ECUMENISM OF THE LAITY

Continuity and Change in the Mission View of the World’s Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations, 1855 - 1955

Martti Muukkonen
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Joensuu
2002
Abstract

This study aims to interpret how the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs changed from aggressive evangelism to social responsibility for human beings. The study looks at this change through changes in the interpretation of the YMCA Paris Basis from 1855 to 1955.

As a tool for this study, a new organisation onion model was developed, based on social movement, third sector and world-view studies. Starting from Hannan and Freeman’s and Berger and Luckmann’s theories, the organisation’s most stable element is its core, where its identity, mission and ideology are located. The shell level consists of the organisation’s constituency, leadership, structure and social objects. The organisational environment can be viewed as (cultural, economic, political and religious) opportunity structures.

Various young men’s religious organisations emerged in the first half of the 19th century in different countries. In 1844, the London YMCA was founded and it became a model for other YMCAs. However, German Jünglingsvereine formed another stream in the YMCA family that in many respects differed from the British model.

In 1855, YMCA leaders of eight countries met in Paris, formed the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, and accepted the Paris Basis as a basis of the movement.

The YMCA spread to all continents, developed organisational models and created new activities such as youth work, physical education, military canteens, etc. Facing new challenges, the YMCA had to modify its mission to fit the needs of various niches.

This study aims to interpret how the different elements in the context, shell and core influenced the change in the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs 1855-1955.

The key factor identified in this change was in the change of the frame on the Kingdom of God, which changed from transcendent City of God to immanent God’s Creation.

Key words: organisation, organisational change, YMCA, Young Men’s Christian Association, religious movement, religious organisation, nongovernmental organisation, NGO, international nongovernmental organisation, INGO, federal organisation, mission, identity, ideology, ecumenism, ecumenical movement, laity, youth movement, youth organisation
Preface

One who gives his little finger to the YMCA will soon find out that the movement is not satisfied with your hand - it takes the whole person (and the family as well, when I got married). My own personal history is linked to the YMCA since the start of my theological studies in 1974. I have served both as a secretary and as board member in local Finnish YMCAs. Additionally, I served for some time as an editor of the Finnish YMCA national magazine. Although it was often lonely work, the movement gave international contacts that had a deep influence on my thinking. Additionally, the theological freedom inside the movement suited me. In short: I found a spiritual home in the YMCA.

This does not mean that this study is aimed to be an apology for the YMCA or NGOs in general. The point of view is to understand why and how the YMCA movement changed from a Pietistic/Evangelical revival movement to a global social service organisation. This is a process that few YMCA people know very well. In general, people know the founder, George Williams; they know the Paris Basis, the Triangle, basketball and other activities, etc. They are proud that the movement is worldwide, but few understand that the YMCA outside their country differs from their own YMCA and its practices. There are still fewer who understand why the present-day YMCA is like it is - a lay, international, ecumenical, youth movement. As a theologian, I have understood something of this diversity, and when I planned to do my dissertation, the YMCA mission was a rather evident choice. Still, the study has been a quest for the roots of both YMCA thinking and for ecumenical theology in general. Little I knew, at that time, of the heritage the movement has given to the world. During this research process, I have glimpsed into it - and what I have seen makes me humble that I am attempting to explain it in a small piece of work.

As everyone can understand, I am an insider studying his own organisation. Being an insider has both positive and negative effects on research. The challenge is always to be able to distinguish oneself from the movement and look at it from outside. In this, I am in the same situation as most movement scholars who have studied social movements of the 1960’s - they have studied movements of their youth. This situation is also faced with those movement intellectuals who established themselves in universities and research institutions when their movement’s ideas diffused into the surrounding societies. They brought their movement discourse into scientific arenas and challenged the old ways of seeing things. Social movements and nongovernmental organisations have been and remain forces that change society, including science.

Being an insider is the problem of sociology in general: it is studying the researcher’s own culture and, thus, all sociologists are insiders when they study their

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1 On this process, see Eyerman & Jamison 1991.
2 In the 1960’s, sociology was full of Marxist claims that science was bourgeois. Recently women studies have been the most ardent challenger of old ‘masculine’ science.
3 A well-known joke on the distinction between sociology and anthropology is revealing: “Sociology studies us and anthropology studies them.”
own cultures. On the other hand, as an insider, a scholar can recognise important phenomena that remain obscure to outsiders. Moreover, he can better understand the unspoken realities that are not present in documents or are not visible to an outsider. The important point is to understand one’s own preferences. If objectivity is only a distant ideal, one can at least try to be honest with oneself and with one’s readers.

In my case, the differentiation from the research topic arises from the topic itself. Although I have worked in the YMCA, I have not been involved in the work of the World Alliance - my international contacts remain mainly on a European level. Thus, in this sense, I am also an outsider. My point of view regarding the World Alliance is that of a curious and critical local member, and that of a Lutheran pastor who tries to understand the phenomenon.

My theoretical thinking arises mostly from being an interdisciplinary scientist between theology and sociology. In theology I was first educated as a New Testament scholar and I still find its influence, for example, in my time perspective on historical phenomena. From this perspective, the Modern age is a relatively short episode. Exegetical studies taught me also to respect my research object and to seek what the text or informant originally intended to say. In theologically-oriented sociology of religion, I have been interested in religious movements. In sociology, I have also been in between the sub-disciplines of social movement research and third sector studies. In both sub-disciplines, I have been inspired by Max Weber’s thesis that “very frequently the world images that have been created by ‘ideas’ have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest.” Thus, throughout this work, the reader will see that I am interested in how people create their worlds and legitimate their actions. In this sense, my theoretical thinking is close to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s, Clifford Geertz’s, Erving Goffman’s and Ulric Neisser’s theories of symbols, frames and schemas.

This work would have not been possible without help from several people and institutions. First and foremost, without the patience of my wife Sirpa and my children Matti and Marjukka, this work would have remained a dream. In scientific work, too little tribute has been given to the ‘home-troops’ who enable a scholar to work effectively. I also thank my mother Marjut Aspinjaakko who gave me the economic possibility to start this work in a time when everything was vague and argumentation weak.

Along my family, I thank my supervisor, Professor Reijo Heinonen, who has patiently led me through these years and helped me to obtain funding that has enabled full-time research work. All his students remember him by one fundamental question with which he continuously challenged his students: “What has this to do with the central problem?” Among numerous other important people, Dr. Päivi Harinen has

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1 Weber 1970b, 280.
4 Goffman 1959.
5 Neisser 1976.
been my faithful critic during these years and I thank her for all her constructive comments.

For their financial help, I would like to thank the faculties of Humanistics and Theology in the University of Joensuu. Their grants have helped me both to work full time for this study, and to participate in international conferences where I have have been able to discuss with specialists of third sector, social movements and youth research. A special thanks also belongs to the Lutheran World Federation. Its grant allowed me to work for one summer in archives of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva. For other stipends, I thank the Foundation for Promotion of Sciences and Christian Arts, and the Foundation of Reino Ylönen.

However, although all these people have been important in this research project, it all would have been in vain if our good Lord had not given strength and confidence during these years.

For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name (Rom. 15:9)

Joensuu, A.D. 2002
Martti Muukkonen
Directories

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AfAConf</td>
<td>African Area Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFCons</td>
<td>Armed Forces Work Consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALConf</td>
<td>Asian Leaders’ Conference</td>
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<td>BWConf</td>
<td>Boys’ Work Conferences</td>
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<td>CIC</td>
<td>Central International Committee of World’s Alliance of YMCAs, 1878-1902 (1902-1955 World’s Committee)</td>
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<td>CVJM</td>
<td>Christlichen Verein Junger Männer - up to the 1930’s the name of the city-YMCAs in Germany as distinction to Jünglingsvereine. From 1944 on, the name of all German YMCAs. Contemporary form of name: Christlichen Verein Jünger Menschen - Young People’s Christian Association.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCPM</td>
<td>Dutch Christian Peace Movement</td>
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<td>DP</td>
<td>Displaced person</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Evangelical Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCO</td>
<td>Emergency Committee of Christian Organisations (WCC, WSCF, YMCA, YWCA) during WW II.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>United Nations Economic and Social Council</td>
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<td>ESA</td>
<td>European Sociological Association</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ExCom</td>
<td>Executive Committee of the World Alliance of YMCAs (since 1955)</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation</td>
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<td>FINGO</td>
<td>Federal International Nongovernmental Organisation</td>
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<td>F&amp;O</td>
<td>Faith and Order</td>
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<td>FRMO</td>
<td>Federal Religious Movement Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gra-Y</td>
<td>YMCA Graduate School Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hi-Y</td>
<td>YMCA High School Club</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGO</td>
<td>International Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 1983-, until then LORCS</td>
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<tr>
<td>IKTHYS</td>
<td>Fish in Greek, oldest Christian symbol. Also first Greek letters from Iesous Khristos Theou (H)Iou (H)Yios (H)Soter = Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Office, 1901-1919, International Labour Organisation 1919-</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMC</td>
<td>International Missionary Council</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Nongovernmental Organisation</td>
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<td>IRO</td>
<td>International Refugee Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISA</td>
<td>International Sociological Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>King James Version of the English Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>L&amp;W</td>
<td>Life and Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>LORCS</td>
<td>League of Red Cross Societies 1919-1983, from then on IFRC</td>
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<td>LWF</td>
<td>Lutheran World Federation</td>
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<td>NAIC</td>
<td>International Committee of North American YMCAs</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Nongovernmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NPO</td>
<td>Nonprofit Organisation</td>
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NPS Nonprofit Sector
NSM New Social Movement(s)
POW Prisoner of War
PWX Ex Prisoner of War
RSCM Russian Student Christian Movement
SACC Continental Committee of the South American Federation of YMCAs
SCM Student Christian Movement
SMO Social Movement Organisation
SSCons Secondary School Work Consultation
Tri-Hi-Y YMCA High School Club for girls
UN United Nations
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UNRRA United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency
US, USA United States of America
USO United Service Organisation for National Defence - joint venture organisation for the work among the US armed forces.
WCC World Council of Churches
WCCY World Conference of Christian Youth
WCF World Congress of Faiths
WComEx Executive Committee of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs
WComPle World’s Committee Plenary Documents
WComR Reports of the World’s Committee to World’s Conferences
WConf Reports of World’s Conferences
WconfPrep Preparatory Documents and Presentations of World’s Conferences
WCYC World Christian Youth Commission
WHO World Health Organisation
VO Voluntary Organisation
WSCF World Student Christian Federation
WW I, WW II First and Second World War
YMCA Young Men’s Christian Association
YMWConf Young Men’s Work Conferences
YWCA Young Women’s Christian Association

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Part I: Introduction
1. Setting of the Study

1.1. Ignored Field of Study

INTERNATIONAL NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (INGO)\(^1\) have gained more and more emphasis in contemporary political discussion.\(^2\) In spite of this, there is a lack of theoretical knowledge of their function.\(^3\) Studies of both third sector and social movements have focused on the local or national level. Globalisation studies, in turn, have concentrated on economy and social consequences of globalisation. Studies of international organisations are mainly interested in international governmental organisations (IGO) such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), World Bank, etc. The program evaluations of INGOs have been alone in focusing mainly on these organisations but even in those cases, the main interest has been the project, not the organisation itself. In general, INGOs have been studied only as interesting additions (if not anomalies) to these main themes.

If INGOs, in general, have not gained the attention of scholars, this is also true in the case of international youth organisations. Even youth research has not studied them. It seems that the study of youth organisations has not been central in any research tradition. This notion is as valid in the case of third sector research as in the case of social movement, organisation, education and youth studies.

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\(^1\) Other concepts used in scholarly discussion have been, for example, nonprofit organisations (NPO), voluntary organisations (VO), public benefit organisations, social movement organisations (SMO), or intermediary organisations. The totality of them has been called the nonprofit sector (NPS), civil society, social economy, philanthropy sector or informal sector. On these concepts, see Muukkonen 2000, 56-94. See also note 5 on page 32 on different NGOs.

\(^2\) NGOs have become important actors in both the economic and political international field. When states are reducing their responsibilities for the social welfare of their citizens, different models of private philanthropy, co-operative action and civil society have been seen as a possibility for rescuing the welfare state. The advantage of nongovernmental organisations has been seen in that they combine the effectiveness of market organisations and the visibility of the public organisations. (See, for example, Salamon & Abramson 1982; Anheier & Seibel 1990, 1ff.; Taylor 1992; Room & 6 1994; Ehrenberg 1999, ixff., 233-250).

Another central topic in discussions concerning NGOs has been globalisation, with all its consequences. Both of these topics are united in the case of international nongovernmental organisations (INGO). INGOs are increasingly important, on one hand, in development co-operation and catastrophe aid and, on the other hand, in moulding public opinion. Although they have been seen as important, INGOs have not been studied much.

\(^3\) Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss (1995, 358) mention on INGO studies that “theoretical explorations have tended to be few in number and specific to a particular sector of activity, especially aspects of economic and social development and of the environment. A considerable body of writing has a primarily legal character, which overlooks or understates the richness of NGO activity and politics.” On a similar trend in third sector studies in general, see Roger A. Lohmann’s critical notes (1992a,b; 1995).
Along with INGOs and youth organisations, religious movements and organisations have been ignored in the social sciences. Christian Smith writes in an anthology on religious movements that social sciences in general, neglect studies of religious movements. Smith lists five reasons for this neglect. First, secularisation theory has held the idea of an inevitable disappearance of religion as a phenomenon. From this perspective, religious movements have not been interesting subjects of study. Second, structural-functionalism established the idea that religion’s role is in creating cultural consensus and social integration. It seemed to have little to do with problems of dynamic change in society. Although structural-functionalism has been out of fashion since the 1970s, one of its legacies was this attitude towards religion. Third, sociology of religion has been an isolated subfield of sociology. For this reason, the findings of sociologists of religion have not influenced movement studies in general. Fourth, in the 1970s there was a paradigm shift in social movement studies to theories which emphasised rational decision-making in movements. Since religion was seen as irrational, it did not have a place in these studies. Fifth, in spite of religion’s significant role in the civil rights movement, it did not have similar significance in other movements of the 1960s. Thus, scholars, who were nurtured in these movements, saw religion only as a conservative force and not as a dynamic one.

In theology, there has been similar ignorance of both youth and lay organisations. During the past fifty years, both ecumenical studies and sociological studies of ecumenical organisations have concentrated on inter-church organisations such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). International lay and youth organisations have not attracted the interest of scholars. Sometimes, one cannot avoid feeling that organisations like the World Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations, World Young Women’s Christian Associations, and others have not been the focus of scholarly attention.

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1 Bryan R. Wilson (1996, 747) defines secularisation as follows: “Secularization is the process of social change in which religion loses social significance... It should be sharply distinguished from secularism... Secularism is an ideology which advocates the abolition of religion and the transfer of the ancillary social functions of religion to secular agencies.” Its etymology lies in the Latin word saeculum, which was used in Vulgate as translation of the Greek word aion (West 1991, 914f.). Thus in this sense, it means ‘adapting to the Zeitgeist’. The term secularisation first emerged after the Thirty Years’ War in the Treaty of Westphalia, when it meant the transfer of church property to secular authorities (Wilson 1988; 1996). Wilson (1988, 160) argues that, along with other meanings, it includes an aspect of laicisation, which means transfer of duties from religious professionals to laity.

On secularisation theory, see Casanova 2001; Demerath 2000; Hadden 1987; Martin 1978.

2 Smith 1983; Hannigan 1991. My own experience in Finland confirms this. During the last five years, I have been almost the only sociologist of religion in annual meetings of the Westermarck Society (Finnish Sociological Association). All leading scholars of Finnish sociology of religion have been absent from these meetings. A similar silence can also be seen in Finnish social science periodicals.

3 Smith 1996, 2ff.

4 Until 1955, the organisation used the genitive form: World’s Alliance of YMCAs (WConf 1955, 83, 222). In this work, I follow the historical use of the name. Thus, when I use the genitive form, I refer to the period before 1955 and when I use the nominative form, I refer to the period after the name was changed in Centennial Conferences in August 1955.
tian Association and World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) do not exist in the realm of ecumenical or missionary studies. If they are mentioned, they are regarded more as nuances of church history than part of the present day Ecumenical Movement. To a great extent, this situation might arise from the nature of ecumenical studies as a sub-discipline of systematic theology, which focuses on doctrines instead of on human interaction. Another reason may be the view expressed by bishop Eelis Gulin: “[In the YMCA and in the Student Christian Movement] the interaction was on a ‘troops level’ while Ecumenical Movement aimed for ‘general level’ unity.” Thus, the official ecumenism between churches has been seen as ‘The Ecumenical Movement’, and research has focused on it.

However, it would be a great loss if ecumenical studies were to concentrate only on doctrines or studies of declarations and policies, ignoring social factors behind these doctrines and statements. The determinants that lie behind these theological formulations are as important as these doctrinal aspects. Theological formulations and organisational practices have their tradition history, which is influenced by the context where they were modified. Knowledge of these background issues would help in understanding the contemporary Ecumenical Movement.

No one would study political history and political decisions without recognising the party background of decision-makers. However, it is a pity that ecumenical studies do not recognise the confessional background, but not the revival movement background of the decision-makers. These affiliations have profound consequences.

**THE WORLD ALLIANCE OF YMCAS** is one of the oldest nongovernmental organisations in the world (founded in 1855). It has a consultative NGO status in the ECOSOC (category II), UNESCO (category B), ILO (special list).

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1 For example, *The Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (1991) does not mention the YMCA contacts of Alivisatos (14 - compare Strong 1955a, 528; Willis 1955, 713) Athenagoras (63ff. - compare to WConf 1926, 142,151; *World Communiqué* Sept-Oct 1967, 10f.; Jan-Feb 1968, 14), Hromadka (483f - compare Strong 1955a, 495; Luknic 1983), Oldham (746f - compare Clements 1999, 42-52; Shed 1955b, 356, 363) Söderblom (938f - compare to Andrae 1931, 85-95; Sundkler 1968, 36-37,96-99). Additionally, there is no reference to lay ecumenical organisations in the articles on laity (580-586) in this dictionary. On the other hand, in the cases of Azariah, Mott and Visser ‘t Hooft the YMCA connection is mentioned. A similar trend can be found, for example, in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1974), in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1997), in *Die Religion in geschichte und gegenwart* (1957). In these works Mott and Visser ‘t Hooft and occasionally Oldham) are connected to the YMCA.

2 For example, one of the most notable works on the missionary paradigm, David J. Bosch’s *Transforming Mission* (1995), has references to the Student Volunteer Movement and the WSCF but does not mention the YMCA or the YWCA at all!

3 Gulin 1967, 312 (my translation from the original Finnish text).

4 One future task for the sociology of religion would be to find out why lay organisations have been so neglected in ecumenical studies.

5 Definitions of nongovernmental organisations will be given in chapter 2.2.

6 *Yearbook of International Organisations* 1996/1997, 1532,1596. Category II covers “organizations with a special competence but concerned with only a few of the Council’s activities (Idem, 1531).”

7 *Yearbook of International Organisations* 1996/1997, 1538, 1596. Category B covers “organiza-
UNICEF\(^2\), and Council of Europe\(^3\). After the Evangelical Alliance (founded 1846), the World Alliance of YMCAs is the second oldest international NGO in the world.

The YMCA is not only an essential part of the church and NGO history. Today, it reports having 45 million members and 14,000 local associations in 122 countries\(^4\). Thus, it has more members than all Nordic Lutheran churches together. It is, if not the largest, at least one of the largest\(^5\) lay Christian organisations in the world. The movement is alive and a vital part of the contemporary Ecumenical Movement. The role of all ecumenical youth organisations is to train young people to interconfessional and interfaith dialogue. Additionally, they are forums where future church leaders learn practical work. The YMCA is doing this today, as well as in the past.

The YMCA has been a pioneer in many activities and practices which we regard as self-evident today. Group work in conferences and the use of international surveys are two of these\(^6\). The movement has been a laboratory of youth work methods, like youth clubs, youth centres, gang work, scouting, youth camps and international youth assemblies. Other pioneering fields have been military canteens, work with prisoners of war (POWs), work with refugees, development banks, basketball and volleyball, interconfessional and interfaith dialogue and immigrant training projects. The YMCA has been either a mother or a midwife to many large nongovernmental organisations. Best known of these are the Scouts\(^7\),

\(^1\) Yearbook of International Organizations 1996/1997, 994,1596. Special list “covers organizations having an interest in one or more topics of relevance to ILO (Idem, 994).”
\(^2\) Yearbook of International Organisations 1996/1997, 1512,1596. “UNICEF grants consultative status to international development and humanitarian NGOs already holding consultative status with ECOSOC (Idem, 1512).”
\(^3\) Yearbook of International Organisations 1996/1997, 344,1596.
\(^4\) Mission & History s.a.
\(^5\) The size of an organisation is a controversial issue. In third sector studies, the size is mostly determined by economic terms: amount of monetary transactions, number of employees or number of clients. However, in the case of membership organisations there are other measurements as well, namely, number of members and number of participants in activities. The official number of members is also a complicated issue because of the differences in reporting. There are always opposite pressures that influence reports. In applying for subsidies the organisation usually includes both associate members (participants in activities) and active members (who meet the requirements and pay the annual fee) in total membership, because a large size helps to get more money. When a secretary, in turn, reports the membership to a national organ, it is not rare that only active members are counted because national membership fees often depend on the amount of members. Thus, the more members, the more you pay. In addition to this, not all organisations make this distinction between active and passive membership. Finally, when some not-so-pleasant-duty of an association must be done, the secretary can sometimes count the committed members on his/her fingers.
\(^6\) Both were first used in the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926.
\(^7\) The relationship between the YMCA and early Scout Movement could be summarised in such a way that in the YMCA Baden-Powell found a channel to distribute his ideas (Macleod 1983, 97,140,146; Warren 1986, 388).
basketball\(^1\) and volleyball\(^2\) organisations and different Army canteen organisations like the American United Service Organisation (USO)\(^3\). In addition to this, many US universities and colleges can be traced back to YMCA education programs\(^4\). It also played a role in the emergence of the World Council of Churches and the UNHCR\(^5\). As these organisations emerged, they got their leadership and other resources from the YMCA. Early leaders of these organisations brought YMCA methods and practices to these new organisations.

Today, many of these models are institutionalised ways of doing something, but that was not the case when those models were developed. The models reflect at least partly the *Zeitgeist*\(^6\) of the time when they emerged. Thus, understanding the context of the emergence of new organisational innovations enables contemporary leaders to evaluate whether they are still valid or not.

**THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT** has three streams according to Willem A. Visser ‘t Hooft. First, the Erasmian tradition stressed that unity is possible only if there is an agreement on fundamental points of doctrine. Second, the church-centred tradition that has pointed out that the Church is the body of Christ and that “it is the task of the faithful to manifest this given unity.” Finally, there is the Pietistic tradition that emphasises that all individuals who are saved form the people of God.\(^8\) In general, it seems that ecumenical studies have concentrated more on the first two streams than the third one. However, the pioneers of the Ecumenical Movement came mainly from Pietistic (or Evangelical) tradition\(^9\).

Ruth Rouse mentions in the *History of the Ecumenical Movement* that probably about 4/5 of the delegates at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 in Amsterdam were somehow related to the YMCA, the YWCA or the WSCF\(^10\). Thus, it is no wonder, that the basis of the WCC resembles the YMCA Paris Basis. These three lay organisations also had a great impact on missionary societies through the Student Volunteer Movement\(^11\). Additionally, the ‘soul’ of Life and Work movement, Nathan Söderblom, had his first ecumeni-

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\(^1\) YMCA invents Basketball (2000).
\(^2\) YMCA invents Volleyball (2000).
\(^3\) Born at the YMCA (2000).
\(^4\) The American way (s.a.).
\(^5\) Holborn 1975, 124f.
\(^6\) Nathan Rotenstreich (1973, 535) defines *Zeitgeist* as follows: “*Zeitgeist* came to define the characteristic spirit of a historical era taken in its totality and bearing the mark of a preponderant feature which dominated its intellectual, political, and social trends”. See also Mannheim’s (1972) arguments on generation.
\(^7\) Visser ‘t Hooft 1955, 8.
\(^8\) Visser ‘t Hooft 1955, 5-11.
\(^9\) On the influence of theologians in the Student YMCA on the WCC, see Warren 1992.
\(^10\) Rouse 1993a, 327.
\(^11\) On the SCM, see Mott 1902; Dietrich 1995; Putney 1995b, 271-279. Relying on Mott, Clifford W. Putney (1995b, 273) makes an interesting note of the importance of the American Student YMCAs, namely that at the turn of the 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) centuries “one third of all white male college students belonged to the YMCA” in the United States. One can assume that the percentage of YMCA members was even higher among students of theology.
cal experience in the YMCA. Thus, behind these early ‘pillars’ of the WCC, missionary movement and Life & Work, we can discern the influence of these three lay movements, the YMCA, YWCA and WSCF. Tom Stransky describes this connection as follows:

If the Ecumenical Movement is primarily people and not institutions, one notes how the same Christian clergy and laity easily moved through, and gave leadership to, the variety of organizations which were ecumenical in intent. And equally important, these pioneers intentionally discovered, inspired and formed younger talented disciples to stand on their shoulders.

Thus, majority of the ‘big names’ of the Ecumenical Movement (like Hamilkar Alivisatos, Athenagoras I, Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, Joseph Hromadka, John R. Mott, D.T. Niles, J.H. Oldham, K.T. Paul, Nathan Söderblom, W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft, Luther Wishard) had met in their youth in YMCA, YWCA and WSCF conferences and developed friendships. When they grew older and took positions in their churches, they kept contact - now in official level - and used common methods and vocabulary. Their experiences in their youth were the ‘practical games’ for future ecumenical leadership. Moreover, when old friends meet in official negotiations there are no enemy-images. Instead, they know that the faith of others at the table is as deep as their own.

THE PARIS BASIS is the basic formulation of the goals of both the YMCA and the entire Ecumenical Movement. After it was formulated in 1855 at the first World’s Conference of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, it was adopted by all the major allies of the YMCA (YWCA in 1898, WSCF in 1895 and WCC in 1948) as their basis. From this point of view, the Paris Basis is one of the most remarkable Christian documents of the modern era.

The Paris Basis and its successors form a special genre of documents. The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches ( Evanston 1954) described it as “less than a confession” but “much more than a mere formula of agreement”. Practically, this means that the formula of the text is significant in every detail, but it is not as normative as confessions in Christian traditions utilising that genre of credal text.

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1 Andrae 1931, 85-95; Sundkler 1968, 36-39,96-99; Stausberg 2000, 423.
3 All these had either served the YMCA as board members or had served on the staff of the YMCA.
4 Although there are some countries like Finland, where the national SCM emerged separately from YMCA, the majority of WSCF organisational members were Student YMCAs.
5 The significance of personal networks for ecumenical work is still an unstudied field. Does the crisis of present ecumenism have something to do with the lack of such contacts that the pioneers had?
6 See Appendix A.
7 On the form of the organisation’s name, see note 4 on page 16.
9 A formula can be defined as an expression that has been crystallised into a certain form
1.2. Central Problem of the Study

The central theoretical question of this study focuses on how the mission view of an INGO changes. The World Alliance of YMCAs serves as a case for this task, although the YMCA itself is such a phenomenon that it deserves interest simply because of its size. Walter W. Powell and Rebecca Friedkin, following Mayer N. Zald and Patricia Denton, argue that the YMCA can be seen as a ‘successful organisation’. They state that ‘although the organization’s activities and efforts were altered in important ways, the changes enabled it to reach a larger audience without sacrificing its basic mission.” This is a statement that has been challenged rather often, both in the YMCA and in the Christian churches in general. There have frequently been discussions on “what does the ‘C’ imply in the initials of the organisation?” Especially in North American revivalistic circles, the YMCA has been seen as a ‘not-so-Christian-organisation’. This attitude receives support when one looks at the home-pages of the US and Canadian YMCAs where the mission has often been stated as ‘working according to Christian principles’ or ‘on the basis of Judeo-Christian heritage’. In these cases, the question ‘whether the North American YMCAs are Christian organisations’ is justified. On the other hand, in other parts of the world the YMCAs are definitely religious organisations, which proclaim the centrality of Christ in their life. Some of them have the YMCA Paris Basis from 1855 as their mission statement; others use a similar expression.

In the middle of this diversity, there arises a question: “What is the mission view of the YMCA?” The YMCA started as an Evangelical Revival movement. Today, while the YMCA emphasises traditional religious work, it also practises physical education, community work and social work especially among victims of war. In this sense, the YMCA mission has diversified from that what it was in 1844 when the London YMCA was founded. During its history, the YMCA has faced many challenges, which have had an impact on its mission view.

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1 Zald & Denton 1963. Later, Zald (1970) expanded the article into a monograph Organizational Change - The Political Economy of the YMCA in which he studied the Chicago Metropolitan YMCA.
3 The Canadian YMCA does not in refer to its Christian roots in any way in its homepage (YMCA Canada, s.a.).
4 The US YMCA states in its homepages that “Y’s help people develop values and behavior that are consistent with Christian principles.” (YMCA at Glance, s.a.)
5 The mission of the Boston YMCA (the oldest in the US) reads in 2002 as follows: “To build health of spirit, mind and body based on the highest ideals of the Judeo-Christian heritage, and to improve the quality of life for children, individuals, families, and communities in the cities and towns of greater Boston.” (About the Y, s.a.)
6 For example, the National Council of England, Ireland and Wales states its mission as follows: “The YMCA is a Christian Movement. At its centre are Christians who, regarding Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, desire to share their faith with others and make Him known, believed, trusted, loved, served and exemplified in all human relationships. It welcomes into its fellowship persons of other religious faiths and of none.” (Aims and Purposes, s.a.)
Thus, the subject of this study is the international YMCA and its mission view. The central problem can be formulated as follows: How and why has the mission view of the World Alliance of YMCAs been modified? This wording emphasises that, although the basic formulation of the YMCA mission view, the Fundamental Principle of the Paris Basis, has been untouched, there has been changes in the general frame of this mission view. To answer this central problem requires analysis of changes on three levels: organisational environment, organisation’s structural elements and organisation’s core values. These will be discussed in chapter 2 where I present my research theory.

