

Forcing Change



Religions United for World Order

By Carl Teichrib

“The coming world civilization will have a single, all-embracing religion, just as it will need a federal world government and an integrated world economy.”

- W. Warren Wagar, *The City of Man*.¹

The idea of bringing together world religions in the cause of world peace has long been a dream of global visionaries. This fall, the dream moved forward on a number of fronts, including a massive interfaith event in South Korea that introduced a *Unity of Religion Agreement*; “all religions must unite under God as one.”

It appears we are witnessing what Catholic thinker, Hans Kung, once described as the “third ecumenical dimension.”

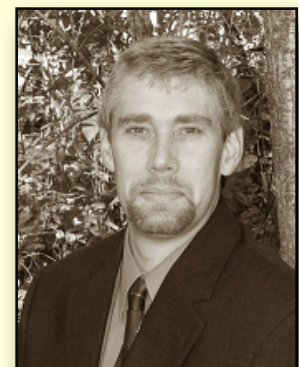
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Carl Teichrib, Editor



Visions of global religious unity have danced in the heads of world thinkers for a very long time, along with the belief that interfaith cooperation will birth a new order of unity and peace; "Heaven on Earth." Consider a few quotes from Chicago's first World's Parliament of Religions held in 1893 (pictured below).

"This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress rises over the world, dispelling the dark clouds of sectarian strife.

This day a new flower blooms in the gardens of religious thought...

This day a new fraternity is born into the world of human progress, to aid in the upbuilding of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men.

Era and flower and fraternity bear one name. It is a name which will gladden the hearts of those who worship God and love man in every clime. Those who hear its music joyfully echo it back to sun and flower.

IT IS THE BROTHERHOOD OF RELIGIONS."² (capitals in original)

"The religion of the future will be universal in every sense. It will embody all the thoughts and aspirations and virtue and emotion of all humanity; it will draw together all lands and peoples and kindreds and tongues into a universal brotherhood of love and service; it will establish upon earth a heavenly order."³

"...the universal religion has as yet not been evolved in the procession of the suns. It is one the blessings yet to come."⁴

"Character and conduct, not creed, will be the keynote of the Gospel in the Church of Humanity Universal.

But what then about sin? Sin, as a theological imputation, will, perhaps, drop out of the vocabulary of this larger communion of the righteous... The goal before is Paradise. Eden is to rise."⁵



Lofty ideals and calls for unity - a new religion - washed through the Chicago event. In fact, one speaker described the burgeoning “new religion” as *Idealism*; “Its confessors are called Idealists... Its chief aim is idealism... the perfection in everything for the ideal of mankind...”⁶ And a type of religious universal idealism did enter the picture, as this event is considered the starting-point for the modern interfaith movement.

But the 1893 Parliament wasn’t the only historical factor in the quest for interfaith idealism. Lodges and esoteric societies had already initiated religious universalism within the cultural environment of the day. Freemasonry, with lodges in seemingly every village and city, had embedded ideas of universalism within the consciousness of its membership. Consider two pre-1893 quotes.

“Masonry requires only a belief in the Supreme Architect of the universe... the Christian and the Jew, the Mohammedan and the Brahmin, are permitted to unite around our common altar, and Masonry becomes, in practice as well as in theory, universal. The truth is, that Masonry is undoubtedly a religious institution - its religion being of that universal kind in which all men agree...”

- Albert Mackey.⁷

“Masonry, around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the one God who is above all the Baalim...”

- Albert Pike.⁸

Theosophy, an occult/esoteric system of philosophy and religion that birthed societies and subgroups of its own, promoted an unabashed universalism. While it is true that the average person on the street didn’t rub shoulders with Theosophists, it is also true that the movement drew to itself men and women of considerable social influence, and garnished the interest of many intellectuals. In fact, during the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions, the Theosophical Society was given space to hold an in-house Congress within the broader Parliament activities. The first Theosophical Congress was housed in a room with seating capacity for 250 people, which quickly overfilled. Next they were given space for 1,000, but that too was inadequate. Parliament organizers then allotted a much larger hall, which packed out with 3000 interested attendees.

The purpose of Theosophy was explained in 1889 as the reconciliation of all religions, sects and nations, “under a common system of ethics, based on eternal values.”⁹ As such Theosophy has, over the decades since the 1893 Chicago Parliament, done much to forward the ideals of global religious unity. One noted Theosophical thinker, Alice Bailey (pictured right), expressed it as the evolution into a “new world religion which will emphasise [sic] unity but bar out uniformity.”¹⁰



Witnessing Unity for World Order

Over the years I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity of attending some small but significant interfaith events, and a few larger ones, as an observer. One of the more intimate events I was able to witness happened on November 13, 1999, at the Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, DC. The day's program was titled; "The Search for World Peace and Justice: What Can World Religions Do?"

