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At the Grassroots of Interreligious Dialogue Activities

Founding a ‘Spiritual UN’ (Temple of Understanding / 1968 – 1972)

Since its very beginnings, the interreligious dialogue (IRD) movement has challenged its members to when it comes to their respective theological understanding of other religions.¹ On the one hand, there are those who actively seek the creation of one world religion. On the other hand, there are those who recognize distinctiveness and differences between religions. In any case, the question of how to relate to those of other religions remains a challenge to this day; it is one of the constitutive dimensions of the IRD movement as a whole.

The present paper seeks to contribute to the discussion of this central question by analyzing the early history of the Temple of Understanding (TOU), one of the central institutions of the modern IRD movement, created in 1960 and still in existence today. This paper analyzes the TOU’s history with a particular focus on its contribution to IRD. The TOU was – and still is – characterized by a number of features, outlined below, that influenced the way the TOU developed. The defining features that are contributing factors in the organization’s development are as follows:

- TOU is an organizational pioneer in the field of interreligious dialogue
- TOU contributes a specific approach to the field
- TOU is not part of any religious networks
- TOU is inclusive and appeals to all kinds of believers

Note: I would like to thank Executive Director of the TOU, Alison Van Dyk who generously gave me access to the archive and ensured comfortable working conditions. I was very pleased and surprised to have received so much support, even in cases that were not directly related to work in the archive. Thanks to Alison Van Dyk’s help and the help of her husband Peter Ledermann, I felt completely comfortable from the first day in New York. Nomi Naeem, Senior Librarian at Brooklyn library was also very helpful and introduced me the TOU archive. Finally, I would like to thank the Research Department for this research opportunity. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Dr. Karsten Lehmann whose guidance in writing this article and critical remarks were extremely helpful.

1 Marcus Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope: One Hundred Years of Global Interfaith Dialogue* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 1.

- TOU is the first organization that regrouped religious organizations that have cooperated with the United Nations (UN)
- TOU is a global organization in its focus, targeting the whole world
- TOU was shaped by the two women that founded the organization

In this paper, the author argues that the analyzed archival materials revealed the following points that shaped the early strategy in the development of this multi-religious organization:

- Firstly, the TOU saw its main contribution to IRD in the creation of an educational center for different religions;
- The TOU failed to construct a building during the first stages of their activity and decided to hold a conference for the TOU adherents instead;
- The First Spiritual Summit Conference was a turning point that defined the further development of the organization.
- After the First Spiritual Conference, the TOU rejected the idea of constructing a building, instead, they built an organization, which has served the original purpose – education for understanding.

These arguments translate into the following structure:

Section 1, “How the TOU began”, describes and analyzes the first steps of the organization. As a result of this analysis, it is possible to conclude that the TOU has several characteristic features. Its activities have had a global nature from the very beginning. It was one of the first pioneers in the sphere of IRD and has maintained its importance as an educational center for interfaith dialogue.

Section 2, “Inner workings of the TOU”, is a description of archive materials. The analysis of primary sources aimed to find out the most interesting and important episode of the TOU history, resulting in the discovery that The First Spiritual Summit Conference in Calcutta might be considered to be the most interesting since it was the first event of great scope and importance for following their strategy and activities. Additionally, it was an event that changed the organization, setting a new goal. At the start of the organization, the main goal was to build a physical building symbolizing the unity of six religions and serving as an educational center, however, after this conference, the idea shifted to non-physical building – *spiritual temple*. Thus, the TOU history can be divided into two stages: the *physical temple* phase and the *spiritual temple* phase.

Section 3, “Papers tell about the TOU”, presents a more detailed picture of the TOU based on the archival materials analyzed. It presents ideas and activities of the organization at the first stage of its evolution when the main goal was to build a *physical temple*, a place where everyone could come and learn something about the other. The building was meant to symbolize the unity among six major

faiths, as described by the protagonists inside the TOU, and simultaneously serve as an educational center with libraries.

Section 4, “The *Spiritual Temple*”, first presents a general description of the TOU based on archival materials, then focuses on the most important episode of the history of the organization, the First Spiritual Summit Conference. It represents the strongest example of the realization of the TOU’s ideas and the most productive method of performing an educational function.

1 How the TOU Began: Initiatives from Outside Traditional Hierarchies

To properly understand the early history of the TOU, it is important to keep two aspects in mind that affected the establishment of the organization – the socio-cultural context of the 1960s and the specific role of Juliet Hollister, the founder of the TOU.

1.1 The 1960s – A Time of Socio-cultural Change

In the history of the USA in particular, where the main protagonists who started the TOU lived, the 1960s were marked by a great movement for social change. This period can be described as one of counterculture, a revolution in social norms about clothing, music, drugs, dress, sexuality, formalities and schooling.² The then complex international political situation caused many people to search for something that could save humanity. With the world disunited by boundaries of enmity due to the Cold War, it was vitally important to find a basis that would bring people with different views together. These different cultural processes also influenced the TOU’s ideals. Four examples were of particular significance: the counterculture, the establishment of new religious movements and the New Age movement, the establishment of new movements in third world countries and the USA’s involvement in the Vietnam War.

² Brian Ward, ed., *The 1960s: A Documentary Reader* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 1; Edward J. Rielly, *The 1960s* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003), 285; Sharon Monteith, *American Culture in the 1960s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 242; Kenneth T. Walsh, “The 1960s: A U.S. News, *Decade of Promise and Heartbreak*: <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2010/03/09/the-1960s-a-decade-of-promise-and-heartbreak> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

The early 60s were characterized by the countercultural movements that developed in the United States, which soon spread to other Western countries in particular. The 60s counterculture consisted of several movements, often overlapping: anti-war, anti-nuclear, civil rights, environment, hippies, the sexual revolution, women's rights, and many other movements with varied interpretations of the American Dream, some of which were accompanied by experimentation with psychedelic drugs.³

Also significant in the 1960s was the emergence of new religious movements, as well as the New Age movement, some of which had roots in different parts of the world. For example, organizations like Soka Gakkai and Transcendental Meditation emerged.⁴ As for the New Age movement, it is difficult to talk about a united phenomenon. New Age refers to a large number of different trends, sometimes contradicting each other. However, it is possible to identify a number of general overarching ideas, such as 'contact', 'synthesis' and 'development'. The New Age idea of contact involves the transfer of information important for the self-development of an individual from a certain higher being to a human being. The kind of higher being could be a god or goddess of antiquity, ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, a historical figure – such as the Apostle Paul, a higher mind, a god of a modern world religion or an angel.⁵ The idea of development can be designated by various terms – ascension, self-development, the transition to a new level of existence.⁶ In short, we can say that the basic ideas that unite different New Age groups are: "ascension", understood as the idea of development using different spiritual practices, "synthesis", understood as the choice of any convenient practices belonging to different ideological systems and "contact", understood as guidance by spiritual beings.