1.3. Previous Studies of the World Alliance of YMCAs

There are relatively few studies on the World Alliance of YMCAs and most of them are quite old. The basic study by Clarence Prouty Shedd & al The History of the World’s Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations was written in 1955 but, in fact, ends with the year 1953. Thus, the Centennial Declaration has not been dealt with in the anthology. Clyde Binfield has published a small booklet, This Has Been Tomorrow on the following 50 years. Other studies on the World Alliance of YMCAs are more internal evaluations than academic studies.

In general, the majority of the YMCA studies are either national or local histories, histories of some activity, or surveys for administrative purposes. However, during the 1990s, there has arisen a new interest in the foreign work of the North American YMCA, and several dissertations on that theme have been published. Additionally, some studies exist on race relationships and the general policy of the North American YMCA. This describes the YMCA research in general - the vast majority of the studies have been done in the USA. However, the North American YMCAs, while forming the majority of membership, are quite different from other YMCAs of the world. They even have their own bases that differ from the Paris Basis and, thus, the ideology of the US and Canadian YMCAs is not the same as the ideology of the World Alliance.

Previous research on the YMCA can be divided into the following categories:

1. Studies of the World Alliance of YMCAs.

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1. On the form of the organisation’s name, see note 4 on page 16.
2. As it will be stated in chapter 2.3.1., there is a difference between change in the mission view and change of the mission view.
4. There might be a cultural bias here in a sense that the majority of the electronic databases are North American and they do not include all research in languages other than English.
5. Shedd’s anthology from 1955 is the main (and almost the only) work. Shorter earlier histories are by Karl Fries (WConfPrep 1905e) and from the World’s Committee report to the 1931 World’s Conference (WComR 1931). Clyde Binfield’s book This Has Been Tomorrow (1991 - the title refers to the title of 1955 Centennial Conference report: And Now - Tomorrow) is a preliminary publication of his project to write the history of the World Alliance from 1955 onwards. In addition to these histories, Werner Jentsch (1968; 1973), Laurent Gambarotto (1991) and Martti Muukkonen
2. Studies of the foreign work of the North American YMCA.
3. National YMCA histories and surveys.
4. Studies on local YMCAs (mainly ‘round-year’ histories, some surveys and a few theoretical works).
5. Studies of a specific activity (boys’ work, physical education, etc.).
6. Studies of a specific segment of the membership (racial minorities, women, participants in some activity).
7. Biographies of YMCA activists.
8. Studies focusing on organisations other than the YMCA.
9. Internal memorandums and reports.


For this study, important works have been Richard C. Morse’s (1913) and Howard C. Hopkins’ (1951) histories on the North American YMCAs; Murray G. Ross’ work on Canadian YMCA (1951); on German YMCA, there are Walter Stursberg’s (1977) and Karl Kupisch’s (1958) histories; and on Indian YMCA, there are the works of M. D. David (1992) and H. J. Dunderdale (1993).

One of the best known is the above mentioned Zald’s work on the Chicago YMCA.

David I. Macleod’s work *Building Character in the American Boy* (1983) focuses on both the YMCA and Boy Scouts.

Elmer L. Johnson’s *The History of YMCA Physical Education* (1954).


David F. De Marche’s *Women and Girls in the Membership and Program of the Young Men’s Christian Association* (1953).

Several biographies on John R. Mott have special importance (see chapter 5.3.4.).

In P. Wolfdieter Theurer’s dissertation *Trinität und Ökumene* (1966) there is a chapter on the Paris Basis. It has been translated and published in English in *Paris Basis Study Material* in the beginning of the 1970s. Heather Anne Warren’s work *That They All May Be One* (1992) argues that the idea of the World Council of Churches emerged and developed among a group of American theologians in the Student YMCA and Missionary Movement. *A History of the Ecumenical Movement I-II*, edited by Ruth Rouse, Stephen C. Neill and Harold E. Fey, is a book that nobody can ignore in this field of studies. The same can also be said of *The Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, which has useful articles on this subject. Other useful histories are those on the Social Gospel (Hopkins 1967), the YWCA (Rice 1947; Seymour-Jones 1994) and the WSCF (Rouse 1948; Dietrich 1995).

Auguste Senaud presented two reports to World Committee Plenaries in 1950 and 1953 on the history of the Paris Basis before the formation of the Centennial Declaration (WComPle 1950; 1953). The Paris Basis Study Committee, in turn, made several reports on the Paris Basis when they modified the wording of the YMCA Kampala Principles that were accepted at Kampala World Council in 1973.

For example, Paul M. Limbert’s (WComR 1955) report to Paris Centennial Conference, *Times of Testing*, is a study of the YMCA and its context during the period 1937 to 1955.
Why is there so little interest in studies of the World YMCA? I suggest that there are several reasons but some, I suppose, are dominant. First, YMCA intellectuals do not produce studies of their organisation. They are mostly involved in youth work or service activities. The forum for their discussion is not academic publications but grassroots interaction with people. The interaction skills that are needed in youth work are rather different from those of academic presentation. Another point is that the work is often so intensive and time-consuming that there is no time for even internal evaluations. Both of these aspects reduce the motivation for research. From the youth research perspective, in turn, the YMCA has not been a social problem that would have aroused interest. In general, the majority of youth research focus on various youth subcultures and there is a lack of research on middle-class youth organisations.

Second, in the academic world, the YMCA has not fit into social movement theories. Klaus Eder pointed that it was not until 1970s that sociologists focused on the middle class. Before the emergence of the new social movements, the middle class did not fit into classical class theories and was left unnoticed. Although the YMCA is not only a middle-class movement, it is largely connected to it. So the old class theories did not recognise it, and when the middle class came into sociological focus, the YMCA was not a ‘new’ movement anymore.

Third, the YMCA has not fitted into religious movement theories either. In the sociology of religion, the emphasis has been on Ernst Troeltsch’s church-sect typology and, from the 1970’s, on new religious movements. The YMCA has not fitted into either of these categories. First, because it has not been a sect - on the contrary, it has tried to unite churches instead of distinguishing itself from some church. Second, in the Protestant West, it is not a product of some imported ideas but usually has been deeply rooted in the religious tradition of each country. The YMCA in Catholic and Orthodox and non-Christian areas, although imported, has tried to co-operate with the established church. Only in non-Christian countries, might it be regarded as a cult. Thus, at the time when church-sect theory was created, the YMCA did not fit into the theory. When interest grew in the revival movements as one form of new religious movements, the YMCA was not a new one anymore. Thus, the YMCA has fallen between the interests of sociologists of religion. Additionally, there is also a tendency to focus on local and national movements and ignore the international religious movements - especially the old ones like the YMCA, YWCA and WSCF. It might be too much to say that they do not exist in the world of sociology of religion but if they exist, they are on the periphery of scholarly interest.

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1 On ignorance of religion in social movement studies, see chapter 1.1.
2 Eder 1995, 26f.
3 The distinction between sect and cult is basically that a sect has separated itself from an existing religious body in some cultural area while the cult is either a new invention (e.g. psycho-therapy based cults) or a foreign import of some form of religiosity existing in some other culture (e.g. Hare Krishna in the West). Because the terminology was understood as improper, the concept New Religious Movements has replaced both concepts.
4 This tendency can be seen, for example, in the curriculum of ecumenical studies. I do not have
Fourth, the founding of the World Council of Churches meant that this new body came into the same organisational niche to compete for the same resources as the older lay ecumenical organisations. Thus, there has been an organisational tendency to underline the status of the WCC as the mainstream of the Ecumenical Movement and ignore the lay organisations. The focus of ecumenical research is mainly on issues that are close to theologians and clergy, namely doctrines, traditions and liturgy. On the other hand, although there are beautiful speeches about the importance of the laity, theologians and clergy have felt uncomfortable when the laity and not the clergy is in charge of the work.

In any case, the World Alliance of YMCAs has not been studied since Shedd’s centennial history. The major exception is Clyde Binfield’s preliminary booklet on the history of the World Alliance since 1955\(^1\). Some remarks can also be found in Kenneth Scott Latourette’s study on North American World Service from 1957 and Robert King Hall’s report on the World Service of North American YMCAs from 1962. They also overlap partly in this work. However, they only focus on the mission of the North American YMCAs, leaving other views out. On the other hand, as I said, developments in the US YMCA are significant because the US YMCA has a special status among YMCAs. In 1955 it formed three quarters of the World YMCA membership\(^2\). Even in 1977, when the share of the US YMCA had dropped to 38 percent of the World YMCA membership\(^3\), it was definitely the largest and most prosperous of all national alliances.

### 1.4. Tasks of the Study

The central problem of this study is how and why the mission view of the World Alliance\(^4\) of YMCAs has been modified? In this study, I make two important limitations. First, I limit my study to the international organ called the World Alliance of YMCAs. The interesting question in the case of the YMCA is simple but fundamental: ‘What is the World Alliance of YMCAs?’ It can be seen as the totality of all YMCAs around the world, or it can be seen as that association which is registered in Switzerland. Another question is even more fundamental: ‘What is the YMCA?’ For people in different countries and different times the outlook of the YMCA has differed greatly. For some people it is a basketball team, for some others a revivalistic missionary organisation. Still, for others it has been a boys’ club, a gym, a refugee aid organisation, etc. There is no single definition of the YMCA. Among this plurality, the World Alliance of YMCAs forms one unifying curricula of other countries but in Finnish theological faculties, the only textbook in exam requirements containing chapters on YMCA, YWCA or WSCF is *The History of the Ecumenical Movement*.

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\(^1\) Binfield (1991). He has aimed to write a history of the World Alliance from 1955 on but this project has not been finished.

\(^2\) 3.4 Million of 4.5 Million. (World Alliance Statistics 1955)

\(^3\) 8.7 Million of 22.6 Million (*The YMCAs of the World* 1977, 198, 212).

\(^4\) On the form of the organisation’s name, see note 4 on page 16.
factor. It is the central organisation where all YMCAs belong through their national councils. Although it has no legislative power over national or local YMCAs, it forms a platform where members from different countries try to harmonise their different views. Thus, it can be said that, to some extent, the mission view of the World Alliance of YMCAs can be seen as the official policy of the YMCA. This limitation means that my focus is on the World Alliance as an organisation, not on the entire YMCA movement, although they are often hard to keep apart. In many cases, the distinction is impossible to make.

Second, in this study I limit the time-span to the period 1855-1955. This also means that through most of this study, I use the form World’s Alliance instead of World Alliance since the name was changed in 1955. The World’s Alliance of YMCAs was founded in 1855. In that year, the movement accepted its Paris Basis, which is the basic formulation of its mission view. However, before it is possible to study the change - even the starting point - it is necessary to look at the factors that led to the emergence of the World’s Alliance. Thus, instead of 1855, the story begins several decades earlier when the first YMCAs emerged. This means that the beginning limit is somewhat fuzzy and 1855 is, in a way, an intensification of a process that began earlier. That process is focused, however, only from the perspective of the First World’s Conference of YMCAs. The other limit is in 1955 when the World’s Alliance of YMCAs celebrated its Centennial and adopted its Centennial Declaration, which interpreted the YMCA mission. At that time, the YMCA was still a revivalistic organisation, although it had already developed its worldwide organisation and basic activities. Thus, in this period, the YMCA was transformed from a network of local Bible clubs to a world organisation, but maintained its basic mission to “extend His Kingdom amongst young men” as the Paris Basis states. This means that the change of the mission view can be seen more in its diversification and new emphases than in a total break from the original tradition.

The limitation of the time span also directs the methodology and limits possible sources of this study. For obvious reasons, the study is historical in nature and the source material contains merely the historical documents of the World’s Alliance. These limitations modify the central problem to research task. Thus, the task of this study is to find out how and why the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs has been modified between 1855 and 1955 as reflected in the documents of the organisation?

The research task of this study can be divided into three sub-tasks. The first problem that most scholars face, when they start a study project, is how to study their research object. Thus, the first sub-task is to develop a research model for an

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1 If God permits, I will continue from 1955 onwards in a future study. This will start from the Centennial Declaration and contain the transformation of the YMCA from an Evangelical organisation to a social service agency until 1973, when the Kampala Principles were adopted. It will continue to the present, when the pendulum has swung back, and the movement is again seeking what its Christian identity means in multiple contexts.

2 Because of the time limits, I use the previous name of the organisation - World’s Alliance of YMCAs - unless I particularly refer to the period after August 1955. On the form of the organisation’s name, see note 4 on page 16.
organisation like the YMCA. This will be done in part one. It will be a combination of third sector, social movement and worldview theories. This model will also be a basis for the outline of this work.

After sharpening the tools, the second sub-task is to study the starting point of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. Since the Paris Basis is the crystallisation of YMCA ideology, it is necessary to start with it. Thus, the second sub-task is to find out which elements affected the formulation of the Paris Basis in 1855. This is done in part two. In both movement and organisation studies there is a rather wide agreement that movements and organisations reflect the time of their birth. The basic tracks that are created at that time belong in the core that, according to Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman, has the highest inertia in organisational changes. Thus, in order to understand an organisation’s ideology in some later period, knowledge of the time when it was founded is required.

Finally, the third sub-task is to study modifications in the mission view between 1855 and 1955. In explaining the mission view of any organisation, understanding the beginning is not enough. An organisation may face critical times when its mission may be reaffirmed or changed. In the case of the YMCA, there have been some critical periods when the evaluation of the Paris Basis has been extremely important. Outcomes of those moments explain how the Basis has been interpreted. In these discussions (or fights), there have been different opinions and the one which lost may have continued its existence below the surface. When power relations in the organisation change, the former losers may become new winners and bring in their old view as a dominant policy. However, it is not only different periods in YMCA history that have modified the interpretation of the mission view. The YMCA is a multi-purpose organisation and its various activities have gained some degree of autonomy. Moreover, as a federation, the YMCA has adapted itself into various cultures. Thus, in these different cultures and activities, the interpretation of the mission can differ from one to another and from the interpretation of the World’s Alliance. As such, the Centennial Declaration is a negotiated compromise of these different frames.

1.5. Source Material

In the case of the source material, I limit it primarily to the conference documents of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. This is justified by the idea that the leaders of any movement interpret the unspoken ideas of the membership. I deal with this theme later when I present my theory. ‘Primarily’ here means that the conference documents are my main sources. It also means two other things. First, that there are some minor sources, which I use in explaining themes, found in

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1 Hannan & Freeman 1989, 70f., 77ff. I deal this theme below.
2 This theme has been alive in political organisation studies. See, for example, Kanter & Summers 1987, 158ff.
3 See ‘Adherency’ in chapter 2.3.2.
these documents. Second, it means that in the case of early years, the conference
documents do not include as much information as from 1926 on. Backgrounds of
decisions are recorded in previous research, which I use as secondary sources.
Most important is C.P. Shedd and other’s anthology *History of the World’s Alli-
ance of YMCAs* from 1955. Shedd especially has studied the correspondence of
the YMCA leaders of this time. Other articles are written by the staff and board
members of the World’s Alliance and they are mixtures of memoirs and research.
Other secondary material consists of national studies, studies on special YMCA
programmes, and biographies of YMCA leaders.

These conference documents can be divided into three categories. First, and
most important, are documents of World’s Conferences. These often contain a
report and resolutions of the conference, reports of the Central International
Committee / World’s Committee[^1], reports from national movements, and ad-
dresses of speakers. Sometimes they also include statistics and histories. How-
ever, as already noted, before the 1926 report, conference documents do not in-
clude contextual analysis of the world where the YMCA acts (except in the case
of the First World’s Conference in Paris in 1855). In these early years, I use pre-
vious studies to frame the worldview of the YMCA leaders.

Second, there are Plenary Minutes from 1886 on. These minutes contain simi-
lar information to the World’s Conference documents, although they do not have
as many speeches and study materials as the conference documents. Instead, they
have more preliminary planning and background material than conferences.

Third, there are some special conferences, which directed the work of the
YMCA in general, and that of the World’s Alliance in particular. These confer-
ence documents often have reviews of the activity’s history and detailed plans for
the action. Thus, my source material is mainly old documents and previous stud-
ies. Additionally, I have some e-mail correspondence with various YMCA ar-
chives. Although they give only some explanations as to details, there is one im-
portant note that the archivist of the World Alliance, Claude-Alain Danthe made,
namely that the background documents of the Centennial Declaration seem to
have been lost[^2].

[^1]: Especially important are four World’s Committee / General Secretary reports to the World’s Con-
fences (Helsingfors 1926, Cleveland 1931, Mysore 1937 and Paris 1955). The view that these
documents draw is a collective representation of the leaders of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs.
The material shows how the leaders framed their working environment and how they saw the mis-
sion of the YMCA. Thus, I am doing some kind of frame-analysis here, although I do not rely on
the theoretical findings of frame analysis research in social movement studies. Related to this, the
following is not a history of that period. Instead, it is a study of how YMCA leaders saw their envi-
ronment, their opportunities and the mission of the YMCA.

[^2]: Danthe wrote to me: “I must admit that it is a little bit strange that such an important document
presented at the World Centennial has no ‘background information’ in our archives. Sincerely, if it
is not here in Geneva I have serious doubt that you can find this information anywhere in the
world.” (Danthe E-mail 6.10.2000)
2. Theoretical Basis of the Study

2.1. Theories about Organisations like the YMCA

As already mentioned, the Young Men’s Christian Associations is a large international federation (over 150 years old), with a membership of 45 million in 122 countries. This means that there are more YMCA members in the world than there are inhabitants in all the Nordic countries together. The movement has established itself in all major cultures in the world. While the majority of membership is Christian, it also consists of other religions. In fact, the majority of members in some countries are non-Christian. The structure of the YMCA is a federation with both vertical and horizontal ties. Much of the international work is bilateral between national movements or local associations. However, some parts (not all) of this bilateral work has been seen as the work of World’s Alliance. This and many other phenomena make it difficult to find a theory how to study the World’s Alliance of YMCAs.

In this study, I have chosen a perspective that the World Alliance of YMCAs is an international nongovernmental organisation (INGO). It works on an international level along with international governmental organisations (IGO) and sees itself as an INGO. However, it is a special type of INGO, namely a federal-type religious movement organisation (FRMO). The movement character means that it is not only an agency, but also a tool for the movement. Thus, it supposedly differs from, for example, foundation type organisations, special agencies and umbrella organisations, which do not have a grass-roots membership. Moreover, the religious identity of the organisation means that the belief system that is behind organisation’s ideology may play a more crucial role in its policy than in some other organisations.

When I sought adequate theory from INGO studies, I did not find much. The best I found was an issue of the Third World Quarterly, which concentrated on INGOs. However, in their concluding article Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss summed their findings:

...far too little useful statistical information or even basic descriptive information exists about the phenomenon of NGOs that are active in the milieu surrounding the United Nations system. This makes theory-building and policy recommendations a hazardous, if not totally non-feasible, undertaking. We have no convincing or well-tested models. This reflects the difficulties of groping in a rapidly evolving, uncertain global society.

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1 The basic difference between association and foundation is that the first is a collectivity of people while the second is based on collection of property. On different definitions on foundations, see Anheier 2001.
2 Vol. 16, 1995, No 3
3 Gordenker and Weiss 1995b, 555.
The next step was naturally to ‘come down’ from the international level and seek how associations are studied on national and local levels. This led to non-profit sector (third sector) studies\(^1\), which have increased significantly since the 1970s. However, this search also only gave a partial answer to my needs. Their major weakness was that, although they see the importance of organisation ideology, they seldom study it. However, the studies gave a good general view on which kind of environment the YMCA exists in, and which internal and external structural forces influence it. In addition, the focus on philanthropy, altruism and volunteerism was valuable. The next step was to review social and religious movement studies\(^2\).

Although both third sector research and movement research study NGOs and civil society, they are two separate research traditions that unfortunately, seldom interact. The reason for this can be found in the early history of sociology. The old assumption is that a social movement has a life span starting from unorganised activity and ending in becoming an institution when the movement ceases to exist as a movement. Although this distinction was already seen to be inadequate in the 1970s, it has left a heritage of movement scholars not being interested in formal organisations. The only exception is the resource mobilization approach, which sees social movement organisations as resources of movements. On the other hand, nonprofit scholars have focused on organisations and macro level phenomena.

Compared to social movement literature, in third sector literature there is little theorising of the emergence cycles, the organisational identities, ideology, organisational cultures, relationships between a mother organisation and a daughter organisation, or the constituencies of the organisations.

In movement studies the focus has been both on structural ‘how’ questions and ideological ‘why’ questions\(^3\). European new social movement research especially has emphasised identity and ideology as crucial elements of movements and their organisations. My aim is to combine the ‘pearls’ of these two research traditions with a scientific tradition that focuses only on these identity and ideology questions, namely with worldview studies\(^4\), which can be seen as an interdisciplinary research field between philosophy, theology, social psychology and education. Thus, these three research traditions form the basis for researching the change in the ideology of an ecumenical youth organisation.

In short, my attempt is to formulate a model for the analysis of a lay federal international nongovernmental organisation (FINGO). With this definition, I exclude those international bodies whose membership consists of states and churches. I also exclude other than federal-type INGOs (like umbrella organisations, quasi NGOs, foundations, international committees and alike), which are not based on membership of such organisations, which, in turn have individuals as

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\(^1\) See Muukkonen 2000.
\(^2\) See Muukkonen 1999a.b.
\(^3\) E.g., Melucci 1984, 821.
\(^4\) See Muukkonen 1999a.
their members (or organisations that have them). However, before I present my theoretical model, it is time to give some definitions on international NGOs.

### 2.2. International Nongovernmental Organisations

During the 20th century, the amount of INGOs has risen rapidly. While in 1909 there were 176 INGOs, today they are more than 15000. Perhaps the most satisfactory explanation is that of Mayer N. Zald and other scholars in resource mobilization approach: the amount of movements (and movement organisations) depends on the resources available in the society. They form their own sector along governmental and economic sectors. Especially in development cooperation and refugee work, they are significant actors. However, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter the studies have been few in number.

Nongovernmental organisations (NGO) are defined according to United Nations Charter 71, which empowers Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to “make suitable arrangements for consultation with nongovernmental organisations, which are concerned with matters within its competence.” The Cold War strongly inflated early attempts to give meaning to the concept. The present legal framework is from 1968 from ECOSOC resolution 1296 (XLIV). According to that resolution, any international organisation that is not established by intergovernmental agreement falls into the NGO category. However, this is not enough, because the text emphasises that any NGO that is seeking consultative status must have goals that resonate with the UN economic and social ambit.

Marc Nerfin had described the role of NGOs with the distinction; prince-merchant-citizen; where NGOs represent citizens. Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss define how NGOs are distinct from other organisations. They define NGOs as follows:

They are formal organisations that are intended to continue in existence; they are thus not ad hoc entities. They are or aspire to be self-governing on the basis of their own constitutional arrangements. They are private in that they are separate from governments and have no ability to direct societies or to require support from them. They are not in the business of making or distributing profits. The NGOs of interest here have transnational goals, operations or connections, and have active contacts with the UN system.

Thus, the concept of NGO has been developed in the context of the UN to draw distinction to states, UN and other international organisations (IGO) that are

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1 Yearbook of International Organizations 1996/1997, 1685. The most remarkable jump was between 1968 and 1984 when the amount doubled from 6,155 to 12,686. Idem.
2 McCarthy & Zald 1977, 1224ff.
4 Nerfin 1986.
5 Gordenker & Weiss 1995a, 360.
established by governmental agreements. From there, it has spread to Third World countries and former socialist countries.

Elise Boulding, in turn, has defined international NGOs as

globe-spanning associations of private citizens pursuing transnational concerns covering the whole range of human interests - scientific, economic, cultural, religious, political, recreational, artistic.

The definitions are quite similar to social movement organisations or volunteer and nonprofit organisations. They also make a distinction between primary associations (community level public service, people’s organisations), secondary organisations (both community level service and federations of primary associations) and tertiary organisations (no community level work, also coalitions of secondary organisations). According to this, only secondary and tertiary organisations are INGOs.

There is great variety of concepts related to NGOs. Various concepts underline different connotations, and different inclusions and exclusions of organisations. Many organisations that these concepts describe are genuine NGOs, but some are practically governmental organisations in NGO clothes. Both the UN and governments have founded many of them, especially in the Third World.

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1 One difficult organisation is the International Red Cross because it has two international bodies, namely International Committee of the Red Cross (originally in 1863 founded as International Committee for Relief of Wounded Soldiers - present name is from 1867) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (from 1919 to 1983 League of Red Cross Societies (LORCS). The first is an IGO because it was founded by the agreement of governments and the latter is an INGO (or QUANGO) because it is an alliance of national Red Crosses and Red Crescents. Together with national organisations, they form the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (founded in 1928 with the name International Red Cross). (Yearbook of International Organisations 1996/1997, 869, 950f., 1052)

2 Boulding 1990, 39. Boulding’s definition fits federal INGOs only if they have individual membership in the lowest level of their organisations. For example, a federation of foundations or universities could be a FINGO but it does not fit into Boulding’s definition.

3 Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon (1995, 289) makes a practical distinction between these: she uses the concept NGO only when it refers to the consultative status in ECOSOC or other IGOs, otherwise she uses the concept of social movement.

4 Gordenker and Weiss 1995a, 380f.

5 Anna C. Vakil (1997, 2060f., 2067) has collected a selection of them: big international nongovernmental organisations (BINGO), community based organisations (CBO), community based nongovernmental organisations (CB-NGO), cooperatives, donor nongovernmental organisations (DONGO), government nongovernmental organisations (GONGO), grassroots organisations (GRO), grassroots support organisations (GRSO), informal community based organisations (ICO), interest organisations, international development cooperation institutions (IDCI), international nongovernmental organisations (INGO), local development associations (LDA) nongovernmental development organisations (NGDO), northern nongovernmental organisations (NNGO), people’s organisations (PO), public service contractors (PSC), quasi nongovernmental organisations (QUANGO) social change organisations (SCO), support nongovernmental organisations (SNGO), voluntary organisations (VO) and welfare church organisations (WCO). To this list can be added at least Congress of Nongovernmental Organisations (CONGO), which is an umbrella organisation of most NGOs. On classification of NGOs, see Gordenker and Weiss 1995a, 360f., 381ff.
INGOs are a heterogeneous group. They differ from each other by size, goals, strategy, membership, status, identity etc. Many of these aspects are hard to define. Size, for example, can mean the budget\(^1\), membership\(^2\), amount of projects, or amount of field workers. It is a kaleidoscope, which cannot be reduced to some criteria only.

When the theories point to the centrality of UN and governments, they forget that nation states are not the only relevant actors. The history of Europe has also been a struggle for power between Caesar and Pope. This is an aspect which NGO, NPO and social movement studies have rather often ignored. Churches, if they are mentioned at all, are classified as NGOs. However, the Churches resemble states in many ways\(^3\) and they cannot automatically be included as NGOs. In a similar way, their international bodies are not NGOs because the membership is on a church basis. Expressed in religious language: a NGO should be a lay organisation.

In general, it seems that the focus of the INGO studies has been too much on UN-NGO relations. Organisations’ own raison d’être has not been the major research question. Unfortunately, the study of INGOs is such a new sub-discipline that it does not have any good research theories. In my previous studies I have evaluated social movement and third sector theories in order to find a theoretical model for the evaluation of an international NGO.

In summary, I define an INGO as being an international nongovernmental, nonprofit and voluntary organisation. International means that the main context of the organisation is ‘above’ the local and national level. Nonprofitness means that its intent is not to distribute profits to its ruling constituencies. Voluntarism means that it is not founded by decision of any state governed organ. On the other hand, voluntarism means that there is some degree of voluntary work or voluntary funding in the organisation. Lay FINGO, in turn, is a non-ecclesiastic religious organisation that is governed by those national organisations that are its members.

### 2.3. Study-model for Federal International Nongovernmental Organisations

What follows is an attempt to draw together findings found in studies of third sector, social movements and worldviews in order to formulate a model for a federal international nongovernmental organisation. The model is developed for this

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\(^1\) With this criterion, there is a great polarisation since 40 organisations get 75% of the public funds for emergencies (Natsios 1995, 406f.). Here the question is how the budget is counted: only the budget of INGO or the whole block of INGO and its member movements?

\(^2\) Membership is also a complex question. Membership can be counted based on constitutional membership, which divides the federations from those having individuals as members. It can also be counted by the individuals of member-movements. This leads to the question of the reliability of statistics, which I do not consider as being very high.

\(^3\) We have to remember that the Catholic Church is the oldest of all contemporary organisations, which has its own legislation.
study on the World’s Alliance of YMCAs but it can be applied to other FINGOs as well. At this point, it is necessary to point out that this model is so wide that in any study it is not possible to focus on every aspect that it includes. However, it is, in a way, a general map to arrange different inputs influencing an organisation. After this representation, I show how I intend to use it when I concentrate on the mission of the YMCA.

The starting point of this model is, on one hand, in Roger A. Lohmann’s note that nonprofit organisations have not been studied from their own perspective, but as a residual category. In other words, their raison d’être has not been at the centre of research, but they have been studied from other perspectives. On the other hand, Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman have underlined the importance of the core values of an organisation. Their theory of hierarchical inertia states that the mission is the most stable element in organisations. This is in the same line with Max Weber’s note that ideas are often ‘switchmen of history’ which define the track of future events.

