The chairmanship of Algeria in the General Assembly in 1974 was a factor behind that particular triumph of the Palestinian cause.

As a *quid pro quo* within the same session of the General Assembly there was, to the fury of much of the Western world, the suspension of South Africa from that particular session of the U.N. General Assembly. With the United States reacting with cries of the "tyranny of the majority" in the General Assembly, there was, in the very complaint, the beginning of the genuine independence of the United Nations. For much of its life the world body had been substantially under the United States and was often an extension of the United States' diplomatic leverage.

After 1973, evidence of increasing autonomy of the General Assembly under Afro-Asian initiative, instigated usually by Arab states, created a picture of genuine independence for the world body. Then there was a debate in December 1973 about a Charter of Economic Rights and Obligations. The Charter was discussed in the General Assembly in December 1974 and adopted. Certain aspects of the Charter virtually asserted that nationalization without compensation was legitimate in certain circumstances. Again the Western world was horrified by this assertion and by this whole militant trend within the United Nations.

Then there has been the controversy about linking energy to raw materials in a conference on the world economy. The United States wanted the conference to be purely between the oil producers and oil consumers. It was substantially an Arab initiative that the idea of linking energy to other products of the Third World became a major stumbling block at the first preparatory meeting early in 1975 in Paris. At that time it was impossible to arrive at an acceptable agenda for the international meeting because the Western powers remained adamant in wanting international discussion to take into account other Third World needs. What we have been witnessing is a relatively radicalized and sensitized Arab world on major issues of relevance to the Third World as a whole. For the time being, leadership is still exercised by the Arab world for the Third World as a whole.

It is unlikely that Arab leadership of the Third World will be permanent, but for the time being it is there and that might itself be one of the most significant events of the century.

The Palestine question has had a lot to do with the Arab desire to identify with the rest of the Third World. It is possible that this Arab concern for political allies on the specific dispute over Israel had the effect of substantially broadening the political horizons of the Arab world. Once a people need political allies they gradually begin to identify with areas that might otherwise have been regarded as irrelevant to them. So in fact the Palestine question, as a background factor in the history of the Middle East, has been:

- (a) part of the process of radicalizing even the conservative regimes in the Arab world;
- (b) part of the process of internationalizing the horizons of Arab leaders as they have sought to mobilize international and global support on the Middle Eastern issue.

#### OPEC AS A MUSLIM ORGANIZATION

Linked to all these developments is the link between the political resurrection of Islam and the rise of the Arab world. Underlying the rise of the Arab world is the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its entry into the mainstream of economic diplomacy.

OPEC in composition is an overwhelmingly Muslim institution. The largest oil exporting country, as we know, is Saudi Arabia, the custodian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and one of the most fundamentalist of the Muslim countries on the world scene today. The second largest oil exporting country is Iran, another major Muslim country, perhaps with potentialities for considerable expansion as an influential power in world politics. If you regard Indonesia as the most populous Muslim country after the collapse of old Pakistan, then Indonesia as a member of OPEC is also part of the Islamic composition of OPEC.

Fourthly, there are the Gulf States. Most of them are very small, but precisely because they are small and have enormous financial resources, they have surpluses capable of being mobilized for political and economic projects in different parts of the world.

The Black African members of OPEC at the moment are Nigeria and Gabon. In the case of Gabon we have as leader a convert to Islam (President Omar Bongo). In the case of Nigeria we have an African country which best encompasses within itself the three parts of the soul of Africa—the indigenous, the Euro-Christian and the Islamic. All three forces are strong in Nigeria. What is

more, the Islamic factor has been growing in national influence since independence.

If you look at OPEC as a whole you can say that it is at least two-thirds "Islamic." Thus the emergence of OPEC and petroleum on the world scene signify the beginning of the political resurrection of Islam.

A related issue is the nature of the regimes that are in power in those resource-rich Muslim countries. It just so happens that the country with the largest known reserves, Saudi Arabia, is also the most Islamic in tradition. And it also so happens that Iran has a post-monarchical system in a conservative Irani-Islamic context. On the Arabian (Persian) Gulf there are also traditionalist rulers. There is a tendency to regard this as a cost in the equation. But it is possible to examine it as a benefit in global terms. The influence within OPEC does not lie merely in westernized or relatively secular Muslim countries like Algeria. It lies even more among countries whose Islam has been less diluted by westernism.

From the point of view of the Muslim world as a whole there is now a dialectic between the underpopulated but very rich and Islamically traditionalist countries on one side and more populous, more secular and less endowed Muslim countries on the other. A dialectic between resource-poor populations on one side and resource-rich traditionalists on the other could change the balance between the forces of secularism and the forces of traditionalism in the years ahead.

The Palestinian question in this domain again has been a catalyst of radicalization. The idea of Saudi Arabia applying the oil weapon against the United States would have been inconceivable without an issue like Palestine and Jerusalem. So again a traditionalist country, very highly pro-western, could, under the stress of war and of anxiety over the future of the Palestinian question, be prepared to invoke a political weapon which would not have been readily invoked by such a regime in other circumstances. Palestine is part of the petro-jihad.

In looking at the political resurrection of Islam one must therefore once again add the Palestinian factor as part of the totality of the picture.

It happens that Israel was created in the nick of time. After another ten years, it would have been virtually impossible to create such a state. At the time Israel was created, where was the Third World on the world scene? Mainly under colonialism. Pakistan, India and Burma were just emerging into formal independence;



China was just about to experience a communist revolution; Africa, except for one or two countries, was still under colonial rule, and most of the Arab world was under regimes which were still neo-colonialist in orientation. Decisions were being taken in a world body in New York which was far less representative than it became in the 1960s.

Now imagine a vote to create Israel taken in 1957, the year of Ghana's independence, or in 1960 when seventeen new African states became members of the United Nations. Clearly the pattern of voting by 1960 would have been drastically different than it was in 1947.

Secondly, by 1960 the Soviet Union's original inclination to vote for the creation of Israel would have been changed by the entry of the new participants drawn from the Third World in world politics. By the sixties it would have been impossible for the Soviet Union to support the creation of Israel at the expense of Palestinians. By the 1970s it would have been impossible even for the United States to support the *creation* of Israel, as distinct from its *protection*, at the expense of the Arabs.

Israel managed to be created just in time—in the 1940s soon after the war, with all the atmosphere of that war still lingering, with all the memories of Hitler and the martyrdom of the Jews under him, and in a situation where the Third World was not a factor in the grand design of global policy-making.

Now that Israel exists we have to calculate what that means for the world in the remaining quarter of this century.

It seems to me that there are positive elements in the problem of Palestine from a Third World perspective. The problem has indeed helped to create greater internationalism among the Arabs. One question which now arises is whether, if the Palestine problem were solved tomorrow, the Arabs would become more isolationist. Would there be an Arab retreat, a lack of interest in what happens in Africa or what happens in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Latin America? One scenario before us is, therefore, the self-isolation of the Arab world if the Palestine question is solved and peace is restored in the Middle East.

Another scenario is "*northernization*" of the Arab world; that is to say the Arab world increasingly regarding itself as part of the southern under-developed hemisphere of the world. Again the question before us is whether the solution of the Middle East problem would lead in one of these two directions. Would the Arab world become more isolationist or more northern-oriented in

its preoccupations?

Well, we do not know. We do know that for the time being the fate of Palestine is a factor behind Arab interest in, say, Africa. It is conceivable that without the Middle Eastern crises many Arab countries, not all of them by any means, would have no interest at all in Africa south of the Sahara. Once again the issue of needing allies on major issues of this type leads to Third World solidarity.

As for the future of the Muslim world, there is the apparent Arab rapprochement with Iran which may or may not be significant. It depends upon whether it is lasting or temporary. The solution of the Kurdish question is only one factor. But if it is a lasting one, then the reconciliation between the Arabs and Iran could be one of the most significant developments for the future of Islam in the remaining quarter of this century. The post-Shah regime could strengthen the petro-jihad.

The reconciliation between Bangladesh and Pakistan could also be very significant for the entire Indian sub-continent and therefore for the future of the Third World as a whole.

Thirdly, are we witnessing the reassertion of Turkey after a period of almost total absorption in the Western world? Is there a new form of Ottoman resurgence that might take place? Will the Turks go non-aligned? Is the partial retreat from NATO just tactical or are we witnessing a more fundamental process? If we are witnessing the resurgence of Turkey in the direction of non-alignment, then we are witnessing the reintegration of Turkey into the Third World and its revival as a significant factor in the Muslim World as a whole.

As for Africa's own resurrection, new possibilities arise. Africa's most natural allies consist of the Black Diaspora and the Arab world. Some Arabs are within Africa. So is the bulk of Arab land. Black and Arab states share the Organization of African Unity. This organization and the Arab League have overlapping membership. There are possibilities of exploiting this relationship to the mutual advantage of both peoples.

The Arab oil-producers have already started the strategy of *economic counter-penetration* into the West. It ranges from buying real estate in England to controlling a bank in the United States, from acquiring a considerable share in the Benz complex in West Germany to the possibility of extending a loan to Italy. The whole strategy of recycling petrodollars is pregnant with the possibilities of economic counter-penetration into the West.

As a result the West is at once eager for the petrodollars and

anxious about their long-term consequences for Western economic independence.

The Arab oil-producers are already entering the business of commercial multinationals. One important multinational in Africa is Lonrho. Kuwait has entered it vigorously. There is indeed a risk that the oil-producers might start playing a sub-imperial role in Africa.

But alongside that risk is an opportunity for a new Third World alliance to counter-penetrate the West. Once again economic power and cultural influence might be linked. As we indicated, the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries is heavily Muslim in composition. It includes the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia. The largest oil-exporting country is Saudi Arabia, which also happens to be the custodian of the spiritual capital of Islam, Mecca. The second largest oil-exporter is Iran, an increasingly influential Muslim country in world affairs. Two thirds of the membership of OPEC is Muslim—and that portion constitutes also more than two thirds of OPEC's oil reserves.

We have also pointed out that Nigeria, another member of OPEC, symbolizes the three parts of the soul of modern Africa—the Euro-Christian, the Islamic and the indigenous religious traditions. All three are vigorous and strong in Nigeria—and Islam is already the strongest single rival to westernism there.

The rise of OPEC in world affairs—however transient—may herald the political resurrection of Islam. Before the end of this century, African Muslims will probably outnumber the Arabs and will be making a strong bid for a shared leadership of Islam. It would not be surprising if, within the next decade, black Muslims direct from Africa are seen establishing schools and hospitals in Harlem and preaching Islam to black Americans. The funding for this Islamic *counter-penetration* will probably come from the oil-producers of the Arab world. But since African Islam is distinctive from Arab Islam, and carries considerable indigenous culture within it, Islamic *counter-penetration* into the United States would also be, in part, a process of transmitting African indigenous perspectives as well. Islam, Africanity and Western civilization may thus find new areas of interaction.

But at least as important as Arab money for African cultural entry into the West is the sheer potential of the black American population. It is the second largest black nation in the world (second only to Nigeria) and it is situated in the middle of the richest and mightiest country in the twentieth century. At the

moment, black American influence on America's cultural and intellectual life is much more modest than, say, the influence of Jewish America. But as the poverty of black Americans lessens, its social and political horizons widen, and its intellectual and creative core expands, black American influence on American culture is bound to rise again. And the links between Africa, the Arab world and the Black Diaspora may in turn find new areas of creative convergence.

### IS EURO-CHRISTIANITY UNDER SIEGE?

But meanwhile Christianity, especially in Africa, has been facing new trials, new tests.

In recent years a number of Christian church leaders and missionaries have been killed in Africa in rather violent circumstances. For example, the month of February 1977 witnessed two highly publicized acts of brutality reportedly committed by Africans against churchpersons. First came the news that seven white Roman Catholic missionaries, including four nuns, had been gunned down in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. The sole survivor, Father Dunston Myerscough (65 years old), was convinced that the murderers were nationalist guerrillas.

The second event less than two weeks later was the apparent murder of the Most Rev. Janani Luwum, Anglican Archbishop of Uganda, while in custody under the charge of plotting to overthrow the government of President Idi Amin Dada. Amin's government claimed that the Archbishop and two of Amin's own Cabinet Ministers under a similar charge were killed in a car crash, but most of the world was understandably skeptical.

In the case of the murder of the seven missionaries in Zimbabwe, it was assumed that they died as casualties of a racial war—rather than as martyrs in a religious crusade. But in the case of the Ugandan Archbishop, the world jumped to the conclusion that he was a martyr to his faith as a Christian. Was the world justified in assuming that Archbishop Luwum died for religious reasons?

In contemporary Africa, tensions between religious groups are never purely religious. Religious tensions are usually an aspect of either ideological conflict between militants and moderates (as in parts of Ethiopia), racial conflict between white and black (as in Southern Africa), ethno-cultural conflict between different African "tribes" and communities (as in Uganda), or class conflict between the haves and have-nots (as illustrated in virtually all cases).

Three major civil wars in Africa within the last decade have had a religious dimension. For seventeen years (1955 to 1972) Southern Sudan waged war against the government in Khartoum for reasons which included religious differences between the Muslim North and the *Christian-led* South. (The Southern leaders were indeed mainly Christian, but the majority of their followers were neither Christian nor Muslim. They were still adherents of local ancestral religions of their own communities.)