Developments such as the rise of the national liberation movement in third world countries – Asia, Africa and Latin America – forced the United States to consider the region as a priority. In March 1961, President John F. Kennedy unveiled the program "Alliance for Progress", which provided more financial aid (20 billion dollars over 10 years) for Latin American countries. This program could be seen as analogous to the Marshall Plan for Europe in that it was meant to foster economic growth for Latin America. It was implemented in the

3 Lewis Yablonsky, *The Hippie Trip: A Firsthand Account of the Beliefs and Behaviors of Hippies in America by a Noted Sociologist* (New York: iUniverse, 2000), 372.

4 Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: Religion, Culture and Society in the Age of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Willey Blackwell, 1996), 1–2.

5 Klimo Jon, *Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources*, 2nd edition (New York: North Atlantic Books, 1998), 193 – 215.

6 Daren Kemp and James R. Lewis, eds., *Handbook of New Age* (Boston: BRILL, 2007), 76.

wake of the victory of the Cuban Revolution (1959) and underpinned the American desire to prevent its spread in the region. The Peace Corps was also established as a US government-sponsored organization of volunteers who travelled to other countries, working in the fields of economics, education, medicine, etc. Both of these programs were designed to strengthen the influence of the United States in the international arena.

Finally, the 1960s were heavily shaped by the United States' growing active role in the war in Indochina. Despite the fact that the American army in South Vietnam exceeded 500 thousand persons armed with the latest technology, they failed to make significant progress in this war. The Vietnam War exacerbated the political situation in the country. This war was the first war, which was broadcasted on television. Every day, Americans watched the violent and bloody scenes of war. Young people became the hottest opponents of the war. The anti-war movement considerably gained scale. Marches and demonstrations, as well as campaigns to evade conscription began. The clearest manifestation of this movement was the US military siege of the Pentagon in 1967, which lasted for several days and was attended by up to 300 thousand people. The wide scope of the anti-war movement forced the US government to reconsider its policy. In 1968, President Lyndon Johnson was forced to announce the agreement of the US to hold peace talks with the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In addition, Johnson said that he would not stand as a candidate for president in the 1968 elections.

These four features of the 1960s created an atmosphere of anxiety. In this context, organizations such as the TOU emerged as answers to such global challenges. This can be illustrated with regard to the central figure that undoubtedly dominated the early history of the TOU – Juliet Hollister.

1.2 The TOU – an Institution outside Traditional Hierarchies

According to the groundbreaking study of Marcus Braybrooke, Juliet Hollister was born in Forest Hills, New York in 1916.⁷ She was interested in world religions since the age of eighteen and studied Comparative Religion at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. During her studies, she had an opportunity to meet a number of Eastern religious leaders.⁸ She found that the implicit sexism in many academic institutions blocked her opportunities

⁷ Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 45–50.

⁸ N.A., “Paid Notice: Death of JULIET G. HOLLISTER,” *The New York Times* (November 30, 2019).

to pursue a career in theology. In her memoirs Hollister writes that she had many “visions” during her lifetime but she felt that she was the last person who should be chosen to deliver such a profound message to the world.⁹ As was common for women of her era, she did not have a college degree; instead she saw in herself the strength of a sharp discerning mind and the quality of unconditional love.¹⁰

From the late 1950s onwards, Hollister began to make her dream a reality by gathering support for what became the Temple of Understanding, a name given to her project in India where the word *temple* has a non-denominational meaning of a sacred place.¹¹ When the idea to establish a Temple of Understanding was first announced, Hollister was a housewife without any affiliation to traditional religious or political networks and hierarchies. She simply felt a personal responsibility for the fate of the world.

As a first step to creation of the TOU, Hollister – together with her friend Virginia Prout – generated a list of outstanding leaders to send them letters with proposal of personal meeting and to discuss the creation of a special educational center for all religions.¹² Hollister planned to share her vision with, among others: Jawaharlal Nehru – the first Prime Minister of India and a central figure in Indian politics for much of the 20th century; Pope John the 23rd, H.H. the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Father Thomas Merton, Dr. Albert Schweitzer – philosopher, theologian and Nobel prize laureate, etc.

Hollister’s role in the initial developments of the TOU already underlines two aspects that characterized the future history of the TOU. First, it is interesting that already at the beginning Hollister had in mind her work as a global endeavor, not being limited by religion, nation, and country. It was also important for her to promote the idea of a physical building as a common goal, not only as the result of one or two donors’ contributions. In other words, the TOU had a global focus from the first days of its existence. Second, Hollister appealed not only to some religious people but also to those who were trying to address the challenges brought about in the 1960s, who were famous for their open views and their personal involvement in the fate of humanity. For example, the first major political figure to whom Hollister appealed was Eleanor Roosevelt. And when she sought funding for the libraries in the educational center of the young TOU, Hollister approached the Ford Foundation.

⁹ Juliet Hollister, *Living my dream: The Remarkable Story of Temple of Understanding* (New York: Temple of Understanding, 2010), 88.

¹⁰ Hollister, *Living my dream*, 88.

¹¹ Braybrooke. *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 93.

¹² Archive of TOU: Box “The TOU History”, folder “Correspondence: the 60s”. (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

The special role of the TOU also stems from the fact that its protagonists are frequently underlining the fact that it is the only IRD organization with an international outlook that was founded by a woman and continues to be lead by one: – Alison Van Dyke, as the Executive Director. In a male-dominant society, Hollister managed to establish an interreligious organization under female leadership. Hollister initiated her activities in the beginning of the second wave of the feminist movement.¹³ In this regard Hollister's success can be considered a sign of a change in the social conception of woman's role, as well as the result of the women's rights movement, which is reflected in more active and higher social positions for at least some woman. Hollister was aided in that her chosen social sphere provided supportive and tolerant environment, since principles of IRD presuppose understanding and appreciation of other. Additionally, it should be mentioned that the initial directions of Hollister's actions were influenced by Eleanor Roosevelt, who advised Hollister to address world leaders and to build an educational center using global efforts.