We can describe a nonprofit organisation with a figure that is a simplified modification of Hannan and Freeman’s theory of hierarchical inertia and relative structural inertia. The organisation is seen as an onion (figure 1).

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1 In the case of other INGOs, the model should be modified. For example, there are various INGOs that do not have membership at all (umbrella organisations, quasi NGOs, foundations) or they have direct individual membership (many scientific societies). In those cases, the federal structure must be replaced by some other.

2 Lohmann 1992a, b; 1995.

3 Hannan & Freeman 1989, 77ff. They (idem 79) recognise “four ‘organizational layers’. The shallowest consists of the specific actions taken by the bureau, the second of the decision-making rules it uses, the third of the institutional structure to make those rules, and the deepest general purposes.”


5 Hannan & Freeman 1977, 931ff.; 1989, 66-69, 72ff., 75f. Hierarchical inertia can be used in the studies on the relation of the core and the shell, and relative structural inertia can be used in the analysis of the organisational niche.

6 Other kinds of onion models are those of Mary Jo Hatch (1997, 14ff., 63-75), Geert Hofstede (1991, 9) and Edgar Schein (1985, 14). According to Hatch, an organisation consists of its culture, social structure, physical structure and technology. In its environment there is an inner circle of its networks, which consists of unions, suppliers, special interests, competitors, partners, customers and regulatory agencies. Finally, the outer circle, the organisation’s general environment, consists of culture, economy, technology and legal, physical, political and social environment. Hofstede’s onion consists of values in the core, rituals, heroes and symbols. The significant difference to my model is that he regards symbols as having low inertia. However, he sees symbols mainly as marks.
The core of an organisation is its *raison d’être*. Around the core is the shell, which can be seen as a materialisation of these immaterial issues. The shell also include the activists, i.e. those who actually run the organisation. Finally, outside the organisation there is the context or niche in which the organisation acts.

Estelle James has pointed out that nongovernmental organisations often have a religious or ideological basis. Alberto Melucci, in turn, has argued that social movements arise in defence of identity. This means that such elements as identity, ideology and mission view are fundamental to them. These are the core of an organisation and have the strongest inertia. In organisational changes, the core is the norm according to which the proposals are seen. Basically, the distinction between the three elements of the core is only analytical. They are so closely related that in practice it is not possible to separate them. To say “I am a Christian” contains all of these elements. Analytically, the mission is the ultimate goal of the organisation. The identity explains who the members of the organisation are. The ideology is the doctrinal formulation of the two others.

The second level, the shell, consists of the structure of the organisation: its leadership, its social objects (heroes, martyrs, holy places and times, etc.) and its cadres. These, in turn, can be divided into more detailed fragments which I deal with below.

The context is the last layer in the organisational onion. It consists, on one hand, of supporters, sympathisers, resources and opportunities and, on the other hand, of adversaries, costs and constraints. Additionally there are authorities and the public, which can be either passive bystanders or active actors.

All organisational levels are interdependent in such a way that changes in one of them create a potential for changes in others as well. As Hannan and Freeman state, the organisational inertia is strongest in the core and it is less likely to

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1 Estelle James (1987, 406f., 1989a, 6; 1989b, 292; 1989c, 32,35; 1990, 23) was one of the first to point out this aspect. She called these organisations interest based communities.
2 “What individuals are claiming collectively is the right to realize their own identity (Melucci 1980, 218).”
3 This is close to Berger and Luckmann’s (1972, 55-58, 113-122) theory of a symbolic universe where routinised practices are stored. Their basic idea is that when something has been dealt or learnt, it becomes an automatic action and it is not even recognised. This frees mental capacity for other purposes. Only when the routine is broken or challenged, the ‘stored model’ is taken into closer focus. When it is again dealt with, it can be stored again.
4 On leadership, see, for example Turner & Killian 1987, 377-382.
5 On counter movements, see, for example, Turner & Killian 1957, 382ff.
6 The role of the public in collective behaviour was first studied by Gabriel Tarde in his paper *Le Public et la foule* in 1901. Some years later, Robert E. Park dealt with the issue in his dissertation *Masse und publicum* in 1903. From then on it has been one of the main concepts in social movement literature. On public, see, for example Park & Burgess 1924, 867-870; Blumer 1953, 189-193; Turner & Killian 1957, 247-275.
change. Additionally, in all changes the core will be reflected as a norm for the validity of the change. In fact, if the core changes significantly, the organisation ceases to be what it used to be and is transformed into something else. This often requires total change in the adherency\(^1\). The changes in the shell may influence the core as well. The change of structure may alter the status quo in the organisation and change power structures in it. The change of the structure may also bring new people to decision-making who may have different interpretations of the mission of the organisation. Finally, the organisational environment can make restrictions or create opportunities that did not exist before. Below, I describe these elements in detail. However, I am not going to argue in which way these elements interact because the interaction is always a sum of so many factors that each organisation is a case \textit{per se}. I only give some possibilities as examples.

\subsection*{2.3.1. Core of an Organisation}

The core (figure 2) includes an organisation’s identity, mission and ideology. Collective identity has become one of the key words for the European new social movement approach. It defines the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘others’. If we look at the modern history of nonprofits, we see that Melucci’s thesis of identity defence is also true in their case. Religious, ethnic and linguistic based organisations are mainly defenders of the collective identity of the group they serve.

\textbf{IDENTITY} has, in new social movement studies, three dimensions: individual, collective and public\(^2\). In other words, it refers to the questions: ‘Who am I?’ ‘Who are we?’ and ‘How do others see us?’ Collective identity defines on which grounds the multipurpose, federal organisation is still a unity. For Melucci, collective identity is not stable but ‘a definition constructed and negotiated through an activation of the social relationships connecting the members of a group or a movement’\(^3\). Also, the ‘collective actor is always a com-

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\textsuperscript{1} A typical example is Bert Klandermans’ (1994) study on the Dutch Christian Peace Movement, which altered its mission when the adherency changed.

\textsuperscript{2} Johnston & Laraña & Gusfield 1994, 12f.

\textsuperscript{3} Melucci 1992b, 49. This approach, which is close to interactionist and constructivist approaches, is a kind of ‘\textit{tabula rasa}’-approach. It is a new view compared both to the Marxist understanding of identity as a manifestation of macro level changes, and to the Freudian psychological-biological
posite, a constructed reality which nevertheless presents itself empirically as a unit.\footnote{Melucci 1992a, 242.} For Melucci, social movement is not an entity but a process.\footnote{Melucci 1992b, 48.} In INGOs, the collective identity has to compete with the constituencies national, religious, cultural, professional, and interest identities. As well as these, one important aspect of identity is related to age. At the beginning of the fifties, Karl Mannheim wrote about the ‘stratification’ of experience.\footnote{Mannheim 1972(1952), 111-120.} He meant that a generation is formed by those people who share the same kinds of experiences when they first enter public life in their adolescence. Although older generations experience the same events, they explain them from the point of view of their shared adolescent experiences. As Mannheim puts it:

Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation: while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation-units.\footnote{Mannheim 1972(1952), 119f.}

Thus, the World War II generation framed, for example, the Vietnam War from a different generational experience than the ‘Aquarius’ generation of the 1960s. In turn, student activism and the Cold War were the collective experiences that modified the worldview of the baby-boom generation.

People who participate in the decision making of a FINGO have several (political, cultural, religious, national, etc.) identities, and these identities influence how different coalitions are formed in the organisation. Sometimes the dividing lines can go between generations, between cultures, between the rich and poor, between activities, etc. These separate identities mould the understanding of collective identity. This interaction process, in turn, moulds the mission of the organisation. For example, if some people in a conference frame their identity primarily on a national basis, their vision of the World’s Alliance’s mission may emphasise aspects of the co-ordination of common interests, like international camps, hotel facilities, etc. If, instead, some others frame the YMCA as a body of Christ, they may emphasise common responsibility to the weakest member of that body, which in turn, points to the need of refugee work and development cooperation.

While the collective identity defines the organisation’s identity from inside, the public identity does this from the outside. Public identity shows great variation in being the rival of collective identity. Outside people from different backgrounds frame the movement differently. In order to adapt to different societies and gain legitimacy, an organisation has to develop different public identities. The approach. (Hunt & al 1994, 187ff.). The former could be called an ‘adaptation’-approach and the latter “a treasure box’-approach. Hans Mol (1976, 60) is one of those who understand identity as a core, which is revealed after roles have been undressed. Mol follows David J. de Levita who presented the definition in his book The Concept of Identity in 1965.
crucial question for any organisation is how much these public identities strengthen the competing identities and split the collective identity.

MISSION is the counterpart of identity. The identity question, “who are we?” is often accompanied by the mission question “why are we here?” Especially in religious organisations, the mission question is closely bound to religious identity and both are connected to ideology. Thus, it is not clear which was first, the chicken or the egg.

The Oxford English Dictionary gives several definitions to mission. The first two are suitable for this work: “The action or an act of sending” and “a sending or being sent to perform some function or service.” Thus, the main idea is either to send or to be sent. In the case of Christian organisations and movements, the ultimate sender is always God. Riitta and Seppo A. Teinonen write in their theological dictionary as follows:

> When God established the Church in Jesus Christ, He sent it to perform a certain task. This ‘missionary task’ or ‘church’s mission’ (lat. missio ecclesiae) includes everything that the Lord has commanded it to perform.

From this perspective, the content of mission as a concept cannot be defined. It is dependant on the whole theology of the Christian group that is in focus: how the group sees its Lord, how it sees itself, how it interprets the Bible. In spite of the vague character of this concept, it can be said that the mission has some basic aspects. First, there is an interpretation of present reality. In social movement literature, this has been called the articulation of the grievance. Without articulation of the grievance, there is no problem and as long as something is seen as natural, there is no need for change. The first step of any emerging enterprise is the analysis of the present situation. From that analysis emerges the interpretation of reality. In the case of Christian movements, this analysis of the present situation is always linked to the understanding that the movement has of God. He is the significant other, who is the starting-point of all Christian activity. The analysis of the present situation of the world is made, then, from this transcendent perspective.

Second, there is a vision of the hoped-for future. This hoped-for future is the final ‘goal’ of an organisation. It is not necessary to explain it in a cognitive way. Instead, it may be explained in broad terms, like “the extension of His Kingdom” in the YMCA Paris Basis. Who can say what ‘God’s Kingdom’ really means? This broad mission view enables organisations to react in carpe diem moments and modify their activities according to emerging needs. For example, the YMCA triangle principle - a human consists of body, mind and spirit - has enabled the YMCA to develop a broad range of activities without violating its mission.

It can be questioned whether the final goal is the same as the strategic goal of an organisation. However, the final goal may be stated in such vague terms that it is impossible to define what it means. Thus, I prefer to keep it separate from the

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2 Teinonen & Teinonen 1975, 185 (my translation from the original Finnish text).
3 Blumer 1971, 301; Hopper 1959(1950), 310-326.
strategic goal. Strategic and tactical\(^1\) goals are more concrete and can be written in long-term and short-term plans. Thus, in the case of the World YMCA, the final goal is the ‘extension of His Kingdom’, the strategic goal is, among others, taking care of refugees, and tactical goal may then be, to provide them with professional education or knowledge of a new language. However, these goals are in a hierarchical relation so that the tactical goal should not violate the strategic goal and final goal. Otherwise, there is a danger that the mission of an organisation changes. Additionally, there is the constant danger of means becoming ends in themselves.

Third, there must be a vocation. An organisation’s vocation is linked to the organisation’s own identity. Goal and knowledge are not enough. There has to be a mutual concern that this organisation exists in order to do something to reach the goal. This vocation can focus on general work for the goal or on some limited part of it. Thus, some organisations can see their vocation as being helping other organisations to work for the main goal. For example, the Labour Movement has several mutual improvement organisations and co-operatives for purposes that are not directly involved in political campaigns for the goals of the movement. Churches, in turn, have several specialised agencies for different purposes ranging from youth organisations to training institutes of graveyard personnel. All these special organisations have a vocation that can be understood as fulfilling one segment of the general mission.

Fourth, there must be knowledge of the means about how to reach the goal. Here ‘knowledge’ must be understood in its broadest meaning including the hypothesis as well. When you ‘take a boy and raise him into a man’ you cannot be sure if your methods give the hoped-for results, but you base your efforts on the knowledge of the methods you believe to be appropriate.

Fifth, these previous elements are sacralized in the symbols, values and norms of the organisation. These guide the organisation in its decision making. Together they form the organisation’s ideology.

**IDEOLOGY** links identity and mission to some general worldview and combines them into some elaborated belief system. In some cases, we can even speak of the theology of some religious movements. The difference between these concepts can be defined in many ways. I use them to mean the following things. First, the worldview is a large basis of one’s thinking. Georg Henrik von Wright has defined the concept of worldview as follows:

> It could be said that worldview is a comprehension that a certain epoch or group of people has accepted on the origin and structure of the world, on the logic and explanation of natural phenomena, and on the right way to live.\(^2\)

Second, the belief system is a common concept for differently elaborated formulations of worldviews like philosophies and religions. By ideology, I mean

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\(^1\) The difference between these two concepts is defined by Karl von Clausewitz as follows: “Tactics is the art of using troops in battle; strategy is the art of using battles to win the war (Cited by Espósito 1972, 712).”

\(^2\) Von Wright 1997, 19 (my translation from the original Finnish text).
some ‘ism’ that is fundamental to the thinking of some group of people. It can be an elaborated worldview (as in the case of many new religious movements) or it can be a special emphasis of some religion (like the Evangelicalism in the early YMCA). The ideology can also be seen as a systematic expression of identity, mission and worldview. The latest does not necessarily require any conscious formulation of the beliefs that have been adopted and it may remain in unconscious level. Ideologies, in turn, usually have some basic doctrines that are collectively adopted. However, it must be admitted that in many cases this distinction is only analytical.

Ideologies are essential to many INGOs (the YMCA included). INGOs are, to modify Ralph H. Turner and Lewis Killian’s expression, value-oriented movements. According to them, a value-oriented movement develops its own belief system, which contains some kind of a creed, sacred literature and myths. The function of a creed is to sacralize the cause of the movement. It also gives an articulation of the worldview (or in Durkheimian terms shared interpretation) that constitutes the frame in which the movement acts. For example, if the world is articulated as being a battlefield of classes then the movement frames all phenomena from that perspective.

However, the intensity and centrality of the ideology varies in different organisations. If an organisation is related to an established religion, the ideology may have been taken as given and it is not the main concern of the organisation, although it lies behind all actions. If the organisation claims to be value-free, the civil religion of the society and the Zeitgeist, in general, directs its preferences. An organisation’s ideology can also come from a rival belief system, like from some subculture, counter culture, revitalisation movement or political ideology. In such cases, the ideology has a central role in the organisation. Quite often, the ideology reflects the era of the movement or organisation formation.

Ludwig Wittgenstein has made a distinction between change in the worldview and change of the view. The analogy is a river that either moulds its bed or breaks its barriers to create a new bed. If the change remains in the same bed, then the change is not central. However, if the change goes over its borders, “then it is a question of the emergence of a new worldview.” Applied to organisation’s mission view, this means that there is a distinction between the new interpretation of an old doctrine and the adoption of a new one. Above, Powell and Friedkin’s distinction between successful and unsuccessful organisations is on the same line.

As mentioned, the worldview may be clearly defined in doctrines of an ideology, religion or philosophy but it can also remain unstructured. Cassirer’s theory

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1 Turner & Killian 1957, 326f.
3 The concept is from Robert N. Bellah 1970(1967).
4 The difference between worldview and ideology is, according to Manninen (1977, 25), that the former can be a belief system of an individual or a group. Ideology, instead, is always a common construction.
5 Manninen 1977, 26.
of the phases of linguistic development explains the difference. For Cassirer, myth and ritual are predecessors of symbols. “Myth is the epic element in primitive religious life; rite is the dramatic element.” Analogically, in the case of organisations, this may mean that many elements of the belief systems are not presented in an organisation’s ideology but remain on a pre-linguistic level. This leads a scholar to focus on an organisation’s rituals and the beliefs that they carry. These pre-linguistic forms of a belief system play a crucial role among the rank-and-file members. Herbert Blumer pointed out, already in 1953, that in social movements there are different sets of ideology for leaders and followers:

> The ideology of a movement consists of a body of doctrine, beliefs, and myths… In the first place, much of it is erudite and scholarly. This is the form in which it is developed by the intellectuals of the movement… another… popular character… seeks to appeal to the under-educated and to the masses.\(^2\)

Sacred literature normally contains writings of the movement intellectuals, stories of the heroes of the movement, descriptions of the gatherings and battles of the movement, hymnals, artifacts, etc. The aim of all this is to create and maintain a feeling of ‘us’ inside the movement.\(^3\)

Myths interpret the *raison d’être* of a movement\(^4\). They are ‘truths’ that are not expressed in doctrines. However, myth is not only a primitive phenomenon but as Sigbjørn Stensland interprets Cassirer: “The interpretation of myth as belonging to the deepest level in human consciousness, indicates clearly that it is prior to conceptual language, and even prior to the emotional level.”\(^5\) The content of myths is acted out in the rites of a movement.

The elements of the ideology of an organisation are stored in its symbols. From these ‘stores’ they can be activated at the point of choice\(^6\). This happens especially at times when the environment changes and new strategies of adaptation are needed. At those moments, symbols are constants to which new proposals are measured\(^7\). These symbols can be artifacts, events, people, texts, or anything that the participants value as meaningful to their shared identity.

Interaction in the core is an ‘everything influences everything’ system. Identity influences beliefs by emphasising elements that are important to those who have a common identity. In some revival movements this phenomenon is called ‘the taste of the pot’ which means that an individual or a group is modifying the gospel according to their personal interests. In the same way, identity influences the mis-

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2. Blumer 1953, 210. In anthropology, this is often called *little tradition* while the formal set of doctrines, symbols and their interpretation forms the *great tradition*. The distinction is from Robert Redfield 1989(1960), 41ff.
8. The expression comes from St Paul: “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves (2 Cor 4:7).”
An ideology defines, in part, the identity and the mission of an organisation. To say that an organisation is a Christian organisation identifies its members with the body of Christ and separates them from the world. Members of the organisation are part of the ekklesia, the universal church. The mission is defined, then, with Biblical terms and it should be legitimate from the perspective of Christianity. Often it means either preaching the gospel or serving one’s neighbour, but it can also be other religious or secular activities, like fostering Christian unity, fostering world peace, etc. The important point is that the identity and mission must be legitimated in accordance with the ideology.

Mission, in turn, influences other components in several ways. Identity tends to converge with other groups involved in the same mission. Missionary work has brought the Protestant churches together, YMCA and WSCF conferences brought young people together in the beginning of the 20th century and gave them a vision of ecumenism. The YMCA work with armed forces¹ and work with prisoners of war² during the Second World War brought Christian ministers to work side by side and fostered mutual understanding. In these cases, sharing a common mission broke down barriers of different identities. However, there are also opposite examples. The aggressive proselytism of some Protestant churches and sects build barriers when the faith of others is not seen as being as good as the proselytised faith. In both cases, the mission and emerging new identity must be legitimated in the ideology.

### 2.3.2. Shell of an Organisation

The shell of an organisation contains its adherency, structure, leaders and social objects³ (figure 3). According to Hannan and Freeman’s theory, the components of the shell do not have as high inertia as the core has. This means that these elements can change more easily and the change in the shell does not necessarily cause a change in the core. However, they create a potential for the changes in the core as well. Below, I focus on four elements of the shell that has been emphasised in the literature.

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¹ In the United States, the United Service Organisation for National Defence (USO) that, in World War II, replaced the earlier YMCA military work was founded by the YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Service, the National Jewish Welfare Board, the Travellers’ Aid Association and the Salvation Army (USO 2000). Although Protestant Churches did not have direct official representation in this organisation (the Y’s represented Protestants) their Christian Commission on Camp and Defence Communities had a close relationship to USO and the president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, Luther A. Weigle, was a member of USO Executive Board (Pence 1948, 126-139).

² On this, see Strong 1955b, 556-578.

³ See Lang and Lang’s definition on page 46.
ADHERENCY is the basis of an INGO. Without members and supporters, there is no NGO status. As Mayer N. Zald and Bert Klandermans have shown, the changes in adherency create the potential for the change of the core. This can happen in several ways. First, identity is closely connected with adherency. When adherency changes, new people bring their identities with them and mould the organisational identity, ideology and mission. This does not lead to changes in the core in all cases, but creates a potential for change. There may be hindrances that downplay the influence of new groups. In such cases, the potential may remain hidden. Such hindrances are, for example, structures that do not allow equal participation, economic dependency on some adherence fragment, the power of the prevailing belief system, the power of leaders, etc.

Second, changes in adherency composition may change the structure of an organisation. These changes range from mere organisational expansion to the total transformation of the structure. A remarkable expansion of an organisation leads to the need of extra resources and administration. When an organisation expands, there will be a moment in which the old structure is not capable in handling everything and something new is needed. On the other end of the continuum, there is the case of total take-over. New adherency occupies the organisation and transforms it to fit its own purposes. In the same way, decline of membership may cause lack of resources and, in turn, reduction of the staff and facilities.

Third, new adherency may bring their own leaders to the organisation who may urge that their voice be heard in the organisation and cause competition for power in the organisation. This, in turn, may lead to the expansion of boards and staff. If the board is not expanded, the competition makes these positions harder to access because of the relative scarcity of leading positions compared to the previous situation.

Fourth, new adherency may also bring their social objects to the organisation. This urges the organisation to reflect the set of its older social objects. If the

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1 McCarthy and Zald (1977, 1221) make a distinction between adherents and constituents. According to them, “adherents are those individuals and organizations that believe in the goals of the movement. The constituents of a SMO are those providing resources for it.”

2 See definitions above in chapter 2.2.


works of a new hero are emphasised, it diminishes the relative position of the old ones. At the very least it creates plurality and this, in turn, has consequences on the identity and ideology.

However, not all segments of adherency have the same importance. Kurt and Gladys Engel Lang pointed out, in 1961, that the adherency of a movement is comprised of several segments and the importance of these segments changes when the movement becomes older. They noted that there are early converts, active reinforcements (old fighters), joiners (those who come along when the movement gains respectability) and resisters (potential followers). On the other hand, irrespective of the stage of the movement or organisation, there is always the following distinction: core members, who do the actual jobs and spend their spare time in the movement or organisation; rank and file members, who attend meetings, participate in activities, use slogans of the movement and believe in its ideology; and those who are not clearly inside or outside and whose support can be mobilised occasionally. Thus, it could be supposed that a new cadre of activists joining an organisation would have a greater impact than if a new cadre of rank and file members join the organisation.

In the case of FINGOs, the influence of new segments of adherency is not direct because international federations do not have individuals, but other organisations, as members. However, the inclusion of new organisations, especially from new areas, creates similar potentials as in the cases of individual membership.

**LEADERSHIP** is another element of the shell of an organisation. Herbert Blumer divided the leadership in social movements into four classes that follow the stages of a movement. In the beginning, there is a need for agitators, then come prophets and social reformers. In time, the movement needs statesmen and finally administrators. This classification can be partly valid for INGOs as well. However, this classification focuses mainly on individual leadership and does not deal with the collective leadership that is central in Zald’s theses. Additionally, there are informal leaders who do not have central positions but who, in fact, influence organisations’ behaviour. The social composition of boards and committees, on one hand, and the relationships between staff, committees, and informal leaders, on the other, defines the leadership in an organisation.

The leadership moulds the organisation in several ways. At the core level, the leadership influences how the identity, mission view and ideology are formulated. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison have emphasised the role of movement intellectuals in the creation of the ideology of an organisation. Intellectuals give the words that describe the *raison d’être* of the movement. Moreover, staff and other leaders formulate the proposals to committees and general assemblies. Addition-

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1 Lang & Lang 1961, 525f.
2 Blumer 1953, 203.
3 Zald 1970, 48,64f.
4 Eyerman & Jamison 1991, 98f. According to Eyerman and Jamison (Idem 102) the leaders “filter out aspects of a rather diffuse worldview, which as a source of collective identity has served as a framework for mobilizing supporters, into clearly defined items for political negotiation in the institutional frameworks of the established political culture.”
ally, some decisions are made by themselves. Thus, leaders have a central role in
the modification of bases and statements of an organisation. Even if the ideology
is based on some religious or philosophical doctrines, the leadership can empha-
sise some elements of the ideology. If the organisation is based on charismatic
leadership, the role of the leader is even greater. In that case, the whole core may
be centred on the personality of the leader.

In the shell level, the influence of the leadership is mainly on the structure of
the organisation. In a way, leaders mould the organisation according to their pref-
erences and ways of working. While they have a right to modify everyday prac-
tices, their proposals on structure are normally taken seriously. Additionally,
changes in structure are often results of the changes in the leadership which, in
turn, may result in the composition of active core members or different coalitions
among them. However, leadership has influence on adherency as well. A leader
gives a public face to the organisation and serves as an advertisement for the or-
ganisation. Charismatic organisations especially are dependent on their prophets,
but the phenomenon is not unknown in other kinds of organisations, either. A
good example is the role of Mother Teresa, an individual who is better known
than her order. In her case, she also serves as a symbol of the organisation. This is
also one way of how leaders influence the shell of the organisation. Many leaders
have become heroes or martyrs of their organisation or movement and thus serve
as social objects of the cause.

**THE STRUCTURE** of the organisation contains both its official structure and
unofficial one. Along with the official structure, different personal networks and
power blocks may sometimes be more important than the official ones. While
other elements of the shell influence the composition and changes of the structure,
it, in turn, influences the other elements of the shell. Changes in structure alter
the power stability in the organisation and bring new segments of adherency (and
drop some others) to the decision making bodies. Thus, the most important aspect
in the change of the structure is its influence on the composition of leadership.
However, sometimes it is hard to say which comes first, because new structure
and new leadership are bound together.

Another issue is the link between ideology and structure. Sometimes the form
is part of the dogma. For example, in the old churches the ministry, and episco-
pacy especially are part of the dogma. In the YMCA, in turn, the principle of local
autonomy has been one of the leading principles. Thus, the modifications of the
structure may be matters of the core, not only of the shell.

**THE SOCIAL OBJECTS** of an organisation contain holy or respected people
(heroes, martyrs, victims), holy places (towns, houses, sites), holy times (special
days, weeks, years), artifacts, customs and rituals. Symbols of the movement are
also one form of its social objects. Lang and Lang define persons as social ob-
jects as follows:

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2. Greek word *symballoo* means literally ‘throw together’. By symbols, I mean those signs that have
   some deeper meaning for the group. Thus, a flag of a nation is not just a sign, its colours and fig-
   ures have some deep meaning that the group values as meaningful to them. For example, it is not
Those who are social objects occupy a central position without being leaders. They differ from leaders in two important ways: first, they neither instigate nor initiate action for a following; second, they do not participate in the action or share in the collective mood of which they are the focus. The category of social objects thus includes such diverse roles as victim, villain, martyr, idol, hero, and fool.

Not all objects in the focus of collective behavior are persons. The object may be a symbolic representation of a collective goal - a totem, a flag, or sacraments... But persons constitute a special kind of object among the many possible focuses of collective action.¹

Lang and Lang note that social objects serve several functions in group processes. They can constitute forms of collective defence when they function as safety valves by which internal conflicts are controlled and directed. Typical examples are scapegoats. Social objects create solidarity among group members when they are hailed. They can be a normative standard of reference for a group or they can legitimate some actions. This can be either in a positive way (idol, hero) or in a negative way (victim, villain, and fool). In the latter case, they remind members of the group of the consequences of breaking the norms of the group. Close to this, a social object can also be a target against which the group is attacking. In revolutions, old rulers are often this kind of targets but there are also other kinds of objects which people attack, like the Bastille during the French Revolution.²

Change of these objects can be through inclusion of new ones or abandonment of the old ones. The inclusion of new objects may be not as dramatic as abandonment of old ones because the latter means that the organisation has to cut off something that has been part of it. This supposedly leads to deep reflection of the core issues as well.

### 2.3.3. Context of an Organisation

The context is problematic in the case of FINGOs because, first, they do not act in one single cultural environment like local and national organisations. Second, various theories frame the context differently. The context can be described with a cube (figure 4) that includes three possibilities in framing the context: through opportunity structures, through positive and negative elements of the environment and through niches where the organisation is working. In fact, it is a matter of taste (or research needs) which one of these is selected as the main classification system and which ones are then analysed as sub-tasks under the main topics. In this study I have chosen to classify the context according to the niches of the YMCA.

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NICHES of a FINGO can be divided into four different acting environments. From the FINGOs’ perspective, the first niche is formed by its national member organisations. While they are part of its shell, they also form an organisational environment where the FINGO acts. In this case, the FINGO is seen as an independent body inside the larger movement. The movement can limit or expand the possibilities of the FINGO. For example, there are questions of resources, division of labour, organisational mandate, etc. In the case of the YMCA, the North American movement has been a member of the World’s Alliance, its competitor in international projects and its largest donor. Additionally, there are interactions between national and local organisations outside the FINGO structure. In the YMCA, this has meant that perhaps the majority of resource transfers goes directly from one movement to another. This weakens the role of the federal level organisation. These interactions also create different coalitions in the movement, which the FINGO has to notice. For example, in the YMCA movement many national movements have their own development co-operation projects and this makes some receiving organisations more dependant on the donating national movement than on the World Alliance. There are also some special international organisations in the YMCA movement that are not in connection with the World Alliance, like The World Urban Network, which is founded by the metropolitan YMCAs round the world. These kinds of arrangements and movements’ adaptation to different local contexts affect the understanding of both the role of the whole movement and the role of a FINGO. The FINGO is thus only one actor in the movement.