In the case of the Nigerian civil war (1967-70) the North was identified with Islam while "Biafra" (or the East) was identified with Christianity. In reality the Nigerian civil war was mainly ethnic—but Biafra's public relations machinery successfully created the impression among many Westerners that Ibo Christians were fighting a war in defence of Christianity. In spite of the fact that General Yakubu Gowon, the head of the Federal Government of Nigeria, was a Christian, and much of his support came from other non-Muslims, Biafra brilliantly managed to suggest that a *Jihad* was being waged against the Ibo. Even the Vatican seemed for a while to have bought that version.

The third major civil war with a religious dimension is still under way. This is the struggle by Eritrea to break away from Ethiopia. The majority of Eritreans are Muslim. There are large numbers of Muslims in the rest of Ethiopia as well, but the country has many centuries of Christian theocracy.

The military rulers of Ethiopia since the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie have gone further than their predecessors to concede that Ethiopia is not a purely Christian country. My last visit to Addis Ababa (December 1976) coincided with the Muslim Festival of Idd el Haj. It was being celebrated as a national holiday in the whole of Ethiopia. That would have been inconceivable under the late Emperor.

But while the new military rulers have made concessions to Islam, they have simultaneously cut the Coptic Christian Church in Ethiopia down to size. Indeed, the Marxist-Leninist orientation of the rulers has paradoxically been at once more tolerant of Muslims (outside Eritrea) and more suspicious of Christian church leaders as potential sources of "ideological reaction." Ethiopia is certainly one case where religious tensions are interwoven with the tensions of secular ideology—as well as with the tensions of ethnic separatism in Eritrea.

The class dimension is also persistent all over Africa. Sometimes new military rulers are opposed to older church leaders



partly because the religious leaders once belonged to the political establishment—whereas the soldiers were recruited from some of the poorest strata of the old society. This is certainly true of both Ethiopia and Uganda under Amin. The soldiers in power in both countries are essentially “lumpenmilitariat”—disorganized recruits from sectors of society which were once disadvantaged and often uneducated, and have since become callous and insensitive.

The class dimension has also been relevant in race relations. In southern Africa it has certainly not been easy to determine where race differences end and class distinctions begin. In the words of the late radical black thinker, Frantz Fanon, who is popular among many liberation fighters in southern Africa: “You are rich because you are white—but you are also white because you are rich.” The Japanese, after all, are honorary whites in the Republic of South Africa—they are “white because they are rich.”

But the most perennial problems in Africa may well turn out to be ethnic ones involving Blacks against Blacks. When we therefore hear of a black Archbishop killed, it would be important to investigate not only issues of religion, class and ideology—but also issues of ethnic affiliation and “tribal” origins. Certainly all four factors seemed to be present behind the death of the Archbishop of the Congo (Brazzaville) in March 1976.

As for the Ugandan situation, certainly ethnic factors continue to be very strong. When the news of the Ugandan Archbishop’s death broke, it reminded me of a night in Kampala six years earlier when my wife and I gave refuge to girls who were running away from potential rape by Amin’s soldiers. The girls were either Langi or Acholi. The previous night some soldiers had broken into Mary Stuart Hall at Makerere University, and demanded to be taken to Langi and Acholi girls. On that occasion they did take away two girls, one of whom was saved from a serious fate by the fact that she had her monthly period. The next night Acholi and Langi girls were, of course, terrified and some of them came to our house for refuge. Vice-Chancellor Kalimuzo and I had urgent consultations about the other girls left in Mary Stuart Hall. President Amin agreed to send us his more reliable soldiers to patrol the campus, and keep the military rapists at bay. The situation was indeed eased—but periodic terror continued to be an aspect of the life of every Acholi and every Langi from then on.

When, six years after that night of “rape terror,” Archbishop Luwum was killed, the question sprang to my mind: “Did Luwum die because he was Acholi or because he was Anglican?” If those

Roman Catholic missionaries were casualties of an unfolding racial war in southern Africa, why could not Janani Luwum have been a casualty of continuing *ethnic* strife in Uganda? After all, Cabinet Minister Oryema who was killed with the Archbishop was also an Acholi. Further news seemed to validate ethnic factors rather than religious ones as dominant behind the new atrocities in Uganda. Leading Langi and Acholi, including some at Makerere University, were either rounded up, brutalized, or briefly harrassed. Hundreds of refugees from Langi and Acholi were soon reported to be pouring into Tanzania and Kenya. As for Amin's own statements, they seemed to echo some of the accusations he leveled against the Acholi and the Langi way back in the first week of his assumption of power in Uganda in January 1971.

Yet the All-Africa Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches preferred to turn the latest Ugandan calamity into a religious crusade. The same church organizations had been "discreetly silent" for six years while Amin tortured and butchered other Langi, other Acholi and indeed other Ugandans, both Christian and Muslim. Yet it took the murder of a fellow churchman to arouse the conscience of organized Christianity. With all other professional groups, it might be understandable to sit back until a fellow-professional was killed before being aroused, but with churches such a record was just not good enough. Canon Burgess Carr should have taken a stand against Idi Amin years before Archbishop Luwum met his fate.

But after the churches had been aroused and had been busy "converting" ethnic strife into a religious crusade, there was a danger of their "prophecy" becoming self-fulfilling. Indeed, more people died after the Archbishop. The strife in Uganda could indeed become increasingly religious, as well as ethnic. Christian might turn against Muslim, Catholic against Protestant—as well as Kakwa against Acholi, Bantu against Nilote. The ominous clock of convulsion starts ticking—as the pendulum of sectarian and tribal revenge is set in motion. The history of Uganda both before and since Amin has enough religious as well as ethnic tension to provide a basis for further convulsion. It may be too late to stop the deepening linkages between "tribalism" and sectarianism in Uganda.

But why did Amin turn against the Langi and the Acholi in the first place? Dr. Milton Obote, the man Amin overthrew on January 25, 1971, was from Langi. The largest single group of soldiers in Obote's army was from Acholi. These two northern communities were indeed related linguistically and culturally—and under Obote's

regime, they were relatively united. But there were also jealousies and rivalries between them which could have been exploited by Amin at the beginning had he been astute enough. Indeed, one of my first public criticisms of Amin after his takeover concerned his mishandling of the Acholi. I argued that, with a little astuteness, Amin could have rallied the Acholi behind him and against Milton Obote. I still believe that Amin would have been less afraid of the Langi on their own than he was of an alliance between the Langi and the Acholi. Although the Langi were Obote's own people, they were not as numerous in Obote's army as the Acholi had been. Nor had the Langi enjoyed the same reputation as the Acholi in terms of "warrior skills and military valour." In reality, the Langi were at least as valiant and skillful as anybody else, but the Acholi had more of a "martial reputation" according to precisely the popular mythology which Idi Amin was likely to share. If I and other unofficial advisers had succeeded in time in persuading Amin to rally the Acholi behind him and against Obote, Amin would have felt less insecure about the Langi as well. Both groups might have suffered less precisely by being separated within Amin's fearful imagination. Amin had a phobia about the Acholi. Exactly one year to the day before Amin took power, he had apparently engineered the murder of his own second-in-command within the army, Brigadier Ocoya. On January 25, 1970, Ocoya was murdered with his wife in Gulu, Acholiland, seemingly because he had aroused the ire and suspicion of his superior officer, Idi Amin. Ocoya's murder had disturbed both Langi and Acholi within Obote's army; and Obote was soon to suspect Amin of being implicated in the crime. Obote began to reduce some of Amin's responsibilities—and Amin interpreted this as a prelude either to his own death or at the very least to losing his command and spending years in prison. Amin's homicidal suspicion of Ocoya, and the preponderance of the Acholi in Obote's army, combined with Obote's moves against Amin, all contributed to Amin's persecution complex in fear of a Langi-Acholi alliance. By being scared of their presumed alliance, he brutalized both communities. I still wish we had succeeded in breaking the obstinate linkage between the two groups in Amin's mind. The Most Rev. Janani Luwum might be still alive today. Who knows? However, fearing the Langi-Acholi alliance with such desperation, Amin may well have brought it into being.

But the problems of Uganda are not only a mixture of ethnic and religious factors. They are also a mixture of domestic and external factors, of national and regional variables. This is where



the analogy between Uganda and Lebanon becomes striking. For both countries, part of the problem concerns the issue of where the imperial powers that ruled them decided to draw the boundaries. Lebanon was carved out of Greater Syria partly because the French wanted to create a separate Christian enclave—a kind of “Christian Israel” even before the Jewish Israel came into being. But the carving out of a Christian enclave was somewhat messy—there were still far too many Muslims around in Lebanon. And although the Muslims were at the time a minority, their birthrate was higher than that of the Christians. Since then, the Muslims of Lebanon have caught up with the Christians—and have begun to outnumber them. The boundaries which the French had so carefully drawn for their Christian enclave had provided a setting for sectarian confrontation.

The boundaries which the British drew up in East Africa were similarly messy. The British split up Amin’s tribe, the Kakwa, between Uganda and the Sudan, and helped the Belgians to annex a third portion of Kakwaland. The Ugandan army under Amin reflected the messiness of the colonial boundaries. Amin recruited into his army *ethnic* compatriots (fellow tribesmen) even if they were not national compatriots, and were Sudanese or Zaireans instead.

Similarly, while the Lebanese crisis was deepened by the presence of Palestinians in Lebanon, so was the Ugandan crisis deepened by the Nubi presence in Uganda. Lebanon has suffered because of two partitions—the partition of Greater Syria in order to create a Christian enclave and the partition of Palestine in order to create a Jewish state. Uganda has suffered because of *ethnic* partitions rather than denominational fragmentations. But both countries are now landed with a legacy of hate and recrimination which imperialism and militarism together have bequeathed to their unhappy people. When hate is militarized, and sectarianism is armed partly as a result of cynical imperial frontiers, at least one entity is allowed to extend its ominous boundaries—the graveyard.

## CONCLUSION

In November 1975 I gave a lecture at the University of Baghdad. In my speech I argued against distributing Arab aid to Third World countries on the basis of either ideological empathy or religious affinity. I argued that the Third World as a whole required considerable solidarity in facing up to the legacy of injustice in the

world as a whole. I certainly disagreed with the notion that Arab aid should be given first to fellow Arabs, secondly to fellow Muslims, and only thirdly to other Third World countries. I argued that this would split up the Third World into ethnic and religious camps instead of presenting a united front against the industrialized powers. I discovered in Baghdad that my critics from the left disagreed with my assertion that ideology should not play a part. But the most hostile were my critics from the Islamic right who regarded the proposition that they should not give priority to Muslims in the distribution of aid, not only as totally unacceptable but almost as a declaration of holy war. I remember a young man who felt particularly angry about it. He was arguing with the Dean who had introduced me to the meeting. My knowledge of Iraqi-Arabic was, to say the least, rudimentary. The Dean, very politely, explained that the student was saying how much they had enjoyed my lecture. I knew very well that the young man was not saying that. He was about to storm out. I called him back and was offering him a paper I had written. At first he would not even accept the paper, he was so incensed. His professors were begging him to accept it. In the end the young man accepted it. But what was dramatized to me by the incident was the depth of feeling displayed by that young Muslim fundamentalist. His position was not symptomatic of the views of the Iraqi government, which was secular and far more likely to agree with me in that particular debate. On the religious angle, that young man represented a deep conviction that distribution of the new Arab wealth should, to some extent, be influenced by the solidarity of religion. It was one level of petro-jihad.

The Summit Conference of Muslim States in Lahore in 1974—the first conference of its kind—prepared the ground on a modest basis for Pan-Islamic cooperation. On balance the richer Muslim countries represented at the Lahore Conference preferred bilateral aid between Muslim countries rather than the establishment and operation of an Islamic Fund. There was also a meeting of the foreign ministers of Muslim countries in Jeddah in 1975, and further consultations took place both along corridors and in the formal proceedings. An Islamic Fund has come into being, but the strong preference of countries like Saudi Arabia for bilateral cooperation has continued to circumscribe the movement towards a collective Islamic Fund. What is clear is that substantial amounts of aid flows are already evident. By April 1975 western aid officials—who had been skeptical about OPEC efforts in aid—were revising

their estimates. In the words of Maurice J. Williams, Chairman of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): "In speed and effectiveness the aid record [of OPEC countries] has been impressive." By early 1975 that aid already accounted for a sixth of official development aid from rich to poor countries. According to these figures of the OECD Committee, the oil states gave 1.8 percent of their Gross National Product in 1974, compared with 0.33 percent in the western industrial states, and 0.21 percent on the part of the United States.

The main aid donors among the OPEC group were Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. Partly because OPEC is largely Islamic in composition, and partly because the "Fourth World" of poorest countries is disproportionately Muslim, about eighty percent of aid from oil-exporting countries has gone to Muslim countries and over half of this to Arab nations. Clearly, there is here distinct evidence of the impact of Pan-Islamism on aid behavior. If that influence continues, and if the volume of aid rises significantly, Islamic communities scattered in different parts of the world are bound to acquire additional political and economic leverage.