These factors set the stage for the formal establishment of the Temple of Understanding, analyzed in greater detail in the following sections.

2 Inner Workings of the TOU: Focus on Archive Materials

Currently, the archives of the Temple of Understanding are situated in the small town of Peekskill, NY. The materials are stored in a small room in special folders, exhibited in chronological order. In addition to paper-based data, the archive also contains audio and video materials. Those archives also include a separate fund for the photos, stored in albums where the images are organized according to the various activities to which they refer.

So far, the archive of the TOU is completely unexplored and uninvestigated. There is no full-time archivist who has been able to keep them in order, systematize its material and be actively engaged in saving them. The archives exist due to Alison Van Dyk, Executive Director of TOU and library enthusiast from New York, Nomi Saeed, who voluntarily engaged in digitizing archive materials and putting them in order. Thanks to these two persons, the archive's content has been gradually posted on the Internet, where it can be accessed by anyone.

¹³ N.A., *The 1960s-70s American Feminist Movement: Breaking Down Barriers for Women*: <https://tavaana.org> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

The archives contain a wide set of materials that relate to the activities of the organization since its inception in 1960 to the present day. Nowadays all correspondence and paperwork are carried out mainly in electronic form. Thus, the greatest amount of material in the archives is up to the year 1990.

After becoming acquainted with all the archival material, I decided to focus on the period of formation of the organization when its ideas and ideals were first established. Thus, I began with material related to the first decade of the TOU, supplementing it with photos and audio material. Documents of this period, for the most part, consist of Hollister's correspondence with future members of the TOU and participants of various programs, which subsequently led to the TOU's structure. In addition to letters, there are newspapers and magazines containing interviews with Hollister, as well as newsletters published by the TOU. The materials found in the archives are quite diverse and contain organizational activities presented from different angles, lists of members, sponsors, conference programs, letters of invitation to participate in different activities and proposals to contribute to projects. However, it is difficult to get a clear image of how the idea for the TOU and its internal components came to develop, using only these archival sources. To fill this gap, I consulted Hollister's memoirs, written between 1979 and 1985, while keeping in mind that they were edited prior to publication.

The main focus of the analysis concerned Hollister's correspondence with future members of the TOU, namely letters written to each one¹⁴ and their responses to the invitation to join the organization.¹⁵ This correspondence reveals the vigorous activity and willingness of members to contribute to the organization's projects. I also tracked the financial development of the organization. Once the organization was known, it was sponsored by the voluntary contributions of ordinary citizens from around the world. Contributions varied from \$1 to thousands of dollars.

In sum, the archival materials provide a detailed picture of the TOU history, which can then be divided into two parts: 1) the *temple* phase as one in which the main goal is to construct a solid embodiment of the interfaith dialogue or physical temple, and 2) the *spiritual temple* phase, where the first idea was dropped in favour of what Hollister, later on, began to call a temple without any boundaries. The next two sections try to reconstruct this history.

¹⁴ Archive of TOU: Box "The TOU History", folder "Correspondence", Letter from Konkokyo Church of Izuo.

¹⁵ Archive of TOU: Box "The TOU History", folder "Correspondence", Letter from Kamil Hussein.

3 About the TOU: Gaining Support for IRD in the USA and Abroad

As already mentioned in section 2, the early history of the TOU can be traced back to the idea of two Connecticut housewives in the fall of 1959 to create a building where all religions would be represented in an educational centre where one could learn about the traditions of their neighbours. This goal more or less determined the actions of the first 8 years in the life of the organization, its search for sponsors and support, as well as the purchase of land for its construction.

Gradually a new trend in the organization's activities appeared: the development of various educational events. As a result, this became the primary format of work and the idea of a physical building morphed into the idea of a spiritual building, formed by the unity of people from around the world.

3.1 First step: Building a *Physical Temple*

The architecture of the building was important to embody Hollister's idea of interfaith dialogue and unity. In the initial plans, the building was to be constructed in the shape of the sun with six rays, each representing one of the six major religions (which at that time were thought to be Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islam).¹⁶ Each ray would contain a chapel and a library. The whole building would be set in a circular pool of water. In the centre would be a courtyard for silence and meditation, containing a small circular pool with a lotus and a flame in its centre.

As planned by Hollister, the building was to serve as a symbol of unity of different cultures and religions. Each beam of this building would be one of the religions out of a single center for all. This meant that all religions have a common beginning, common idea and a common goal. The building itself was to remind the onlooker that, without exception, the Sun shines for and gives warmth to everyone regardless of their skin color, eye shape or religious beliefs – an image in tune with the New Age ideas of that period. In other words, the initial conception of the TOU reflected the social atmosphere of the time when it was founded. But it was important that the building would not be “a place of

¹⁶ Archive of TOU: Box “The TOU History”, folder “L.D. – plan”, Brochure “The Temple of Understanding”.

worship”, but “a place of education, where anyone might enter and in a short period of time – perhaps through the films or recorded lectures, and by visiting representative chapels within the building – pick up some knowledge of the faiths of men and thereby some understanding of spiritual kinship of men.”¹⁷