The answer to the question was wrapped up in the event itself: Join in partnering with the World Federalist Association (WFA), the largest pro-world government lobbying group in the United States, and the newly formed United Religions Initiative (URI) - an organization attempting to usher in a permanent and global inter-religious body known as the United Religions. So on that day a small collection of religious representatives, officials from the WFA, and the Vice President of the URI waxed on about the need for global governance, the desire for a United Nations-styled spiritual body, and the necessity of religious harmony to ensure world political order. A "Draft Summary Statement" was handed out to those in attendance.

"We participants in today's conference affirm the initiatives from both political and religious realms... We call for a widening circle of dialogue and of efforts, involving world religions working together constructively with trends toward and ideals of world governance, so that the unity of humankind can be brought to a new level of world reality in the millennium to come."

About six months later, June 25-30, 2000, the United Religions Initiative Global Summit took place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Unlike the one-day WFA/URI conference in Washington DC, the Global Summit was a robust affair with approximately 300 representatives from 39 religions and spiritual traditions, participating world federalists, and many global activists. It was a posh event on the campus of Carnegie Mellon Univer-



sity, complete with cultural performances and rituals, a lavish reception in the Cathedral of Learning, and a richly arrayed URI charter celebration in Carnegie Music Hall. Local media was on hand, support came in from many organizations, and a public telephone call of congratulations was streamed in from the United Nations.

But the anticipated “United Religions” global body didn’t materialize. Instead, the URI shifted into becoming a grassroots movement and interfaith advocacy group.

Ten years later, in 2010, I received observer status for the G8/G20 World Religions Summit. Unlike the URI experience, this gathering wasn’t meant to formulate a new UN-like spiritual institution. Instead, it exemplified a consensus driven approach to pressuring national governments into adopting *global governance*. Each religious body that was represented remained autonomous, but each vowed to push for the goals and methods agreed upon as a spiritual collective. Not incidentally, leading members of the World Federalists Movement were key players in pulling this event together (see the June 2010 edition of *Forcing Change*).

The above three conferences provide a brief snapshot, a glimpse into the realm of “interfaith-support” for global order.

Interfaith 2014

The reason for the above history, including my personal interaction with the interfaith movement, is simply this: Both the documented history and my personal observations demonstrates that interfaithism - with its hope for world order - is ingrained in Western society. Its push has been felt, in different guises and through various methods, for many decades.

Something else, however, needs to be kept in mind. Even those events with spectacular goals, large audiences, big budgets and media coverage, do not always bear the fruit originally hoped for. The URI experience is one example, as is the original 1893 Parliament with its ideals of the “Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man.”

Nonetheless, the pressure has mounted and continues to grow as international visionaries seek to fashion “Heaven on Earth.” And often this ideal is piggybacked on much publicized social unrest, “global crisis” and planetary doom, and regional conflict.

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Your membership helps fund the research and expenses incurred in producing each issue of *Forcing Change*. *Thank you!*

With the above in mind, it is noteworthy that this fall has seen its share of inter-religious developments and events. Here are a few examples, small and large, that have taken place in the last two months.

What: World Alliance of Religions Peace Summit (WARP Summit).

Where: Seoul, South Korea.

When: September 17-19.

Hosted by Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light - a controversial Korean-based religious movement founded by Lee Man-hee - the World Alliance of Religions Peace Summit was a staggering event. The colorful and elaborate opening ceremony took place in Seoul's Olympic stadium, and it has been reported that over 200,000 participated. All told, over 700 religious leaders and more than 50 current and former heads-of-state and senior governmental officials attended the WARP Summit. The result: A formal declaration recognizing the oneness of God, the establishment of "unity of religion," and a call for "international law" to unite humanity. (see pages 8 & 9 for the full texts).

What: Interfaith Summit on Climate Change (ISCC).

Where: New York, NY.

When: September 21-22.

During this past September, New York City was the epicenter of global climate politics. High level meetings took place in and around the UN's Climate Summit, rallies and marches hit the streets, and special interest groups demanded "social justice," "eco-justice," and global governance. Religions too were involved. The Interfaith Summit on Climate Change was organized through the World Council of Churches and Religions for Peace, a multi-faith organization that coordinates global action for world peace. The point of the Interfaith Summit was stated on the Summit's webpage: All the participants will be asked to commit being advocates for climate justice and the protection of the earth both at the global and the national level." In other words, world religions commit to being political activists. (see page 10 for the ISCC Statement).