One of the consequences might be to deepen Muslim disaffection in those countries where Muslims are underprivileged minorities. There is already evidence of increasing Muslim militancy in some countries in Asia and Africa where Muslims until recently accepted their lot as an indigent, or neglected, or outright oppressed minority. Muslims in the Philippines have been in rebellion, and have recently been able to rely on substantial moral and financial support from Arab states. Muslims in Thailand are getting increasingly restive, and are again looking to co-religionists in the Middle East for support and sympathy. In Chad, a civil war has been raging, involving Muslims in rebellion against long years of neglect and discrimination. Their difficult situation, which goes back to the days of French rule, to some extent worsened after independence. Eritreans have found a new will to continue the struggle for separate national identity after years of relative victimization under an Ethiopian Christian theocracy. Disaffected Muslim minorities in other countries in Asia and Africa might attempt soon to modify their status and mitigate their sense of grievance. One possible alternative is an actual rebellion, which before long is bound to attract the attention of fellow Muslims elsewhere, and which could result in considerable military capability against the

government that is in power.

Clearly, some of these Pan-Islamic trends are potentially creative and innovative; other aspects of those trends are potentially disruptive and divisive. New power carries both the promise of increased fulfillment and the risk of political and moral excesses. The resurrection of Islam does indeed carry the seeds of both possibilities; but at the very minimum it once again enriches the human cultural heritage by starting the processes of challenging the domination of Western civilization and culture over the human race. The petro-jihad is thus secularized.

But what does it all mean in terms of the future of the world? And how does it help to create a new international *religious* order? The greatest exporters of oil at the moment are Muslims, as I indicated; but the greatest consumers of oil are Christians. Should the history of Islam's interaction with Christianity be newly entitled "From the Crusades to the Crude?" In other words, should this type of structural balance in which the greatest exporters of oil are Muslims and the greatest consumers of oil are Christians be forged into a link between ecumenicalism, as a movement of different religions, on one side, and petroleum and technology as a basis of interlocking economies, on the other? If history is now traced from Saladin to Shell, and we start from a confrontation between Muslims and Christians over the holy lands in the Middle Ages to a dialectic in which the technology of Christendom needs the oil of Islam, what we have are possible new areas of structural interdependence. The link between petroleum and ecumenicalism for the last quarter of the twentieth century could be the basis of increasing collaboration between countries whose main religious experience is Islamic, and countries whose main religious experience is Christian. Included on both sides of the divide are African countries—heirs of that tripartite legacy of Islam, Christianity and the indigenous heritage of which Kwame Nkrumah so eloquently reminded us way back before OPEC was born. (Applause)

*Warren Lewis:* Profesor Mazrui, I am particularly taken by what you said, about the two hemispheres having Africa in common. That model works in terms of primal religion, too. In Asia one has primal religion—shamanism and so forth; in North and South America one has native American religions, and in Africa one has autochthonous Black religions. Once again, what do East and West have in common religiously and geographically? They have Africa to mediate, and it is precisely the elevation of the autochthonous traditions, the primal religious tradition in Africa, which we seek in

our Conference of Africa.

The next person whom I want to introduce is another amazing man. This one is from Ghana and Cincinnati—Franciscus Africanus, alias Francis Botchway. If you don't already know him, what he has to say will be a better introduction than anything I might tell you.

## A CASE FOR AN AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMANISTIC VALUES

Dr. Francis Botchway

Thank you very much, Warren. My duty this afternoon is not to engage in a theological discourse, but to sell you an idea. I'm going to try to do just that. Following Ali Mazrui helps me do what I want to do. Ali spoke about the triadic experience of the Africans, the traditional African experience based on the autochthonous religions and indigenized religions of Africa—that is, the indigenized Euro-Christian and Islamic experience of Africa. At the Barrytown conference in May of this year I presented a paper on this particular issue. With reference to the triadic experience of the African, I argued in that paper that:

The way out for the modern African is not to engage in a futile attempt to recreate the past which cannot be resurrected. The only choice is to move forward to a higher reconciled form of society in which the quintessence of the human purposes of traditional African society reasserts itself in a modern context. The inevitability of this progressive forward march must be felt by all Africans. The real basis for African society must be to elevate the African idea of the original value of man, which stands refreshingly opposed to the traditional Christian idea of the original sin and degradation of man. It must also accommodate the positive contributions of Euro-Christian and Islamic civilizations. The synthesizing process must be undertaken by the present generation of African scholars. Confronted by this triadic experience, we must develop a philosophical frame of reference which would make possible the theoretic basis for an ideology whose substance shall contain the three fundamental experiences of the African.<sup>3</sup>

What is called for as the first step, I argued, is a body of connected thought which will determine the general nature of our action in unifying the society which we have inherited. This unification is to take account at all times of the integrated ideas underlying tradi-



tional African society. The ultimate synthesis of this triadic experience is an even greater imperative, for it will point beyond Africa and indeed beyond history. This will be Africa's contribution to the modern world; this will be the new historical affirmation. And I'm happy to say that Ali Mazrui also sees this point in terms of the Afro-Asianism of Islam and Afro-Westernism of Christianity. Coming to my purpose today, I am here to argue the case for an African Institute for the Study of Humanistic Values.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Warren Lewis who called to ask if I would like to present a case for the establishment of this Institute in Africa. I immediately agreed to do so, because I knew that at this conference I would be talking to people whose concerns are fundamentally humanistic. I would also like to mention here one of my colleagues, Dr. Kwame Gyekye, from the University of Ghana's department of philosophy with whom I have dialogued about African religion and religiosity. I am relaxed here because there are so many distinguished scholars in this room whom I know personally: Dr. Karifa Smart from Sierra Leone, and my very good colleague of the past six or seven years, Dr. Guerin Montilus from Haiti and Wayne State University in Detroit.

Our concern is this: we need a center for the study of humanistic values in Africa. Why do we need this center? For the past four years, as a result of contact with the International Cultural Foundation, with whose aims we are impressed, Dr. Gyekye and I have been engaged in serious intellectual discussions about the whole question of absolute values. We have been disappointed and appalled by the near universal emphasis on national values and parochial values at the expense of what we believe should be the sharing of values which concern and transcend cultures and geographic boundaries. There is no doubt in our minds that there are values which are absolute, values which know no national, geographic, cultural or racial frontiers. But in the course of this philosophical discourse, we came to the conclusion that instead of using reason to seek the universal, man sinks into skepticism and into withdrawal from the future. In essence, man has become the proverbial ostrich. Our search for the absolute, then, or universal synthesis, is not a search for a mysterious essence nor a search for an esoteric body of knowledge. It is a search for transcendent values common to mankind. At the proposed African Institute for the Study of Humanistic Values we want to conduct protracted dialogues with scholars interested in the search for absolute values—scholars who are interested in a systematic reflection on man's

absolute values.

What, therefore, are the aims of the Institute which we propose to establish in Africa? The main aim of this Institute, in general, is to engage a group of African and non-African scholars and intellectuals in the comprehensive search for understanding and promotion of human values. Specifically, we are interested in focusing attention on such things as science, technology and moral values in the contemporary African scene. We want to search for a standard of value which can guide scientific and other intellectual pursuits in Africa. We are interested in focusing on the possibility of the existence of absolute human values. We are interested in developing a system or paradigm which would serve as the focal point for the integration and unification not just of African but of all values common to mankind. We also want to look at African religion and religiosity. Further, we want to take a look at the nature of African society, because quite often the majority of African scholars tend to look at traditional African societies and institutions through Western philosophic paradigms. We want to take a look at our own institutions and raise questions about the nature of these institutions: how they worked in the past and if there is the possibility of extrapolating out of these experiences something which we can use to guide us in the evolution of our nation-state systems.

We also want to look at the moral and spiritual values of Africans and the family structures of African societies. We want to ask fundamental questions about the gradual disappearance of the traditional African family structure, and its consequences in the nation-building process. So far, our societies at the moment do not have the institutions which would actually help us in meeting the needs and demands of our people. We also want to make contributions to African traditional philosophy. We want to begin to study the ontology, the epistemology, and the cosmology of traditional African people on a systematic basis and to catalogue our findings in a systematic manner so that future generations of Africans will have access to this knowledge.

We are also interested in comparative studies in the cultures and philosophies of other regions of the world: Western Europe, the Americas, India, Japan and China. We want to look seriously at some of the values in Islam, in traditional African society, and those we have acquired from the Euro-Christian experience. We may be able to develop something which we believe would be much superior to what we have inherited. It would be the aim of

the Institute to enlighten the public through a series of public lectures, seminars, symposiums, and conferences to which scholars throughout the continent of Africa would be invited to pool our many resources, out of which will grow periodical and monographic literature to be distributed all over Africa. In time we hope to establish a library in which would be housed books specifically dealing with the cultures, religions and philosophies of the various peoples of Africa. This is extremely important because we do not have anywhere in Africa a center, independent of governmental control, where African scholars from the continent of Africa can meet, research, dialogue and write. Most of the institutions in Africa are almost 100% subsidized by the various governments. Even though one can argue that there is academic freedom in most universities, there is still a need for an independent think-tank where the fundamental problems that confront us in Africa can be addressed. It's much easier for those of us living outside Africa to raise these questions and to discuss these issues in forums outside Africa. But why not on the continent of Africa itself? We want these questions to be raised by African scholars and other scholars on the continent of Africa. It is important to do so. Why? Because we want to leave a legacy of intellectual independence for succeeding generations of Africans. If Ali Mazrui would allow me, I want to cite a passage from one of his works, *Violence and Thought* (1969) which is really an excellent analysis of some of the problems which confront us in Africa. I wish and hope that African scholars in African universities, in centers of learning in Africa, would be raising these kinds of issues, and passing on the data they have acquired to their various governments and publics in Africa. Whether or not those governments use the information is not the question. Ali writes:

Equipped with the printed word, the present generation of East Africans [I'll drop the word 'East' Africans, and just use the general terminology 'Africans'] stands at the beginning of an entirely new intellectual tradition in the history of...Africa. We could bequeath to future...Africans a work of poetry, novels, of drama, of philosophical and speculative writings. They, in turn, could add to it and pass it on to their descendants.

As the literature builds up, it would be divided into periods according to the dominant trends at a particular age. Historians of literature might speak of a romantic period of...African literature, or a new pragmatic period of...African philosophy, distinguishable from other great periods in the same cumulative...African intellectual



tradition. And this tradition would be diffused to different levels of the population through the popularizing tendencies of a vigorous press, relatively free. It follows, then, that at this particular moment of its history, . . . Africa should momentarily turn away from ancestral worship to posterity worship. She should look to the future and decide what she would like to bequeath to her descendants. From this door of independence a whole new epoch of African creativity could unfold, and our gift of the intellect to the next generation of . . . Africans might at the same time become a boon of nationhood.

My job then, is to appeal to the conscience of the scholars in this room to help us realize this dream. This dream is important not because Gyekeye and I or Ali Mazrui or any one of us in self-imposed exile wants a little corner of the world where he can do his own thing. That's neither the point nor our aspiration. What we want to do is to bequeath to succeeding generations of Africans something which they can call their own.

Where is the literature that deals with African philosophical ideas? Where is the literature that deals with the ontology of Africa? Where is the literature that deals with the cosmology of African people? All of us know Western philosophy, and we can quote the philosophers. We know Kant and Hegel and we can quote Plato, Socrates, Cicero, etc. We know all of these writers. But when it comes to traditional African values and systems of thought, quite often it is very hard for us to quote anyone or any writing. As Ali was suggesting a while ago, if you see African high energy physicists from Nigeria and Kenya, the two of them cannot carry on their very sophisticated intellectual conversation in an African language. They would turn to English, French or German. There is a need for us to begin to study linguistically languages such as Swahili and see how best we can use the languages as tools which would enable us to transmit knowledge to succeeding generations of Africans.

Therefore we appeal to you. We need your assistance. We need the assistance of the International Cultural Foundation. We need the assistance of Reverend Moon and all those who are interested in the humanistic possibilities of mankind. Thank you. (Applause)

#### DISCUSSION

*Warren Lewis:* You notice on the program there are to be closing remarks. Surely it comes both as a surprise and relief to you to know that you are the ones to make the closing remarks.

*Kasim Gulek:* I'd like to congratulate heartily Ali Mazrui for his excellent discussion of Islam and Christianity as African-Asian and African-European. It's an original way of presenting it. Extremely well done! Islam in Africa has historical roots that go to the Arabs, but also to the Turks. The Turkish rule in Africa lasted several centuries over almost all of Africa north of the Sahara and the eastern part of Africa down to Mozambique. During this period, the Ottoman Turks contributed to the development of Islam, Islamic culture, Islamic art. The Ottoman Turks also contributed to the expansion of Islam in Europe. The Turks carried the banner of Islam up to the doors of Vienna. They went there not only as Turks but also as Muslims. In those days the difference was very vague and it was the banner of Islam that the Turks took to Vienna. Their contribution has been significant during several centuries, not only from a religious point of view but also from a scientific and artistic point of view. I'd like to have seen this contribution at least mentioned. In Ali Mazrui's study of the degeneration and backwardness which started some time ago in Islam, he mentioned the Ottoman Turks as emphasizing military science rather than others. The contributions of the Turks to Islam, Islamic science and Islamic art have been so great, I was unfavorably touched by this remark, which, I hope, he realizes I'm right in mentioning.