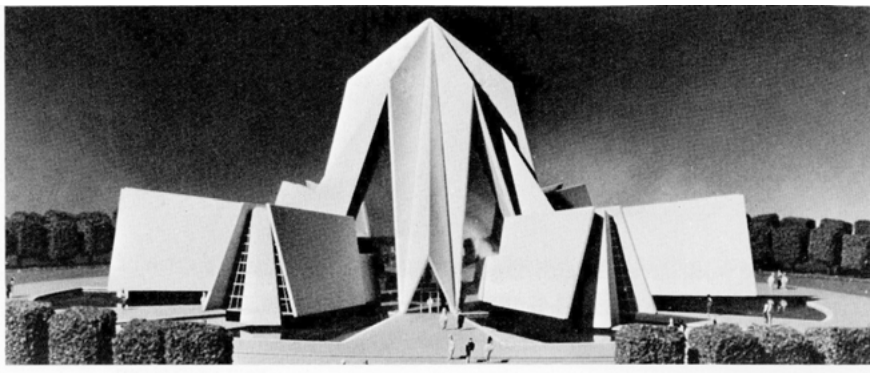


Fig. 1: Model of an educational center, 1959¹⁸

The idea of the physical building serving as an educational center was a cornerstone of Hollister’s early activity. Seeking ways to realize this idea determined Hollister’s actions. Without either a college degree or religious studies, Hollister did not have the credentials. Additionally, she was a woman tackling religious leadership, a sphere dominated by men. Interestingly, the first individual who officially voiced approval was also a woman. Through an indirect connection, she gained the opportunity to meet with Eleanor Roosevelt. Hollister had rough architectural plans of the building drawn up by her friend Lathrop Douglas and displayed them before her. Roosevelt thought it was a wonderful idea and encouraged Hollister to continue. She suggested that Hollister begins by developing support from key religious and political leaders around the world and she offered to write letters of introduction to Roosevelt’s friends at the United Nations and around the world for her. Hollister received copies of these letters.¹⁹

¹⁷ Robert Wallace “Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession,” *Life Magazine*, (14 December 1962): 94–103.

¹⁸ Archive of TOU: Box “The TOU History”, folder “L.D. – plan”, Brochure “The Temple of Understanding”.

¹⁹ Archive of TOU: Box “The History of TOU”, folder “Correspondence”; Archive of TOU: Box “The History of TOU”, folder “Letters of introduction”, 1959.

With this very interesting set of people in mind, Hollister started from the following list of key people: Pope John XXIII, Prime Minister Nehru, and President Nasser. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote letters of introduction for all of them. After receiving official responses, it was possible to plan her trip around the world to present her idea.

3.2 Trips around the World

Hollister's trip around the world can be reconstructed according to the interview she gave at the time to *Life* magazine. The initial tea date with Eleanor Roosevelt was 7 February 1960, and six weeks later Mrs. Hollister was on her way around the world with her 11-year old son Dickon. She had 1800 dollars initially intended for remodeling her kitchen and 3500 dollars borrowed from a bank.²⁰

In Rome, Hollister presented her letters of introduction to Monsignor Martin O'Connor in the American College of the Vatican, then she attended a group audience with the Pope. In Cairo, Hollister spoke with Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout, the rector of Al-Azhar University, Muhammed Abdulah el-Araby, a revered professor of law at Cairo University, Anwar el-Sadat, Secretary General of the Islamic Congress and future President of Egypt.

In New Delhi, Hollister met with Prime Minister Nehru (the first Prime Minister of India and a central figure in Indian politics for much of the 20th century), Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (the first Vice President of India (1952–1962) and the second President of India from 1962 to 1967). In Bangkok, Hollister introduced her project to Somdej Pramaha Veerawong, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. Then Hollister visited New Asia College in Hong Kong and met with H. S. Hisamatsu, a Zen Buddhist leader from Kyoto.

All these people expressed words of support, promising to speak or write on behalf of the project.²¹

3.3 Presentation inside the USA

In 1960, Hollister did a fifteen-minute introduction of the TOU vision for the *Voice of America* radio show, which was recorded, translated into 32 languages and broadcasted around the world. She appeared on several talk shows includ-

²⁰ Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 97.

²¹ Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 97.

ing one with Harry Reasoner, *The Today Show* with Barbra Walters, and *To Tell the Truth* with Bud Collyer. The TOU idea was officially announced to the press at a benefit event sponsored by the *Women's International Religious Fellowship* in Washington, D.C. Afterwards, newspaper headlines began reporting about Hollister's plans: "Group Plans A 'Spiritual U.N. Here" is a headline from *the Washington Post*, published in December 1960.²² Other journalists struggled to describe the center's purpose: "Six Faiths Join to Build Data – Exchange Center".²³

Hollister also appeared on *The Reverend, the Priest, and the Rabbi*, a radio program hosted by Rabbi Samuel Silver of Temple Sinai in Stamford, taking part in an all-night show on the TOU. All this coverage successfully got the message out and an influx of mail began appearing at the Hollister residence. By the end of 1961, the TOU had already gained 1000 sponsors from 23 countries.²⁴

Support sky-rocketed in their second year. Mail continued to pour in and by the fall of 1962, Hollister recorded 6000 supporters in 66 countries.²⁵ Right around the time that this interest was escalating, an article written about the TOU appeared in *Life* magazine. The article, entitled "Juliet Hollister and Her Wonderful Obsession", was published on 14 December 1962. In it, the author tells the story of the TOU²⁶ and also gives an account of Hollister:

She has extraordinary energy and is direct in action, to a point which some of her friends consider foolhardy. If she felt that it might be a good idea to talk to Pope John, she might well try to reach him on the telephone. When she is swept by enthusiasm, she often exaggerates but not to the point of falsehood. She has a good deal of courage yet there is no real hardness in her; she weeps as often as any other women.²⁷

22 N.A., "Group Plans A 'Spiritual U.N.'," *The Washington Post* (December, 29, 1960).

23 N.A., "Six Faiths Join to Build Data – Exchange Center," *The Herald Tribune* (December 2, 1960).

24 Archive of TOU: Box "the TOU History – sponsors", folder "Lists, countries, amounts. 1960 – 1970".

25 Archive of TOU: Box "the TOU History – sponsors", folder "Lists, countries, amounts. 1960 – 1970".

26 Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 95.

27 Temple of Understanding, *The History of the Temple of Understanding*: <https://templeofunderstanding.org/about-us/history/> (accessed: 24.5.2020). See also: Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 94.