Second, most FINGOs (as well as other INGOs) work in the context of international organisations. Many of them are located in Geneva. The staff of the UN, other IGOs and INGOs form an international society where people meet their friends, colleagues and countrymen in various ways. These contacts form a network which, on one hand, homogenises the policies and, on the other, facilitates the flow of innovations. What I call ‘Geneva society’ is, to some extent, also found in other cities where there are similar concentrations of world headquarters. It could be supposed that, in a way, world cultures are meeting and interacting

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1 On social movement networks, see Carroll & Ratner 1996.
through their representatives in Geneva society. Thus, in this respect, this society differs from ‘natural’ societies where there is either one dominant culture, or cultures are interacting at all levels. In these international societies, people are constantly between their own culture, the hosting culture and the patchwork quilt of other cultures. Moreover, when the staff of IGOs and INGOs are constantly changing, this international society is in a state of continuous change. Thus, the processes are presumably different from those in ‘natural’ societies.

Third, when a FINGO (and INGOs in general) has some grass-roots activities, contexts of these activities are comparable to the contexts of national and local organisations. The only difference is that a FINGO can withdraw from this context if needed, while the national/local organisation can seldom change its national environment. In other respects, the national and local environment is similar to that of national organisations. In the case of the YMCA, these kinds of activities have been its work among prisoners of wars and among refugees.

Finally, the megatrends of the time, or Zeitgeist, touch FINGOs as well. As organisational environments differ from place to place, they also differ from time to time. Some historical periods favour some activities and some do not. For example, the Hippie Movement was a child of the 1960s, the Peace Movement had its heyday in the 1980s and the Environmental movement seems to dominate in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s. There are also carpe diem-type moments that are combinations of various factors. Some of these moments favour the activities of the organisation and enable it to do its work. There may be, for example, a need for the skills and services of the organisation. A good example is the refugee services that were needed after the Second World War. The YMCA had experience in both immigrant-work and work with prisoners of war. After the war, many of the ex-prisoners became refugees and the concentration camps became refugee camps. The YMCA was already there and its experience was transformed and used into providing service for refugees. It was a question of being in the right place at the right time. Other types of opportunities are linked to the Zeitgeist.

OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES of a FINGO define what is possible and what is not in various niches. In social movement studies there is an approach that studies different opportunity structures that facilitate or hinder the emergence and action of movements. In research, three kinds of opportunity structures have been named. In addition to these, I would add a fourth one (figure 5).

Political opportunity structures have, according to Sidney Tarrow, the following variables: “the degree of openness or of closure of the polity; the stability or instability of political alignments; the presence or absence of allies and support

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1 There are, however, some exceptions. After the Second World War, the Polish YMCA moved to London and, in Finland, the Vyborg YMCA (from the part of Karelia that Finland had to give to the Soviet Union) to Lahti.

2 The concept is from Naisbitt and Aburdence 1982.

3 The concept of political opportunity structure was implicitly presented by Michael Lipsky (1968) and developed by Charles Tilly (1978), Doug McAdam (1982), Sidney Tarrow (1983) and Herbert Kitschelt (1986). Tarrow 1988, 429.
groups; divisions within the elite or its tolerance for protest; and the policy-making capacity of the government. In short, political opportunity structures refer to the web of political actors, authorities, trends and preferences in which the organisation has to act.

Economic opportunity structures have been emphasised in resource mobilization approach. John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald state that the more resources there are in a society the more social movements there are. This is because social movement organisations (SMO) compete for that surplus that people put towards entertainment, organised religion, voluntary associations and politics. Where income goes for basic needs, a surplus does not exist and there are fewer

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1 Tarrow 1988, 429.
2 Especially Mayer N. Zald (1991, 350) has defended this thesis by pointing out that the nuclear accident in Chernobyl generated more social movement mobilisation in Stockholm than in Kiev or Warsaw.
social movements. ¹ This seems to be one modulation of Maslow’s classical hierarchy of needs.

From the ideas of surplus, there is not a long way to other economic terms. McCarthy and Zald note that there is a distinction between federated SMOs with constituents that have face-to-face relations to other constituents, and non-federated SMOs with isolated constituents. The latter form of SMOs is highly dependant on organisational advertising and other economic methods. In fact, the target goals of the movement became products that are sold to adherents. This selling tendency is increased by the need to ensure the existence of the organisation. This leads to the selling of all kinds of by-products and a professionalisation of the movement.²

McCarthy and Zald’s theses are much in the same line as Hannan and Freeman’s ecological theory³ of organisations, which uses biological metaphors of struggle for food and life-space in the case of organisations. Certain environments can only feed a certain amount of organisations. Economic theories of nonprofit organisations, in turn, see associations, foundations and suchlike mainly as economic actors. They emerge as a result of market or state failure to fulfil the needs of people, or they emerge as clearinghouses to handle transactions from donors to beneficiaries⁴.

Cultural opportunity structures refer to cases which do not so much involve question of politics and economic resources, but the overall influence of certain cultures. Karl-Werner Brand links opportunity structure approach to neo-institutional theory⁵ and discourse theory⁶. He argues that, alongside political and economical struggles, social movements are always engaged in the struggle of symbols and meanings. Brand has argued (following Tarrow) that social movements emerge in cycles and are depended on the Zeitgeist of their time⁷. By Zeitgeist, ‘social mood’ or ‘cultural climate’ he means

the specific configuration of world-views, thoughts and emotions, fears and hopes, beliefs and utopias, feelings of crisis or security, of pessimism or optimism, which prevail in this period. This Zeitgeist creates a specific sensitivity for problems; it narrows or broadens the horizon of what seems socially and politically feasible; it directs patterns of political behavior and life-styles; it channels psycho-social energies outward into the public or inward into the private sphere.⁸

¹ McCarthy & Zald 1977, 1224ff.
² McCarthy & Zald 1977, 1227ff.
⁴ See Muukkonen 2000, 96-143.
⁷ Brand 1990a; 1990b, 2.
⁸ Brand 1990a, 28.
Thus, cultural opportunity structures refer to the overall Zeitgeist of a certain culture. However, Brand also points out that “modern western societies have differentiated a whole host of institutional subsystems... in which development largely follows the logic of its own inherent organizational rationality.” Thus, it is not only the general Zeitgeist of a culture but also the Zeitgeist of special subcultures and their interaction that creates cultural opportunity structures.

The Zeitgeist can influence the public and authorities towards forming a positive or negative attitude towards organisations, and thus there is a constant campaign to present an organisation’s public image as positively as possible. As institutional theory states, the organisation has to follow the customs and rules of its environments. Often this means that the organisation moulds its shell and even core in such a way that it gains legitimacy within its overall context.

Miller McPherson, while using the ecological theory of organisations, gives other elements of cultural opportunity structures. She notes that in organisational ecology the dimensions of niches are location, timing and social characteristics like age, sex, social status, etc. The social characteristics define the membership basis. For example, youth organisations and veteran organisations do not often compete for the same members. According to McPherson, “the physical location of organizations will dictate where their members come from.” Finally, the time dimension determines, according to the author, the possibilities of participation. The time scale may vary from hours (meeting times of several organisations may be overlapping, or the work creates limits in participating) to years (to different ages differing organisations are attractive).

Religious opportunity structures refer to the special status of religion in any society. In one sense, religion is part of its hosting culture. When we speak about Latin American culture or Scandinavian culture, we understand them as sums of habits, artifacts and worldviews of some group of people. However, on the international level, culture and religion are only partly overlapping concepts. Great world religions have adapted themselves to different cultures and one culture can have several religions. For example, the Roman Catholic Church is a part of the Latin culture but it exists also in Polish, Irish and Filipino cultures. North American culture, in turn, contains many world religions. Thus, I use the concept of religious opportunity structures to describe the Zeitgeist in the field of religions. Accordingly, with cultural opportunity structures, I mean the influence of local cultures and, with religious opportunity structures, I mean the influence of world religions and ideologies. The distinction can be seen, for example, in the case of the Polish YMCA between the World Wars when, in Poland, both the cultural and political elite favoured the work of the YMCA but the Catholic Church opposed it in all parts of the world.

1 Brand 1994, 5f.
2 Meyer & Rowan 1977.
3 McPherson (1983a, 521) uses the Lotha-Volterra equation to calculate the growth rate of organisations according to the carrying capacity of the community.
4 McPherson 1983a, 520f.
Religions can facilitate or limit the expansion and existence of a FINGO several ways. First, if a religion sees a FINGO as a representative of a rival religion or ideology, it can fight against it\(^1\). On the other hand, if a FINGO is seen as an ally, the religion can supply resources to it\(^2\). Second, religion does not necessarily need to define its attitude towards a FINGO. That is, religions also supply many of the basic concepts of the hosting culture. Thus, the concepts that a FINGO uses can be either familiar or alien to people in the areas where the FINGO works. Sometimes people with different worldviews do not understand each other at all. Third, linked to previous items, religions also serve as value memories of their hosting cultures. Thus, the goals of a FINGO are valued through the value systems of different religions.

Opportunity structures are not, as I have already stated, determinants of action but possibilities. They both form the rules of the game and they determine the possible actions. The analogy to chess illustrates opportunity structures rather well. There are several choices, of which some are good and some bad, but the player makes the final choice what to do in a situation. Of course, sometimes the position limit choices in such a way that it can be said that it forces certain action (as in the case when the king is threatened and there is only one possible move). Economic and political opportunities are external constraints to any action. On the other hand, religion and culture are more internalised and they constrain the actions of people more fundamentally. Men take the values and norms of their beliefs and culture as granted, and these values limit the organisation’s possible actions. In a similar way, organisational identity and its mission constrain its possibilities. However, mission, identity and beliefs do not only limit the opportunities but may also expand them. People do not rationally calculate the tasks that they get involved in. Religion and ideology push people to do something because they have a vocation - not because they benefit from the action. If people calculated their actions, much would not be done. The other way that mission, identity and beliefs expand the opportunities of an organisation is through personal networks\(^3\). As Peter Dobkin Hall notes\(^4\), the Evangelicals in North America created networks that helped organisational growth. Networks help an organisation to gain legitimacy, to find new resources and to receive innovations. In addition to religious and ideological networks, other main sources of personal networks are ethnic and professional ties.

**SUPPORTIVE AND HINDERING FACTORS** (or need and resistance) are used in movement studies, which use innovation theories as models of the diffusion of an organisation\(^5\). In this study they are embedded in all these opportunity structures. Supportive elements help the organisation to survive and complete its

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1. Like the Catholic church opposed the YMCA before the Second Vatican Council.
2. In the same way, Protestant churches have helped the YMCA. On the national level, this phenomenon has been studied by Aldon D. Morris (1984, 1996). He showed how American Black churches supplied resources to the Civil Rights Movement.
mission. These include monetary, human and symbolic resources that organisation can use as well as the legal possibility to work and a positive atmosphere that ensures public support. As well as its leaders, adherents and allies, an organisation may have passive supporters who value the goals of the organisation without being involved in it. These sympathisers have a crucial role in the legitimisation of the organisation. They are that fraction of the public that has a positive attitude towards the organisation. If this support is missing, the legitimacy of the organisation is threatened.

Hindering elements are those which threaten the existence and work of the organisation. Social movements often have a counter movement that opposes the goals of the movement. When many INGOs are actually social movement organisations (SMO), they have similar adversaries. Religious organisations compete against anti-religious ones and against those of different religion; anti-abortion movements fight with feminist organisations, etc. Of course, the intensity of the fight varies greatly. It can be supposed that work on the international level requires some institutional stability and this, in turn, means that rival organisations have to behave in accordance with civilised norms. However, the influence of an adversary group may emerge if its members have official positions in organs that are important to the organisation. Another way adversary groups can exert influence is through the public identity of the organisation. Counter-organisations often try to downplay the reputation of the organisation in order to reduce its legitimacy and support.

Costs and constraints of an organisation form a major obstacle to its work. Arguments of effectivity claim that organisations strive to cut their expenses and reduce their costs. This tendency has implications on both the core and the shell levels. On the core level, costs, combined with resources, lead the mission by stating what is possible and what is not. On the shell level, they influence the structures and number of staff. Constraints have similar effects. Important forms of constraint are rejection and competition. Some contexts reject the organisation, for example, because of ideological reasons. In other contexts, the competition is so hard that the organisation cannot enter these arenas.

2.4. Applying the Model

The core, the shell and the context of an organisation are in constant interaction. All elements influence each other. This means that different phenomena cannot be reduced to just one or a few determinants. Instead, a scholar has to be sensitive enough to notice the determinants in a certain place and moment. The theory that I have presented above is a heuristic device to identify the important phenomena in organisations. It is not a classification or systematisation of phenomena but more like Wittgenstein’s family picture. These elements can be iden-

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1 See, for example, Dahl 1982, 42ff.
2 On the difference between traditional classification and Wittgenstein’s family picture, see Collier &
tified in organisations, but in different forms. The dilemma of this kind of picture is, as Salamon and Anheier have argued in the case of classifications\(^1\), that the more general the applicability, the more it simplifies the phenomena. Vice versa, when the picture is detailed, it has less value as a general device and all organisations become cases \textit{per se}.

This model is a simplification of an organisation. I have collected the ‘pearls’ of different theories into an organisational map to help the framing process and as a tool for analysis. The simplification means that many details are missing, but this is always the case in ‘landscape pictures’. Although most scientific research focuses on detailed ‘portraits’, I think that these ‘landscape pictures’ are also needed. These wider pictures help a scholar to locate their own, more detailed study in a wider perspective and notice the complexity of organisational life.

The model can be used in three ways. First, it enables one to define what is the focus of the study and how other elements are related to the main interest. In this study, I concentrate on changes in the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. The ideology of the YMCA has been articulated in the Paris Basis from 1855 on and it can be said that it was a model \textit{of} the YMCA. The Basis was a result of a process that had already taken place and was seen in local YMCAs. In this study I am interested how other parts of the model influence the Paris Basis and its interpretations of the YMCA mission. Moreover, while the Paris Basis has been a model \textit{for} the YMCA, which directs its mission and policy, I am interested in outputs of the organisation’s mission only to the degree that they create a circular process influencing the mission in return. Both the Basis and its interpretations (Jubilee Declaration from 1905 and Centennial Declaration from 1955) are influenced by other elements of the model.

Second, the model enables me to stop at those historical moments when something happens. Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian have emphasised that new, unfamiliar and unstructured situations are moments when new norms emerge\(^3\). When primary or secondary sources show that there are changes in the core, the shell or the context, it is a place for analysis. Does the change influence the ideology? If it does, it requires deeper analysis, but if there is no sign of influence, the change on that level can be ignored until the next change occurs. This helps one to

Mahon 1993.


\(^2\) The distinction between model \textit{of} and model \textit{for} is from Clifford Geertz (1973, 93).

\(^3\) Turner and Killian (1959, 58-79) modify the old collective behavior concept of milling, underlining that in the milling process new norms and patterns of behaviour emerge. With this concept the authors are referring to collective action in situations (like catastrophes) where previous models of behaviour are no longer valid and people have to create new ones. According to them, people try, in new situations, to form a common interpretation of the situation and define what to do. Turner and Killian (1959, 40) point out that these occasions are the ones in which the culture is changed. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1972, 55-58) speak about a similar phenomenon when they refer to the routinisation of behaviour. Normally, people use routines to enable them to concentrate on issues that are more important. However, sometimes there are moments that the routines should be rethought and modified.
find the critical periods in the organisation’s history, which create potentials for a change in ideology.

Third, when I have identified a critical moment, I use the model as a questionnaire for the sources. In other words, I ask what changes have happened in opportunity structures, in adherency, in structure, in leadership, etc. Thus, the model enables one to examine different potential sources for changes in ideology and different combinations of factors at different times. My aim is to explain how the Paris Basis was interpreted at various moments of the movement, why it was interpreted like that and what interpretations were rejected. These latter ones are important because they might represent the frame of some sub-group in the YMCA and appear again if that group gains power.

This third way of using the model also gives the basic outline for this work. In part II and part III, I start with the analysis of the context, continue to the shell and, finally, focus on the core elements. In each case, I search for how the particular element has influenced the mission view.

As I said at the beginning, this model has been developed to analyse the YMCA mission. However, because the YMCA is one of the oldest and largest FINGOs, it has developed many organisational models, which have then diffused to younger organisations. Thus, the model could serve as a general scheme or cognitive map for other organisations as well.

In an empirical study, the model should be applied according to the central problem and research task of the study. In this study, the central problem, as stated, is: how and why the Christian mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs has been modified. The research task, in turn, is to find out how the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs has modified between 1855 and 1955 as reflected in the documents of the organisation.

Applying the organisational model to this research task leads to the following questions:

- How the changes in the context of the World’s Alliance were seen in the YMCA World’s Conference documents and how these changes affected the mission view of the World’s Alliance. With this question, I aim to find out how the YMCA leaders framed their world and changes in it.
- How the organisational change of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs was seen in the World’s Conference documents and how this affected the mission view of the World’s Alliance. With this question, I aim to find out which kinds of effects the institutionalisation, expansion, changing constituency, etc. had on the mission of the World’s Alliance.
- How the World’s Conference documents presented the core values of YMCA and how they directed the mission view of the World’s Alliance. With this question, I aim to look at such themes as identity and ideology of the YMCA.

These questions will be directed towards the documents of the First World’s Conference in Paris in 1855 in order to find out what was the mission view of the

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1 The concept is from Ulric Neisser 1967, 287-292; 1976, 31-78, 108-127.
World’s Alliance at that time. This work is done in chapter three where the sub-
chapters follow the distinction as to context, shell and core. Then, the model will
be used both as a historical filter and as a questionnaire. In each part - context,
shell and core - the detailed elements of parts are identified in the documents and
analysed. This means that changes that cannot be seen in the documents simply
did not exist in the realm of leaders, or they did not have such weight that the
World’s Alliance felt the need to react to them. This analysis will be done in
chapter four.

In chapter four, there is one problem concerning the organisational environ-
ment of the World’s Alliance. As I have presented it, my choice has been that I
look at the context from the point of view of four opportunity structures. How-
ever, as figure 4 shows, the context can be framed from different perspectives.
Along with the opportunity structure perspective, there are also those of positive
and negative factors, and those of special niches. Positive and negative factors can
be embedded in opportunity structures rather easily. The combination of niches
and opportunity structures is more complicated. The World’s Alliance of YMCAs
has four main niches which influence its work. These four niches are overlapping,
and the distinction serves only as an analytical distinction. They are as follows:

1. The YMCA movement itself, which contains (along the World’s Alliance) area, national
and local YMCA organisations.
2. The international society in Geneva, which consists of the staff of different IGOs, IN-
GOs and other foreigners.
3. Those niches where the World’s Alliance actually worked, namely the local special pro-
jects, such as refugee camps organised by the World’s Alliance.
4. The Zeitgeist of the world, which includes general cultural climates, ideological and
mode streams, and general megatrends.

My decision was that in chapter four I would first look at the general context
of the YMCA, which includes both the Geneva society and the Zeitgeist. Then I
will focus on the constituency of the World’s Alliance and look at how different
YMCAs developed in different parts of the world. The special niches will be
highlighted in chapter 6.3, where I focus on the special missions of the YMCA. I am
aware that this solution has its weaknesses when events sometimes occurred si-
multaneously and written text has to be written in order. I hope that the reader will
be patient when seeing references to following chapters.
Part II: The Paris Basis as a Model of the YMCA
3. Children of Revivals

This study aims to explain the changes of the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs during the period from 1855 to 1955. Mayer N. Zald titled one of his articles *From evangelism to general service - Transformation of the YMCA*. As movements and organisations reflect the *Zeitgeist* of their founding date, it is necessary to look first at the conditions that enabled the emergence of the YMCA in the first half of the 19th century. Thus, in this Part I, I focus on the reasons why the YMCA emerged and how the Paris Basis reflect the grievances of the time. In Geertzian terms, I look how the Paris Basis was a model of the YMCA in 1855. This task makes also necessary to look the period before 1855 but it will be focused only from the perspective how it explains the wording of the Paris Basis.

In this sub-chapter, I am going to use my organisation model as a basis for questions that I direct towards the documents. First, to give a short overview on the opportunity structures that enabled the foundation of the YMCA. I am not aiming to write a social history of that period. Instead, I focus on trends that the YMCA leaders saw as being so important that these phenomena required some action of the YMCA. Second, I am going to focus on the membership and organisation of the different YMCAs at the time when the World’s Alliance of YMCAs was founded in 1855, because structures often reflect the ideology and mission behind them. Third, I am going to focus on the *raison d’être* of the YMCA through an analysis of the Paris Basis of the World’s Alliance from 1855. As I noted before, the distinction between identity, ideology and mission is only an analytical distinction. Being a Christian means that you have a Christian worldview and mission.

3.1. From Missionary Societies to Youth Associations – Emergence and Diffusion of the First YMCAs

The YMCA histories and historical introductions usually focus on the London YMCA as the first YMCA. It is true that the London YMCA is the first organisation carrying the name ‘Young Men’s Christian Association’ but it is not the oldest of those organisations that founded the World’s Alliance. There are older associations in Germany (Bremen 1834), Scotland (Glasgow 1824) and Switzerland.

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1 Zald 1963. With this, he pointed to the change that occurred in the North American YMCA, and particularly, in the US YMCA. In the first decades of the 19th century, the YMCA emerged as a missionary revival movement and although evangelism was present in 155, the main emphasis had shifted to the service of the whole man, ‘body, mind and spirit.’ Since the North American YMCA has formed the majority of the movement during this research period, it can be hypothesised that there might be similar changes in international level as well.

2 Senaud 1955, 13.

3 Senaud 1955, 10.
land (Basle 17871). Thus, the London YMCA was only one centre from where the diffusion started.

Below I give a short description of how the YMCA idea started and was diffused before the foundation of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. After that, in the next sub-chapters I give an analysis of which kinds of opportunity structures favoured its emergence, how they moulded the structure and core ideas of the movement. The adjoining Map 1, shows how the association idea started from two sources is shown, namely Basle in Switzerland and London in Britain. In general, the spread of associations followed the theses of hierarchical diffusion theories2: the first associations usually emerged in some central city of the country and from there diffused to district centres and to the countryside.

The diffusion of the YMCA idea started in Basle in Switzerland. The Basle Jünglingsverein, as the YMCAs were called in German speaking areas, emerged in the Basle Mission House. Thus, it was an implication of the Missionary Movement in Germany. The new association was also in correspondence with several German Missionsvereine. The difference between the Basle Jünglingsverein and these Missionsvereine was that it did not limit its work to missionary activities but it intended to “be a place of refuge, a home for young people,” as Senaud3 describes it. Perhaps because of its connections to German mission societies, it seems that the Basle Jünglingsverein did not have influence in other parts of Switzerland. Instead, from Basle the idea of Jünglingsverein4 spread first to Bremen (1834) and from there to the rest of the German Confederation. However, the diffusion of the idea was not always as clear as in the case of Basle’s influence on Bremen. Sometimes it happened that an existing group heard about Jünglingsvereine and sought contact with these associations. A few years later the Jünglingsvereine in Barmen (1836) and Elberfeld (18385) were founded. These two associations were closely located and together they formed the centre of the German Jünglingsvereine. Their centrality was confined when nine associations formed

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1 Charles Cuénod (WConf 1855a, 42) mentions in his report to the First World’s Conference that the origins of Basle Jünglingsverein “is traced back to the year 1787, and therefore is the oldest of our Associations. It has been further developed since 1825.” Actually, he means that the Evangelischer Jünglingsverein of Basle is the same organisation that was founded in 1787 with the name Lediger Verein. Senaud (1955, 11), however, notes that “this is not confirmed by any available documentary evidence.” International Survey of the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations (1932, 26) mentions that the 1768 association “continued this work until 1820; five years later the work was revived along the same lines and eventually became the YMCA of the Canton of Basel.” Anyway, the Basle YMCA is the oldest of Continental YMCAs.

2 Innovation theories have been applied to the diffusion of religious organisations by Heikkilä (1979) and Kauppinen (1990).

3 Senaud 1955, 12.

4 Majority of the German-speaking YMCAs used the name Jünglingsverein up to 1920.

5 Based on Karl Krummacher’s Fifty Years’ Work among Young Men in all Lands 1844-1894 (s.a. 52), International Survey of Young Men’s and Young Women’s Associations (1932, 26) mention that the work in Elberfeld started already in 1820. Stursberg (1977, 9, 14), in turn, mention that pastor Karl August Döring started a group already in 1816. These groups were supposedly, however, Missions-Jünglingsvereine which preceded the Jünglingsverein. Similar pre-YMCA work also occurred at least in Stuttgart in 1805 and Hamburg in 1820 (idem 75, 80).
Map 1: The First YMCAs
the *Rheinisch-Westphälische Bund* in 1848 in Elberfeld. From then on the board of the *Bund* was called the Elberfeld Committee. Elberfeld became one of the main nodes in diffusing the *Jünglingsverein* idea in Germany, among German speaking population in other countries¹ and in the Netherlands. When the World’s Alliance of YMCAs was founded, there were already 130 associations in Germany², thus forming the largest national movement in the alliance.

From Germany the *Jünglingsverein* idea diffused to the Netherlands and back to Switzerland. The associations in German speaking Switzerland especially had contacts with Germany³. However, in both countries, the associations emerged independently and the influence of associations in other countries was more as a midwife⁴ than a parent type. Additionally, associations in both countries got assistance and ideas from France. In 1855, there were 48 YMCAs in Switzerland and 10 in the Netherlands⁵.

In Britain, the mother of YMCAs was the London YMCA⁶ which was the first association with the name ‘Young Men’s Christian Association’. In contrast to the German situation, the British YMCA arose, not from the missionary emphasis, but from the British philanthropy tradition. This association became the centre of the YMCA movement in the English speaking world. The idea of the YMCA diffused from London through the network of businessmen and branches emerged even in such distant towns as Adelaide and Calcutta⁷. Especially the first YMCAs in North America (Montreal and Boston 1851) were results of contacts with London. In the case of the Continental YMCAs the impact of the London YMCA was also

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¹ Thus there were German *Jünglingsverein* in London 1846 (two years after the foundation of the London YMCA), in New York 1850 (an year before the first Anglo-Saxon YMCA), in Strasbourg (1851) and in Paris. Shedd 1955a, 57f.; WConf 1855, 36f.
² WConfPrep 1905c, 16.
³ Shedd 1955a, 60.
⁴ The expression is from Christian Smith (1996, 16) who separates midwife organisations from parent organisations. While a parent organisation gives birth to a new organisation (either by founding them or by schism) midwife organisations nurture newborn associations that have been born independently.
⁵ WConfPrep 1905e, 16. Perrot (WConf 1955c, 23) reports that there were 53 associations in Switzerland. However, the differences between Fries’ and Perrot’s statistics may result from the fact that Perrot’s numbers are from the summer 1855 and Fries’ from the end of the year.
⁶ The oldest of contemporary YMCAs in Britain is Glasgow, which started in 1824 with the name *Glasgow Young Men’s Society for Religious Improvement*. In 1841, another association emerged, *Glasgow Young Men’s Christian Institute*, which in 1848 changed its name to YMCA. These two associations were amalgamated in 1877 (*The YMCAs of the World* 1958, 164). This was one of several *City Missions* that a Scott, David Nasmith had founded in Britain and in the North America. However, Clyde Binfield (1973, 134) notes that “it has been usual for any conscious connexion between the Nasmith societies and the London YMCA to be denied” but admits “somewhere the Scottish societies must have an impact, however indirect, on the London movement” (On Nasmith societies, see Idem, 138-148).
⁷ Shedd 1955a, 31, 35.
more that of a midwife than a parent. In 1855, 47 associations or branches existed in Great Britain and Ireland\(^1\), five in Australia\(^2\), and one in India\(^3\).

Along with Britain and Germany the third root of the YMCA was in French language areas. Since 1843 there had been a Christian association of young men in Nîmes (Société Philadelphique) and since 1847 in Geneva (Réunion du Jeudi). Later both of these associations changed their name to Young Men’s Christian Association. In spite of these earlier attempts, it was only in the 1850s that similar associations emerged in other parts of the French speaking world. From Geneva the idea spread to Paris\(^4\). In general, Shedd argues that the YMCA in the French speaking Europe emerged out of revival, Branche Française de l’Alliance Évangélique and Sunday School Movement\(^5\). Moreover, it seems that new associations emerged more out of the general atmosphere in the Protestant churches, or Zeitgeist, than by the propagation of the idea from place to place. Most of the 52 French associations that existed before the First World Conference had emerged during a relatively short period between 1852 and 1854. At that time both Belgian associations were still part of the French Union Générale.

The oldest YMCA in North America are Cincinnati (1848)\(^6\), which was one of Nasmith’s Young Men’s Societies, and a German Jünglingsverein (1850) in New York. However, they did not play any significant role in the diffusion of the YMCA in the American continent. The YMCA diffusion started in the same year, 1851, in Boston and Montreal, when some young men inspired on the London YMCA during their visit to the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, founded those associations\(^7\). In 1854, 19 associations formed the North American Confederation of YMCA\(^8\). In 1855, there were altogether 54 YMCA in the USA and Canada\(^9\).

These movements were in correspondence and decided to come together when the Evangelical Alliance planned to have its conference during the Paris World Exhibition in 1855. The founders of the World’s Alliance were 38 local associations from the following seven (or nine present-day) movements: British, Dutch, French (and Belgian), German, North American (USA and Canada), and Swiss

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1 WConfPrep 1905e, 16.
2 Shedd 1955a, 31.
3 The YMCA of the World 1958, 87.
4 Shedd 1955a, 42.
5 Shedd 1955a, 41.
6 WConf 1855a, 72f.; Senaud 1955, 6f. At the time that the YMCA started its diffusion, the Cincinnati YMCA was still a Nasmith Young Men’s Society. Moreover, Senaud (1955, 7) notes that Nasmith’s “principles of organization, membership, and leadership were vague and not carefully worked out.” Thus, although it is the oldest of contemporary North American YMCA, it has not carried the name YMCA for longest. The New York Jünglingsvereine, in turn, was mainly an ethnic association.
7 Latourette 1957, 22; Shedd 1955a, 30f.; Morse 1913, 14ff.; Hopkins 1951, 16-19.
8 WConf 1855a, 77; Morse 1913, 25-35; Hopkins 1951, 54-64.
9 WConf 1855a, 72-83; WConfPrep 1905e, 17.
ones. Besides these, there were five associations in Italy\textsuperscript{1}, which were in correspondence with these YMCAs but did not attend the first conference.