*Ali Mazrui:* I agree with much of what you said. The Turkish role with regard to Islam in Europe is incontestable. That is the most distinctive Turkish contribution. Though by the time the Turks were doing it, Europe's capacity to resist further Islamization was already considerable. The Turkish role of Islam in North Africa lay in providing a kind of infrastructure of authority through a number of generations. But Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, I would venture to suggest, spread so much on the basis of trade and informal structures that even when Arab North Africa was under Turkish rule, Islam in sub-Saharan Africa tended to be under Arab auspices. On balance, I'm not in disagreement about the considerable contribution of the Ottoman Empire to Islam and its defense of Islam for so long. On the issue of the military factor, perhaps there was a shift in preoccupation from science much more broadly defined to interest in technology for military purposes. I was simply suggesting that was one of the factors which distorted growth in the history of science in Islam. We are nearer in our interpretation than we may sound. Thank you.

*Kasim Gulek:* Ali Mazrui spoke of the Ottoman Empire. May I make a further remark? It was not an empire in the European

sense. Within the Ottoman state, all the elements comprising that state had the same possibilities and privileges as the Turkish element. There were Arab prime ministers, Albanian prime ministers, and Arab ministers. It was a different kind of state, more in the line of a commonwealth than an empire, in the sense that Europeans established their empires. In no European empire do you see any of the ruled people become ministerial prime ministers. In the Turkish state, in the Ottoman state, the opportunity existed and was taken.

*Guerin Montilus:* I will be very brief this time. It is against our African tradition to be brief. I am an anthropologist and, at the same time, a theologian. I was working in Africa doing my research five years among the Aja in West Africa and also among the Oba. I gathered 5,000 to 6,000 slides. I kept them as long as I could in Africa, and after that I had to bring them to the United States. I would have been very happy to leave the duplicates from these in Africa, but where? And with whom? I never erased any tape recording I did for five years. I have twenty to thirty small tapes and perhaps thirty cassettes. I would like to leave the duplicates someplace, because people would like to use this documentation. But where and with whom? Many colleagues I know are doing research in Africa, but do not leave anything in Africa. Warren Lewis was proposing to us some days ago to collect a canon of texts for African religions. Yes, but now our problem is: where to find this canon? As I told you, these texts exist. They are in the background, in the womb of African religion. But we really need some place. So I join my voice to this plea for an African Institute. As a son of slaves sold in the Caribbean, I think it would be great to have some place to study our traditions and African values. Swansea and I support you between 900 and 1000 percent, and I hope you succeed.

*Myrtle Langley:* Francis Botchway, I support you wholeheartedly, but I have one question: where?

*Francis Botchway:* We don't know where. We do feel, however, that we have to have someone who shares the same vision to carry on the work of the Institute. My colleague from the University of Ghana's department of philosophy, with whom I have been discussing this over the years, has agreed to work on it in Africa. I suspect the person most familiar, most sympathetic to the idea, would assume the responsibility of actually laying the initial foundation. In this instance, I hope and pray that Kwame Gyekye will assume that responsibility because I'm still in the African diaspora.

*Karifa Smart:* My name is Karifa Smart from Sierra Leone. I

would like to say how very pleased I am that my African colleagues have been working several years on this idea. It is essential, particularly as an instrument toward developing the kind of generation in the future of Africa that will feel free to make a contribution based on Africa to world thought, as you have indicated, on an equal basis. I speak with feeling on this particular subject, especially seeing that both colleagues who have spoken tonight have a Muslim background. I myself come from a Christian family, but, as happens in Africa perhaps better than anywhere else in the world, it is a family in which the Muslim component, the Christian component, and the indigenous African component live together with no kind of struggle or contention such as religious affiliations have caused in other parts of the world. I come from a country where the balance of faiths is almost equal: Sierra Leone has about one-third indigenous population, one-third Islamic, one-third Christian.

*Unidentified Speaker:* I am from Jordan. I would like to invite Francis Botchway and Ali Mazrui to make the center in Jordan. We would be very, very pleased and very honored indeed. We are neighbors, and have always been good friends. I do not suggest this merely as a grand gesture; I mean it, although I realize the difficulties. How deeply moved I was and how proud I was to listen to two brothers from Africa speaking for an African cause so eloquently, and so movingly and so magnificently. I was pleased with the level of scholarship and with their sincerity. I support this idea, for whatever my support is worth. I'm only a professor but, with all sincerity, if you will make a drive, I would like to contribute to that drive as generously as is humanly possible. And I would like to suggest that the gentleman who would be the founder of this magnificent venture make a tour of Arab countries. May I assure you that, at least in Jordan he will receive a generous contribution. I really mean that. That is for the financial and for the organizational aspects. As for the intellectual aspect, I just want to add one thing. Africa is clean; it is a new baby, and, as such, I think it has a lot to offer in terms of values. We in the Mid-East, in the Levantine, have been molested for so long (though I don't want to introduce any political arguments or any backbiting), so badly, that I don't think we offer very much right now. We have become almost morally, not corrupt, but decrepit, because of centuries of struggle, some of it being terribly bitter. This remark I would like to emphasize because I want to add my organizational and financial contributions, and also intellectual contributions. I really support the

idea that Africa can be and is an excellent candidate as a moral well from which other people and other continents may draw. Africa itself has also suffered, perhaps in a worse way. As my colleague has just said, he is the son of a slave. That's something to be terribly proud of, when one can say it with his head raised so high. I thank you.

*A.J. Ohin:* I am from Togo, West Africa. Before going into the speech by my colleague from Africa, I would like to make a short remark on the statement by the last speaker when he says Africa is a small baby. The first human beings are supposed to have come from Tanzania. That's what we're told by anthropologists. Now, as to the statement by my African colleague. I want to thank Ali Mazrui for his speech. I'm very glad to see that he points out that we have in Africa a certain degree of broadmindedness to the religious in our ranks. He mentions Senghor (President of Senegal), who was almost a priest. And what happened in Kampala? I was in Kampala when the archbishop was killed. He was killed not because he was a priest, but because those who were killed were Langi and Acholi. I was in Zanzibar, in East Africa, as a publisher's consultant. I was impressed that in Zanzibar some or most of the signs in the corridors in the hospitals were in Swahili. Then I started practicing Swahili. To my surprise, not any Swahili books were written by an African—all those I came across were written by English. I know a bit of Hausa and I think Nigeria is a bigger nation and occupies a central part of Africa. I'm very glad that Francis Botchway has the idea of organizing something for West Africa, because it seems to me that the Africans of West Africa are religiously lost. Right now, if you go to Accra, every day, every week, about ten to fifteen new religious groups start. I really don't know what they are doing. Maybe what you would do will help. Thank you.

*Kwame Gyekye:* I am from the University of Ghana. Francis Botchway and I prepared this document. I just want to say one or two things regarding the reasons for the necessity of establishing this Institute for the Study of Humanistic Values in Africa. As Francis said, and as we have it here in our document, we have been highly impressed by the ideals and objectives of the International Cultural Foundation. This is my fourth time to attend the Science Conference. We thought it would certainly be a good idea if we could bring the idea and the objectives of the ICF to other scholars in Africa. We thought one way of doing this would be establishing the Institute for the Study of Humanistic Values. This Institute



could also be used when we organize conferences like the one we are proposing. It is this Institute which will help in organizing the Global Congress in Africa. We plan to contact priests and other religious men in Africa, go to shrines, and so on. It is our belief that this Institute will undertake to do the groundwork.

*K.L. Seshagiri Rao:* I just want to say this African Institute has relevance not only for Africa but for a much wider scope. As all of us know, nearly 20% of the U.S. has black African roots. So I suggest this Institute should not only receive support from Africa but also be understood as another platform of the black American. A second point I want to make is this: although mention has been made of Christian Africa, Islamic Africa, and the native religions of Africa, there has been considerable influence from the various Eastern countries on the peoples of Africa as well. Some of these people are quite a lively group. This aspect should not be forgotten. Thank you very much.

*Osborne Scott:* I'm from the City College of New York, speaking as an Afro-American. I'm sure that this project would be exciting to Afro-Americans. I want to congratulate my colleagues from Africa and from America on this project. I will transmit this idea to colleagues of mine in the black American denominations. I am sure you will receive support. (Applause)

*Jack Waardenburg:* I am from Utrecht. The idea that in Africa itself there should be a center for documentation about Africa is very good. At present, you have to go to London, to Paris, to Leiden and to other places. It is very strange, but we receive Africans in Holland who come to study Africa. This is such an abnormal situation. Apart from all the human aspects, it is an absolute scholarly necessity that there be a center of study in Africa itself with good means, where scholars coming from both Africa and from the outside can study together. I'm morally very much supporting the establishing of the Institute. Thank you.

*Warren Lewis:* Now we have to terminate comments from the audience. Francis Botchway has asked for the absolute last word, so I give it to him.

*Francis Botchway:* I want to emphasize what Karifa Smart said about Sierra Leone: one third being Christian, one third being Islamized, and the other third being traditional autochthonous African religion, and all in the harmonious balance of the equilibrium of society. I come from a Catholic family—my uncle is the Archbishop of Togo. I am Muslim. My uncle is a traditional priest. The triadic experience of the African is something I experience on

a daily basis. There is that harmonious balance, equilibrium, in the family and in the society as well.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution*, London, Heinemann, 1964, pp. 68-70.

<sup>2</sup>See also Mazrui, *Ancient Greece in African Political Thought*, Nairobi, East African Publishing, 1967.

<sup>3</sup>*Towards a Global Congress of World Religions*, ed. Warren Lewis, Barrytown, N.Y., Distributed by The Rose of Sharon Press, 1978, pp. 145-146.

## Monday Morning Session I

INTERFAITH COOPERATION—  
ACHIEVEMENTS AND POSSIBILITIES

Rev. Marcus Braybrooke

*Warren Lewis:* A number of people have already left, but in taking their leave, have communicated many good words. Interreligio Nederlands communicated with us yesterday; it looks as though they will be joining with this activity as well. Bruce Long from the Blaisedell Institute had to leave yesterday because he's speaking today at Cornell, but he indicated his interest as well.

Today, the focus is our overall goal to bring the creative and the critical religious hearts and minds in our world together in the first session of a Global Congress of World Religions in 1981. We are now specifically working on a conference of those groups, like Interreligio Nederlands, the Blaisedell Institute, the Temple of Understanding, the World Congress of Faiths and similar institutions. These are bodies of interest which are neither churches nor religious establishments, but interest groups organized as intermediates between the religions themselves and religious individuals, to facilitate religious interdependence, interpenetration and communication.

We hear, this morning, an address by Marcus Braybrooke, who is Rector at Swainswick, near Bath, in England. Marcus is the general director, and nerve center and spokesman, for the World Congress of Faiths, an England-based group which continues to operate in the spirit and the energy of Sir Francis Younghusband, who founded the World Congress of Faiths in 1936. I presume Marcus will tell us something more in detail about his organization. They are a vital group of people. I was with them last September in the city of York for their annual meeting. Marcus is here as an individual, not as the official representative of the World Congress of Faiths. Marcus has completed a dissertation, soon to be published, on the histories, successes and lack thereof of interreligious movements over the last hundred years or so. There is no other book on that subject. Marcus is breaking new ground, letting us know the history of global ecumenics. It is about this history he wants to talk this morning.

*Marcus Braybrooke:* First, may I thank Warren for that warm

welcome. As you've made clear, I should say that I do not represent the World Congress of Faiths today. Our executive committee comprises members of different religions and, as you would expect, they don't always speak with one voice. Nor do I represent the Church of England, which certainly does not always speak with one voice.

Religious pluralism is not new. At many times and in many places, members of different religions have lived in proximity, sometimes as conquerors and conquered, sometimes as hostile rivals. The beliefs and practices of one religion have influenced another. What I think *is* new is the increasing desire that such religious coexistence be based on mutual respect, and the growing hope that religious variety may be enriching rather than divisive.

We are now beginning to see that the variety of religious traditions in the world is, in fact, something to be thankful for and something which is enriching. With isolated exceptions, such as Asoka or Akbar, this concept of religious tolerance and understanding is very new. In Christianity first, and I think increasingly in other religions, there have been ecumenical movements drawing together those who belong to the same religion, even if to different traditions and denominations. Parallel to this, but a weaker and more struggling infant, has been a wider ecumenical or interfaith movement seeking cooperation, fellowship and unity between members of different religions. It is the growth of this infant to perhaps adolescence which I want to talk about this morning.

I will summarize the history of one or two of the main organizations, indicating the sort of approaches they have adopted. Then from this I want to make a few suggestions about what we may learn if we are indeed working toward a Global Congress.

Chicago, as many of you well know, was the setting for the first interreligious conference, in 1893. So it's been almost a hundred years. To mark the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, Chicago held a World's Fair. To accompany this, a series of congresses were arranged on the chief areas of human knowledge. There was some uncertainty about whether to hold a religious congress, lest it cause division and discord. I think we might still have the same hesitations. A committee was set up to examine the question, and they decided that there should indeed be a congress of religions, one at which all religions should be represented. This idea of a World Parliament of Religions gained considerable support, but it also aroused opposition, especially from the Sultan of Turkey and the Archbishop of

Canterbury. At the Parliament itself, which a number of Anglican clergy attended, because Anglican clergy are not in the habit of taking too much notice of the Archbishop's views, a paper by one of the canons of Westminster was read. (Laughter) At the Parliament, the relation of religions to each other, and in particular of Christianity to other faiths, was a major topic of discussion. The papers of the scientific section contain a mass of interesting information, and some attempt was made to relate the Parliament to the concerns of the world. It's quite interesting to look at what the dominant concerns were—one of them was women's lib. One most significant feature of the Congress was that it met, and attracted enormous crowds. More than seven thousand attended the final session, and I gather there was even a black market for tickets. I don't think any subsequent interfaith gathering has attracted that sort of attendance.