3.4 Support

While Hollister and those working with her were getting the message out about the TOU mission, steps were also being taken to establish the foundations of the organization. In 1960, Hollister began forming the Board of Directors. In addition to Hollister and her husband, Vice President Radhakrishnan was the first Board Member. More Board Members joined. They included Rabbi Israel Goldstein, Head of the New York Board of Rabbis, Reverend Lowell Ditzan, Head of the National Presbyterian Center in Washington, D.C. and Dr. Wen Yen Tsao, who worked as a cultural counselor at the Taiwanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. Tsao, in particular, was enthusiastic about the TOU and expressed this in an early letter to Hollister.²⁸

By August 1960, the TOU had reached the tax-exempt status entitled to an international, educational corporation.²⁹ In September 1960, the first board meeting took place. The Board grew to include Norma Boyd, Founder and President of the Women's International Religious Fellowship – established in 1959 – and one of the founding members of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first sorority founded by African American students³⁰, as well as Mrs. Halm, the wife of the Ambassador to Ghana, Mohammad Zafrullah Kahn, Ambassador of Pakistan to the U.N., and Jim Mills, a former Chairman of the Board of Education in Greenwich, Connecticut. Related activity was simultaneously taking place outside the USA. A TOU committee was formed in Japan led by Lord Abbot Ohtani in Kyoto. Reverend Toshio Miyake of the Konko-Kyo sect was one of its members.

Hollister's dream resonated in various parts of the world. One can judge by the active responses of the public. At the start of Hollister's activities, she received thousands of letters from 22 countries with support for her dream and, moreover, declarations of financial support as well. Hollister's travel with her son generated media interest; many articles about her dream were written and she was interviewed several times and appeared on various TV shows. Many segments of American society, in particular, had immediately taken an interest in her ideas. This interest demonstrated that a broad range of people were ready to entertain the idea of the TOU. For some three to four years the number of supporters of this initiative grew to between six and seven thousand. Among those who responded to Hollister's appeal, were representatives of different nationalities and religions and people with different social status and income. Most of the

²⁸ Archive of TOU: Box "the TOU History – Correspondence", folder "1960–1970".

²⁹ Archive of TOU: Box "Documents", folder "60s".

³⁰ Archive of TOU: Box "1960: Board Meetings", folder "The List of Participants".

work was done by volunteers, supporting Hollister's ideas, and ready to help the organization.

During the first year of TOU's operations, its work was conducted out of the Hollister residence. But as the organization grew, it required more space and moved to its headquarters in an office in Greenwich, Connecticut, then to a Washington, D.C. office in 1965. That same year, Hollister named Peter Dunne the Executive Director. He was the Co-founder of the American Institute for Foreign Trade and the Director of the International School Foundation in Tucson, Arizona.

During this development, Hollister, her friends and supporters had in mind the organization's mission to create the educational center.

3.5 Constructing a Building

In her interview with *Life* magazine, Hollister mentions that they need approximately 5 million dollars to cover the cost of the land and construction costs, but that they still did not have this amount.³¹ Hollister and her Board did what they could to raise as many funds as possible. They held fundraising events, such as a benefit dinner held at the Waldorf-Astoria where 23 U.N. ambassadors and thirty Japanese monks attended.³² Interestingly in her letter of invitation to this event, Hollister underlines that the TOU is not a religious organization but an educational one.³³

In the fall of 1965, Peter Dunne located a 20-acre parcel of land on the Potomac River that was deemed suitable for the TOU and was available at an affordable price. By 1966, the TOU had acquired the land.³⁴ Having secured the land, the Board of Directors moved the plan forward. On 12 October 1966, the TOU held an inaugural ceremony. The event included several speeches, an opening prayer and a tree planting. The speakers included Zafrulla Khan, Dr. Wen Yen Tsao, Rabbi Samuel Silver, Reverend Lowell Ditzen, and other prominent people working in the religious sphere.³⁵ Charles Mills served as Master of Ceremonies. The tree planting concluded the ceremony. Representatives from the major religions each planted a tree a Cedar Deodara for Hinduism; a Bamboo for Bud-

31 Wallace, "Judith Hollister and her wonderful Obsession," 103.

32 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1962-events".

33 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1962 - events", Letter of invitation to Ambassador Rossides.

34 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "Building projects".

35 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1966 - meetings".

dhism; a Cedar of Lebanon for Judaism; an Oak for Christianity; and a Turkish Oak for Islam.³⁶

3.6 The Educational Dimension

During these early years, the TOU's activity expanded to include more than just fundraising and the planning of a future building. The organization began to find more ways to carry out its educational mission.

In 1965, the TOU held its first conference at Asia House in New York City on the theme of "Education for Understanding". A variety of individuals participated: Harry Meserve of the Organization for Religious and Mental Health in New York; Erwin Goodenough and Filmer Northrup from Yale; Wilfred Cantwell Smith from Harvard University; Edwin Stanton a former ambassador to Thailand; Amiya Chakravarty from Boston University; Shoyu Hanayana, representing Bishop Shinsho Hanayana; Zwnown Rossides Ambassador from Cyprus to the U.N.³⁷

In 1968, the TOU held the first Washington Conference on Interreligious Understanding, co-sponsored by the National Presbyterian Center and Georgetown University. The main aim of this conference was to bring together a panel of qualified and dedicated spokesmen for Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. They discussed "the Validity Which Each of the Religions Accords to Other Religions". Among the speakers were different prominent people presenting various religions of the world.³⁸ They talked about their own faith's perspective on other religions and ways in which religions could communicate with one another in Washington and beyond. The papers presented at the conference were later published by the World Academy of Art and Science and the conference resulted in the formation of a steering committee for interreligious communication.

This conference was the first event of its kind held at a Roman Catholic University. And according to Marcus Braybrooke, this one-day meeting highlighted the main idea and shared belief that "many kinds of theological terminology as there are religions, that the great faiths of the world do possess the capacity

³⁶ Archive of TOU: Box "Photos: 1966".

³⁷ Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "1965 – events".

³⁸ Archive of TOU: Box "The History of TOU", folder "Washington conference, 68"; for example: Rev. John Haughey, Professor of Theology at Georgetown University; Rev. Duncan Howlett of All Souls Church in Washington; Venerable Piyananda Maha Thera, President of the Buddhist Vihara Society in Washington, and Dr. Isaac Franck, Executive Vice-President of the Jewish Community Council of Washington.

and the will to join hands for the common good, and none of them considers that this would call for any compromise of their essential doctrines or rituals.”³⁹ One could conclude that the event was an official confirmation of the possibility of interreligious dialogue from the theoretical perspective of different religions; religious authorities showed that their own sacred texts do not prohibit them from participating in a dialogue with representation of other religion.