This was a short description of how the YMCA idea diffused in those countries from which the founders of the World’s Alliance came. We can see that there were both diffusion from one association to another and simultaneous emergence of societies. What we can see from the diffusion was that the YMCA idea was not homogeneous from the very beginning. It was a combination of German, Latin and Anglo-Saxon lay religiosity, although they had also many common theological elements. However, what we can expect is that the differences between theological thinking in these areas had some impact on the YMCA frame as well.

In the next sub-chapters, I will focus on the three aspects of the emerging YMCAs. First, what was the context like where the first YMCAs emerged? Second, what kind of organisation did the first YMCAs develop and from which constituencies did they draw their membership? Finally, I will focus on the raison d’être of the new movement.

3.2. Context of the First YMCAs

In the previous sub-chapter, it was seen that the two first YMCA movements began in Britain and Germany. The character of the YMCA was different in these countries. In many respects, they represent opposite ends of a continuum when we look at various aspects of associations. Therefore, in this and following sub-chapters I concentrate mainly on these two movements and only briefly comment on the situation in other countries.

3.2.1. Revivalistic Concerns in the Age of Transition

Cultural opportunity structures\textsuperscript{2} define the possibilities that culture lays in front of a new movement. No organisation emerges out of nothing. The Zeitgeist and cultural practices set the limits in which the movement acts, but the culture provides the emerging organisation with different kinds of resources and tools as well. John Stuart Mill has described the beginning of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century as the “age of transition,” when “mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines and have not yet acquired new ones.”\textsuperscript{3} In these kinds of unstructured situations people seek new solutions and norms to the new problems emerging\textsuperscript{4}. In this process, we see what collective behavior theorists have called milling\textsuperscript{5}, a group of

\textsuperscript{1} WConf 1855c, 23; Shedd 1955b, 266.
\textsuperscript{2} See chapter 2.3.3. I remind that although the word ‘structure’ gives an impression of some static structure, opportunity structures are changing positions, as in chess.
\textsuperscript{3} Mill 1987, 6.
\textsuperscript{4} On unstructured situations, emerging norms and changes of culture, see Turner & Killian 1959, 40-79
\textsuperscript{5} Blumer 1953,174; Turner & Killian 1959,59.
people creates a shared interpretation of the new situation and a common opinion what should be done. In this search for new solutions people use their culture as “a tool kit” and try to apply old values and models to new situations. This seems to be valid in the case of the emerging YMCA as well.

The idea of a Christian youth association was not entirely new in the first half of the 19th century. Auguste Senaud has identified 195 such associations of young men before the founding of the London YMCA in 1844. Most of these only lived a short time, but some of the existing YMCAs (like Basle and Glasgow) have roots in these early organisations. John R. Gillis and R.J. Morris, in turn, reveal in their studies other kinds of associations, which existed in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. W. Edwyn Shipton, in his report to the First World Conference, mentions “Mechanic’s and Literary and Scientific Institutions” that prepared “the way for the introduction of some such agency as that of the Association.” Thus, when the YMCA emerged, there were organisational models that it could use as resources. The emergence of the YMCAs is linked to the combination of these old association models and changes in society.

First, there was a rapid growth in population. Shipton mentions that there were 150,000 young men in London in 1844. London in particular was crowded with young people, and society was not prepared to handle the problems that this vast migration caused. Shipton mentions, especially, long working hours and overcrowded dormitories. He reports:

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1 The expression is from Ann Swidler (1986).
2 Senaud 1955, 4.
3 Gillis 1974. Gillis focuses on different youth and apprentice societies both in towns and in rural areas.
4 Morris 1996(1990). Morris shows that the models of clubs, orders, assembly rooms and philanthropic institutions were firmly established in the beginning of 19th century.
5 William Edwin Shipton (1825-1890) served first as the assistant secretary of the London YMCA from 1849 and then as the secretary from 1856 to 1879. He was ipso facto the first secretary of the World’s Alliance during 1855-1878 when the London YMCA was the centre of international YMCA correspondence. (Shedd 1955a, 147-153, 1955b, 207)
6 WConf 1855a, 54.
7 Gillis (1974, 42f.) argues that on the cultural level there was a huge change in the framing of youth in the nineteenth century. The main shift was the change from the subordinated status of the youth to the relative independence. Benjamin Disraeli described this phenomenon as follows: “We live in an age when to be young and to be indifferent can no longer be synonymous (quoted by Patrick Howarth 1951, 46 according to Shedd 1955a, 17).” According to Gillis (Idem), this was one result of industrialisation. Old models of master-apprentice, patron-servant and father-son relationships were changed and subordinates no longer lived in the household of their superior, and there was a shift from ‘food and accommodation’ payment to a monetary salary.
8 WConf 1855a, 56. Gillis (1974, 39), in turn notes that “the population of Europe rose from approximately 125 million in 1750 to 208 million a century later, increasing to almost 300 million in 1900.” He also notes that, “younger age groups increased even beyond their high preindustrial proportions, the ratio of the age group 15-29 to the age group 30 and over reaching almost 65% in the late eighteenth century, and over 70 % in England by the 1840s.” According to Charles Booth, 80 per cent of migrants from English villages to London were 15 to 25 years of age (quoted in Gillis 1974, 55).
Confined thus in arduous duties during the day, and having no suitable rooms for study, social intercourse, or recreation, in their places of abode, the majority sought their enjoyment in tavern and found in the society of boon companions the only relief from the dull uniformity and routine of their daily existence¹.

This rapid growth of youth population was, according to Gillis, behind the rise of different kinds of fraternities and peer groups in the 19th century². When we look at the early London YMCA, we can see that, in the beginning, it was this kind of peer group. Actually, it started as a Bible club of young shop assistants and only later became an association of young men in general. Thus, the situation in dormitories created a potential need for some kind of relief action. The YMCA’s answer was, according to Shipton, to found Mutual Improvement Societies in these dormitories, reading rooms, library and to hold series of public lectures.³

On the Continent, the cultural opportunity structures were a bit different. Because of industry, young people had their own money and, thus, they were more independent from their parents than before. However, in Germany the old customs of apprenticeship and guild practices were slower to disappear than in Britain (where obligatory apprenticeship was abolished in 1814) and France (where guild regulation was abolished by the Revolution). Gerhard Dürselen from Germany referred to the old tradition of Wanderjahr when he reported to the First World Conference about the Christian Herberge that most German associations had established for wandering apprentices⁴. The old tradition of Wanderjahr continued longer in Germany than in Britain⁵.

Cultural opportunity structures, thus, presented both the need for work among youth, and models for the work. To sum up, there were three important factors influencing the foundation of the YMCA. First, the emergence of youth as an age group brought forth the special needs of this age group. Second, the size of this age group in industrial towns made the needs visible. Third, the traditional models of philanthropy led peer groups to find solutions from volunteer activity. However, cultural opportunities were closely linked to the political ones which I focus on next.

3.2.2. Age of Social Reforms and National Unification

Political opportunity structures developed along with cultural ones. In Britain, industrialism developed earlier than on the Continent. Among those changes that occurred, Shipton mentions political representation in Parliament, rise of knowl-

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¹ WConf 1855a, 56.
² Gillis 1974, 37-93.
³ WConf 1855a, 57-60, 65; Shedd 1955a, 18-24.
⁴ WConf 1855a, 52.
⁵ Based on Wolfgang Schieder’s (1963, 93-110) research on German labour force Gillis (1974, 51f.) tells as an example of the size of the phenomenon that “during the 1830s, 15,000 to 20,000... German craftsmen were resident in Paris; and another 10,000 Germans found work in London.”
edge among people, changes in social, trade and labour legislation\(^1\). Additionally, the socio-political tradition in Britain was that social problems were solved by local parishes, private philanthropy and voluntary associations rather than by state action\(^2\). Shipton mentions one important political aspect that influenced the economic opportunities of the YMCA, namely that the changes in trade legislation “had tended to develop that [foreign] commerce to an unprecedented extend\(^3\).” The YMCA emerged at the beginning of these changes and among its supporters were men involved in campaigns for social reforms\(^4\). Thus, the YMCA was not only an expression of the political changes but part of the social reformist movement of that time as well.

On the Continent, the political situation differed from that in Britain. While in Britain the status of the central power was so firm that power could be delegated to the local level, in France the continuous trend was a struggle for centralisation. Germany, in turn, was divided after the Vienna Conference of 1815 into several small states, which formed a confederation. In the 1840s and the 1850s, Germany was still on its way to unification - the map of Germany was a patchwork quilt, which changed almost yearly. Thus, there were not similar mechanisms to impose changes in social legislation as in Britain. Every German state was a case *per se*. However, perhaps the most significant difference to Britain was that on the Continent social grievances led to political instead of philanthropic action. The main word on the lips of people was revolution. This can be seen in the statement of the founders of the Rheinisch-Westphälische Jünglingsbund in 1848:

> It was also an evil spirit that united us. Before our very eyes the storms of the revolution had lifted the veil from the abyss of destruction, into which we had been gazing with horror. In shock we saw how the spirit of the revolution pulled thousands of young men into the vortex Godlessness, immorality and indiscipline, leading us to fear the worst. We heard how there were hundreds of young people’s associations which gave voice to the claim: we hate Christianity, God must be abolished... So we asked ourselves what kind of action we could take

\(^1\) WConf 1855a, 54ff.; Thane 1996, 6, 14-17.
\(^2\) Thane 1996, 5ff.
\(^3\) WConf 1855a, 54.
\(^4\) Before Shipton joined the London YMCA, he was an active member of the Early Closing Association which, founded in 1843, “was the immediate precursor, and... active and invaluable auxiliary” of the YMCA (WConf 1855a, 56n.). Best known of the YMCA philanthropists was Anthony Ashley, Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, whose work lead to the Labour Act of 1847 which reduced the hours of labour to 10½ per diem (Shedd 1955a, 17f). Shipton reports that Prince Albert was a friend of the London YMCA (WConf 1855a, 67).

One theme related to supporters of the YMCA is its relation to Freemasons. From time to time, accusations have emerged that the YMCA is a para-masonic organisation (Anderson 1963, 20f). Although space does not allow deeper analysis of this question here, it must be admitted that ‘there is no smoke without fire’. At least in Poland the Freemasons were active in the YMCA (Zebrowski 1991, 104). In the case of the London YMCA, it can be said that, at the very least, the relationships were not hostile. One of the vice-presidents, John Leifchild, had a farewell dinner at the Freemasons’ Hall and YMCA leaders both attended and held lectures at the same place. (Binfield 1973, 35,52) In general, there is need for a study on the personal networks of the YMCA leaders.
against these occurrences and we came to the conclusion that we should set up a Christian Jünglingsbund and in this way to spread a net which would save what could still be saved.¹

Thus, although the Continental YMCAs had social projects, they did not arise from the dominant trend of society like in Britain. Instead, the Jünglingsvereine can be seen as a counter-movement to secular revolutionary movements.

In the United States, there was one political theme that had impact on YMCA thinking on a world level: the issue of slavery, which was threatening to tear the country apart. Like the nation, the North American YMCA was divided into two camps. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe had published her Uncle Tom’s Cabin which became an influential anti-slavery statement. When the leader of the Washington YMCA, William Chauncy Langdon, strove for the foundation of the Confederation of North American YMCAs, the question of slavery was one obstacle on this road. Langdon was afraid that even discussing of this theme would alienate southern associations and be a threat to the fragile new Confederation. Thus, he did not allow discussion on the issue in the first meeting of the North American Confederation of YMCAs in 1854 but buried it into the Business Committee. When the International Committee did not take a stand against slavery, all Canadian YMCAs withdrew from the Confederation.²

The London Association had faced the question of slavery when Harriet Beecher Stowe³ attended its Annual Breakfast Meeting in 1853. This, in turn, prevented an American delegate, Clement M. Butler, from “feeling at liberty to attend.”⁴

Thus, political opportunities, especially in Britain, favoured voluntary based solutions for social problems. When the status of the British Crown was solid, it could delegate the administrative power downwards. Additionally, new legislation roused the sense that social problems could be solved. However, cultural and political opportunities do not fully explain why the YMCA as a religious movement emerged to face the problems of youth.

### 3.2.3. Missionary and Philanthropic Zeal of the Evangelical Awakening

Religious opportunity structures had perhaps even more effect on the emergence of the YMCA than the political and cultural ones⁵. The latter ones, although important, do not explain why the YMCA emerged as a Christian answer to the situation. Most reactions towards new social problems were secular ones, not

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¹ Quoted by Stursberg 1977, 36f. (English translation from the German original text by John Stotesbury).
³ Harriet Beecher Stowe was the author of the well-known novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Her father, a Congregationalist minister, Lyman Beecher, was involved in the development of the Boston YMCA Evangelical Test in 1851. Morse 1913, 16.
⁵ On religious context of the early YMCAs see also Rouse 1993a, 309-327; Senaud 1955, 3-14; Shedd 1955a, 15-101; Morse 1913, 1-14; Binfield 1973; Stursberg 1977; 7-70.
religious. The major factor behind the emergence of the YMCA was the awaken-
ings of the 18th and 19th centuries. Verneri Louhivuori describes it from a YMCA
insider perspective in 1915 as follows:

Rationality with its deathly breath, along with boasting Protestant orthodoxy was breaking
down in the face of new life-creating revival movements. Like a growing wave, the gospel
spread through nations, forcing them to work and action. In addition, as signs of awakening,
new previously unknown methods are adopted in the fields of God’s Kingdom. Among oth-
ers, the great home and foreign missions, Bible societies, and Sunday School Movement
emerge, all of whose influences have been enormous. The birth of these organisations meant
the victory of the idea of co-operation.¹

Although there is certain pathos in Louhivuori’s text, it describes how the first
half of the 19th century has been seen in YMCA histories. It was in this context of
the Evangelical Awakening that George Williams and his 11 companions devoted
themselves to the work “for the extension of God’s Kingdom.” These 12 young
men were from four different denominations and, thus, the London YMCA was
ecumenical from the very beginn⁴. Another theme related to the religious op-
portunity structures of the London YMCA was its relationship to the clergy. Be-
cause the YMCA did not establish itself as a sect or church, it was not a rival to
churches, but an ally. As a sign of this alliance, Shipton mentions that “ministers
of every evangelical denomination have accepted the office of Vice-President, to
express their approval to the Society’s principles and arrangements.” Moreover,
Shipton reports that the dormitories “forbade the visit and counsels of any minis-
tor or religious agent⁵.” Thus, the only possibility was the strategy that the YMCA
used, to find “pious young men, residing in the different houses,” who could “es-
tablish them [prayer meetings] in their bed or other rooms..., and that the uncon-
verted among them should be invited to attend these services.” Thus, in this situa-
tion lay work was the only possibility. However, it has to be noted that the YMCA
was not the only one of this kind of association. In his report to the Paris Confer-
ence Shipton lists several denominational and inter-denominational associations,

¹ Louhivuori 1915, 5 (my translation from the original Finnish text).
² See the Paris Basis in appendix A.
³ Shedd (1955a, 23) notes that “three each coming from the Methodist, Independent, Presbyterian,
and Church of England denominations.” Against this, Binfield (1973, 123) notes that the “tradi-
tion, that the twelve were equally divided among the four main denominations, arose much later. It
is delightfully tidy and not wholly improbable.” Binfield also deals with the problem of twelve and
notes that different reports give different numbers of participants from eight to fourteen (Idem.
120-124).
⁴ WConf 1855a, 60. In Boston, where the situation was rather similar, the foundation committee
interviewed four leading clergymen after the preliminary meeting. On the basis of this consultation,
the Boston YMCA adopted its Evangelical Test of membership, which restricted membership to
the Evangelical churches. The association, when founded officially, appointed a standing commit-
tee that had two members from every Evangelical church in the city. (Hopkins 1951, 19; Morse
1913, 16ff.)
⁵ WConf 1855a, 57.
⁶ WConf 1855a, 58.
but notes that “the field is wide enough for all." Ruth Rouse summarises the characteristics of these various associations as follows:

Three features appeared wherever the Evangelical Awakening spread: international Christian intercourse and action; a missionary awakening showing itself in the formation of missionary societies; efforts directed to social reforms.²

The Awakening did not touch everyone. Shipton reports that the social program of the YMCA sponsored Mutual Improvement Societies sparked interest among the principals of dormitories. When there were no converted young men available in some dormitories, the association used others who were interested in these kinds of social programs³. Evidently, this led to the need to affiliate these non-converted to the association and to the formation of associate membership alongside active membership, which required personal conversion. Thus, the secular assistant leadership in the YMCA is not an invention of the post-World War II era but was present from the beginning.

In Germany, the religious opportunity structures were different. The Pietistic Revival did not lead to sectarianism (as did the Evangelical Awakening in Britain) but remained inside the Evangelical churches in Germany. This had, in turn, several consequences. The first of these consequences was that the revival did not split the church but strengthened it by revitalising its activities. Another consequence was that the emerging political opposition did not find a religiously expressed legitimisation to its protest like in Britain. The English Labour Movement got many of its leaders from Methodism⁴, and thus the British Labour Movement was never as anti-Christian as its sister-movements on the Continent.

Second, the main opponent of Pietism was not similar to High Church activity such as “the Oxford Movement in the Church of England, which emphasized the Catholic heritage of that church." Instead, it was the Lutheran orthodoxy, which was weak in its spirituality. As German Pietism was older than Evangelical Awakening in Britain, it had created its established institutions that had influence inside German churches. However, as a counter movement to Pietism, rationalism emerged and rationalist theologians displaced Pietists, for example, in the old fortress of Pietism, Halle University⁶. Rationalistic theology was one of the main targets of revivalists in the 19th century.

Third, German states were mainly dominated by one state religion according to the old \textit{cuius regio - eius religio} principle. They mainly were Lutheran, Reformed, or Catholic. Additionally, most of the German associations were founded and led

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¹ WConf 1855a, 70.
² Rouse 1993a, 310.
³ WConf 1855a, 60.
⁴ Carl Brand (1974, 16) argues: “Most of these early leaders took their gospel from the Bible and their nonconformist churches” Henry Pelling (1965, 129) writes along the same lines: “Methodist class meetings and lectures had been a training ground for political radicals and early trade union organizers.” According to Leonard Smith (1993), the relation between Labour Movement and Methodism was first argued by Elie Halevy. On the topic, see Wearmouth (1957).
⁵ Evangelical Alliance 1994, 612.
by Protestant parish pastors\(^1\). For them, Christian youth associations were tools for their parish youth work. This had two direct effects on membership criteria in different *Jünglingsvereine*. While in Britain the associations were ecumenical, in Germany there were restrictions on membership. Perrot mentions that in the southern parts of Germany and in Baden-Württemberg, associations were denominationally differentiated\(^2\). Another result was that, since Lutheran and Reformed churches as majority churches opposed sectarianism they did not want *Jünglingsverein* to become a ‘fifth colony’ for these groups and opposed the membership of these groups. Karl Krummacher’s words half a century later expressed the attitude of the pastors in this early period:

> In Germany we have one National Church... and only some few small communities [sects] which form an insignificant minority. We cannot possibly concede the same rights to the Baptists and Methodists, although we wish them God’s blessing in their work among youth.\(^3\)

Fourth, in Protestant Europe there was a strong Pietistic tradition of *ecclesiola in ecclesia*\(^4\). Senaud argues that in this tradition the work of Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) was important for the first Continental YMCAs. Zinzendorf founded societies of young men in Halle and Wittenberg and these were models for the Choirs or Bands among the Moravian Brethren in Herrnhut. It was according to this Choir model that the *Lediger Verein* of Basle, which has also been called the first YMCA, was formed in 1768\(^5\).

There were also some similarities between Britain and the Continent. After a friendly ecumenical period in the 1820’s, the Protestant churches in Britain, Germany and France started to oppose each other. In Britain, Nonconformists and other groups left the Church of England and founded denominations of their own\(^6\). In Germany, the King of Prussia’s proposal to unify Lutheran and Reformed churches led to strong reaction against it among Lutherans\(^7\). In France, many different Protestant groups formed their own denominations\(^8\). Rouse tells that “when William Carey proposed the holding of a World Missionary Conference, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, Andrew Fuller, turned the project down, declaring that “in a meeting of all denominations, there would be no unity, without which we had better stay at home”\(^9\)."

The major differences in the religious context affected the YMCAs as well. In Germany and Switzerland, the Lutheran and Calvinist Churches were more dominant than the Anglican Church in Britain, where Calvinism and free church activ-

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\(^1\) WConf 1855c, 17-22.  
\(^2\) WConf 1855c, 17, 27.  
\(^3\) Karl Krummacher 1894: *Die Evangelischen Jünglingsvereine (Christlichen Vereine Junger Männer) und verwandte Bestrebungen*. Elberfeld (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 359f.).  
\(^4\) Along with this singular nominative form, plural nominative (*ecclesiola*) and plural accusative (*ecclesiolas*) forms are used in literature.  
\(^5\) Senaud (1955, 5), Stursberg (1977, 7). See also note 1 on page 60.  
\(^6\) Rouse 1993a, 317.  
\(^7\) Brandreth 1993(1954), 286ff., 302f.; Rouse 1993a, 316, 325.  
\(^8\) Rouse 1993a, 316.  
\(^9\) Rouse 1993a, 315.
ity existed along the Anglican Established Church. In consequence, the Jünglingsvereine in Germany were affiliated to the Established church and excluded sectarian groups from their membership. In this sense, they were not truly ecumenical. France and Belgium, in turn, were Catholic countries where Protestantism was a minority religion. This minority position distinguished them both from the German state-church experience and from Anglo-Saxon ecumenism. These differences had certain consequences, which were later sources of conflict in the YMCA family.

In this situation, new demands for Christian unity emerged during the 1830’s and 1840’s. The London YMCA was partly a laymen’s reaction to this rising dogmatism. The Evangelical Alliance was the answer of ecumenically thinking church leaders. Two years after the foundation of the London YMCA, the Evangelical Alliance was founded in London in 1846\(^1\). The Alliance soon became the channel of interaction of ecumenically minded pastors and laymen. Many YMCA secretaries were also involved in local branches of the Evangelical Alliance\(^2\).

Religious opportunity structures, thus, explain how the emerging YMCAs were a part of Christian response to the Zeitgeist. The Great Awakening was the direct impulse for several religious movement of the time. The YMCA can also be seen as a child of the revival. It was from this revivalism that the missionary and philanthropical zeal of the YMCA arose. When the revival challenged Christians to take their religion seriously, it also led to confrontations. In Britain, the revival opposed High Church streams in the Church of England. In Germany, it opposed orthodox Lutheranism. In both countries, the common enemy was rationalism and liberal theology, which gave rise to protest activity to defend traditional Protestant Faith.

Cultural, political and religious opportunity structures shed light on why the YMCA emerged. They explain much of the formation of the shared interpretation of the new situation, and the shared worldview. However, they do not explain how the movement took shape and was able to organise itself. Focusing on economic opportunity structures sheds light on this question.

3.2.4. Christian Businessmen Facilitate the Philanthropical Work

While the cultural, political and religious opportunity structures explain why the YMCA emerged and to which kinds of challenges it aimed to respond, the economic opportunity structures explain how it emerged. On reading the British YMCA histories, it appears that there was a chronic lack of money. The YMCA and similar organisations relied on the same limited source of funds: the philanthropic elite. This source was crucial, especially in the beginning when there were establishing costs like hiring meeting rooms and employing a missionary secretary.

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\(^1\) On Ecumenical Alliance, see Rouse 1993a, 318-324; Wolffe 1986;

\(^2\) Henri Dunant of Geneva and Jean Paul Cook of Paris were also local secretaries. Shedd 1955a, 113.
In this situation, the membership basis of the newborn YMCA was important. While the London YMCA begun as a peer group of young shop assistants, it had business-minded resource people in its membership. This early core group was influential in several ways. First, when these young shop assistants grew older, they had more influential positions in their companies. These positions enabled them to find wealthy sponsors for the new movement. The support of Williams’ employer, George Hitchcock, was especially remarkable\(^1\). Also Williams himself was a significant donor. These wealthy Christian businessmen created the critical financial mass that made the work possible\(^2\).

Second, the members used their business experience in order to organise the YMCA. This led the London YMCA to turn some of its activities into products that could be sold. The public lectures, use of library, etc. had a fee that created part of the income\(^3\). On the other hand, the presence of qualified businessmen guaranteed that the accounts were kept properly. In this way, the YMCA avoided the weakness of Nasmith societies, which were often short-lived because of vague organisation and leadership\(^4\).

Third, George Williams’ and his companions’ working duties led them to travel and in these travels they spread the idea of the YMCA. Vice versa, travelling merchants visited the London YMCA and brought the idea back home\(^5\). Moreover, contacts with the business world led the members of the London YMCA to find such opportunities as the ‘Great Exhibition of Industry’ (1851) in their evangelisation work\(^6\).

In Germany, the situation was partly different. Although, like in Britain, some associations were founded by merchants (Anton Haasen in Elberfeld in 1838), there were also pastors (Gerhard Dürselen in Ronsdorf in 1842) who founded them as part of their youth work\(^7\). In this situation, local parishes, in fact, supplied the needed first resources since the pastor could use parish facilities for youth work as well. In other parts of the Continent, the associations were often small clubs of 5-20 men that did not need large resources. On the other hand, this meant that they did not expand in the same way as the London YMCA.

Beneficial use of economic opportunity structures gave the newborn YMCA the possibility to survive and expand. In Britain, the role of leading businessmen was crucial, while in Germany part of the necessary resources came from parishes. Economic opportunities also moulded the structure and activities of the new organisation.

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\(^1\) During the years 1844 and 1853, Hitchcock gave over £1300 to the YMCA (Binfield 1973, 185).

\(^2\) Theoretically, the YMCA emergence in Britain follows the theory of critical mass in social movements that Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver (1993) have created. They state that ‘Collective action arises around those interests for which there are groups of especially interested and resourceful individuals who are socially connected to one another (Idem. 54).’

\(^3\) Shedd 1955a, 27f.

\(^4\) Senaud 1955, 7.


\(^6\) WConf 1855a, 67f.; Shedd 1955a, 30ff.

\(^7\) Shedd 1955a, 55; Stursberg 1977, 10.
3.2.5. Impact of the Context on the Mission View of the First YMCAs

In this sub-chapter, I have focused on how the leaders of the YMCA saw the context of the Movement. Theoretically, the emergence of the YMCA seems to follow the arguments presented in theories that have been somehow related to interactionism: collective behavior and constructivism. As noted before\(^1\), Ralph H. Turner and Lewis Killian have argued that in a milling process, people use their old experience and values when they construct an interpretation of the new situation. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison have emphasised that the movement intellectuals are those who follow this milling process and give an interpretation as a conclusion of the discussion\(^2\). In the case of the YMCA, these old models were largely taken from the Evangelical tradition, and movement intellectuals constructed the shared interpretation of their environment in this frame\(^3\).

The main spark and interpretative frame for the YMCA was the Evangelical Revival. According to this revivalistic frame, the old Christian norms were threatened. Industrialism and revolutions had collapsed the old values and this, in turn, caused social problems. Churches had failed to fulfil their mission and, thus, it was the duty of every individual Christian to be involved in the restoration of these values\(^4\). I have elsewhere argued that much of the emergence of third sector organisations has been due to this ‘church failure’\(^5\). Religious movements have emerged as protest movements in order to face the problems that churches had not been able to deal with. Both Pietism and the Evangelical Awakening were attempts to revitalise Protestant churches. In this general Evangelical Movement, the YMCA was one string, which occupied its own niche: to focus on young men taken away from their traditional roots. In this niche the YMCA practised the Evangelical frame of action which included both missionary work and social action, like Bible studies, mass conferences, *Herberge*, education, visiting the poor, etc.

Thus, there were cultural, political and religious opportunity structures, which favoured the emergence of the YMCA. However, this was not enough as we see in the case of a somewhat earlier attempt to establish a similar movement. From

\(^1\) See note 3 on page 54.

\(^2\) See see note 4 on page 44.

\(^3\) In general sociology, this comes close to what Weber spoke of as world images (*Weltbild*) being switchmen of action, and what Berger and Luckmann (1972, 55-58, 113-122) spoke of as stored values in the symbolic universe. Ann Swidler’s idea of culture as a tool kit also fits into this theoretical frame (see note 6 on page 50).

\(^4\) Durkheim has called this ‘restorative collective action’. The Durkheimian idea is based on a tension between disintegration (which leads to anomic collective action) and integration (which leads to routine collective action). Somewhere between these lies restorative collective action (Tilly 1978, 16ff.; Turner & Killian 1959, 4f.).

\(^5\) Muukkonen 2000, 121. The classical nonprofit emergence theories state that NPOs emerge either out of state failure (Weisbrod 1975, 1977, 1988) or out of market failure (Hansmann 1980, 1987). However, these theories do not fit well into 19th century Europe. The state and market were not supposed to carry philanthropic work, it was rather the duty of local parishes, fraternities and voluntary associations.
1824 on a Scott, David Nasmith had founded perhaps 70 Young Men’s Societies in Britain and the USA. Although these societies had the same opportunities as the YMCA, their organisation was not on a firm basis. Later, they either ceased their operation or transformed themselves to YMCAs. Compared to the Nasmith Societies, the strength of the YMCA was in its business frame. The YMCA leaders were part of the emerging new middle class and they saw the importance of economic factors perhaps more clearly than those who had a frame that God takes care of everyday needs. From the very beginning, the YMCAs were also nonprofit enterprises, which offered services to their members and clients.