Because of this it was, however, a matter mainly of an audience listening to a few speakers. There was not really very much conferring among the participants, though some of the main speakers stayed as guests in different homes in Chicago, so there was a certain amount of meeting there. The organizers, whilst they disavowed any idea of compromising the unique claims of any religion, did encourage a certain universalism. The chairman, President Bonney, in his opening address, voiced the ideal that:

When the religious faiths of the world recognize each other as brothers, children of one Father, whom all profess to love and serve, then, and not until then, will the nations of the earth yield to the spirit of concord, and learn war no more.<sup>1</sup>

It is disappointing that, apart from publishing the records, the Parliament made no plans for the future and formed no continuing body. But an example had been set.

The next major conference was the first International Congress for the History of Religions held in Paris in 1901. This was an occasion very different from the Chicago Parliament; it was devoted exclusively to the scientific study of religions. Academic detachment has continued to be characteristic of the International Association for the History of Religions, which emerged from a series of conferences dating back to that first congress in 1901. Friedrich Heiler, who was the pupil and friend of Rudolph Otto, did, it is true, say at the Tokyo Conference that one of the most important tasks of the science of religion is to bring to light the unity of religions; but, in the main, such an approach has been



repudiated. As a result, although the serious study of religions has grown considerably, many scholars have stood aloof from interfaith organizations because they have been afraid that their scholarly reputations would be jeopardized.

Whereas they assume that neither one nor another religion is true and must operate from a neutral basis rather than from a stand of commitment, most of us have come to interfaith dialogue from a stand of commitment. The depth of scholarship which academics could have provided has been lacking in the interfaith movement, and this is one of its main weaknesses. Many religious leaders, afraid that their orthodoxy might be compromised, have also stood aloof. Yet, one reason why interfaith organizations have a continuing importance is to foster a fruitful relationship of the Global Congress and interfaith gatherings with the more academic meetings of those who study world religions.

Attempts to encourage interreligious co-operation were renewed after the First World War. In 1921, Rudolph Otto formed a Religious League of Mankind, but this was eventually proscribed by the Nazis. In India, members of different religions worked together in the Gandhian movement. Religious associations in Japan held a National Religious Conference in 1928. From America came several initiatives, especially the attempt to convene an International Conference for Peace attended by members of various religions. In Britain, in 1934, Sir Francis Younghusband, stimulated by his contacts and encouragement in the U.S., convened a committee which decided to arrange a World Congress of Faiths, which met for the first time in 1936. Since the Second World War other bodies have been formed, such as the Temple of Understanding and the World Order for Cultural Exchange, of which Michael Woodard is presently the inspirer.

I think we may concentrate on examples of the two main approaches: the World Congress of Faiths in England and the World Conference on Religion and Peace which grew out of the pre-war peace initiative in the U.S.

Although the World Congress of Faiths has hoped its work in the long term will contribute to peace, it sees interfaith fellowship as the key to deeper spiritual truths. The World Conference on Religion and Peace, on the other hand, has sought to activate religious people as an effective lobby for peace and international justice.

The founder of the World Congress of Faiths, Sir Francis Younghusband, was motivated by a mystical experience which

occurred in Tibet in 1904. The day after he had signed a peace treaty in Lhasa, he was alone in the mountains when, he said, he felt in touch with the "flaming heart of the world." He knew that a mighty, joy-giving power is at work in the world, is working all about us and is working in every living thing. He had a vision, he said, of a: "... far greater religion yet to be, and of a God as much greater than our English God as a Himalayan giant is greater than any English hill."<sup>2</sup> His conception of a fellowship of faiths sprang from his mystical sense of the unity of all people, and the brotherhood of mankind was to him a truth realized in religious experience. In the Congress, Younghusband had no intention of forming another eclectic religion. Rather, he hoped members of all faiths would become aware of the universal experience which had been his. He chose the word "faiths" rather than "religions" deliberately to be as broad as possible. Humanists and new religious movements were indeed welcomed at the Congress.

The aim of the Congress was to develop 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. Much of the work of the Congress has been at the level of combating ignorance and prejudice about other people's beliefs. Yet it has retained the sense that the existing religions point beyond themselves to an as yet unrealized and more universal truth.

No one is asked to modify his own religious loyalty and convictions. There is the implicit assumption that truth is not the monopoly of one religion, but that the insights of the different traditions belong together in a greater whole. With this has often gone a certain impatience with doctrinal or ritualistic fundamentalism. The tendency of the Congress has been to attract the liberal or the mystical from various traditions who await a fuller unveiling of truth. Those who are conscious that they are in possession of the whole truth have found the Congress uncongenial. At times it has been viewed with some suspicion by religious hierarchies. Perhaps the approach is best exemplified in interfaith worship, which the Congress in Britain has pioneered and encouraged. It has always made it clear that in interfaith worship, the participants are not asked to compromise their convictions. But there is the assumption that what fellow religionists have in common is greater and more significant than what divides them. A hymn by George Matheson, a blind Scottish minister who lived at the end of the last century, was quite popular:

Gather us in, we worship only Thee,  
In varied names we stretch a common hand,  
In diverse forms, a common soul we see,  
In many ships we seek one spirit land.

Whereas in the World Congress of Faiths, dialogue is essentially truth seeking, the World Conference on Religion and Peace is more immediate and practical in its aims.

Its Secretary-General, Dr. Homer Jack, has said:

We have learned in using our religious and ethical insights to leap over theology and discuss the next steps for human survival which tend to parallel the agenda of the United Nations.<sup>3</sup>

The first World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) met in Kyoto, Japan, in 1970, but it had been carefully prepared for by several smaller gatherings. The Second Conference, which I was privileged to attend, was held at Louvain, Belgium, in 1974. Plans are being made for a third conference next year in the U.S. At the first conference, a permanent organization was formed which has received accreditation as a non-governmental organization at the United Nations. WCRP has been active there on several issues, especially human rights. The influence of the WCRP is difficult to judge, but it seems that its reports and contacts at the United Nations have been of value. The WCRP has challenged religious leaders to translate their ideals into recommendations concerned with particular world problems. It has also shown that members from different religions and continents, while disagreeing about metaphysical matters, can agree on urgent human concerns. The need is for more religious people to acquire expertise on political and economic matters. However, the only practical scheme, the "Boat People Project" to help refugees from Vietnam, was a failure. Recent news stories have made us aware how tragic it is that this scheme was not more successful. WCRP was aware of the situation a couple of years ago which just now has attracted wider media coverage.

In addition to these two approaches, the churches as official bodies in recent years have become involved in interreligious dialogue. The Vatican established a Secretariat for non-Christians in 1964. In 1971 the World Council of Churches set up a sub-unit on "Dialogue Between Men of Living Faiths and Ideologies." Some denominations also have committees on interfaith matters. And to some extent, other religious bodies are developing more official

dialogue with other faiths.

A variety of valuable meetings has been arranged both between representatives of two religions and among members of several religions. The question, I think, is whether official representatives of the churches can be open to dialogue in its fullest sense. Certainly, some individuals who take part may be open, but the relationship of dialogue to mission and witness is not resolved. This issue was hotly argued at the Nairobi assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1975. At a subsequent consultation at Chiang Mai in Thailand, the concern for dialogue was set in the context of the search for human unity. Yet a desire to understand members of other religions and to cooperate with them for peace and justice need not imply any endorsement of the religious significance of these other religions.

I believe the distinctive character of the main interfaith organizations is their recognition of both the particularity of the great religions and their validity. The declaration of the Louvain Conference of the World Conference on Religion and Peace says:

Of all the things learned at Kyoto, none has marked us more deeply than the discovery that the integrity of the commitment of each to his own religious tradition permits, indeed nurtures, loving respect for the prayer and faithfulness of others.<sup>4</sup>

In a similar mood, at the 40th Anniversary of the World Congress of Faiths at Canterbury, Bishop Appleton, then chairman, said:

Each religion has a mission, a gospel, a central affirmation. Each of us needs to enlarge on the gospel which he has received, without wanting to demolish the gospel of others. We can enlarge and deepen our initial and basic faith by the experience and insights of people from other religions and cultures without disloyalty to our own commitment.<sup>5</sup>

Here the historical actuality of the great religious traditions is recognized and affirmed. There is no syncretism. Their distinct heritage and view of the world are understood. For a religion is a complex organism in which different features are closely related and one aspect can not be isolated without distortion. Once the distinctiveness of religions is recognized, they are seen as complementary rather than as rivals. It's not that one is true and the other is false. But together, they point beyond themselves to a richer truth which is as yet not fully realized. This endorsement of the religious significance of other faiths implicit in interfaith organ-

izations is, I think, a challenge to each religion's self-understanding. It requires Christians to clarify their view of the place of other faiths in God's plan of salvation. The question is the same for members of other traditions.

Now, I would like just for a moment to speak from my standpoint as a Christian. Most Christians have moved away from the view that only those who have explicit belief in Jesus will escape hell-fire. It is widely recognized that God has been at work in other cultures and mention is made of the incognito or the anonymous Christ. Yet Christians usually see their faith as the climax or fulfillment of God's purpose. From the position that "others have none and we have all," there is a move to "others have some, but we have more." What I think Christians have to ask (and to some extent, members of other faiths need this same internal dialogue) is: Can we accept religious plurality at a theological level. This, as I see it, would mean commitment to the truth thus far disclosed to us, acceptance of the truth disclosed to those of other faiths who are equally committed and affirmation of the hope that together yet more truths may be disclosed to us. The commitment to truth, which is essential for living faith, remains. It is sad if the old joke that comparative religion makes us only comparatively religious is somewhat accurate and we become religiously watered down. I think commitment must remain, commitment to the truth so far disclosed to us, but with a new openness, being led by the Spirit into the fuller truth. Such an approach gives profound religious significance to the present need for a meeting of religions as a precursor to a new development in mankind's religious history.

Indeed, the spiritual renewal which many have experienced through being opened to other religious traditions may be a foretaste of a spiritual renewal essential to mankind's survival. God may be bringing this greater spiritual renewal to pass through the unprecedented encounter of world religions in this century. In this context, along with society's proper concern with peace and justice, dialogue will be a truth-sharing and a truth-seeking exercise.

At the intellectual level it will ask of doctrinal statements, what is the living experience and insight to which they point? How does this relate to living experience reflected in other doctrinal traditions? Where are the differing insights contradictory and where complementary? This is the kind of approach, I think, adopted by Professor John Hick in his book *Death and Eternal Life*. It can be applied to many other vital areas of belief. Our World Congress meeting next year will take the theme "Creative Suffering," seeking



the insights given in the several religions.

Drawing on the different traditions, all of us can be strengthened in our spiritual experience and understanding of the meaning of life. Willingness to share and explore other spiritual traditions and disciplines in the manner of Swami Abhishiktananda is of the utmost importance. Thus we in the World Congress of Faiths have arranged one or two meditation weekends led partly by a Hindu, partly by a Christian. We are willing to try to go beyond cultural and religious differences to the essential spiritual experiences to which they point, asking, for example, in what ways the Hindu awareness that "Atman is Brahman" is akin to St. Paul's "Christ liveth in me." Only those who meet at a deep level of the spirit, "in the cave of the heart," can answer these questions. It is to such a truth-seeking dialogue that any Global Congress of Religions could contribute.

For the last few minutes I would like to say something more about what a Global Congress might achieve. Or, rather, it's easier to say what I think it should not be. I think its aim should not be political in the sense of rallying members of religions on particular political issues. I think the World Conference on Religion and Peace is already quite effective in trying to do this. I'm not sure if religion should be used for an end beyond itself. In any case, I think religionists do not necessarily have special competence in economics and politics. When they discuss particular matters, religious people disagree as much as—if not more than—other mortals. If they confine themselves to worthy generalities, they carry little weight. In the long term, such a meeting will, I hope, contribute to peace and understanding, but I think particular issues should not be primarily on the agenda. Nor should such a Global Congress be anti-secularist or a ganging up of religionists against humanists or Marxists or agnostics. I think it should not be an antibody. Nor do I think it ought to be just an academic gathering; because, as I suggested earlier, the academic disciplines assume a neutral stand, whereas, presumably, those attending a Congress of Religions will think that "religion," on the whole, is a "good thing"—not that I make that a requirement for attendance.

A certain involvement of academics is very valuable and vital; but, again, I think the Congress is not a meeting of the International Association for the History of Religions. Nor do I think it can be a meeting of official representatives of religions. Some religions are not so structured as to produce official representatives; were this the basis, the conference would become an exercise in ecclesiastical diplomacy. We do want those who hold leadership positions

in the main religious bodies to attend, but as individuals. The dialogue is essentially a personal meeting. Linked to this is the question of finances. It would be helpful if the money could come from several sources. The Congress is, and should remain, genuinely independent. Interfaith organizations are not rich in funds, of course, so we are grateful for the initial sponsorship of the Unification Seminary.