Thus, the first steps of the TOU were determined by one specific purpose – to build an educational center. Hollister toured a number of countries around the world in order to present her project and to enlist the support of significant representatives of different religions. The next step was to achieve greater fame, which was accomplished with the help of media and television. However, the amount raised by the end of the 5th year of the TOU was not enough to buy the land and to cover construction costs. Although the organization had quite wealthy sponsors and the possibility to appeal to people who could single-handedly sponsor the construction of the building, the TOU was in no hurry to pursue this route since Eleanor Roosevelt offered to raise the necessary funds from around the world underscoring the international nature of the project. At the same time, a new stage in the organization’s activities began; they started to hold conferences with the subsequent publication of the reports. In other words, they began to engage in that activity, the main function of which coincided with the intended purpose of the educational center.

To properly assess the significance of these developments, it is important to have a look at the second phase of the TOU’s activities that focused on the *spiritual temple* – rather than the physical one. The subsequent developments underlined to what extent the organization did not wait for the physical structure of an educational center of all religions to come to fruition and, instead, undertook an educational mission without a building. This shift centered on what the protagonists inside the TOU described as the ‘First Spiritual Summit Conference’.

4 *The Spiritual Temple: A New Dimension in the TOU’s History*

During the first 8 years, the primary efforts of the organization were put towards the creation of the TOU building. However, in 1965, a turning point occurred when the TOU held its first educational events. In 1968, the first of several sum-

³⁹ Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, 97.

mit conferences was held, marking a significant moment in the history of the organization, and signaling an important transition in the nature of its work.

4.1 The First Spiritual Summit Conference

The idea of a spiritual center had indeed attracted a great number of supporters and this idea was still kept alive by Hollister and her staff.⁴⁰ However, it was becoming clear that there might be a greater appeal by supporters in an alternate, yet related area, namely the desire for the religions of the world to exist in harmony with each other. Although those individuals were highly interested in the construction of a building, what they wanted most was to see religious leaders and communities working together, learning about each other and developing mutual understanding. In closely analyzing the letters of support received by Hollister one can determine that people were not primarily attracted to the idea of constructing the building itself but by the essential purpose of it – spreading the word⁴¹, i.e. an educational function. The First Spiritual Summit was a major step in that direction.

The First Spiritual Summit Conference was held in Calcutta in 1968. It was convened at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture from 22 to 26 October. It was originally planned for Darjeeling, but severe storms and flooding required a last-minute change.⁴²

32 representatives from 10 religions attended. Among them were leaders of religious communities, scholars and civil society. The event featured a variety of speakers with daily presentations of papers. The conference's theme was "the Relevance of the World's Religions".

4.2 Emphasis on the Importance of Religion

The main conclusion that can be drawn by analyzing the documents relating to the organization of the first conference in Calcutta is that the event was organized in order to emphasize the importance of religion and faith in the modern world. Recognizing that this was an important issue to reflect upon, the Board

40 Archive of TOU: Box "Correspondence", folder "1961", Letters from M. Johnson, W.W. Bosworth, D. Stone.

41 Archive of TOU: Box "The History of the TOU", folder "Correspondence, 1965".

42 Archive of TOU: Box "Correspondence: 66–68"; Archive of TOU: Box "The History of the TOU", folder "1st Spiritual Summit".

of Directors chose this as the conference theme. Given the nature of the theme, it can be assumed that all those participating in the conference believed that religion was relevant from the outset. The TOU's mission was encouraged precisely because its supporters believed that religion was important to the world. Secondly, in desiring to promote understanding among religions, it can also be inferred that the TOU's supporters also would have felt that all religions were relevant and that it was worth the time and effort to gather representatives of the different faiths together to develop mutual understanding.

The conference-aim predominantly reflected these two aspects. It was hoped that gathering together religious leaders and thinkers would allow religious communities to articulate the relevance of religion and to begin to work towards developing commonalities. At the conference, eleven religions were represented: The Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Shintoism and Zoroastrianism. The distribution of faiths and key representatives present are as follows:

- Christianity had the greatest level of representation.⁴³ For example, one of the speakers was Fr. Pierre Fallon, a pioneering leader of interfaith work in Calcutta who was working on behalf of the newly-formed Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (now called the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue). Aymero Wondmagnehu, Director of His Imperial Majesty's Private Cabinet for Religious Affairs and Administrator of the Ethiopian Orthodox Mission from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia also participated.
- Buddhism was represented by Princess Poon Diskul, Dr. Reimon Yuki and Dr. Hakuji Matsuo from the World Fellowship of Buddhists; Maha Thera, the President of Buddhist Vihara Society of Washington D.C.
- Dr. V. Raghavan from the University of Madras, Professor Amiya Chakravarty were among those that represented Hinduism.
- Dr. Syed S. Vahiuddin from the University of Delhi and Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan were representatives of Islam.
- Rabbi Mordecai Waxman from New York and Dr. Ezra Spicehandler from Israel represented Judaism.
- Two persons represented Zoroastrianism.

Finally, there was one representative for each of the following religions: The Baha'i faith, Confucianism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Shintoism.

In addition to the representatives of the religions, there were special counselors. From the list of the participants, it is clear that the organizers cared about

⁴³ See annex.

the quality of those who were invited. The conference was attended not just by members of different religions, but by active individuals who occupied positions of responsibility, with high social status. They were essentially people who could subsequently have an impact on their environment and society as a whole.

The papers presented by these individuals were published in *The World Religion's Speak* on 'The Relevance of Religion in the Modern World', ed. by Finley P., Dunne Jr. The titles of the participants' reports also tell us a lot.⁴⁴ First, one can note that most of them were devoted to the relevance of the religion in the modern world, so they supported the special mission of the TOU. One part of the reports describes ways of building interreligious dialogue. In essence, the conference was held in an atmosphere of cooperation and tolerance. It would not be an exaggeration to say that representatives of each religion felt responsible for the mission of preserving peace in the modern world.

On the morning before the last day of the conference, all those attending gathered together and crossed the Ganges River by steamboat to the Calcutta Botanical Gardens. At this occasion, they offered a communal interfaith prayer on the salvation of humankind.



Fig. 2: Common prayer of the participants at the First Spiritual Summit Conference⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See annex.