In this chapter, I have focused on the opportunity structures of the first YMCAs as the movement leaders saw them. In the formation of its mission, a movement goes through a milling process in which the new emerging situation is interpreted and grievances identified. In this process, the movement creates its structure, identifies its leaders, defines its constituency and chooses its social objects. These, in turn, together with opportunity structures, formulate the movement’s collective identity, ideology and mission. However, these opportunity structures are not determinants. As the name of the concept indicates, they create potentials. It always requires an actor who is able to see them and transform potentials into reality. When we focus on a collective actor, we necessarily focus on its leadership, constituency, structure and symbols. These organisational elements also modify the core values of the movement. Therefore, it is time to look at those elements that mediated the opportunities and manifestations.

**3.3. Movement Takes Form**

In this sub-chapter, I focus on the organisational questions of the first YMCAs. Membership and leadership influence the mission when people ask their association things that they see as important. Bert Klandermans has shown how the changes in movement’s membership influence its mission. People from different classes, religions, sexes, ages, occupations, etc. frame their world differently. Karl Mannheim has spoken about generational experience. In the same way, we can speak about class experience, sex experience, etc. Leadership also influences the mission. It is not a trivial issue whether a movement has prophetic, administrative, oligarchic or democratic leadership. The individual skills of different leaders also have an impact on the mission of the movement as well.

Along with membership and leadership, organisational form and social objects influence the mission. Organisation can be static or flexible, it can be hierarchical or diffused, it can direct resources to the top or to the grassroots, etc. All these factors influence, if not the final goals, then at least the strategic and tactical choices of the organisation. Social objects, in turn, serve as flags or symbols of the movement and they are an important part of the formation of the ideology of

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1 Klandermans 1994.
2 See chapter 2.3.1.
the movement.

Below, I focus on each of these four aspects, membership, leadership, organisational structure and social objects. After them, I look how the context and the shell of the YMCA modified its core values, especially its mission.

3.3.1. Association of Young White Evangelical Men

The analysis of the YMCA structure starts from its membership. The relation of membership to the mission goes via identity, on which I focus below. Here it is important to remember that all collective identities are combinations of other group and individual identities. In order to find out these group identities, I focus on the construction of membership of the first YMCAs. In short, the membership basis of the London YMCA can be summarised in the words ‘middle-class Evangelical young white men’.

The YMCA has been traditionally identified as being middle-class. The speciality of the early London YMCA was its relation to the business world. As already noted, the London YMCA was at first a spiritual club of shop assistants. When the YMCA extended its membership base it, however, remained in the middle class 1. It can be said that the YMCA in Britain was one expression of how the emerging new middle class arranged its spiritual services. In Germany the membership basis was different: the majority of members belonged to the working class. Jünglings-vereine were formed to meet the needs of young apprentices, artisans and craftsmen who were the activists of associations. Although they did not want to establish associations among other classes, there were also student associations, which, in turn, did not want to be in the same Union with other Christian associations. 2

The male membership seems to be more a result of the almost non-existent role of women both in English and in German public life. In addition to this, the YMCA was a spiritual organisation of a natural group and not a result of a conscious decision. It was only later that the theme emerged as a problem which needed resolution 3. This male model became the model of the YMCA almost everywhere, and the organisation was restricted to men.

As noted, the YMCA was a result of the Evangelical Awakening. This meant that the first members were those who were converted and felt an obligation to spread the Gospel. Although the starting point was similar in both Britain and Germany, the membership criteria became different in these countries. The London Rule VIII of the constitution states: “That no person shall be considered eligible to become a member of the Association unless he be a member of a Christian Church, or there be sufficient evidence of his being a converted character 4.”

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1 Macleod 1983, 3; Zald 1970, 27, n.27.
2 WConf 1855c, 16f.; WConf 1855a, 52.
3 See section Girls and Young Women in chapter 6.3.2.
this rule, the significant point is that, in principle, the YMCA was open to all Christian confessions although it was a Protestant movement.

When two years later the reference to church membership was omitted\(^1\) the emphasis remained on conversion. Because there were interested people that were not converted, the association divided membership into two classes: active and associate membership. Rule X from 1850 states: “Young men, not members of the Association, should be admitted to the privilege of the Society’s library and Reading Rooms, on payment of one guinea per annum or 10 shillings and sixpence for the half year\(^2\).” The discussion on membership requirements has continued since this early decision and has been much on the same line: open membership but Christian leadership.

In Germany, the relation to the state-church was taken for granted, but the Christian character of members was emphasised there as well. This was expressed in Dürselen’s report to the First World’s Conference\(^3\):

> Those who constitute such an Association should be themselves believers in Christ their Saviour. These are the kernel, and, as we may also say, the salt of our Associations. Then, this foundation having been firmly laid, and living stones built thereon, we open the door widely to all who will come. We admit to our society all who will conform to our rules. Conversion is the grand aim, but it is not made the condition of admission.\(^4\)

Thus, in Germany, there was only one membership category and the association was seen more as a tool for parishes than as a society of converted. The role of Christian communion was reserved to the parish, not to the association. On the other hand, Germans emphasised the same strict requirements in the case of board and committee members as the British did in the case of active members\(^5\). These different membership criteria later led to conflicts between the Anglo-Saxon and German movements.

The next membership criterion - young - was an amorphous definition. In general, in associations, there were no age limits in the beginning, and teenagers were full members if they fulfilled other requirements. The first age limits that emerged were maximum ages, usually 40\(^6\). The founders of the London YMCA were around their twenties\(^7\) and it seems that the definition of ‘youth’ meant the period between departure from home and marriage\(^8\).

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1 Shedd 1955a, 25, n2.
3 World’s Conferences (in genitive form) were held until the 22nd Conference at Paris in 1955. With the new Constitution, the main decision-making body became the World Council. (WConf 1955a, 83, 222)
4 WConf 1855a, 52.
5 Shedd 1955a, 57.
6 Macleod 1983, 72.
7 For example, George Williams, the ‘father’ of the YMCA, was 21 when the association was founded.
8 Gillis (1974, 2-9) mentions that at that time the age of youth started from the age of seven or eight and lasted to the age of 25 to 30. Thus, ‘youth’ seemed to mean the independent period between childhood home and marriage.
The last aspect of membership, white race, was mainly a concern in the US but it had influences on the international level as well. As I noted, the North American YMCA was divided because of the issue of slavery. However, although there were associations that officially opposed slavery, the YMCAs in the US did not favour black membership in white YMCAs. In this sense, the white identity surpassed the Christian identity, except in the case of Canadian YMCAs, which withdrew from the North American Confederation of YMCAs because of its racist policy.

In general, the membership of the YMCA grew fast. The London YMCA reported in 1855 a membership of 1,500 active, 1,000 associate members and ‘constantly reached’ 20,000 young men. Additionally, Shipton mentions that during the 1850’s the association reached 100,000 young men with its activities. This means that of the 250,000 young men in London in the 1850s, approximately half had some kind of connection to the YMCA, although the actual membership remained only in 1% of all young men in London.

Table 1 shows the membership statistics internationally. We can see that, although the movement was of British and German origin, the North American YMCA was the largest if counted by the amount of members. Thus, over half of YMCA members were in North America.

To sum up, the membership of the YMCA constituted mainly of white, young, middle-class, converted Christian men. Although the conversion was not required in Germany, unlike Britain, the nucleus of the membership there was also of committed Christians. In both countries the associations aimed to enlarge its influence beyond its committed members. In Britain, this was done by another membership class, but in Germany the unconverted were also accepted as full members. The growing membership basis among young men shows that the YMCA mission was seen in this target group. It was also mainly from this constituency that the leaders of the movement came from.

### 3.3.2. Lay and Clerical Leadership

Leadership of the British YMCAs and German Jünglingsvereine were based on a collective leadership. There were annual meetings of associations and these meetings chose the board. The board, in turn, chose sub-committees and secretaries. In general, the work was based on voluntary work. A hundred years later the resource material for the Centennial Conference, Fellow Workmen for God, represented the situation as follows:

In the earliest days of YMCA history there were only ‘members’. There were no ‘secretaries’ and few, if any, volunteer leaders’ in the strict sense. Each person became a member of the

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1 Later this led to the establishment of an apartheid (or Jim Crow, as it was called in North America) policy with separated associations for whites and blacks. On the concept of Jim Crow, see Pilgrim (2000a,b).
Table 1: Founders of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, 1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ass.</th>
<th>Memb.</th>
<th>Sect</th>
<th>First associations</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source of influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Antwerp 1853</td>
<td>Local origin. Swiss and French contacts. Part of the French Union until 1867.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brussels 1853</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>France</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Bremen 1834</td>
<td>Idea from Basle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hamburg 1834</td>
<td>Idea from Basle and Bremen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frankfurt 1835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Barmen 1836</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elberfeld 1838</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5,640&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Glasgow 1824</td>
<td>Local origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London 1844</td>
<td>Local origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>400&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Utrecht 1846</td>
<td>Local origin student group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Amsterdam 1851</td>
<td>Local origin. Support from Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>54&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>14,000&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Cincinnati 1848</td>
<td>Originally Nasmith’s association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boston 1851</td>
<td>Idea from London. NAIC federal structure idea copied from Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Montreal 1851</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Washington 1852</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New York 1852</td>
<td>Idea from Boston. German speaking Junglingsverein already in 1851.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Basle 1768</td>
<td>Organised according to the Herrnhut pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Geneva 1847</td>
<td>Originally Réunion du Jeudi. Name changed in 1852 at the suggestion of the Paris YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lausanne 1852</td>
<td>Local origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>St. Gall 1853</td>
<td>Idea from Basle and Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>27,466</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information is based on World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909; Fries 1905, 16f; Morse 1913, 39, 149; and on the country based information in YMCAs of the World 1958 and WConf 1856. Here it must be stressed that some figures (especially those of Germany and North America) were presented as estimates.<br><br><sup>a</sup> Figures from Fries. World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909 gives 7,500 and Morse 8,500 members. Shipton gives statistics only from London in Occasional Paper.<br><br><sup>b</sup> The statistics do not notice that the London YMCA already had two paid secretaries in 1855, namely Tarlton and Shipton.<br><br><sup>c</sup> World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909 give 40 members (which must be a spelling mistake), Morse gives 400, Fries gives 800 and Heyblom in Occasional Paper estimates 400-800.<br><br><sup>d</sup> Langdon lists 54 associations while Morse gives a figure of 36.<br><br><sup>e</sup> Figures from Morse. Other sources give 20,000 members. Larger figures might include all members while lower figures might show the number of full members.<br><br>YMCA with a sense of Christian mission and a feeling of responsibility ‘for the extension of His Kingdom among young men’.¹

However, this might be the case in many small associations but it is not the whole truth. In the London YMCA, one of the first tasks of the new association was to appoint a ‘missionary’. A 25 year old layman, T. Henry Tarlton was chosen and the function of this first YMCA secretary were defined as follows:

The duties of the missionary will be to act as assistant secretary; to attend all general meetings of the Association; to assist in conducting services in houses where they want help; to establish, and render as efficient as possible, district associations; to form, by communicating with pious young men in the large towns and cities of the kingdom, branch associations (it

¹ WConfPrep 1955a, 39.
may sometimes be necessary that he should visit these towns and cities; to visit young men in illness; and to make himself generally useful among the class to which his efforts will be directed, by pointing them to the ‘Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world’.

In 1850, another secretary, W. Edwyn Shipton, was appointed as a correspondent secretary. As Shedd says, “he was the first man in any country to give his entire professional life to the secretariatship of the YMCA.” Until 1855 there were only these two British young men and two Americans in Boston and New York as paid YMCAstaff.

Along with the paid staff, the board members of the London YMCA played a crucial role in the extension of the movement. George Williams and other voluntary leaders visited other towns, searched for similar associations, and encouraged the foundation of new ones. Moreover, they raised the needed funds for the work. One of the leading bankers in London, R. C. L. Bevans accepted the presidency in the first annual meeting, and Williams’ employer George Hitchcock, became the treasurer. I have already referred to the other important connection, namely that of Evangelical ministers as vice-presidents of the association.

If we look at the list of Members and delegates of the First World’s Conference, we can see that among the 34-attending delegates, there were nine pastors and one doctor. Thus, almost one third of the delegates were priests. Among these delegates were also the leaders of the movement, John Hall Gladstone, W. Edwyn Shipton, T. Henry Tarlton, George Williams from Britain; E.W. Heyblom from Holland, Gerhard Dürselen from Germany, Edouard Barde, Charles Cuénod, Henri Dunant and Max Perrot from Switzerland; and Emile F. Cook, Jean Paul Cook, Frédéric Monnier, Gustave Monod and Eugéne Renevier from France. One of the early leaders, William Chauncy Langdon from the North American YMCA could not attend the conference but submitted a report that Abel Stevens read. The new movement was largely based on the work of these leading men. Some of them became later more important than others and I will look at them later. Some, like Henri Dunant, disappeared after the conference.

Leaders of the YMCA formed the nucleus of the nucleus. In Britain, they were all lay people but in Germany, the leadership was, in many cases, in the hands of local parish pastors. Although the movement was a voluntary movement, it soon developed lay professional leadership as well. Along with the membership and leadership, the third main issue was that of organisational structure.

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2 Shedd 1955a, 28.
3 Morse 1913, 149. However, Zald (1970, 33) notes that the Boston employee was a librarian. According to him, “the first full-time secretary, a staff person responsible for supervising the total organization program, was hired by the Philadelphia YMCA in 1857.”
4 Shedd 1955a, 26.
5 WConf 1855a, 60.
3.3.3. Centralised and Federal Structures

The national structures of the YMCAs in Britain and Germany were different as well. In Britain the London YMCA was a parent association for others, and other YMCAs were affiliated to London as branches\(^1\). This model emphasised the role of the founders and guaranteed some kind of ‘copyright’ of the YMCA to the London association. It kept all decisive power in London and branches had only the options to ‘take it or leave it’. German associations, in turn, did not emerge as a result of the missionary enterprise of one central association. Perrot mentions that when they emerged they were not aware of each other\(^2\). In 1848, eight of them formed a federation. The German YMCA underlined the local diversity, as can be seen in Dürselen’s report from 1854:

> The Committee has never upheld the opinion that all the Associations should adhere to the same forms and methods; on the contrary, it fully recognizes the necessity of an individual growth based on the local conditions and the influences of varying circumstances; the Committee, however, must insist that all the Associations belonging to the Bund should be Christian associations and that in this sense they are in principle different from all other similar organizations.\(^3\)

Basically, this emphasis on local diversity can be traced to the seventh article of Confessio Augustana which reads as follows: “Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike.” The German model followed the Lutheran principle according to which “to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.”\(^4\) All other issues are matters of free will.

The federation model, thus, emphasised the autonomy of local associations. This local autonomy issue was behind the problems in creating the North American Confederation of YMCAs: large associations especially, were not interested in anything but the local work. When Langdon tried to draw associations into the Confederation, he carefully safeguarded the local associations from the supervision of a national body. Thus, in the case of racism, which I mentioned earlier, the International Committee did not take a stand on racism because, as stated in the call for 1855 Annual Conference: “the confederated existence is intended, in no way, at no time, under no circumstances, and in no relation, whether as a Convention or as a Central Committee, to advance upon the local character of any Association\(^5\).”

Thus, there were two models of the YMCA organisation from the beginning, the branch model and the federation model. The German type federation became a model for other national YMCA federations (especially for the North American

\(^1\) Shedd 1955a, 26.
\(^2\) WConf 1855c, 16.
\(^3\) Geschichte des 4ten, 5ten und 6ten Jahres der Rheinisch-Westphälischen Jünglingsbundes, Elberfeld, 1854. Quoted by Shedd 1955a, 56.
\(^4\) Augsburg Confession, Article VII.
\(^5\) Quoted in Mjagkij 1994, 12.
movement) and for the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. The British branch model is alive in many large metropolitan YMCAs.

### 3.3.4. Social Objects of the Movement

Social objects are, as noted before, people, places, events, artifacts, etc. that become significant symbols of the movement. In the early YMCA, they consisted mainly of Bible figures and people in Reformation history. At this stage, the movement did not yet have its own heroes\(^1\). It did not exactly have holy cities, but the YMCA Associations in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Paris, Nimes, Lausanne, St. Gallen, Amsterdam, Elberfeld, Stuttgart\(^2\), Washington and New York had a special status. In the First World’s Conference, they were regarded as centres of correspondence, which served as nodes between the national and international community of YMCAs\(^3\). It can be noted that although Geneva (and Henri Dunant) was active in the formation of the World’s Alliance, the Geneva association was at this stage, led into a by-road for some time.

Some theological doctrines, like, divinity of Christ, the centrality of the Bible, etc. can be regarded as social objects. Although immaterial, they function like material objects when adherents of opposing groups frequently use them and fights crystallise around them. Perhaps the best known example is the *filioque*\(^4\) debate that divided Christendom at the beginning of the Second Millennium. In the 19th century, it can be said that the whole Evangelical Movement was a counter-movement to theological liberalism and its desacralising and demythologising attempts. In this debate, the divinity of Christ and centrality of the Bible were central questions. Along with theological liberalism, other targets mentioned in the First World’s Conference report were Arianism, Socinianism and Popery\(^5\). In the next chapter I show how these theological themes influenced in the formation of the YMCA Paris Basis.

In the case of important events, however, the report of the First World’s Conference mentions German *Kirchentag* at Halle\(^6\). It must also be remembered that the whole Conference was possible because of the Conference of Evangelical Alliance. Along with these holy days, Sunday and Sunday Service were, of course, important moments for YMCA people. Thus, to some extent, the Evangelical Alliance, as a movement, was also a social object which gave a sense of unity.

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\(^1\) Eugene Bersier (WConf 1855a, 98) mentions in his address to the First World’s Conference, Newton, Leibniz, Bacon, Kepler, Euler and Pascal as scientists who had respect on religion.

\(^2\) This must mean Stuttgart *Missionsjünglingsverein* (see Senaud 1955, 12) since the Stuttgart *Jünglingsverein* was founded six years after the Paris Conference, in 1861 (Shedd 1955a, 166f.).

\(^3\) WConf 1855a, 12.

\(^4\) The Western Church added the words “and the Son” (*filioque*) into the Nicene Creed, arguing that the Holy Spirit comes from both the Father and the Son. The Orthodox Church kept the old formulation in which the Spirit comes from the Father alone.

\(^5\) WConf 1855a, 5f.

\(^6\) WConf 1855a, 22.
Thus, the social objects of the YMCA were mostly those of Evangelical Christianity in general. The main emphasis of the YMCA was on spiritual regeneration of individual and in this emphasis, the main social objects were Christ and the Bible.

3.3.5. Two YMCA Models and Mission

In this sub-chapter 3.3, I have described how the two early streams of the YMCA emerged and took form. It can be seen that from the very beginning there were differences between the German and British movements. The membership basis was one of the main elements influencing the mission of the YMCA. In Britain and France, the membership was mainly middle-class men and the target group of the work was this constituency basis. In Germany, in turn, the target group wider than in Britain. Because the associations were tools of parish work, the target group was the young male population in the parish area. For this reason, German Jünglingsvereine targeted more working-class males than the British YMCAs.

The leadership of YMCAs in these countries came mainly from the middle class although there were some social-minded upper class people as well. In Britain, the leaders were mainly lay people, often from the business world. In Germany, in turn, the leadership was mainly in the hands of young pastors. The structure of the YMCA varied in different countries. In Britain, there was a parent association model, while Germany favoured federal structure.

Thus, we can see that the way the YMCA was organised differed from the very beginning. Partly this organisation reflected different opportunity structures, partly differences in the constituency basis and partly the structure of leadership. These differences were established in the YMCA models and served later as organisational resources. There were clearly two YMCA models, which can be roughly summed up as follows:

Table 2: Characteristics of British YMCAs and German Jünglingsvereine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>British YMCA</th>
<th>German Jünglingsvereine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founders</td>
<td>Young lay merchants</td>
<td>Parish pastors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership basis</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious background</td>
<td>Evangelicalism</td>
<td>Pietism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious affiliation</td>
<td>Interdenominational</td>
<td>Affiliated to the national church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership criteria</td>
<td>Personal conversion</td>
<td>Anyone interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National structure</td>
<td>Parent association</td>
<td>Federation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Later I will show how many of these issues occurred from time to time and gave rise to controversies in the movement. When these controversies were settled, the resolutions were written in the Paris Basis and its interpretations. Many of the future problems of the organisation have their roots in the different cultural
backgrounds of these two movements. Additionally, such YMCA characteristics as federalism, interdenominationalism, social service, lay emphasis and commercialism have been around from the very beginning of the movement. They were lay responses to the different opportunities that the Evangelicals faced in the first half of the 19th century. The principles that were chosen in these early years were stored in the Paris Basis, which became a model for the YMCA. In the next chapter I show how this model was interpreted, modified and supplemented during the first century of the movement.

3.4. Unity in Spirit - The Foundation of the World's Alliance, 1855

3.4.1. Towards the World’s Alliance

In previous chapters, I have concentrated on Britain and Germany because they created the first national organisations and their models represent different ends of a continuum. As noted before, other founders of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs were associations in France (and Belgium), the Netherlands, North American YMCA (Canada and the USA) and Switzerland. Most associations in these countries emerged in the 1850s.

These new associations heard about each other and started to build contacts. Leaders of older associations visited the new ones and encouraged them to organise themselves. Some associations became branches of the London YMCA or were affiliated to the German Elberfeld Committee. There were also enterprises to form national alliances, which had some influence in the formation of the World’s Alliance.

The idea of General Alliance for YMCAs came, according to Auguste Senaud, from the French context. The French Second Empire did not allow Protestants to have a national synod1. In this situation the leaders of the Paris YMCA, following the example of the Evangelical Alliance2, launched an idea of a wider organisation of Associations in French speaking countries under the Paris leadership3. In this attempt, there was London influence as well, because George Williams visited Paris several times, and contacts between Paris and London were close4. However, the federalist Swiss were not eager to be organised under French leadership and thus Henri Dunant, the ‘soul’ of the Geneva YMCA, looked forward to include Anglo-Saxon and German Associations into the Federation as well5.

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1 WComPle1950b, 2. The Empire was restored in 1851 and from then on secret police surveillance extended almost everywhere, political rights were banned and the press censored.
2 Shedd 1955a, 94. On the Evangelical Alliance, see, e.g., Kirby 1974; Rouse 1993a, 318-324.
3 WComPle1950b, 2; Shedd 1955a, 41, 52.
4 Shedd 1955a, 47.
5 WComPle1950b, 2; Shedd 1955a, 94-97.
Another root for the international alliance of YMCAs was the German *Rheinisch-Westfälische Jünglingsbund*, which had already been formed in 1848\(^1\). The German *Bund* was an inspiration for the Dutch National Alliance in 1853\(^2\), for the North American Confederation of YMCAs which was founded in 1854\(^3\) and for the French Alliance as well\(^4\). Moreover, the German *Bund* was in one sense ‘a World’s Alliance of Jünglingsvereine’ because associations of German emigrants were attached to *Rheinisch-Westfälische Jünglingsbund*\(^5\). Thus, as Shedd notes, “Germany’s contribution to the creation of the World’s Alliance in Paris in 1855 was indirect\(^6\)” but is evidently behind the actual proposal of the formation of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. Germany gave the federal model, which was a substitute for the London parent association system.

When the Evangelical Alliance planned to have its Conference in Paris during the Second World Exhibition in 1855, YMCA leaders saw a possibility to meet face to face for the first time. The First World Conference of YMCAs (August 20-24, 1855) took place just before the Evangelical Alliance Conference and, of the 99 YMCA participants, 50 attended the Evangelical Alliance Conference.\(^7\)

When the YMCA leaders met in Paris, they accepted a statement that was a manifestation of their faith. This statement, the Paris Basis, became the expression of the YMCA ideology. It defined both the identity and the mission of the movement. Below, I analyse the Basis as a model of the YMCAs of 1855.

### 3.4.2. Background of the YMCA Paris Basis

The proposal to form the World’s Alliance was officially made by the American, Abel Stevens, who proposed that the Paris Conference aim for

> the union of all the associations of the old and new world in confederation, on a basis which would exclude every subject foreign to their legitimate and common aim.\(^9\)

His motivation was that the union would impart mutual strength, express “the sacred unity of the Church of Christ” and serve as a special importance to North America “as removing a stumbling-block, which would otherwise cause division amongst the Associations in that continent\(^10\).” In reference to this possible divi-

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\(^1\) WConf 1855a, 52.
\(^2\) Shedd 1955a, 65.
\(^3\) WConf 1855a, 77-82; Shedd 1955a, 59; Morse 1913, 25-35; Hopkins 1951, 54-64.
\(^4\) Shedd 1955a, 59.
\(^5\) Shedd 1955a, 57f.
\(^6\) Shedd 1955a, 57.
\(^7\) WComPle 1950b, 2; Shedd 1955a, 61,106-113,131,133f. The attitude towards the Evangelical Alliance in the YMCA was, as Shedd describes: “the sense of close relationship with and yet separation from the Evangelical Alliance.” Shedd 1955a, 114 (italics in original).
\(^8\) See Appendix A.
\(^9\) WConf 1855a, 10.
\(^10\) WConf 1855a, 17.
sion, he mentioned the question of slavery\(^1\), which was soon to lead to civil war.
In his proposal, there were five following articles that described the idea:

The 1\(^{st}\) provided that the Associations should be managed by members of Evangelical Churches. By the 2\(^{nd}\), the admission of a second order of associated members was provided for, in those cases in which it might be desired. The 3\(^{rd}\) article provided that no difference of opinion on points not comprehended in the immediate aim of the Association should be permitted to interrupt their harmony. The 4\(^{th}\) proposed a certificate of membership, which should be available in instances in instances of Young Men travelling from one Association to others. And by the 5\(^{th}\) article, the plan of correspondence... was to be applied to the Alliance now proposed.\(^2\)

In Stevens’ proposal some of the basic elements of the YMCA self-understanding in the North American continent can be seen. First, the identity was related to “Evangelical churches” and young men. The restriction to Evangelical churches evidently reflected the relationship with the Evangelical Alliance, which campaigned against “Popery, Puseyism\(^3\) and Plymouth Brethrenism\(^4\).” It also reflected the American Evangelical Test of the Boston YMCA from 1851.\(^5\)

Second, the mission of the new organisation was, according to Stevens, to serve as a bond between independent associations and occasionally help them if needed. The basic mission of the movement (extending God’s Kingdom) was conducted on the local level and they had a complete autonomy in implementing their mission. Here we can hear echoes from the American debates of the role of their Confederation. However, local independence was also favoured in Germany and Switzerland. Thus, we can say that the Reformation’s idea of local independence was accepted in the YMCA as well.

Third, the ideology of the YMCA was based on Protestantism. In Stevens’ proposal, there is also an interesting addition that paved a way to the Ecumenical Movement, namely his third article: “No difference of opinion on points not comprehended in the immediate aim of the Association, should be permitted to interrupt their harmony.” As we have seen, on one hand, the question of slavery had already divided the North American movement. On the other hand, the Ecumenical movement had suffered from the ‘wave of dissidence’ and denominational stiffening in the 1840s.\(^6\) The proposal pointed out that unity was seen as more important than either ethical issues or doctrinal purity. This became a typical character of both YMCA ecumenism and Evangelical views, in general.

Although Stevens’ proposal received general support, his formulation was criticised. Continental Europeans saw that the membership criterion of ‘Evangelical Churches’ “would not be applicable in Europe, seeing that here we have Evangelical Churches, the membership of which does not necessarily imply any

\(^{1}\) WConf 1855a, 10.
\(^{2}\) WConf 1855a, 16f.
\(^{3}\) Edward Pusey was one of the leading figures of Anglo-Catholic movement in Anglicanism.
\(^{4}\) Rouse 1993a, 319.
\(^{5}\) Morse 1913, 16f.
\(^{6}\) Rouse 1993a, 316f.
personal profession. French Frédéric Monnier made his own proposal drawn from the French national Basis that had also been accepted into the constitutions of Brussels and Geneva. Thus, the text of the Paris Basis had already established itself into the French speaking YMCAs. From this background, it is easy to understand why Monnier’s proposal was accepted to replace Stevens’ first article. Stevens withdrew his second article because of associations’ “right of admitting as associates those who are not properly members of the Societies.” Finally, his articles 3-5 were accepted as ‘further proposals’ and the final text from the Monnier proposal was formulated by a committee.

Senaud gives an interesting piece of information that can be mentioned here. According to Henri Monnier’s biography on his uncle Frédérick Monnier, “the inspiration for the Paris Basis had been given to latter by his friend Daniel Le Grand, [who] towards the end of his life, was striving to simplify as much as possible the basic elements of the Christian faith.” Thus, the aim of the Basis can be interpreted as an attempt to crystallise the Evangelical faith into its essence.

To sum up, the background of the Paris Basis lies in the Evangelical revival that influenced the structure of constituency. Composition of membership, in turn, stated the mission to be an “extension of His Kingdom among young men.” Along with these fundamental issues, the North American Civil War and previous correspondence influenced the additional proposals. The former excluded controversial political issues from the agenda and the latter stated the means of work of the new alliance.