What: Faith and Ecology Conference.

Where: Jerusalem, Israel.

When: October 22.

This event was sponsored by the United Planet Faith & Science Initiative, a project who's twelve "founding leaders" include Desmond Tutu and Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, Chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. For one day, about 100 people - faith leaders representing Christianity, Judaism and Islam, along with scientists and students - met to empower one another and gather "around a shared vision of ecological sustainability."

Other interfaith developments this fall include three significant announcements.

First: On September 9 it was announced that the next installment of the Parliament of the World's Religions will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah, October 15-19, 2015. As explained by Parliament Chair, Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid, "America is the home base of the interfaith movement, and it's about time the Parliament came back home."

Second: On October 23, Jerry White, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State with the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, a branch of the US Department of State, went on Vatican Radio and called for a Global Covenant of World Religions.

Third: In late October it was announced that Astana, Kazakhstan, will host the 5th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions next June. This event will be the continuation of the Congress of Leaders started by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in 2003. Bolstering the Congress is the fact that UNESCO has proclaimed the time between 2013 to 2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, an initiatives pushed for by Kazakhstan.

From the "Heaven on Earth" dreams of 1893 to the current interfaith politics for global order, the vision of religions-in-concert has slowly but surely come together in bits and pieces. And it is still coalescing.

In 1982, Hans Kung, the famous Catholic priest and academic who would later draft the interfaith document, *Towards a Global Ethic*, wrote these telling words; "After intra-Protestant and intra-Christian ecumenism we have irrevocably reached the third ecumenical dimension, ecumenism of the world religions!"¹¹ **FC**

¹ W. Warren Wagar, *The City of Man* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963), p.167.

² Speech by Charles Carroll Bonney, "Words of Welcome," *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (Open Court, 1993), pp.21-22.

³ Speech by Merwin-Marie Snell, "Future of Religion," *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (Open Court, 1993), p.174.

⁴ Emil Gustav Hirsch, "Elements of Universal Religion," *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (Open Court, 1993), p.221.

⁵ Ibid., p.224.

⁶ Adolph Brodbeck, "Idealism the New Religion," *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (Open Court, 1993), p.348.

⁷ Albert Mackey, *A Text Book of Masonic Jurisprudence* (Redding & Company, 1859), p.95.

⁸ Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (Supreme Council of the Souther Jurisdiction, A.A.S.R., USA, 1871 - reprinted 1944), p.226.

⁹ H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (Theosophical University Press, 1889 - reprinted in 1995), p.2.

¹⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Volume 1* (Lucis Publishing Company, 1936 - reprinted in 1979), p.362.

¹¹ Hans Kung, Preface to the book, *The Meaning of Other Faiths* by Willard G. Oxtoby (The Westminster Press, 1983), p.10. The Preface was originally written in October, 1982.



UNITY OF RELIGION AGREEMENT

We, the religious leaders and representatives of the spiritual traditions of the world, have been born into this generation with the duty to end war and to establish peace.
For the heritage of peace to be brought to all generations, we must do everything in our power to end all wars on this earth and to establish world peace according to the will of the Creator, God. Therefore, all religions must unite under God as one.

We pledge in sight of God, all people of the world, and the peace advocate to become one under God through the unity of religion.

We hereby acknowledge that we must be recreated through God's seed so that we might be recognized as the family of God, and in that likeness, shine an eternal light upon the earth, loving our neighbours as ourselves.

We recognize our need for repentance, as well as our need to show grace to all people of the world; grace which can be seen in the light, rain, and air of heaven, and through that grace, lead humanity to salvation from death.

We hereby pledge, with all reasonable endeavour, to take on this duty to establish peace and end all wars on this earth, and, as a united religion, to leave a world at peace as a legacy for our future generations.

Considering the grace we have received, we are moved to fully carry our filial duty to our Father God; that is, to do whatever we can to make this world one over which God can reign.

This we recognize as a task appointed to this generation.

We recognize that when religions become united, wars will end, and peace will come to the world. This has been the will of God and the purpose of religion for the past 6,000 years.

Therefore, I hereby sign this agreement in sight of God, all people of the world, and the peace advocate.

HWPL (IWPG, IPYG), ICD

Date: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____



Man Hee Lee, Chairman
**Heavenly Culture,
World Peace,
Restoration of Light**

Name: _____

Designation: _____



AGREEMENT TO PROPOSE THE ENACTMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL LAW

As people born in this era, it is our duty to end all wars of this generation and to establish world peace.