⁴⁵ Archive of TOU: Box "TOU: History", folder: "Calcutta Conference".

The conference ended with the drafting and signing of a formal declaration. The document spoke about the particular need for religion in these times:

We see that science, technology, political and industrial forces, with all their powers, have so far not been able, either alone, or in combined effort, to produce the kind of world that all men desire. We believe it is time for all peoples and nations, including the leaders of our major secular institutions, to recognize the relevance of the world's religions to the fate of man in the present century.⁴⁶

The declaration concluded by proposing the formation of an interfaith committee, an “international, inter-religious, world body”⁴⁷ and by suggesting that the TOU hold a second Summit Conference a year later.

The First Spiritual Summit conference was also special because it is one of the events that Thomas Merton attended on his fateful trip to the East.⁴⁸ He died less than two months later in Bangkok. His famous lines, “we are already one and we imagine we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are”⁴⁹, were first uttered at the Summit Conference in presenting his paper “Monastic Experience and the East-West Dialogue.”⁵⁰

The First Spiritual Summit Conference resulted in an agreement to gather once again in the same format of the 2nd Summit Conference. According to Hollister's letter to Dr. John Myers, dated 22 July 1969, they had begun planning the next Conference in Istanbul for the spring of 1970.⁵¹ In this letter, Hollister also asks for financial support – not for building purpose, but for conference expenses.

⁴⁶ Finley P. Dunne Jr., *The World Religions Speak on 'The Relevance of Religion in the Modern World'* (The Hague; Dr. W. Junk N. V. Publishers, 1970), 208. Archive of TOU: Box “TOU: History”, folder: “Calcutta conference”.

⁴⁷ Archive of TOU: Box “TOU: History”, folder: “Calcutta conference”.

⁴⁸ An American Catholic writer and mystic, a poet, social activist, and student of comparative religion.

⁴⁹ William H. Shannon, ed., *Thomas Merton: The Hidden Ground of Love – Letters* (New York: Macmillan. 2011), 12.

⁵⁰ Dunne Jr., *The World Religions Speak*, 72.

⁵¹ Archive of TOU: Box “The History of TOU”, folder “Correspondence – 2nd Summit Conference”, Letter to Dr. John Myers, July 22, 1969.

4.3 The Same Aim – an Alternate Embodiment

Indeed, the First Spiritual Summit Conference was a significant moment in the TOU's history. As was discussed above, it signaled a transition in the nature of the organization's work. The shift was especially important for the organization's vision of itself. The Summit Conference marks the moment that that original vision transformed into something else. The idea of a solid, concrete building dedicated to the world's religions, gave way to a new entity, a symbolic temple. The last reference to the idea of building an educational center in the sources was found in the book presenting papers from the First Spiritual Summit Conference.⁵² The later correspondence reflects preparations for the next conference but not efforts to find other places or additional funding for a building; Hollister, as in her earlier correspondence, asks for financial support but not for construction of a building. Instead, she seeks funding for holding the next Summit Conference.

This shift might have been understood as a failure, but the present Executive Director of the TOU and heir to Hollister's ideas and ideals, Alison Van Dyke, expresses it differently by stating that it was a success and a development rather than a failure. A *temple* can be a tangible space that people visit, but it can also be something fluid and dynamic, such as a net of relationships formed and based on a common vision: the unity of the world's faiths, the development of peace and understanding and harmony in the world. The *temple* building thus became a symbolic entity. Its solid, concrete structure transformed into the common commitment to interfaith work. Although it was seemingly possible to continue efforts to find a place and seek additional financial support for building a physical temple, the idea changed in its essence; the material building was no longer as important as the spiritual unity expressed in the form of meetings in different countries.

The new direction of the TOU stands for several significant points that still characterize the notion of a *temple*:

- The word temple in the name of the organization gains a deeper meaning. At first, it referred to a physical building, to become a sacred place for the main six religions; after the shift, the meaning of the word temple was transformed to imply the unity of people sharing a common vision and this unity did not only include six religions, but all of them without any limits (a physical building would by its nature be limited by its space and opportunities to represent some religion or spiritual practices whereas opportuni-

⁵² Dunne Jr., *The World Religions Speak*, 210.

- ties presented by the symbolic unity represented in the activities are limitless).
- The spiritual notion also developed. Initially, it meant that the temple was related to the non-ceremonial side of religion and/or any spiritual practice in the world. After the rejection of the idea of building a physical temple, the word “spiritual” was added to refer to the non-physical nature of the temple.
 - The rejection of the idea of building a physical temple freed a lot of energy, time and efforts that could be used directly for educational activities.
 - Initially, Washington D.C. was considered as the best place for the TOU. While considering leasing a building, the organization chose New York – a world center and fertile ground for various activities. It is also worth noting that the chosen building was next to the UN, which underlined the TOU’s title “spiritual UN”, adding also many new organizational opportunities.

The above-mentioned developments at the end of the 1960s are necessary to properly understand the TOU and its role in the dialogue movement. They underline how the TOU established a particular educational approach to IRD that is still significant today. The variety of TOU’s present activities and its constant improvement confirm this point.

5 Conclusion

The TOU is a dialogue organization with a rich history with its own contributions to interfaith dialogue processes. The organization still holds interfaith conferences and meetings of representatives of different religions, as it has done since almost the beginning of its inception. The organization also actively works with youth conducting special programs and introducing the TOU principles.

The TOU history is a story of how they developed their own approach to IRD. The organization was established as an attempt to realize interfaith dialogue through education and fostering the exchange of values. This educational mission was supposed to be carried out within a new building that would serve as a physical embodiment of the unity of the TOU-identified six main religions. During, the initial years, most of the TOU’s efforts were aimed at raising funds for such a building. After a few years, in parallel with the fundraising, the organization began to hold members’ meetings in the form of round table discussions and conferences. The most significant of these events was the conference in Calcutta (now renamed Kolkata). This event differed by its level (almost 100 participants, 5-day-duration) and venue (outside the United States in a country in the

East) from the previous conferences. The important result of this conference was that it exemplified the new format of work for the organization. Initially, it was assumed that education would be the primary function of the TOU, consisting of a library, recorded lectures and videos and representative chapel inside a physical building. But the 1st Summit Conference showed that the main purpose of this educational activity – to get acquainted with other religions, to understand them and their values, and to develop mutual respect and tolerance – could be achieved quite successfully in the framework of the conference. Moreover, the dependence on the significance of a specific building lowers the potential of the organization and also affects the equal status of members.