3.4.3. Structure of the Basis

The structure of the Basis (see appendix A) was made so that in the beginning there is a Preamble where the purpose of the Basis was stated. According to it, the Basis was a bond between the members of the associations at present and the criterion for accepting new societies as members. After the Preamble, there is the Nucleus of the Basis, or, as it is sometimes called, the Fundamental Principle, and

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1 WConf 1855a, 17f.
2 See synopsis in table 3.
3 Shedd 1955a, 67.
4 The early roots of the Paris Basis show that the Basis was not formulated in 1855, as many YMCA publications suppose. It would be another task to study these roots among French Christianity. Moreover, as I show below, even the disputed formula ‘God and Saviour’ has its roots in some Ecumenical Councils.
5 This means, in practice, adoption of so called ‘associate members’ who can participate in activities but have no vote in leadership.
6 WConf 1855a, 19f. Officially, it was the editing committee, which was composed of the representatives of all seven countries. Practically, Monnier and three other Frenchmen (one Swiss French) formulated it in the night. There is also an interesting note on the non-existing connection to the Teetotal Movement. Théophile Rivier, who was present there, writes in his diary: “We worked to draw up the article of Union until one a.m. - drank grog - Renevier stretched out on a couch!” Quoted in Shedd 1955a, 131.
7 WComPle 1950b, 5.
finally Stevens’ articles 3-5. Frequently, in the history of the YMCA, only the Fundamental Principle has been regarded as the Paris Basis. However, Frank Willis underlines that “this statement and the three articles have together” formed the Paris Basis.

**THE PREAMBLE** expresses the starting point of the new federation. It reads as follows:

The delegates of various Young Men’s Christian Associations of Europe and America, assembled in Conference at Paris, the 22nd August, 1855, feeling that they are one in principle and in operation, recommend to their respective societies to recognize with them the unity existing among their Associations, and whilst preserving a complete independence as to their particular organization and modes of action, to form a Confederation on the following fundamental principle, such principle to be regarded as the basis of admission of other Societies in future.

In this Preamble, we can find several important aspects. First, that Christian unity already exists and the YMCA is only an attempt to manifest this unity. This is the same idea that has been later expressed with the words: “He that unites us is greater than that which separate us.” Although it can be supposed that there was some conference euphoria, there were also other reasons for this feeling of unity. The YMCA has been ecumenical from its very beginning. Other YMCAs, except in Germany, were also mainly interdenominational. Accordingly, the YMCAs had already experienced ecumenism in the local level and correspondence had created contacts to other similar associations abroad. It was also felt that the associations were formed “under the influence of the Spirit of God.” In this sense, unity was not seen as being created by the members. On the other hand, it must be noted that this perceived unity was the unity of Evangelical Protestants. Although there were minimal anti-Catholic tendencies in the conference, the participants from Geneva especially, implicitly excluded liberal theologians, Arians and Socianists from their unity, seeing them as their opponents.

Another remarkable point is the notion of complete independence of member associations. Stevens’s proposal for local independence was manifested in the statement: “Associations... preserving a complete independence as to their particular organization and modes of action.” From the reports to the Conference and from the discussions after them it was evident that there were great variety in organisation and modes of action. There were differences in target groups (students, young merchants, young working men, etc.); in membership requirements; in the treatment of associated members; in organisation modes; in activities, etc.

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1 Willis 1955, 687; Jentsch 1971, 8.
2 WConf 1855a, 20.
3 One function of these kinds of conferences is that they give rise to and maintain *esprit de corps* among movement participants. See Blumer 1953, 205f.
4 WConf 1855a, 119.
5 The only exception is in Charles Cuénod’s report on Switzerland (WConf 1855a, 46) where he mentions that members of the Geneva association “joined themselves to the Anti-Catholic (i.e. Anti-Romanist) movement.”
6 WConf 1855a, 5, 20f.
7 WConf 1855a, 120f.
particularly the issue of special associations for special groups was one which heightened sentiments\(^1\). These discussions are implicitly behind the statement of local independence.

However, there are also pre-conference roots for the wording. I have already remarked on the Swiss attitude towards the proposal of the French speaking Alliance of YMCAs under the Paris leadership. Local autonomy was important in Switzerland and Germany. This same attitude was also manifested in North America where, in 1854, there had been a meeting at Buffalo where delegates had discussed the possible North American YMCA Confederation. It was stated there that the Confederation would have no authority over the local associations. Some associations were afraid that they would become branches of the Boston YMCA (which was the oldest YMCA in the US), parallel to the French proposal and the British practice.\(^2\)

Thus, there were fears of both losing self-sovereignty and practical reasons behind the wording of ‘complete independence’. In general, we can see how the Reformation ideal of local independence got support from the Swiss allergy to centralism and the American debate on slavery. Independence was not, however, isolation. Werner Jentsch describes the relationship between union and independence as follows:

> This World Alliance is a kind of process of dependence which at the same time makes independent and a kind of independence which at the same time is aware of its proper dependence.\(^3\)

Finally, the Preamble stated that the Fundamental Principle would be the criterion for membership of the World’s Alliance in the future. This meant that all new organisational members had to adopt the Paris Basis or equivalence as a prerequisite of their membership.

**THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF THE BASIS** is what normally is called the Paris Basis. The tradition history\(^4\) of ideas presented in the Fundamental Principle can be seen in the synopsis in Table 3, in which there are quotations from the Basis of the Evangelical Alliance\(^5\), Article 7 of the Paris Association’s constitution\(^6\), Monnier’s proposal\(^7\), English\(^8\) and French texts of the Paris Basis\(^9\).

It can be seen that, except for the Preamble and Proposals, the text of the Paris Basis came almost directly from the French national Basis with some wordings that were seen in the EA Basis (namely the notion of doctrine). Similarly, it can be seen that there are some differences in the wording of the French and the Eng-

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\(^1\) Shedd 1955a, 119f.  
\(^2\) WConf 1855a, 77,80; Zald 1970, 57.  
\(^3\) Jentsch 1971, 9.  
\(^4\) Tradition criticism is a method, which enables to find the different phases of a text. See, for example Coats 1988, 912ff.  
\(^5\) Quoted in Rouse 1993a, 320n.  
\(^6\) WConf 1855c, 26.  
\(^7\) Paris Basis French manuscript (WConf 1855b)  
\(^8\) WConf 1855a, 20.  
\(^9\) WConf 1855b (quoted also in Shedd 1955a, 132).
Table 3: Synopsis of the Paris Basis and the related previous bases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Evangelical Alliance</strong></th>
<th><strong>French Movement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Monnier’s proposal</strong></th>
<th><strong>Paris Basis - French</strong></th>
<th><strong>Paris Basis - English</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...parties composing the Alliance shall be such <strong>persons</strong></td>
<td>qui, recardant <strong>Jésus-Christ</strong></td>
<td>qui, recardant <strong>Jésus-Christ</strong></td>
<td>qui, recardant <strong>Jésus-Christ</strong></td>
<td>who, regarding Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only as hold and maintain what are usually understood to be Evangelical views, in regard to the matters of Doctrine understated, namely:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) The incarnation of the <strong>Son of God</strong>, and His Mediatorial <strong>Intercession</strong> and <strong>Reign</strong></td>
<td>comme leur <strong>Sauveur</strong> et leur <strong>Dieu</strong></td>
<td>comme leur <strong>Sauveur</strong> et leur <strong>Dieu</strong></td>
<td>comme leur <strong>Sauveur</strong> et leur <strong>Dieu</strong></td>
<td><strong>as their God and Saviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) The Divine <strong>Inspiration</strong>, <strong>Authority</strong>, and <strong>Sufficiency</strong> of the <strong>Holy Scriptures</strong>,¹</td>
<td>selon les saintes <strong>Écritures</strong></td>
<td>selon les <strong>Écritures</strong></td>
<td>selon les saintes <strong>Écritures</strong></td>
<td>according to the <strong>Holy Scriptures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>veulent être ses disciples dans leur <strong>foi</strong> et dans leur vie</td>
<td>veulent être ses disciples dans leur <strong>doctrine</strong> &amp; dans leur vie</td>
<td>veulent être ses disciples dans leur <strong>foi</strong> et dans leur vie</td>
<td>desire to be his disciples in their <strong>doctrine</strong> and in their life,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>et travailler ensemble à étendre parmi les jeunes gens le règne de leur Maître.</td>
<td>&amp; travailler ensemble à étendre parmi les jeunes gens le règne de leur Maître.</td>
<td>et travailler ensemble à étendre parmi les jeunes gens le règne de leur Maître.</td>
<td>and to associate their efforts for the extension of His <strong>Kingdom amongst young men</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanations: *italics* = French texts are identical; *underline* = texts are identical to English version *point underline* = the same thing with different words; *bold* = differences between French and English versions

lish texts. There were also significant differences to the Evangelical Alliance Basis. I refer to these differences in the next sub-chapters.

The content of the Fundamental Principle is more than just a formulation of faith. If one looks at the structure of the text, one can find the core elements of identity, ideology and mission. However, it must again be noted that the distinction is merely analytical. In practice, they are overlapping.

Table 4: Elements of the Fundamental Principle of the Paris Basis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Young Men’s Christian Associations</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seek to unite</td>
<td>Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those young men who,</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures.</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desire to be his disciples</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in their faith and in their life</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and to associate their efforts</td>
<td>Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.</td>
<td>Mission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 4, it can be seen that the identity of the movement consists of “those young men who… desire to be his disciples in their faith and in their life.” The ideology of the YMCA focused on “Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to Holy Scriptures.” This ideology is manifested in the faith and life of the members. Finally, the mission of the movement was to unite the committed Evangelically thinking young men “and to associate their efforts for the extension for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.” In other words, the mission of the YMCA was, first, to seek people who already had motivation and, second, to co-ordinate their already existing activities. From this point of view, the Paris Basis is more a definition of the actual tasks than simply a formula of faith. Thus the Basis is, in Geertzian terms, both a model of the Evangelical Christianity and a model for the practical tasks of the YMCA. I analyse these in detail below.

**THE ‘PROPOSALS’** of the conference emphasise more the practical than the spiritual aspect of the federation. As seen above, the ‘proposals’ were directly adopted from Stevens’s articles. The first of them was:

That any differences of opinion on other subjects, however important in themselves, but not embraced by the specific designs of the Associations, shall not interfere with the harmonious relations of the confederated Societies.

As we have seen, Stevens’ worry was that the slave-question would divide the New World’s Alliance as it had divided the American Confederation and the Evangelical Alliance. On the ideological level Stevens’ proposal derives from the

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1 Geertz 1973, 93.
2 WConf 1855a, 20.
3 WConf 1855a, 10, 122; McCrea Cavert 1970, 595.
British philanthropic tradition that separated charities from political activity\(^1\). This amendment became later a part of the Nuclear Basis. The other two proposals were even more practical:

That a travelling certificate of membership be designed, by which members of the confederated Societies shall be entitled to the privileges of any other society belonging to this Confederation, and to the personal attentions of all its members.\(^2\)

The issue of a travelling certificate reflects the needs of members and existing situation. First, many local YMCAs have been either founded or supported by travelling businessmen, pastors or students. Second, the German *Jünglingsvereine*\(^3\) had established Christian *Herberge* or Homes for travelling apprentices and journeymen\(^4\). Third, both the British and French movements had a parent association practice according to which local associations were branches of the association in the capital. Thus, the proposal was actually confirming existing practices. A similar note can be made on the correspondence, which proposal reads as follows:

That the system of correspondence adopted by this Conference shall apply to the Societies of this Confederation.\(^5\)

Henri Dunant from Geneva had been especially active in this field, and the whole World Conference was a fruit of his correspondence. The plan of correspondence was actually accepted before Stevens’ proposal of an international alliance of associations. According to this plan, in each country one or two associations were chosen as centres of correspondence. These centres were designated as, on one hand information channels inside one country and, on the other hand between countries.\(^6\) Thus, effective communication system was a priority of the YMCA from the very beginning.

**TO SUM UP**, the structure of the Paris Basis was constituted by the Preamble, the Fundamental Principle and three Additional Proposals. The Preamble stated that the associations maintain their complete independence in the alliance, although new associations have to accept the Basis in order to be admitted as members. The Fundamental Principle expressed the ideological basis (Evangelical faith), identity (young men’s movement) and mission (unite young Christians and associate their efforts in extending God’s Kingdom). Proposals excluded controversial political items from agenda, agreed in the means of co-operation (correspondence) and mutual hospitality towards members from other countries.

\(^{1}\) See Randon & 6 1994.
\(^{2}\) WConf 1855a, 20.
\(^{3}\) The name YMCA was taken long afterwards.
\(^{4}\) WConf 1855a, 52.
\(^{5}\) WConf 1855a, 20.
\(^{6}\) WConf 1855a, 12f.
3.4.4. Unity and Mission

Along with YMCAs in Britain and Germany, other founders of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs were movements in France (and Belgium), the Netherlands, North America (Canada and the USA) and Switzerland. Most associations in these countries emerged in the 1850s. These new associations heard about each other and started to build contacts. Leaders of older associations visited the new ones and encouraged them to organise themselves. Some associations became branches of the London YMCA or were affiliated with the German Elberfeld Committee. This parent-model was opposed by the Swiss who did not want to become branches of the Paris YMCA but wanted a larger union. There were also enterprises to form national federations in Germany and North America, which were models in formation of the World’s Alliance.

When the YMCA leaders met in Paris before the Evangelical Alliance Conference, they accepted the Paris Basis as an expression of their faith. The Basis was a model of the YMCA, in that it reflected the values, practices and structure of local YMCAs. Two opposing principles can be found in the YMCA ideology, which were dominant in the movement. On one hand, there was a sense of God-given unity among members of the movement. At the same time, there was a heavy stress on local independence. Thus, YMCA unity was not an organisational but a spiritual unity.

The Paris Basis has three parts, all of which point to some important aspects in the movement. The Preamble ensures local independence in the new-formed Alliance. The Fundamental Principle defined the ideology, identity and mission. Finally, Additional Proposals stated some practical principles, the most important being the prohibition in getting involved in controversial political issues. This arose from the fear that the escalating controversy on slave question in United States would divide the new movement there. These themes will be focused in in detail in the next sub-chapter.

3.5. The Paris Basis as a Battle-Cry and an Action Plan

In this sub-chapter, I focus on the core of the new movement from the perspective of how the identity, ideology and mission were expressed in the Fundamental Principle of the Paris Basis. The Basis was not only a theological statement, but also an expression of identity and strategic plan of action.
3.5.1. Calling Young Men to the Service of the Kingdom – Identity of the YMCA

There are some textual problems between the French and English versions\(^1\) of the Fundamental Principle. In the case of identity, there is a difference between the English expression ‘young men’ and French expression ‘jeunes gens.’

‘Young men’ in the English version, is clearly a gender based expression, but in the French version the words *jeunes gens* can also mean young people in general. Although the French term has a connotation to the male sex, it is not necessarily the dominant meaning\(^2\). Tradition historically the non-gender expression is closer to the EA Basis where there is the expression ‘people’, while the gender-based expression describes the constituency basis of the movement. In Paris, this issue was no question at all because all the participants were young men. In later years, female membership became one of the ‘big questions’ of the movement. However, it is worth to notice that female membership was potentially present from the beginning, in the French text.

As I noted above, the membership of the YMCA consisted mainly of young men. Thus, it is easy to understand why the collective identity of the movement was made according to the gender and age identity of this constituency. However, it was not a question of youth in general, YMCA identity referred to those young men… who want to be Christ’s disciples in their faith and life. I will refer later to the ideological aspect of this expression. Here it is important to note that the YMCA identity referred to committed Christians. This was emphasised in many reports to the First World’s Conference. As seen above, British associations had created the principle of dual membership in order to protect the collective Christian identity of the YMCA. Although the associate membership was open to all decent men, the nucleus or movement activists consisted of committed Christians. The Basis does not make any distinction whether this commitment is through conversion experience (Britain) of through Christian nurture (Germany). In Germany, where there was only one class of membership, the Christian identity of the movement was guarded as well. When Gerhard Dürselen defined in the Paris Conference that “the foundation, therefore, is properly and distinctively Christian”\(^3\), the definition narrowed the identity but was still too large. As we have seen, there were also other youth movements, like Nasmith’s societies, and they were not seen as being part of the movement. Pastor Georges Fisch, president of the French Alliance of YMCAs, expressed the speciality of the YMCA identity when he stated that YMCAs were “nothing other than the Evangelical Alliance among the younger generation.” Many YMCA secretaries were also secretaries of the Evangelical Alliance and it was easy to see the YMCAs as part of the same movement.

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\(^1\) The English report was a translation of the French report with some additions from its translator’s, Thomas H. Gladstone’s own notes. Shedd 1955a, 114.

\(^2\) Rey 1992, 882; Robert 1982, 861.

\(^3\) WConf 1855a, 52.
On the other hand, there was also a tendency to organisationally differentiate the YMCA from the EA.¹

The delegates in the Paris conference saw themselves and their organisation as a tool of Christ. As already noted, their identity was based on their Christian faith. In the case of the international identity of movement, this can also be seen. In the Preamble it was stated that “feeling that they are one in principle and in operation, recommend to their respective Societies to recognize with them the unity existing among their Associations.” Thus, the delegates recognised others from different countries as members of the same movement that did not value state borders. In this sense, international unity was given - not seen as something that should be striven for.

Although the YMCA saw itself as a part of the global Church of Christ, it differentiated itself from local churches. The YMCA did not see itself as an auxiliary of any church but as a servant and partner of them. Even in Germany, where the relationship was closest, the *Jünglingsvereine* guarded their autonomous movement identity. Dürselen reported:

> In most, the pastors and teachers take an active part in the Associations. We know we must not depend on that. We would not rely on an arm of flesh. Whilst, therefore, we are thankful for such help and countenance, our confidence is in the Lord of Hosts, and from Him alone, we hope for effectual blessing.²

In this sub-chapter, I have focused on YMCA identity. The Paris Basis portrays YMCA members as committed young Christian men. Other aspects of identity were subordinated to this young men’s Christian identity. In the case of class identity, there were differences between associations. In Britain and North America, members identified themselves mainly as middle-class, in French speaking countries as students and in Germany mainly as working class. Thus, the class identity of the YMCA was not as significant as religious, gender and age identities. The white identity was taken so much for granted that obviously the European delegates did not understand what implications it had on the African-Americans in the US. As identity was largely based on the peer groups of young men, we will see that this peer group thinking also influenced the determination of the mission of the YMCA.

### 3.5.2. Believing in ‘God and Saviour According to Holy Scriptures’ – Ideology of the YMCA

In this sub-chapter, I focus on the ideology of the YMCA as expressed in the Fundamental Principle of the Paris Basis. In general, the Basis was not a Creed but a confession of faith. In this sense, it was not a balanced theological formulation of the doctrinal beliefs, as was the Basis of the Evangelical Alliance. It was a reaction to certain theological tendencies of the time. It could be compared to the expressions of the first Christians, like, ‘Jesus is Lord’ or fish symbol, IKTHYS

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¹ Shedd 1955a, 113f.
² WConf 1855a, 53.
Iesous Christos Theo (h)Yios, Soter = Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour). There were two themes above others that the YMCA leaders wanted to protect, namely, the divinity of Christ and the divinity of the Bible.

‘GOD AND SAVIOUR’ as a formula was an answer to the challenge of liberal theologians1. Both Senaud2 and Werner Jentsch argue that behind the Basis’ emphasis on the divinity of Christ was, in particular (a refutation of), David Friedrich Strauss’ book ‘Das Leben Jesu’3, where he denied the divinity of Jesus4. This provoked strong opposition among Evangelicals who protested against this and emphasised the divinity of Christ5. Thus, in this sense, the Paris Basis is a symbol of a protest movement of its time.

The formula ‘God and Saviour’ connected to Jesus does not explicitly exist in the New Testament6, although implicitly it can be found there. The only passage that could be translated as ‘God and Saviour’ is Titus 2:13: “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” This might be the link to the Paris Basis. The Amsterdam YMCA, namely, required a special confession of faith of its members. This confession ended with words “expecting the blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” This follows the wording of Letter to Titus. Thus, the formula ‘Jesus Christ, God and Saviour’ might be a modification of this verse. It seems to have emerged as part of the language of 19th century Evangelicals. However, a study of the tradition history of the formula would need more careful focus on both the language of Evangelicals (and their precessors) and the early Christian texts.

The formula was later one target of the attacks in other ecumenical bodies, which had adopted a modified versions of the Paris Basis. The claim was that the wording lacks the concept of Trinity. Orthodox theologians especially have seen a risk of Christomonism9 in it. Some other theologians have seen it as being Do-

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1 The former fortress of Pietism, Halle University, had become a centre of rationalistic theology already by the middle of the 18th century. In Britain, rationalistic theology emerged among Deists (Nelson, Marty & Chadwick 1994, 222).
2 WComPle 1953b, 3.
4 Jentsch 1971, 5; 1968, 14.
5 James Barrelet (WConfPrep 1905d, 5) mentions in his address to the Jubilee Conference in 1905 that “when the Statutes of Paris were worked out, the question of our Lord’s divinity was much disputed, and the founders of the Alliance wished to assert his divine nature in opposition to the rationalism of the time which looked upon the Saviour as a simple man.” Jentsch (1971, 5; 1968, 14), in turn, notes: “Therefore the question of Christ was given a prominent place in the draft of the Paris Basis while other theological questions remained in the background.”
6 In the Old Testament it can be found as an epithet of Yahweh (Isa 45:21). The form of ‘Lord and Saviour’ related to Jesus, exists four times in the 2 Peter (1:11; 2:20; 3:2; 3:18).
7 Although the Greek text also makes it possible to translate “glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (See Dibelius & Conzelmann 1989, 143), European translations distinguish ‘great God’ from ‘our Saviour Jesus Christ’. In general, the New Testament makes a distinction between God and Jesus.
8 WConf 1855a, 49.
9 Williams 1991, 539; Thomas 1991, 1097. Teinonen (1975, 149) defines the concept as follows:
cetic. On the other hand, even this formula has sometimes been too dogmatic for Unitarians and members of the Society of Friends.

The existence of the formula, God and Saviour in texts of four early ecumenical councils challenges the claims of Christomonism or Docetism. The focus on the person of Jesus in the Paris Basis did not necessarily mean anti-Trinitarism. First, for the representatives from Geneva, the question of the Trinity was important because of their fight against Socinianism. Thus, it would be odd if here they would propagate anti-Trinitarism. Second, many of the early leaders of the YMCA were pastors or active laymen who were involved in the Evangelical Alliance, and the London Basis of the Evangelical Alliance contained a strong emphasis on the Trinity. There must be other reasons for the lack of the Trinitarian formulation.

Max Perrot, the president of the Geneva YMCA said in his report to the Evangelical Alliance:

It is not without consideration that we call ourselves the Christian Associations. It is on Christ and on Christ alone that we wish to build. It is Christ crucified whom we wish to serve. Not the equivocal Christ on whose person men establish vain and subtle distinctions, but Jesus Christ the true God and true Man, Jesus Christ our great Lord and Saviour to whom, as to the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honour, praise, glory and adoration for ever! Amen.

While acknowledging the importance of the Trinity, the emphasis in the YMCA (and in the whole Evangelical Movement) was on the Second Chapter of the Creed. On the discussion of the Paris Basis in the First Conference, T. Henry

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1 Christomonism (Gr. Krhristos, Christ; monos, only), one-sided emphasis on Christ, putting the first paragraph of the confession before the second. (my translation from the original Finnish text).
2 Docetism (Gr. dokein, suppose, theorise, seems to be), a heretic view in the Old Church time that, in Christ, God only apparently became a human; Christ would only have a pseudo-body; he would have only apparently suffered and died (Teinonen 1975, 63, my translation from the original Finnish text). On Docetism in the formula, see A.W. Martin (1981).
3 In Sentence against the ‘Three Chapters’ and in Anthems against the ‘Three Chapters’ the Resolution of the II Council of Constantinople (Istanbul), 553 AD reads as follows: “Our great God and saviour Jesus Christ...”. The Definition in the resolution of the II Council of Nicea, 787 AD, in turn, has the words: “our Lord, God and saviour, Jesus Christ...”. The resolution of the IV Council of Constantinople, 860-870 AD uses in customary recapitulation and reassertion of all previous Ecumenical Councils the expression: “Christ the God and saviour of us all”. Finally, in the Sentence condemning Jerome of Prague, the resolution of the Council of Constance, 1414-1418 reads: “Christ our God and saviour”. Thus, condemning this formula of the Paris Basis text leads to condemnation of the texts of these Ecumenical Councils as well (All Catholic Church Ecumenical Councils - All the Decrees, s.a.).
4 WConf 1855a, 5. Socinianism is a Unitarian movement named according to Faustus Socinus from 16th Century. Unitarians rejected the Trinity and stressed the Monophysitism of God (Schulz 1991, 1031f.).
5 Rouse 1993a, 320.
6 Perrot was asked to present a report on 23 August (WConf 1855c). The YMCA conference was originally intended to end on 22nd but an extra session was added on 24th. Fifty of the 99 YMCA delegates participated the Evangelical Alliance conference as well. Shedd 1955a, 111f.
7 WConf 1855c, 24 (English translation from the French original text in Theurer 1971, 23).
Tarlton, the honorary secretary of the London YMCA, supported Monnier’s proposal, seeing that it gave sole prominence to the one source and characteristic of Christian life, namely, love to Christ, and placed the Associations on the one only foundation, Jesus Christ and Him crucified.\(^1\)

The point in Perrot’s words is that the focus of the YMCAs is on the Second Chapter of the Creed, but that does not mean overlooking the other Chapters. Werner Jentsch, in his interpretation of the Paris Basis, points out that although Christianity is centred on the saving power of Jesus, the concept ‘Son, Saviour’ also presupposes the existence of ‘Father, Creator’ and ‘Holy Spirit, Sanctifier’\(^2\). In fact, the concept of Christ, as a Greek expression of the Hebrew Messiah, is a term of Jesus’ relationship to Father. Thus, according to Jentsch, the Trinitarian concept was built-in to the Basis. Moreover, Jentsch has also noted that other subjects, such as the church, the Sacrament, or Predestination, have been left unmentioned... The Paris drafters did not think it necessary to make any special mention of these subjects in order to express their unity and fellowship\(^3\).

Jentsch also argues that there is a connection between the Paris Basis and the Motto of the World’s Alliance, which was adopted much later. In the emblem of the World’s Alliance there are words from Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer “that they may be one.” However, there is no reference to John 17:21 in the 1855 Conference document. Thus, Jentsch’s argument lies in the supposition that pious Protestants of that time should have known this passage.

‘ACCORDING TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES’ is a Protestant formula, which seems to ignore both Catholic and Orthodox understanding of the Tradition and Councils. In spite of this, the formula cannot be seen either as a differentiation from these old churches or an attack against them. The background of the expression was mostly in reaction against the rise of Biblical criticism that saw the Bible as only an ancient document. The target of the protest was inside Protestantism, not against the old churches\(^4\). This is why the delegates from Geneva tried to include the words ‘divine inspired’ in front of the words ‘Holy Scriptures’ in the Paris Basis. Their motive was that the Bible was so vigorously attacked in Geneva that they should clearly stress the divinity of the Scriptures.\(^5\)

Martin raises an interesting question about the meaning of the words ‘Holy Scriptures’. If the formula ‘God and Saviour’ does not exist in the Bible, what does ‘according to the Holy Scriptures’ mean? He gives three possible answers. First, it might mean, “this is what Scripture says.” However, he notes that this is

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\(^1\) WConf 1855a, 18. Tarlton refers to St. Paul’s words in 1 Cor 2:2.

\(^2\) WConfPrep 1955a, 115; Jentsch 1971, 4;

\(^3\) WConfPrep 1955a, 117, note 6.

\(^4\) The relationship to Catholicism appeared in a couple of reports to Conference. In France there were Catholic members in the YMCA but the requirement was that “they refuse to accept the absolute authority of the clergy in matters of faith” (WConf 1855a, 28). On the other hand, in Geneva the members have joined the Anti-Catholic movement (ibid. 46).

\(^5\) WConf 1855a, 20f.
not the main line of the New Testament but only to a few isolated passages and to a particular interpretation of the Gospel of John. Second, it "might mean that we confess what the Scriptures say about the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." Martin notes that "this interpretation of the Basis can hardly be taken more seriously than the first." Third, the words might mean something "either more or less than they appear to say." In this case, it would "imply that every confession of Jesus Christ should point men back to the inexhaustible richness of the biblical witness."\(^1\)

‘DOCTRINE’ in the Paris Basis manuscript was struck out and replaced with f\(^2\)i in the French version, but it remained in the English text. However, here was a difference to the French National Movement’s version. There has been an unsolved problem why ‘doctrine’ remained in the English text for the next hundred years\(^3\). In 1955, the English text was corrected, so that it was equivalent with the French text\(^4\). However, there is no document that explains the difference between versions. Evidently, in the English version, there is an echo from the EA background but the main text is from French soil.

The English text was translated by Thomas H. Gladstone from the French text and it had some additions from his notes\(^5\). This might give one possible explanation to the problem. It could be that Gladstone may have written some parts of the text automatically from his memory without looking every word from the original manuscript. If he remembered in Monnier’s proposal that there was ‘doctrine’, he wrote it without noticing the mistake\(^6\). Thus, it can be just a careless mistake.