It is easier, as I've said, to say what the Congress should not be than what it should be. Conferences, if I can say this after the enjoyable ICUS, are seldom creative—especially as a meeting of individuals with one another and with God. It seems to me somehow that conferences don't create new insights. What I think they can do is make us aware of creative developments and possibilities and enable the sharing of insights. But seldom, I think, do the insights actually come in the midst of conferences. They allow us to check our viewpoints and particularly to see whether we have rightly understood another tradition.

To appreciate another religion, you need to meet with living representatives of that faith as well as read books about it. And each faith, in fact, because it is living, gives the impression of changing. Conferences, too, can encourage us to venture forward; in some countries the whole idea of interfaith meetings is still very new and meets very much opposition. It is an encouragement to find that others elsewhere are seeing the same course.

Much of the most effective dialogue is very local. It needs to continue over a long period. A Global Conference can establish communication and should, I think, be closely related to assisting local and national groups. This is why I welcome the suggestion of a "Conference of Groups." But in an interdependent world, how members of different religions relate in one area affects relationships elsewhere. Christians and Jews, for example, cannot be unaware of what happens in Israel even if they live several thousand miles away.

Further, a global body can give impetus to the growth and deepening of dialogue. The new spirit of friendship between religions is, I believe, an important factor in fostering human unity. Equally, I believe that only as world religions share their spiritual resources will spiritual bases adequate for a new world emerge. This is not to suggest an easy merging or synthetic unity, but to suggest that the great faiths need to seek out and expound the essential truths enshrined in their various traditions. "Dialogue" is perhaps an unsatisfactory word, as it suggests a two-way meeting

and very much just a sitting encounter. I'd rather picture the world religions as journeying together toward God. They start out from different points, wearing different clothes, perhaps an orange robe or jeans and T-shirts; each has its own resources. But they are all stronger when they share together. One may have water to share, another food, another something for insect bites. The longer they journey together, the more they share and become interdependent. The closer they come to God, to the Transcendent or the Absolute, however we like to term Him, the deeper the unity between them. It seems to me, thanks to the pioneer efforts of those of whom I have spoken, the world religions have just about met and introduced themselves. They have yet to start journeying together towards the Absolute, in whom they will find the truth and love and strength which is the only true basis for fellowship of faiths and for a better world. Thank you very much. (Applause)

#### DISCUSSION

*Warren Lewis:* Now we will discuss these ideas as Marcus has set them forth. Address yourself directly to him, but also feel free to make your own statements. It is important here that we be frank and forthright with one another.

*Unidentified Speaker:* I'd like to ask a question. When you were listing the things you think the Congress should not do, you said on the one hand that generalities are not going to accomplish anything, but on the other hand you advised against specific political issues. My question is, what's left?

*Marcus Braybrooke:* I think the Congress should not address itself primarily to political issues. This is not the arena to discuss how peace might come in the Middle East, or what the solutions in Northern Ireland should be, although religion is at issue in both cases. Only a few of the people attending the Congress could have the required expertise and detailed knowledge in those areas. I would hope that we might address ourselves to some of the more personal issues of life, the meaning of life, how we find wholeness, integrity, happiness for the human race. Our understanding of death and how we face it could well be discussed here, as well as issues of suffering and a whole range of ethical questions which would not embroil us immediately in unmanageable politics. We must not assume because we have some religious knowledge that we have expertise in every area of human knowledge. People of the same religion take different views about a particular practical, political issue. Our focus should be trying to understand each other

at a deeper level of our convictions and the spiritual values which give meaning to life.

*Unidentified Speaker:* Correct me if I am wrong, but you are making a distinction, then, and saying that religious people who have the knowledge to direct themselves and this conference ought rightly to address individual, personal issues, but not deal with wider, multinational issues? That's what I hear you saying. Is that what you mean?

*Marcus Braybrooke:* I welcome other people's feelings about what the issues should be. It seems to me that we can together look at essential moral and spiritual principles. For example, on questions such as the environment, we could explore the issues of our responsibility and attitude toward the natural world. The different religions have their own insights into this. There are moral, spiritual guidelines on how we treat the natural world, how we treat animal creation. I'm not sure, however, that we would have the expertise to talk about actual policies on, say, reforestation. It's the area between, what ethicists call "middle axioms," which would determine the level of our congress. We have to recognize the limitations of our knowledge and our discipline. Does that make it any clearer?

*William J. Minor:* I would like to carry this just a little further. In the World Conference on Political Psychology in New York last summer, it finally came down to a deep realization that the fundamental difference between Middle East Hebrews and the Arabs was the religious commitment each group has. If we are going to solve these problems in any kind of efficient way, we have to come to the religious basis of these two groups. They are far apart and their political reconciliation is tied up with the whole issue of religion. To evade these political issues as though they are not rooted in what we are trying to do here seems to me to be a basic fallacy.

*Marcus Braybrooke:* I have not made myself clear. I'm not against discussion of political and humanist concerns insofar as they relate to the question of religious commitment. The difference in commitment of the Jews and Muslims is a proper area for us to seek to understand, rather than discussing, let us say, the question of to whom Jerusalem belongs. That would seem to be a second level of issues.

*Warren Lewis:* Dr. Minor, you seem to be saying that if we can get people involved in a creative dialogue at the level of faith, there might very well be some common roots there which could solve

some political problems—but without our first having raised the political issue. The two have to be tied together, don't they?

*Irving Hexham:* I think this is important, and for me the definition of religion is an important issue. Religion can not be separated from one's identity and ontological commitment. What we are looking at is basic fundamental commitment. Outwardly, many people may hold a religion to which, in fact, they are not committed in the most fundamental, basic and internal ways. We were in New Orleans recently at the American Academy of Religion. I went for a drink with a couple of friends, one of whom was a professor from an American evangelical college, and the other, a colleague of mine with his wife. The professor from the American college had known my friend for a long time, so he said to my friend's wife, "When are you coming back to America?" And she replied, "We're Canadians now." And he said, "You *live* in Canada." But she said, "No, we have become Canadians." His face dropped and there was silence. In fact, he didn't say much for the rest of the evening. He found it impossible to conceive that an American would become a Canadian. It was his fundamental statement of identity. He was first and foremost an American and then a fundamentalist Christian. Religion and politics and identity are interwoven. We must look at these commitments on all sides. One of the most important issues I would like included in a Congress of Religions is the question of nationalism because, at one level, nationalism functions at least as a pseudoreligion. Thank you.

*K.L.S. Rao:* I would like to bring the Gandhian perspective to this discussion. Before that, I will tell you a story. A little girl in a Sunday school was asked the names of the first and the last books of the Bible. She said, "The Bible begins with *Genesis* and ends with *Revolution*." When anyone takes his or her own religious convictions seriously, they can not help but be revolutionary. It is a different matter if the person wants to be goodie-goodie and go along with the establishment. But if the person takes religion seriously, then of course that person has a great impact upon persons and institutions. One cannot help but become revolutionary. Gandhi was once asked, "You are a saint, you are a good man, why do you soil your hands by engaging yourself in politics, engaging yourself in a fight with the British for the freedom of India?" And he said, "If you think that religion has nothing to do with politics, then you do not know what religion is all about." So it was his religious concern which expressed itself in politics, in the emancipation of women, in the elimination of the caste system, in his



solidarity with the untouchables, his siding with the poor, his siding with the oppressed and the hungry. All his concerns were the expansion of his religious convictions. He was once asked, "Why don't you, if you are religious, go and live on top of the Himalaya Mountains or somewhere on the bank of a river?" He said, "I know only one way of living my religion and that is in the midst of society and in solving the problems of the people." So, how can religion be far away from these concerns? They are the main concerns. I think I'm putting Marcus' point of view correctly: What he wants to suggest is not that religion should have nothing to do with the political issues of life, but should engage itself in politics in the kind of activity which will unite and heal people. Thank you.

*Unidentified Speaker:* Aren't we concerned about the relation of religion and politics as a manipulation of religion for political or nationalistic ends by the politicians? How do we develop a strategy for meeting this?

*Marcus Braybrooke:* Religion is and must be involved with life; our commitment affects our attitudes on a whole range of problems. But I'm hesitant, partly from attending one of the World Conference for Religion and Peace conferences (for which I have considerable admiration). You get a whole lot of people together, they pass a resolution to oppose the armaments race, and spend the best part of the day working out the exact verbal form of the resolution. What I hope we will be doing in such a context is looking rather at the roots of violence and aggression and the resources for nonviolent resistance in the different religious traditions. Let's try to go beyond and much deeper than the sorts of consensus resolutions which say nothing.

*Warren Lewis:* This is really a hard question. As a pacifist and an Anabaptist, under no circumstances would I fight in anyone's war. That is a political statement but it's also a theological statement. It was also both a political and theological statement when Martin Luther King said to the sustainer of segregation: "We don't have the legal right to ride on your bus or eat in your restaurant, so we'll just sit here. We won't take you to court, we won't fight you; but here we are, human beings, and we want to ride to work and we want to get a hamburger here. So, we'll just sit here until either you thrash us or feed us." That's the kind of political, theological statement which I affirm. It's the statement of a person who operates out of theological convictions in such a way that the political implications become clear—as opposed to a person who becomes a politician, runs for a job with the government, and

passes laws based on his theology which say that everybody else has to do what he wants them to do. You might agree with his theological-political decisions, and you might not.

The other problem is related to Marcus' point just now about nonviolence; neither Jews nor Muslims have a very good track record on nonviolence. As a matter of fact, it is not part of their perspective at all. There, already, we have a religious difference. We're just stuck with that, aren't we? The only way to make headway with it is if we come together and talk it over.

*David Kim:* [speaking to Braybrooke] I am very impressed with your presentation and historical survey. I'd like to hear more about your research and results. You mentioned that eighty-five years ago, a big thing happened. It must have been inspired by God providentially. Seven thousand people were there. You mentioned Chairman Bonney. Where is he? Where has his idea gone? All this ecumenical effort... How successful have they been according to their original plans? Also, how much have they failed? Including your World Congress of Faiths, what is the failure in the past, what is successful? Why do we repeat the same mistakes? I'd like your academic, scholarly analysis. Be honest: Did you find out why they failed? In the Orient, we say it's like a snake: big head but the tail is small. We are not going to repeat this kind. Is it clear?

*Marcus Braybrooke:* The question is all too clear; the answer is what is hard. The influence of any conference is often not easily quantifiable. But in the last seventy or eighty years, there has been the growing recognition that people of different faiths and religions can legitimately meet together without disloyalty to their own tradition, and can, perhaps, work together. There has been to some extent a change of atmosphere. In Britain in the last twenty years the dominant attitude of Christians and other faiths has moved from one of "mission" to one of "cooperation" on community relations. This is a very broad generalization, but the intellectual battle for theological pluralism has won a move toward this. The views of a person like Bonney in the 1890s would now be widely accepted rather than create an anti-demonstration, as happened then. I remember the first interfaith services I went to. We were picketed outside, because the idea that a Christian could worship with someone else seemed a total denial of Christian claims. I think at that level, we are still combatting prejudice.

Failures have often come at the organizational level. The organizations have been insufficiently structured for continuity and real commitment to each other. This is why one ought to

hesitate about size. It may be more important that we foster groups which continue to meet at some deep level rather than have one glorious jamboree in Moscow. Any large gathering must be related to working groups from before and after. One can have a certain level of dialogue for twenty-four hours shut off in a conference, but you really have to get to know people, to live with them through times of disagreement in a deeper measure. The work that has been done has not been a waste of time; it has achieved a change of atmosphere. But what I hope we are going to be able to achieve is a much more lasting and deep commitment to each other.

*Warren Lewis:* How can we keep from making the mistakes they made before?

*Marcus Braybrooke:* We need to define rather more clearly what our task purposes are. I have tried to indicate this morning the different approaches of the academics and the peaceworkers—peaceworkers who are concerned with spiritual-theological reconciliation and those who are just concerned with good community relations. Often, all these different interests have come together under one so-called interfaith gathering. But the particular purpose of that gathering remained undefined. This is why we need to spend quite a lot of time in preparation for our Global Congress, so we can really know what we are hoping for when it happens.

*Warren Lewis:* Do you have a hope you might express? What is your hope for the Global Congress?

*Marcus Braybrooke:* I hope it would be related to ongoing interfaith meetings and dialogue in different parts of the world. It would be a coming together of those already involved, rather than attracting religious leaders who are going to go away again having enjoyed a little holiday.

*K.L.S. Rao:* I completely agree with the gentleman who raised the question of how conferences have stumbled in earlier times. How many times does a child stumble before he learns to walk? Simply because he stumbles several times, we do not say to the child, "Now stop it; don't plan to walk anymore." We have to keep trying to learn to walk. Why? First, because we are physically one world and one community, though culturally and religiously diverse. One of the goals of education and of human endeavor is to understand one another. In order to understand one another, it is not enough to understand "all mankind." You cannot understand the Japanese without understanding Hinduism...

I think the Global Congress is an historical necessity. It's coming, we can't stop it. It has to come. The only thing we have to

work out is that it should not fail. It should have a lasting effect; it should have benevolent and beneficial effects.

*Myrtle Langley:* Northern Ireland was mentioned and it was mentioned, as it often is in the media of the world, in terms of a religious war. I would hope a Global Congress would bring about the kind of dialogue which would show that in Northern Ireland what we have is not so much a religious war, perhaps, as politicians using religion in a context of three hundred or four hundred years of two ethnic groups at war. One group settled in the land of the other. One took one religious name; the other, another religious name—and many, many complexities came after that. If there were different colors, Northern Ireland would be like the white-black problem in Rhodesia. I come from the southern Ireland side of it—I hope I have no axe to grind. I would hope that we could address ourselves to the different tangles, as it were, in the name of religion. Would Marcus agree with this?