Another consideration is that the mobility shown by the activities in different cities and countries is very much in line with today's world – a world of globally Internet-connected networks. The last point, which serves as a confirmation of the effectiveness of the TOU, is that the ownership of the notion of a building through the use of the word *temple* and the continuation of its symbolism serves as an affirmation of the organization's existence and material embodiment of its ideas. If this building were not present, the organization would always have to maintain a high level of activity, conducting a number and variety of events to maintain its presence.

In the early 1960s, Hollister's undertaking initially gained an active and sincere response of people from around the world. The TOU has since then constantly received growing support, including in the form of remittances, from around the world. This has allowed the TOU to continue to fulfill its mission. Today, it remains an active and successful IRD organization working to unite people around the world.

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7 Annex

7.1 Annex 1: List of the Participants of the 1st Spiritual Conference in Calcutta (1968)

Christianity:

- Fr. Pierre Fallon, a pioneering leader of interfaith work in Calcutta who was working on behalf of the newly-formed Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (now called the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue);
- Lowell R. Ditzen, S.J. Director of the National Presbyterian Center, Washington, D.C.;
- Harold F. Snyder, International Affairs Representative for South Asia;
- Aymero Wondmagnehu, Director of His Imperial Majesty's Private Cabinet for Religious Affairs and Administrator of the Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
- Fr. Thomas Merton;
- Bishop A.J. Shaw, Methodist Church in Southern Asia, Mrs. Sanford Kauffman, Church Women United;
- Sister Barbara Mitchell, Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, Purchase, New York;
- Roland Gammon.

Buddhism:

- Her Serene Highness Princess Poon Diskul, President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists;
- Aiem Sangkhavasi, Secretary-General of the World Fellowship of Buddhists;
- Reimon Yuki, representing Kosho Ohtani;
- Venerable Piyananda Maha Thera, President of the Buddhist Vihara Society in Washington, D.C.;
- Dr. Hakujin Matsuo of Nishi Hongwanji, Kyoto, Japan;
- Venerable Mahasthavira N. Jinaratana, Mahabodhi Society of India, Calcutta;
- Mrs. Gyalo Thondup, President and founding committee member of the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Center in Darjeeling.

Hinduism:

- Swami Chinmayanandaji, Chinmaya Mission, Bombay;
- Dr. V. Raghavan, University of Madras;

Amiya Chakravarty, SUNY New Paltz;
Swami Madhav Goswamiji, Gouriya Math, Calcutta;
Swami Lokeshwarananda, Ramakrishna Mission.

Islam:

Dr. Syed S. Vahiduddin, University of Delhi;
Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, Leader of the Sufi Order International, and later on the founder of The
Abode of the Message, a residential spiritual center in New Lebanon, New York;
Al Haj S.M. A. Raschid.

Judaism:

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, Temple of Israel, Great Neck, New York;
Dr. Ezra Spiceland, Hebrew Union College School of Archaeology and Biblical Studies, Jeru-
salem, Israel.

Confucianism:

Dr. Wei Tat, from the College of Chinese Culture, Taipei, Taiwan.

Jainism:

Miss Vatsala Amin, Divine Knowledge Society, Bombay, Representing Munishri Chitrabhanu.

Sikhism:

Sardar Sher Singh, representing S.S. Sant Chanan Singh, Amritsar, India. Baha'i:
Dr. K.M. Munje, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of India.

Special counsellors:

Dr. Huston Smith,
Dr. Stuart Mudd,
Dr. Emily Hartshorne Mudd,
Reverend John C. Haughey.

7.2 Annex 2: List of the Reports of the 1st Spiritual Conference in Calcutta

Section 1: The Relevance of Religion in the Modern World

Introduction by HUSTON SMITH: The Relevance of the Great Religions for the Modern World

Dr. V. RAGHAVAN: The Relevance of Hinduism

Reverend PIERRE FALLON, S.J.: Christianity in a Pluralistic World

H. S. H. Princess POON PISMAI DISKUL: The Four Nobel Truths and the Eightfold Path

Dr. SYD VAHIDUDDIN: Religion in the Twentieth Century with Special Reference to Islam

Rabbi MORDECAJ WAXMAN: Judaism and its Relevance to Modern Problems

Professor WEI TAT: Confucius and the I-Ching

Reverend THOMAS MERTON: Monastic Experience and the East-West Dialogue

Reverend THOMAS MERTON: Extemporaneous Remarks

Swami CHINMAYANANDA: The Unity of Religion

Dastoor N. D. MINOCHEHR HOMJI: Zoroastrianism – “Thus spoke Zaratustra”

Ven. MAHATHERA D. PITANANDA: Buddhism and the other World Religions

Munishri CHITRABHANU: Jainism – A Way of Thinking and Living

Sardar SHER SINGH 'SHER': Sikhism and the Sikhs

Reverend LOWELL RUSSELL DITZEN: The Relevance of the Protestant Branch of Christianity to the World Today

Dr. EZRA SPICEHANDEL: Religion as a World Force: A Jewish View

Dr. REIMON YUKI: Buddhism in the Present Age

Swami LOKESHWARANANDA: Difference and Similarity among the Religions

Dr. SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR: The Pertinence of Islam in the Modern World

PIR VILAYAT INAYAT KHAN: The Significance of Religion to Human Issues in the Light of the Universal Norms of Mystical Experience

HOMI B. DHALLA: Zoroastrianism Today

Bishop A. J. SHAW: Jesus as a Message for our Day

SWAMI MADHAV GOSWAMI MAHAREJ: The Essential Brothehood of Mankind: A Hindu View

Dr. HAROLD F. SNIDER: Religion and World Problems

Ven. MAHASTHAVIRA N. JINARATANA: Religion in an Age of Scientific Achievement

Dr. TETSUTARO ARIGA: A Rethinking of Christianity

Dr. H. M. MUNJE: A Baha'i Viewpoint

Reverend TOSHIO MIYAKE: The Obligation of Religion in our Era