We must unite in heart and will and leave peace as an eternal legacy for our future generations.

We, as former heads of state, chief justices, and representatives of the United Nations, will do everything within our power to enact an international law for the cessation of wars on this globe and the creation of world peace.

We, the current heads of state, sign the proposed international law to end all wars and establish world peace for all nations, people, and peace.

Our purpose is to educate all levels of society, organisations, and educational institutions to mutually collaborate for the enactment of the international law to make peace a reality.

I hereby sign this agreement in sight of God,
all the people of the world, and the peace advocate.

I consent to this proposed agreement for the heritage of global peace.

HWPL (IWPG, IPYG), ICD

Date: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____



Man Hee Lee, Chairman
**Heavenly Culture,
World Peace,
Restoration of Light**

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Climate, Faith and Hope:

Faith traditions together for a common future

Note: This is the Statement from the 2014 Interfaith Summit on Climate Change.

As representatives from different faith and religious traditions, we stand together to express deep concern for the consequences of climate change on the earth and its people, all entrusted, as our faiths reveal, to our common care. Climate change is indeed a threat to life, a precious gift we have received and that we need to care for.

We acknowledge the overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is human-induced and that, without global and inclusive action towards mitigation and unless fully addressing its fundamental causes, its impacts will continue to grow in intensity and frequency. At the same time, we are ready to dialogue with those who remain skeptical.

In our communities and thanks to the media, we see the manifestations of climate change everywhere. From our brothers and sisters around the world, we hear about its effects on people and nature. We recognize that these effects disproportionately affect the lives, livelihoods and rights of poorer, marginalized and therefore most vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples. When those who have done the least to cause climate change are the ones hardest hit, it becomes an issue of injustice. Equitable solutions are urgently needed.

We recognize that climate change stands today as a major obstacle to the eradication of poverty. Severe weather events exacerbate hunger, cause economic insecurity, force displacement and prevent sustainable development. The climate crisis is about the survival of humanity on planet earth, and action must reflect these facts with urgency.

Therefore, as faith leaders, we commit ourselves to the promotion of disaster risk reduction, adaptation, low carbon development, climate change education, curbing our own consumption patterns and reducing our use of fossil fuels. Based on our spiritual beliefs and our hope for the future, we commit to stimulating consciences and encouraging our peers and communities to consider such measures with urgency.

We share the conviction that the threats of climate change cannot be curbed effectively by a single State alone but only by the enhanced co-operation of the community of States, based on principles of mutual trust, fairness and equity, precaution, intergenerational justice and common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities. We urge the rich to support the poor and the vulnerable significantly and everywhere, especially in Least Developed Countries, Small Island States and Sub-Saharan Africa. Significant support would include generous financial resources, capacity building, technology transfer and other forms of co-operation.

We encourage Heads of State and Ministers attending the Climate Summit to announce pledges for the Green Climate Fund, including commitments to increase them thereafter, to establish new partnerships for climate resilience and low carbon development, and to assure access to renewable energies for all people.

As people of faith, we call on all governments to express their commitment to limit global warming well below 2° Celsius. We emphasize that all States share the responsibility to formulate and implement Low Carbon Development Strategies leading to de-carbonization and the complete phase-out of fossil fuels by mid-century.

Consequently we encourage world political and economic leaders to exercise their leadership during the Climate Summit by announcing joint actions such as important short-term emission cuts, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, coal caps or coal divestment, forest protection, increased energy efficiency in construction and transportation, and other concrete steps. We further call on all governments to identify medium and long-term adaptation needs and to develop strategies to address them based on country-driven, gender-sensitive and participatory approaches to better manage residual loss and damage due to adverse climate impacts.

Ultimately we request all States to work constructively towards a far-reaching global climate agreement in Paris in 2015, building on transparency, adequacy and accountability. The new agreement must be:

- ambitious enough to keep temperature from rising well below 2° Celsius;
- fair enough to distribute the burden in an equitable way; and
- legally binding enough to guarantee that effective national climate policies to curb emissions are well funded and fully implemented.

As religious representatives and citizens in your countries, we hereby commit ourselves to address the climate change threat. We continue to count on your leadership, and we encourage and expect you to make the right decisions. When difficult decisions need to be taken for the sustainability of the earth and its people, we are ready to stand with you. We pray for you and for all humanity in caring for the earth.

New York, 21 September 2014.