*Marcus Braybrooke:* Yes. This is such a complex matter because religion is intertwined with other issues. And it again comes back to the question: Why is it that people's other commitments often seem to be stronger than the religious commitments they claim? There are Christians in Northern Ireland who are working hard for peace and reconciliation, just as there are committed Jews and Muslims in the Middle East who are working for peace and reconciliation there. But it remains true that in a large number of situations, national and other interests seem to dominate our religious commitments. I would like us to examine these issues. I would like to say again that I don't want us to pass the sort of resolution in which "we call on all people of good will to work for peace in the Middle East," and then make the resolution available in a news release. One temptation of religious people is to appear to pass judgement on the failings of other people. In fact, we all feel very conscious of our own share in these failings. We also are conscious that our own religions have not been dynamic and powerful enough to check the other factors which cause violence and injustice in our world.

*Robert Moon:* In the field of physics, we have success and failure. We feel that in these successes and failures there is always a message; this message comes from Above. In order to reach a truth about any situation, physics included, we have to approach a problem on the basis of the powers that God has given all people—the intellectual, the spiritual and the moral powers. We must get guidance from Above. Allow the Holy Spirit to work through us.

We feel this way, strangely enough, because we were faced with a problem like this on the Manhattan Project, where we did secret work on nuclear energy. Then we realized we had to introduce this vast power to the world and to mankind, and say to mankind, "This is the world we have!" We found that we were not fit to live in this age. So we set about to try to make ourselves fit. Things did not go ahead on numbers. It wasn't a question of success or failure, but a question of dedication to knowing and doing His will. We saw no other answer, living in this age, this atomic age. Therefore, we felt that through our looking for God's message that may be there, the message in an experiment, that God had revealed things on many levels to us. We experienced revelations from the project—rather large ones. This Global Congress also contains a message—direct revelation and the success and failure of a message. We must get away from a human approach and get more to the realm where the Holy Spirit would have a chance to work. Sometimes old Pride comes across many of us because we feel we know everything about the Bible and everything about religion and everything else. I found I had to make myself right with my own family and with my colleagues in order to break down the walls. God's grace flows through us, but if we have anything around us that walls us in so that this grace cannot flow out to others and other people flow into us, then individuals can become somewhat divisive. In a humble way I ask, why can't we appeal to the Heart of Power? Why can't we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us? I think I'll stop here.

*Warren Lewis:* A nuclear physicist who believes in the power of the Holy Spirit to make possible what we do!

## Monday Morning Session II

### MOHANDAS GANDHI AND THE HINDU VISION OF RELIGIOUS CO-EXISTENCE

K.L. Seshagiri Rao

*Warren Lewis:* Now I have the genuine pleasure of presenting Prof. Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao to you. He studied at Mysore University and at Harvard. He is now Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Virginia. It is a pure delight to present him to talk to you about the Global Congress and let the spirit of Gandhi speak through him. I now present to you Professor Rao.

*K.L. Seshagiri Rao:* There are problems all around. There are



problems all around, there are evils all around—social, national, international. How do we go about solving them? To give an example: a blind man wants to cross the street and you can hold him by your hand and take him to the other side of the street. But then he has another street to cross and another street to cross and another street to cross—every time, somebody has to help him. Suppose you were able to give him vision. You have made him independent: he can cross this road, he can cross the other road, he can cross many roads. One of the most practical ways of solving the problems we face is to focus and raise the consciousness of the people on a problem and give them “vision.”

One of the most creative experiences of Gandhi's life, which from then on made him involve himself in social-political community affairs in a most creative way, was the one he had in South Africa. He was traveling on a train from Durban to Johannesburg. He had a first-class ticket. At a place called Martisburg, a white gentleman entered, but he did not want to travel along with this black man. So he called the guard and asked him to move Gandhi to a third-class compartment. Gandhi said to the guard, “Look, I have paid for a first-class ticket. I don't want to cooperate in evicting myself. It's all right if you throw me out, but I won't go.” He was thrown off and his baggage was thrown out on the platform. That was the turning point of his life. The question that ran through his mind at that time was: Should he go back to India and forget all about all these things and all these community affairs, or should he stay in South Africa and fight the evil, trying to do something about those people who are oppressed? He made the decision and stayed there. He educated the Asian community there and fought for seventeen years before he won against the South African government on every one of the points over which he fought them. It took him seventeen years, but he did it. And that was just the prelude to his struggles for independence in India, and his campaigns for the achievement of the rights of the untouchables, of women, and so on.

So that train ride was a very creative experience for Gandhi. I hope all the discussions today have raised our level of consciousness to this problem and have turned the lever in the proper direction in our hearts and minds. When we achieve a higher consciousness, I think we have got it made. The rest will come easy. First must come a raised level of general consciousness and the desire to do something creatively. Once the change comes in the heart, then it can be expressed in institutions and external

behavior.

Concerning the Congress of World Religions, I want to make a minor observation and I have shared this with Warren earlier. I hope to see the title changed to "Global Congress of the World's Religions"—not "World Religions." I mention it because, in my mind, there is the connotation of world religions as those which have hundreds of millions of followers, like Buddhism or Christianity or Hinduism. But how about Jainism, which has four million followers, or Zoroastrianism, which has less than a million followers? And how about Judaism which does not have a hundred million followers? But they are all "World Religions." Each one of them has a universal message. So I would like, if and when this Congress meets, the name to be Global Congress of the World's Religions, so that it will envelop all the world's religions, big and small.

Today I want to present the teaching of Gandhi on the question of inter-religious relations. I believe that his approach presents the necessary attitude and flavor if the Congress of the World's Religions is to succeed at all. In one way, his approach is explained in terms of "Sarvadharmā," which in this context means, "reverence for all religions."

Gandhi arrived at the concept of "reverence for all religions" in the course of his sincere search for truth. He was conscious that his way of understanding truth was not the only way. He had a great regard for the point of view of other persons. That was for him the practical meaning of charity. Because of his great concern for truth, he was humble and inwardly receptive to the other currents of truth coming from other sources. He never claimed finality for his own convictions. Otherwise, he could never have said "Truth is God." His concept of the harmony of religions and his reverence for all of them were the result of his ardent pursuit of truth. As you know, the creative values which gave inspiration for Gandhi are truth and non-violence. All that he did and said are expansions of the implications of these two insights.

The attitude which implies that one's own faith is the best and the highest and that other religious systems are imperfect or inadequate produces a closed system. Fanaticism puts a stop to all religious quests and leads a person up a blind alley. As one German philosopher observes, "The claim of exclusiveness is a moral attack on the search for truth."

Gandhi did not advocate syncretism; he did not believe that all religions are of equal value to everyone, and that a synthesis can

be achieved by merely adding together the best in different religions. On the contrary, he maintained they all have their own respective backgrounds and characteristics issuing forth from specific historical, geographical, and cultural circumstances. These specific backgrounds are the outcome of unique social and intellectual forces, and are often composed of an unrepeatable combination of factors which cause qualities to develop differently. That all-important difference expresses itself in the ethos of a people. The members of each religious group, therefore, share an outlook on the world, God, humanity, etc., which is not identical with that of other groups. In the religious and cultural fields, there is a great scope of difference in methods, approach and modes of expression. Any attempt to root out these traditions is not only bound to fail but is also sacrilege. It is therefore right and desirable to uphold the uniqueness of particular religious systems. Cultural and creedal differences are not to be steamrolled, but attempts should be made to establish harmonious relationships between different cultures and creeds. The need of the moment is not a new religion, but mutual respect among the adherents of different religions. This is to be achieved through harmony, not uniformity.

Gandhi did not look upon eclecticism with favor. He did not approve of abdication of one's own religion and its rich heritage. On the contrary, he advocated firm adherence to one's own religion. The eclectic does not go deeply into any religious tradition and, therefore, lacks depth. His approach is superficial and he fails to grasp the distinctive message of any religion, even his own. He swims on the surface only. Actually, to call a person "eclectic" is to say that he has no faith. Gandhi did not approve of an eclectic religion; he advocated that different religions enter into a mutually respectful and fruitful intercourse with one another, each retaining its special fragrance. All religions are relevant in the context of the diversity of human needs. In the final analysis every person must have a form of worship and a set of beliefs suited to his own mental and moral competency. The food of the adult does not promote the infant's growth. Some religions are strong in devotion (*bhakti*), some in knowledge (*jnana*), and others in action (*karma*). Different types of people require different types of religious teaching. Though most religions refer to one God, they present God in different ways in accordance with the requirements and temperament of the respective peoples involved. This being so, there is no need to deplore the existence of various religions. All true values which ennoble and uplift life belong to God and must be respected and

taken seriously. To ignore any of them is to ignore God's infinite richness and impoverish humanity spiritually.

The aim of all religions is the moral and spiritual salvation of human beings. Each religion is valuable, as each serves its respective adherents. As Professor Sorokin has observed:

The existing major religions do not need to be replaced by new religions or be drastically modified. Their intuitive systems of reality-value (God, Brahman, Tao, etc.) as an infinite manifold and their conception of man as an end value (as 'Son of God,' as 'Divine Soul,' as 'bearer of the Absolute')—all of these conceptions are essentially valid and supremely edifying. Similarly, their ethical imperatives enjoining a union of the human with the Absolute and the unconditional love of human person for human person and for all living creatures, call for radical change. Some of these norms, such as those of the Sermon on the Mount, are indeed incapable of improvement.

The need of our times is for a sympathetic understanding of the facets of truth in different religions and their ways of life. Only by impartiality and charity can we recognize and appreciate different points of view and work towards a greater cooperation among religions than in the past.

The great religions of the world, each in its own sphere, have sustained the hearts and minds of millions of people through the ages. Each of them has attempted to solve life's problems in its own way, according to its own genius. All of them have supplied answers to the persisting questions of the mysteries of existence. They have lighted humanity on the path of right conduct and have given solace in the face of suffering and death. All deserve reverential study and understanding. And as long as they remain vital, they deserve to go on living.

Apart from the broad groupings of humankind on the basis of religious affiliation, religion also is an individual attitude toward life and reality, and carries with it a sense of personal longing for the Divine. This element in religion is expressed by Whitehead when he says that religion consists in what one does with his "solitariness." There are deeply religious men and women who are unable to derive help from any institutional religion. Most individuals are neither sufficiently contemplative nor sufficiently imitative to adopt the explanation given by some master theologian. They may grasp parts of this system of thought and sense the direction of the system as a whole, yet they find that they require their own interpretations when they are in the grip of engrossing troubles and turmoils in their lives. In times of acute distress, it is

not the perfection of the system as a whole that satisfies, but some aspect of it that renders the moment intelligible and bearable. For such people, religion is a thing of the heart and not merely of outward form. Each person is entitled to his own religious conviction, and as a necessary corollary, needs to respect others' convictions.

Dr. Sri Radhakrishna observes:

When two or three religious systems claim that they contain the revelation of the very core and center of truth, and acceptance of it is the exclusive pathway to heaven, conflicts are inevitable. In such conflicts, one religion will not allow others to steal a march over it, and no one can gain ascendancy until the world is reduced to dust and ashes. To obliterate every other religion than one's own is a sort of Bolshevism in religion which we must try to prevent.

To fail here would lead to a state of anarchy in the moral and spiritual realm with repercussions in the social and political. There are several examples of this unhappy fact in recent history—cities and states have been ruined. . . . In the words of Gandhi:

Mutual respect for one another's religion is inherent in a peaceful society. Free impact of ideas is impossible in any other condition. Religions are meant to tame the savage nature, not to let it loose.

Freedom of speech, freedom of movement and freedom of worship are necessary for the flowering of human personality. Freedom in these spheres always means allowing similar freedom for others; in this sense, freedom is a social quality. And in freedom alone can religions flourish—otherwise, the situation becomes impossible. Gandhi said:

The Golden Rule of conduct is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall see truth in fragments from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. Whilst, therefore, it is a good guide to individual conduct, imposition of the conduct on all will be an insufferable interference with everybody's freedom of conscience.

All religions teach adherence to certain human and spiritual values, such as devotion to duty, righteousness, self-restraint, mercy, and above all, dedication to truth and love. In this sense, the success of any religion is the success of all religions. In the eternal struggle of good and evil, religions have taken sides with the good, and exhorted humanity to cultivate moral and spiritual values. Gandhi held that each religion must bring its individual contribution



to humanity's understanding of the spiritual world. He readily welcomed the diversity of religious creeds by which people have sought to express their relation to the Supreme. He believed that all the world's religions are God-given and that they were necessary to the people to whom they were revealed.

At this point, of course, I cannot afford to omit this historical note: religions, in many cases, have been manipulated, misused, abused, exploited. Now these aspects have to be carefully removed, but we cannot throw away the baby along with the bath water. Religion, religiousness, the devotion to truth and righteousness, sincerity, have to be cherished; but we want to put an end to the abuses of religion.

Since the dawn of the religious quest, the horizon has continued to widen. Prophets were born, and are being born, to give us different facets of truth. God speaks to humanity at various times and in diverse tongues. Various persons in different environments are engaged in this eternal search for infinite truth. The same spirit informs them all. As we grow and progress in spirituality, we realize our kinship with one another through the universal spirit that binds us all.

Truth in religion does not mean a proposition. Truth in religion means contact with reality—experience of reality. That's the vision of God. It points to a commonly experienced reality. Religious personalities have contact with the Divine. But one person's experience is not the only true experience. There is no cause here to oppose religions other than one's own. All religions are fulfilled in their own way by contact with the Divine.

Understanding truth in this way, Gandhi advocated that each individual should start from his own religious foundation. But that does not mean that other ways to God are wrong. Men and women should know that other ways to God exist which equally serve other people. It is not necessary to ask through which gate one enters the City of God. The important thing is the basic experience of the Divine, the living contact with God. In the absence of this, all the forms and formalities and the debates are of little avail.

The spiritual truths contained in all religions are the common heritage of humanity. Gandhi's concept of reverence for other religions culminated in another concept which he formulated: *mamabhāva*, i.e., the acceptance of the entire religious heritage of mankind "as my own." I don't want to deprive myself of any part of this heritage; I don't want to destroy any part of this heritage; I want to keep it all. In fact, even though I do not belong to this or

that particular tradition, if I find there is the danger of the destruction of that tradition, the whole world, all concerned people, should go to the defense of that tradition, because it is a part of the religious heritage of humanity.

Spiritual values are universal and cannot be confined to a geographical area—we cannot ultimately have “Eastern values” or “Western values.” Spiritual values are universal, they are human values. They cannot be restricted to a particular group of people. Every human being has the right of access to these spiritual treasures. These values are there to be studied, admired, appreciated, and assimilated. Reverence for all religions should therefore culminate in *mamabhāva*. The prophets and saints of different religions have passed on their experience and knowledge for the benefit of humanity. They have a universal appeal. They are not the monopoly of any person or religion. Anybody may draw inspiration from them.

Most of the adherents of the world’s religions are hardly aware of the authentic contents of their own respective traditions. They are ordinarily satisfied by adhering to certain rites and ceremonies. That is why general humanity has not been kind to truly religious souls. Some of the prophets have died as martyrs at the hands of their own people. What the world needs, therefore, is the creative practice of religion, and not mere profession of it. The world has suffered not from lack of knowledge, but from the lack of right practice. The transformation can come only from self-purification and self-analysis.

Religions, in cooperation with one another, can do a great deal to rehabilitate mankind and give meaning, purpose, and value to life. They can also do much towards the establishment of peace in the world. If religions recognize their mutual worth and potentialities, and work to bring out the latent treasures hidden in each of them, they will help humanity immensely at a time when it is facing one of the most acute spiritual crises in history. No single religion has been able, so far, to spiritualize the whole of mankind. Perhaps an all-comprehending and sustained effort is required on the part of all religions to achieve this purpose. In the process, mankind has to learn that the tolerance with which truth is pursued is of as much importance as truth itself; it is a part of truth. If it be true that no divisions are so sharp as those caused by religion, it is equally true that no unity is so strong as the one that follows inter-religious understanding and harmony.

One important outcome of reverence for the faith of other people is the encouragement it gives to an impartial study and

appreciation of other religions and the criticism of one's own in the light of different religious systems. Various religions existing side by side cannot but give rise to comparison, one with the other. Comparison is a halfway house to constructive criticism, and constructive criticism results in creative religious reconstruction. There are always sensitive souls among the adherents of every religion who, keenly alive to the virtues of their religion, the virtues of other religions, and the shortcomings of their own, are stirred to reforming zeal. Gandhi himself received inspiration from Christianity and Islam which he used in his task of reformation within Hinduism, and he publicly acknowledged it.

Two thousand five hundred years ago, humankind witnessed the Buddha. Two thousand five hundred years after the Buddha, we witnessed Gandhi, who literally believed that violence and intolerance negated truth, that the greatest power on earth is the power of love in action, and that voluntary self-suffering can change the mind and heart of the most hostile of persons. These are the teachings of Gandhi, who lifted an ancient tradition of tolerance to greater heights than ever before. As the well-known historian Toynbee observes:

A spirit of non-violence is a state of feeling inspired by a moral ideal. But every moral ideal is bound up with some corresponding intellectual outlook. In the Indian outlook, the intellectual counterpart of the Indian spirit of non-violence is a belief that, for us human beings, there is more than one approach to truth and salvation.

Describing his vision, Gandhi said:

I do not expect the India of my dreams to develop one religion, i.e., to be wholly Hindu, or wholly Christian, or wholly Moslem; but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with all its religions working side by side with one another.

This same vision, I think, might be applied to the whole of humanity. You know, males and females have differences, but they can work together. Hindus and Buddhists and Muslims and Christians have differences; why can't they work together? I think and feel and believe that they can. Thank you very much. (Applause)

#### DISCUSSION

*Irving Hexham:* As a South African historian, I find it difficult to accept the optimistic interpretation of Mr. Gandhi's work in Africa. He had some success, but, unfortunately—and I think this

is very important for talking about religion—after his success came failure. The Indian community in South Africa is very oppressed today. I say this because, as an historian of South African religion, I believe that if we are going to talk about the world's religions, we also must admit that certain religions are evil in their effect and we cannot be tolerant. When one encounters evil, one must speak out against it.

*K.L.S. Rao:* Gandhi launched his agitation against the South African government on the following points: he wanted the poll tax that was levied upon the Asian communities to be ended and he wanted the removal of restrictions on Asian immigration in South Africa. On these points the government had to yield and make an agreement with Gandhi. These were his limited goals and he won them on the basis of his nonviolent struggle.

It is incorrect to make religion responsible for the misuse of religion by politicians. If, at this point, the South African government is making use of religion to maintain the apartheid system, one can't make Christianity responsible for that. We have to trace the cause of this, making a correct analysis of how religion is being falsified to support an evil system. Wherever there are evils, they have to be separated out; they have to be eliminated. There is no point in reconciling ourselves to apartheid, reconciling ourselves to the oppression of some of the third-world countries, and so on. No, no compromise! But that does not mean we have to give up our basic commitment to truth and love. That is the basis of creative religion. If we, in fact, make these commitments to truth and love, these very religious concerns will make us revolutionary activists to remove the ugly marks on the face of humanity and on the face of history.

*Warren Lewis:* On the first point at issue here, I hear no disagreement. I think Irving would like to see a resurrection of Gandhi in South Africa. Apparently his work needs to be done all over again. On the second point, Irving, would you say that apartheid is a direct result of Afrikaner religion or is religion the *ex post facto* rationale for this racial-cultural situation?

*Irving Hexham:* I think it is an extremely complex situation, but I think there is such a thing as an Afrikaner religion which is not simply manipulation by politicians, and which is, in itself, evil.

*Warren Lewis:* I have to agree with that. As a Southern white, I was twenty-two years old before I met a black person I thought was as good as I am and I had to get past my religion to believe it that way. I realize now that it was a religious cause to keep the

racism separated; and miscegenation—intermarriage of whites and blacks—would, for me, have been close to the unpardonable sin. I've had to get over that in my adult life. Now, I work for a man who believes that interracial and intercultural marriages are a large component in the coming together of the globe. Our Southern white religion was evil, is evil, on that point. That is my opinion.

*Shawn Byrne:* We cannot achieve everything; we have got to select. The major choices before us are whether to tackle the great ethical evils of our time, or to try to create a creative alternative. I think we want to think of the Global Congress as a process rather than as a once-off thing. The main conference might deal basically with theological questions and perhaps the follow-up ones might deal more with ethical applications, as a very general suggestion. I do feel that we need to have what I would call a vertical viewpoint, that we be not so much concerned with doctrinal differences and cultural differences, but that we try to have a more universal and vertical look at the purpose and significance of all religions and cultures. This is what I meant earlier when I suggested the question: Who is mankind and where are we headed? I would be worried if the Congress were to be merely a cerebral fact. I would be worried about that, because although a great deal of prominence is given to the intellectual faculty, it actually is not the deepest human faculty. The heart is at a deeper level. So I feel that the Congress should have something to do with the feeling sense, with the oneness of all mankind and with the feeling sense of that oneness in origin and in goal, in desire, and in need. That would incorporate the recognition that religion is developed out of differing experiences and cultures. Mr. Braybrooke mentioned this, I think, in reference to Sir Francis' experience of compassion and the recognition of the unity of all mankind. It included the feeling, the sense of embracing everybody; recognizing that religions and cultures have derived out of different experiences and have therefore headed off in somewhat different directions but that nevertheless all are trying to answer the same basic questions as to who mankind is, where we come from, and where we are headed. If we can experience ourselves in this way, we can then be creative. If we can recognize these relativities, we can ask more absolute universal questions. This, I guess, is what K.L.S. Rao was saying in connection with Gandhi: a reverence for all religions, while at the same time recognizing that we must say that all religions have gone off the track in part, that there is evil involved in every religion. That should also be recognized.

I would like to suggest that the Global Congress ought to be,



then, something of an experience of mankind's basic unity before the Ultimate, before God, and that it should be more like a festival with the arts than a gathering, merely, of theologians and experts. I would like to see it be a multi-faceted happening. I guess it can't just be artistic or heartistic, it can't just be music and celebration and all that, but neither ought it to be just theological or ethical and political directions. The net effect would be a sense of the interdependence of all mankind, of all men and women. I would like to see it not prepared in such a way that it pins people down too much. I would suggest, maybe not altogether seriously, that we ask the great religious leaders, great theologians, great thinkers, to come unprepared. No prepared scripts—just come and be ready to give what overflows from your heart on the spot in this situation, come and share with us in music and drama and song and prayer (prayer should be at the core of it) and discussion. But let it flow, let it be spontaneous, let the Holy Spirit work through it. I think, in such a situation, we could develop the kind of sensitivity which has been spoken about here, called for here, which is really the most necessary thing: compassion, sensitivity, universality. Thank you.

*Warren Lewis:* As a tongue-speaking Pentecostal, I certainly agree with that last comment, believing as I do that if you don't take thought for what you will say in that day and in that hour, but rely upon the Holy Spirit to tell you what to say when you get there, then maybe it will be God and not your own preconceived notions speaking. At least, God will have a chance. I agree we can't say ahead of time what the Global Congress will decide to do. Personally, I hope it will not be a "once-off" event. I certainly share with Marcus the horror of the idea of a get-together which is a "nice conference," and then that's the end of it forever. I personally am still thinking in terms of a "U.N. of the religions" which would meet periodically to deliberate and would continue to struggle with the issues of life from the religious perspective, perhaps spinning off appropriate action groups, similar to UNESCO and UNICEF. We can't set the agenda for the Global Congress. The Global Congress has to decide what it's going to be.

*Unidentified Speaker:* I come from Germany. In spite of your convictions that we should be a Pentecostal movement, I am nevertheless very glad that we are allowed to speak our hearts. Yet I have the impression that there are many people, especially in religious questions, who would have big problems if we put all the emphasis on this speaking the heart openly. There would be many people who would have difficulty speaking out before people of

other traditions, other convictions, other religions. I am convinced it is a good thing to speak from shyness, especially in the question of religion. We shouldn't speak only by reason; but there are many people, from different religions, and religions with deep heart, who have a shyness exactly to show heart. I have no difficulties to show my mind, but I have more difficulties to show my heart. Not everybody can speak immediately at such a meeting in this way.

*Robert Moon:* We started this conference (Boston ICUS) with the general idea of absolute love expressed in Sun Myung Moon's introduction at the beginning of the conference. I think this is extremely important in what we are trying to do here. Our worldly affairs are so much concerned not only with the deeds, but also the word. How can we control our thoughts? This is where trouble begins, with the thoughts. Thoughts can be evil or they can be good, and we must find a way in which we can eliminate the evil thoughts before they progress to the word and deed stage. I think sharing is very important here, using all our intellectual, spiritual and moral powers from our hearts and under God's guidance. Then we begin to realize that no individual is above any other individual. We're all the same, we have something to share, we complement each other. As far as knowing is concerned, many of us have experienced the sciences, where one cannot be a scientist without being a poet. We do share ideas and something new can come if our hearts and minds are ready. There is also revelation. That may be what we're after in this Global Congress.

*Warren Lewis:* Now we are at the end of the second session. I feel as though we have made progress. There is more momentum now than there was a year or a week ago. We have Marcus Braybrooke and Seshagiri Rao to thank. I'll conclude simply with this invitation: it seems that our next step will be to hold a conference of several groups which are industriously engaged in the work of global, interreligious, ecumenical dialogue, groups such as Marcus's World Congress of Faiths and Seshagiri's Temple of Understanding. We will form an international, interfaith invitation committee to plan this proposed conference, which we might hold in about a year's time. Its purpose shall be to allow the several groups to communicate with one another about their perspectives, their histories, their work, and their future. These groups, ideally, might confederate as the co-conveners of the Global Congress of World Religions.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>*The World Parliament of Religions*, ed. J.H. Barrows, Chicago, 1893, pp. 67-68.
- <sup>2</sup>Francis Younghusband, *Vital Religion*, London, 1940, p. 6.
- <sup>3</sup>*Religion for Peace*, (Newsletters of WCRP), July 1975, p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup>*The Louvain Declaration*, Cyclostyled text, p. 1.
- <sup>5</sup>*World Faiths*, Spring 1977, pp. 4-5.

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