While looking at the meaning of the words, the omission of EA’s long doctrinal formulation was on purpose. The Christianity in the YMCA context was more ‘fides qua creditur’ (faith with which one believes) than ‘fides quae creditur’ (faith that is believed). In that sense, ‘faith’ was theologically the correct word\(^7\). Additionally, both the French YMCA and Dunant felt that the Evangelical

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1 Martin 1981, 263f.
2 Senaud (WComPle 1950b, 4f) supposes that the change was made by Charles Cuénod, who took the signed original text and later gave it to the archives of the World’s Alliance. However, Shedd (1955a, 131) argues that the manuscript, which is In archives, is not the final version accepted by the Conference. Later, Senaud (WComPle 1953b, 2) agrees as well, and adds that the words “such principle to be regarded as the basis of admission of other Societies in future” are missing in the manuscript.
3 Shedd (1955a, 133f.) argues with Karl Fries’ explanation that the English delegates, surprised that there was one extra day on 24 August, left the conference before the final approval of the text. According to Shedd, most English delegates remained at the Evangelical Alliance conference. Additionally, the English conference report is a translation from the French one.
4 Frank Willis (1971, 4), who presided over the Centennial Declaration Committee, explains this harmonisation as follows: “the word ‘doctrine’ in the English text of the fundamental principle was replaced by ‘faith’, and the English text thus revised became the ‘decisive’ text of the fundamental principle of the four texts then approved - English, French, German, and Spanish.”
5 Shedd 1955a, 114.
6 These kinds of corrections of the text are common in Biblical texts. During the period when they were not yet sacred texts there appeared variations in wording also because of careless mistake of a抄ist.
7 This strengthens the result that ‘doctrine’ was the original word in the text.
Alliance restricted its membership needlessly by excluding Quakers and Plymouth Brethren from its membership. The Paris Basis was not a confession but a ‘battle-cry’ to unite the forces against those who denied the deity of Christ. It concentrated on the essential. As James Barrelet said 50 years later in the Jubilee Conference: “[The Associations] have no other basis than living faith in Jesus Christ, and no other aim than the salvation of all young men.” W.H. Mills, in turn, in the same Jubilee Conference noted that “…the Basis should (as it does) express only the simplest and most vital principles of the Alliance.”

‘HIS KINGDOM’ in the English text also differs from the French expression le règne de leur Maître. In Britain, the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) has moulded the English language so much that ‘Kingdom’ is the only reasonable form. In the KJV, there does not even exist such a concept as ‘Dominion of God’ as in other European translations. This explains the formulation in the English text. The French expression is wider than the ‘kingdom’ which has also existed in the French Bible translations.

There are two possible explanations for the difference between the French text and the English one. The first is obvious: the French ‘Our Father’-prayer uses the word règne. Another explanation is related to continental political history: there has not been such an undisputed kingdom on the Continent as in Britain. The continent has had emperors, kings, dukes and counts that have ruled their own territories - in the French speaking area as well. The concept of règne therefore, better suited in this context. Furthermore, in the re-established Empire of Napoleon III, speaking about kingdom would have been politically unwise. There were already tensions between the government and Protestant groups. This political context would explain the use of more neutral expression règne de leur Maître (dominion of their Master).

The ecumenical problem of both formulas is that both ‘Kingdom’ and ‘Dominion’ are used in a Protestant way to mean the transcendent reality towards which citizens of this kingdom are going. Roman Catholics and Orthodox would have

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1 Shedd 1955a, 45, 86; Rouse 1993a, 321.
2 Theurer 1966, 79f.
3 WConfPrep 1905d, 15.
4 WConfPrep 1905c, 17.
5 Closest in the KJV is the formula ‘His dominion’, for example, in Ps 103:22; 114:2.
6 Although the etymology of the word règne has its roots in Latin word rex, king, the word has been used in French Bible in connection to Emperor Tiberius as well (Luke 3:1).
7 The German Gottesreich could be a result of the Empire as well. In Luther’s time, the main political power in the continent was in the hands of the emperor and independent princes. Luther’s work also influenced Scandinavia where the Swedish Guds rikedom represents all Nordic expressions. However, the diffusion of the expression from the Lutheran context to Reformed context remains only as a possibility.
8 An expression of this differentiation between this world and the other world is seen in John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Process, which describes how the Pilgrim wanders from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. According to Niebuhr (1937, 129), other books that “expressed this tension toward the future and the Christian’s anticipations”, were Richard Baxter’s Saint’s Everlasting Rest and Jeremy Taylor’s works Holy Living and Holy Dying.
used the word ‘Church’ with, or instead of ‘His Kingdom’. The etymological meaning is the same - the Greek word Kyriakos (which is the root for both Church and German Kirche) means ‘belongs to the Lord’. The difference between expressions is in the context they were used. The expression ‘Kingdom of God’ did not limit itself to some particular church but included all Christians. Additionally, without going into details and different emphases, it can be said that for Protestants, the Church as an organisation did not have similar aspects of salvation as in the case of the older churches.

In addition to the information which text critical analysis of the Basis gives, tradition critical analysis also sheds light on the thinking of the delegates in Paris. The starting point of tradition critical analysis is by a comparison to the London Basis of the Evangelical Alliance. Despite the fact the delegates were also active in the Evangelical Alliance, the Paris Basis is less dogmatic and more practical than the EA Basis is. The latter quotes almost the whole Apostolic Confession (including the question of the Trinity) in its nine paragraphs. The expressions of the divinity of Christ and the authority of the Bible were a common question in both bases. However, the formulas of the Paris Basis have in the main, other sources than that of the Evangelical Alliance.

The ideology of the YMCA, in general, was not yet developed. It was stated in the constitutions of local associations and national alliances. Ideological vagueness can be understood with reference to negative ecumenical experiences of the 1830’s and 1840’s. The Basis of the Evangelical Alliance was still doctrinally rigid and, thus, more exclusive than the Paris Basis. If the main frame was the unity of Evangelical Christians, all other frames were subordinated to this master frame. Moreover, as it was noted, the YMCA leaders felt that unity among Christians was ‘given’. In this situation, it was not the task of men to draw boundaries.

Along with doctrinal problems, the other weakness of the Evangelical Alliance was the lack of a clear forward-looking program. Ruth Rouse supposes that this was because the Evangelical Alliance emerged in a situation when other interdenominational organisations (foreign missions, city missions, Bible and Tract Societies, etc.) had already occupied the field. There was no special niche for the Evangelical Alliance. The YMCA, instead, found its niche among the peer groups of its membership and defined its mission among young men.

**TO SUM UP,** the ideology of the YMCA, as stated in the Paris Basis, consisted of Evangelical emphases that were expressed with crystallised formulas. “God and Saviour” referred to the centrality of Christ in the movement, “accord-

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1. Actually, the Catholic Church has often equalised the Kingdom of God with itself (Brown 1987, 308; Ehrenberg 1999, 28-54; Preston 1993, 306; Smit 1991, 567).
2. The French Église comes from another root, ekklesia, mean ‘assembly’ or ‘out invited’.
3. As the identity hinted, the general frame was mainly of that of Evangelicalism, which emphasised, as David W. Bebbington (1993, 183) puts it:
   1. the authority and sufficiency of Scripture;
   2. the uniqueness of redemption through the death of Christ upon the cross, often linked with a specifically substitutionary theory of atonement;
   3. the need for personal conversion;
   4. the necessity, propriety and urgency of evangelism.
ing to the Holy Scriptures” defended the Bible as divine revelation. There are also two expressions, which differ in the English and French versions. In the English version, the word “doctrine” had replaced “foi” of the French text and “His Kingdom” replaced “le règne de leur Maître.” Both possibly reflect the emphases of national religiosity.

3.5.3. Associating Their Efforts for the Extension of God’s Kingdom – Mission of the YMCA

In this sub-chapter, I focus on the mission view presented in the Paris Basis. However, it must be again emphasised that the distinction between identity, ideology and mission is only analytical and they overlap in many themes.

In general, the YMCA had as a final goal, to lead young men to the Kingdom of God. When the kingdom was understood in a Pietistic-Evangelical way, the task of the YMCA was to make converts. In this, the YMCA was not different from other evangelising agencies of the time. The more important parts of the YMCA mission were its strategic and tactical goals. They better describe what the organisation really intended to do. In the Fundamental Principle of the Paris Basis there can be seen three different strategic goals for the YMCA: uniting, educating and sending.

SEEK TO UNITE does not mean that there was no unity among Christian young men. As noted, the Preamble stated that delegates ‘feel that they are one’. However, the unity that the Fundamental Principle speaks about, refers to the manifestation of this transcendental unity. In 1905, James Barrelet explained the task of uniting young Christian men as follows:

the young Christian longs for the help of his fellow-men. This is what moved Sir George Williams to unite a few young men for prayer and for the meditation of the Holy Scriptures; thus was the London Christian Association founded in 1844. Working in the same office, exposed to the same dangers and temptations, these young clerks understood, and helped one another.

Thus, according to Barrelet, the unification was twofold: on one hand, the unification was spiritual unification with Christ and, on the other hand, practical mutual assistance. In this respect, the task was the same as what Jesus expressed in the Great Command: “Love your God… and love your neighbour.”

The tactical goals were those of Evangelical Christianity: to gather young men into Bible classes, prayer meetings and other spiritual gatherings. Along with the devotional goals, this tactics served organisational goals as well: these meetings were moments when esprit de corps was maintained and strengthened. These meetings served also as safe havens where similar thinking young men could feel that they were not alone.

In the case of mutual assistance, various YMCAs developed different tactics. As noted, the London YMCA started as a club of shop assistants. The association

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1 See note 1 on page 39.
2 WConfPrep 1905d, 8f.
provided its members with a library, reading rooms, bathrooms, lectures and cheap refreshments. These services were financed by membership fees and donations (often from wealthy members). Dürselen, in turn, mentions singing classes, promenades, fêtes and annual meetings as methods of improving unity in German Jünglingsvereine.

In the chapter on YMCA identity, it was shown who the young men were that the YMCA sought to unite. As we saw, there were several YMCA identities in various countries. The Paris Basis is the smallest common element in these different national YMCA identities. The only requirements are that they regard “Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures” and “desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life.” These young men were already motivated and committed to missionary work. Thus, the organisation only needed to direct this motivation.

**TO ASSOCIATE THEIR EFFORTS** refers more to a practical than a theological task. Although the associations had emerged from the needs of the members, there was also organisational wisdom in concentrating on converted young men. When they and their talents were united, their critical mass and co-operation would serve the missionary work that was the main aim of the Evangelical Movement.

Fifty years later, W.H. Mills expressed the aim of the associations as “two principal objects: Mutual Edification, and the Conversion of Young Men to God.” Associations were, according to him, “a Godgiven instrumentality for winning the young manhood of the world to Christian discipleship.”

Since there were only four secretaries in the whole movement in 1855, the responsibility of activities lay with the members. In this sense, the YMCA was truly a membership movement. Almost a hundred years later, the World Consultation on Young Men’s Work expressed this aspect of the YMCA mission as follows: “The purpose of the YMCA is not to render services to its members, but to provide them with opportunities for serving others.” If we look at theories of philanthropy, the idea of the transaction costs model is useful. The YMCAs were a kind of stock market of spiritual services – they gathered those who were willing to serve and those who needed help.

**FOR THE EXTENSION OF HIS KINGDOM** was the motivation in the search for unity. Visible unity was not a goal *per se* but it served the main goal of

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1. WConf 1855a, 65f.; Shedd 1955a, 29.
2. Shedd 1955a, 27.
3. WConf 1855a, 51f.
4. WConfPrep 1905c, 6, 25.
5. YMWConf 1951, 18f.
6. The triadic transaction model, developed by Michael Krashinsky in 1986, holds that the relationship between producers and consumers requires more than two parties. If these two parties are not in a face-to-face situation or if there are few donors and many anonymous recipients, the costs of the transaction will be too high. In these kinds of cases, some kind of stock is needed. Nonprofit organisations serve as intermediate stocks in the philanthropy market. On transaction costs approach in third sector studies, see Muukkonen 2000, 122-126.
the YMCA, namely leading young men to Christ. Unity of Christians was a witness for those who do not believe\(^1\). Thus, in order to be effective in missionary work, Christians should manifest visible unity.

As noted before, neither the Paris Basis nor the Conference explicitly defined what the ‘extension of God’s Kingdom’ means. Implicitly it can be seen in Renévier’s description of the ‘means used’:

One great object of all the Unions is mutual edification. Several of them occupy themselves also with the evangelization of the surrounding districts. The Union of Geneva, and some Unions in France, visit the sick and the poor. The special work of Antwerp is the benefit of mariners. But the principal aim of most of the Unions is the conversion of young men to God, which they seek to accomplish by various means.\(^2\)

Behind this expression, there was the understanding of the Kingdom of God as a transcendent city of God towards which believers were going from the evil world. In this, the YMCA followed traditional Pietistic and Evangelical understanding that, along with being in heaven, God’s Kingdom existed among those who believed in Christ\(^3\). Thus, extending God’s Kingdom meant converting more citizens to this Kingdom. This might be one reason why the Paris Basis focused on the second paragraph of the Creed. Focus on the first paragraph would have emphasised the whole Creation as the Kingdom of God. Focus on the third paragraph would have emphasised special spiritual gifts (speaking with tongues, healing the sick, etc.) as requirements for those to be included in God’s Kingdom.

In general, it can be said that the strategy was to preach Gospel in one’s own environment. Thus, in London, the emphasis was on those means that helped to reach young merchants residing in dormitories, while in Germany the focus was on the problems of labour youth. Thus, the tactics of different YMCAs varied according to local situations. The general goal was to evangelise young men but different YMCAs emphasised different target groups in whatever way their identities differed: clerks emphasised work among clerks, students among students, etc.

As noted above, there were old models of action, which the YMCA adopted. Shipton tells that the London Association had general meetings of the association, prayer meetings, Mutual Improvement Societies, lectures, publications, libraries, reading rooms, tract distribution (especially during the Great Exposition of Industry in London in 1851). Additionally, he mentions the use of branch associations as a strategy of extension.\(^4\)

In the beginning, the YMCA did not make a special attempt to foster Christian unity or ecumenism. The situation was the other way round: YMCA members felt that Christian unity already existed and their work was only a manifestation of

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\(^1\) John 17:21,22.
\(^2\) WConf 1855a, 120 (my italics).
\(^3\) In this, Pietism opposed trends to see God’s Kingdom as immanent - either as manifested in the church (like in Catholicism), as an earthly theocracy (like in Münzer and Calvin) or even as ‘his left hand’ as Luther described the state as God’s establishment. On Kingdom of God in theology, see Brown 1987; Niebuhr 1937; Preston 1993; Sharpe 1983; Smit 1991; Staehelein 1951; Steinacker 1992.
\(^4\) WConf 1855a, 58-67.
that unity. However, this given unity was something that the new movement wanted to maintain. For this purpose, the First World’s Conference adopted the Proposals along with the Fundamental Principle. The main method was to keep contact by correspondence. Nationally, the letters from other countries were collected together, copied and sent to local associations. Thus, one of the main purposes of early YMCA publications was to give information from societies in other countries.

**THE MISSION OF THE YMCA.** was thus based on the Evangelical understanding of God’s Kingdom and of Christianity in general. Above, I have followed the structure of the Paris Basis in interpretation. Now it is time to look it from a theoretical point of view. In chapter 2.3.1, five different aspects of mission were presented: interpretation of present situation, vision of the hoped-for future, the organisation’s own vocation, knowledge of means, and its symbols, values and norms. Below, these aspects in the mission of the YMCA will be framed.

As the kingdom was constituted of those who believe in Jesus, the analysis of present reality saw the context from this perspective. From this perspective, there were too many of those who did not belong to any Christian church (as in North America) or were nominal Christians (as in Europe). Thus, present reality in the eyes of the YMCA pioneers was far from the ideal. However, the recognition of non-believing young men was not the only thing in this analysis. Edwyn Shipton’s description in his report focuses on causes of this ungodliness:

> The length of time occupied by business prevented any possibility of attending any place of religious or moral instruction during the week; the absorbing character of business, as well as the necessary rule of commercial houses, forbade the visit and counsels of any minister or religious agent; the combination of excessive and protracted labour with the moral and social evils which it originated, caused the Lord’s-day to be regarded only as the week’s holiday - the necessary relaxation for a bow which had been bent to the point of breaking. Its spiritual character and claims and its moral significance were alike forgotten, its hours were passed in indolence or spent in dissipation and folly. Sad indeed is this picture, yet it is not overdrawn.¹

Thus, the YMCA veterans saw that social conditions prevented young men from taking care of their souls. Social evils were the cause of the present situation and thus, one of targets of the movement. Along with social evils, the movement also identified cultural evils, such as liberal theology and the Catholic Church, which that were obstacles to the faith of young men.

The hoped-for future was, based on the previous analysis, a world where young men could hear the gospel and turn to God. When God’s Kingdom was seen as a collectivity of believers, the task of the movement was to extend the number of these believers. The immanent aspect of this hoped-for future was a society, which respects Christian values and morality.

The vocation as part of the mission reveals the basic purpose of the movement: it was not a restricted club but essentially a missionary movement. The vocation of the movement was to associate the efforts of individuals for one purpose: extension of God’s Kingdom. The mission gave a basic collective identity to the

¹ WConf 1855a, 57.
YMCA. In this, identity and mission mingled: to be Christian was to be sent to preach the good news.

The means of the YMCA mission were both traditional Evangelical methods (preaching the gospel, Bible clubs, prayer meetings, Sunday Schools, etc.) and social service (lectures and other teaching, reading rooms, Herberge, Mutual Improvement Societies, etc.). This methodology varied from country to country and from town to town, and the YMCA saw this freedom as fundamental to its mission. As the Preamble of the Paris Basis states, the World’s Alliance had no right to interfere into the “particular organization or modes of action” of member organisations. Every local association should have freedom to react to local needs.

Finally, symbols, values and norms as part of the mission, mix the ideology and the mission in the same way. The distinction is only analytical. To be a Christian is to practice Christian ceremonies and habits as well as to implement Christian ethics and ideals. In the YMCA, this meant Evangelical or Pietistic Christianity, with emphasis on the Bible, personal piety, a humble lifestyle and philanthropic activity.

3.5.4. The Paris Basis as a Model for the YMCA

The Paris Basis can be seen as a crystallisation of the identity, ideology and mission of the existing YMCAs in 1855. In the case of identity, the Basis emphasises that of a converted young man. Implicitly, a white identity is present in the 1855 Paris Conference when the question of slavery was wiped from the agenda of the movement. Other YMCA identities (middle-class identity in the Anglo-Saxon countries, state-church identity in Germany or student identity in French speaking countries) cannot be seen in the text. The only possible hint that there were differences is the strong emphasis on local independence. The YMCA was seen as a tool for Christian young men to proclaim the Gospel to their peer-groups.

The identity of the YMCA was stated in words that also defined the ideology of its members. The YMCA was a movement, which included into its membership all who fulfilled the minimum requirement of Evangelical belief. This evangelical belief was expressed in a vocabulary that consisted of Evangelical expressions and emphases like “God and Saviour” and “according to the Holy Scriptures” which defended the divinity of both Jesus and the Bible.

The mission of the YMCA, according to the Paris Basis, is threefold. First, the aim is to unite young Evangelical men. Second, to lead them to a mutual share of resources, and, finally, to send them to extend God’s Kingdom among young men.

The Basis also contains some methodological aspects such as Additional Proposals which, however, did not bind associations. The prohibition of political debates was in accordance with the British philanthropy tradition, and was backed by the North American desire to keep the movement together in the face of civil war. Correspondence and membership cards were technical questions that reflected the international nature of the movement.
3.6. The YMCA in 1855

In this chapter, I have focused on context, shell and the core elements of the new movement. In short, it can be said that the mission of the YMCA arose in a situation where there was a need for a religious movement, which would answer both the spiritual and material needs of young men. Developing its organisation based on old youth organisation models and business experience, the London YMCA developed a new model of Christian association. The organisation received a respected status among pastors of various denominations, leading philanthropists, wealthy businessmen, and, most important, segments of its target group, young men.

The Evangelical revival had led to the formation of groups and associations of young men in other countries as well. In particular, the 1850’s was a time when these groups emerged. In a few years, these groups became affiliated with each other by correspondence. When the conference of the Evangelical Alliance offered a possibility to meet in Paris, the leaders of associations in Britain, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, North American and Switzerland decided to meet before the conference.

When the YMCA leaders met in Paris, they accepted a statement that was a manifestation of their faith. This statement, the Paris Basis, became the expression of the YMCA ideology. The background of the Paris Basis lies in the Evangelical revival, which influenced the structure of its constituency. It defined the identity, ideology and mission of the movement. In terms of identity, the movement was a Christian movement of young men, who regarded “Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures.” Composition of membership, in turn, stated the mission to be “to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.” In this stage, the Kingdom of God was understood in a Pietistic and Evangelical way as composed of converted souls. Along with these fundamental issues, the North American Civil War and previous correspondence influenced additional proposals. The first of them excluded controversial political issues from the agenda and two others stated the means of the work of the new alliance.

The structure of the Paris Basis was constituted of the Preamble, the Fundamental Principle and three Additional Proposals. The Preamble stated that the associations were to maintain their complete independence in the Alliance, although new associations have to accept the Basis in order to be admitted as members. The Fundamental Principle expressed the ideological basis (Evangelical faith), identity (young men’s movement) and mission (unite young Christians and associate their efforts in extending God’s Kingdom). The Proposals excluded controversial political items from agenda, agreed in the means of co-operation (correspondence) and mutual hospitality towards members from other countries.

THE IDENTITY of the YMCA included four main themes, namely the gender identity, age identity, lay identity and religious identity. At this stage the YMCA was an organisation of young men and not of both sexes or of various age groups. The chosen expressions emphasised the Protestant identity of the move-
ment, although there was a desire for the unity of all Christians. However, this unity could only be based on mutual equality, not by one church surrendering to another. The emphasis on faith instead of doctrines may reflect the lay character of the YMCA. Frank Willis has given a good description of the YMCA identity when he defined the YMCA as being “a non-ecclesiastical lay fellowship within the Church Universal, seeking to work on and across, but not to ignore or transcend, denominational and confessional frontiers.”

Basically, the YMCA identity was bound to its ideology and was that of an Evangelical identity. However, at Paris in 1855, the focus of the young men was on the totality of Christianity and not on any particular church. Questions of doctrines and denominations were subordinated to the criterion of personal faith in Christ as God and Saviour. However, the Evangelical identity did not include all Protestants. As it was seen in the Strauss debate, there was no room for those who held critical views on the Bible. The YMCA members of that time would feel rather familiar in today’s Fundamentalist and Evangelical Movements and vice versa. In a way, the identity of the YMCA was also bound to its mission: it consisted of those who wanted to spread the Kingdom of God. It was required that all members be missionaries in their location.

If we look at the constituency of the YMCA, we can see that it was a movement of young men, often students and merchants. The membership was mainly drawn from the middle class although, in some countries, workingmen formed a significant proportion of membership. Moreover, as it can be implicitly seen from the attitude towards the slavery question, the identity of the YMCA members was that of white men: slavery was basically not their problem.

Geographically, the existing YMCAs were located in Protestant Europe (as well as Belgium and France) and in North America. From this point of view, a dual identification among members was seen. The basic identification was to the local association, which was an ecclesiola in ecclesia and the context where Christian unity was felt. This identification was tied to other local identities and the national identity was the strongest of these. This local identity was potentially a rival of ecumenical Christian unity and thus, Stevens’ additional proposal concerning ‘differences of opinion’ aimed to reduce this potential tension.

The YMCA has claimed to be a lay movement. At Paris in 1855, this was only partly true. Especially in France and Germany, there were many pastors in the leadership of Associations. In the Paris Conference, more than 10% were theologians. The emphasis on lay leadership was mainly a British and North American contribution to the movement. To sum up, the YMCA identity in 1855 was that of Evangelical, Euro-American white men who regularly attended a Bible-club.

IDEOLOGY was, as stated, closely related to identity. The Paris Basis was more inclusive than the London Basis of the Evangelical Alliance. The emphasis was on the Protestant doctrines of only Christ and only Scriptures. These were interpreted to the tune of revivalism of that time. Thus, although the Creed has been accepted as a whole, the emphasis was on the second paragraph of the Creed.

1 Willis 1955, 689.
One significant point in the revivalism of the YMCA was that there was a minimal emphasis on charisma that could be found in other revivalistic movements. Thus, there was no mention of glossolalia, miraculous healing, prophecy or other forms of ecstasy in the YMCA documents.

In the YMCA ideology, there were two aspects, which later became basic principles of the movement. First, following the general attitude of Evangelicalism, it saw all issues that were not related to the ‘winning of souls’ as being secondary. This principle is not primarily a religious attitude, but one which can be traced from the British philanthropic tradition that separated charities from political activity. Thus, it was according to this tradition that political issues were excluded from the agenda. Second, following the old Protestant tradition of local independence the Paris Basis guaranteed Associations ‘complete independence as to their organisation and modes of action.’ This principle, in turn, influenced the expressions of the mission of the movement. In short, the ideology of the YMCA in this stage was that of the Evangelical Alliance.

MISSION arises from the interpretation of the present reality. In the Paris Basis, this was not expressed, although it was described in the reports to the First World’s Conference. There were two basic points, which the YMCA stressed. The first part of the interpretation was the life conditions of young men that the flood of youth to towns had caused. Due to long working hours and crowded dormitories, young men were subject to negative influences without the possibility of personal development. The second part of the interpretation dealt with the spiritual condition of youth in general. From a revivalistic point of view, young people were spiritually passive and distant from the Kingdom of God.

The view of the hoped-for future had several levels. The actual goal was the improvement of the life conditions of young men. However, as Paul Limbert notes, “the YMCA at its best has been more than a ‘mutual improvement society’; it has been a movement with a mission to extend the Kingdom of Christ among other young men.” These two goals were not two separate aims but complemented each other. Improving life conditions was seen as a requirement for the possibility of personal development, which included both mental and spiritual aspects. Spiritual development, in turn, enabled a young man to resist those social evils that threatened his life. Moreover, extending the kingdom of Christ can be seen as the final goal of the movement. This kingdom was mainly understood as a transcendent realm towards which converted souls were wandering.

All YMCA actions aimed for the conversion of young men, and, thus, the extension of Gods Kingdom among this special group. All other goals were subordinated to this final goal. The special vocation of the YMCA was work among young men. Thus, the movement was not focusing on general evangelism but on a special target group. Moreover, when local YMCAs could be seen as peer groups, the vocation of the YMCA was seen as extending God’s Kingdom among their own peer group. This explains why the US YMCAs were so ignorant in the case

1 See Randon & 1994.
2 WComR 1955, 8.
of Negro slaves: they did not belong into their actual everyday realm where their vocation had to be fulfilled. In the same way, the YMCAs in various countries had different membership basis (artisans in Germany, shop assistants in Britain, students in France, etc.), which focused their work on the same class of people.

The Paris Basis Preamble stated that the means of action were local concerns. This enabled the movement to adapt itself to local conditions. Thus, from the beginning the YMCA had different methods of work in various countries. On the other hand, the newborn World’s Alliance was an important tool for this work in two senses. First, the sense of international unity helped to maintain *éspíritu del cuerpo* even in places where the Association was small. Second, it helped the diffusion of both organisational models and methods of work. Thus, while the Paris Basis left strategic and tactical choices to the local level, the existence of a larger network helped the new movement to implement its vocation.

Localism and internationalism were important symbolic tools for the YMCA. In Paris 1855, the young movement did not have its own value-system but used the symbolism of the Evangelical Revival and local religious contexts. It gave the YMCA the choice to legitimise its work in words that could be accepted by all Protestant denominations. The YMCA was not seen as a sect but a movement both, within each church, and between them. The discourse of Christian unity that was understood as given from God, was a tool to cross denominational boundaries. It enabled the YMCA to collect resources from a larger constituency than would have been possible if the movement had been either a sect or a revival movement inside one denomination (Germany, of course, was an exception).

**THIS CHAPTER** has concentrated on the roots of the Paris Basis. It was a model of the YMCA and it was from these roots that the formulas in the wording came. Although some elements of the Basis derive from the first YMCAs in Britain and Germany, the Basis was a French product with some American spice. It reflected the identity and mission of the founders of the alliance as well as the existing practices in local YMCAs.

We have seen that the Paris Basis contains three different parts: Preamble, Fundamental Principle and Additional proposals. From this on, the Basis started to have a life of its own. It became a ‘religious fact’ that became a model for the new associations and for the whole Ecumenical Movement. In the next chapter I will focus on how this Basis was interpreted and modified in various historical moments.
Part III: The Paris Basis as a Model for the YMCA
4. Expansion and Extension of the YMCA

The context of the first hundred years of the World’s Alliance of the YMCA can be described, as Kenneth Scott Latourette does, in one word: revolution. Latourette writes:

The revolution was in part economic. It arose from the increased knowledge and mastery by mankind of its physical environment. The natural sciences... were developed beyond all previous proportions. With them went the Industrial Revolution with the application to machinery of power..., the emergence and growth of factories, and the invention and development of steamships, railways, auto-mobiles, airplanes, the electric telegraph, the telephone, wireless, radio, the radio, and television.

Hand in hand with the economic revolution, and partly because of it, came drastic social changes. New cities sprang up around the factories. Towns burgeoned at the mouths of the mines from which were dug the minerals essential to industry. Some old cities, notably London, New York, and Tokyo, attained unprecedented dimensions. It was to make provision for the well-being of the youth of the cities that the Young Men’s Christian Associations were brought into being.

The revolution was also political. As such it had begun at least as early as the eighteenth century, with the American and French Revolutions... Ancient ruling houses were swept aside. New forms of government were introduced. Socialism became common and the Marxist form of it triumphed in Russia, its satellites, and China.

Education was remade. Inherited moral standards tended to pass. Traditional family patterns and loyalties were threatened. Nationalism either appeared for the first time or was heightened. Historic religions were weakened. Secularism, with its disregard for religion, was rampant.¹

In this general historic setting, the YMCA emerged and developed. However, as Ralph H. Turner and Lewis Killian have stated, “culture does not ‘change itself’ in an impersonal, automatic fashion. Individuals change culture.”² Therefore, from the YMCA point of view, it is not so interesting what kinds of changes occurred in the organisational environment of the YMCA, but rather how the YMCA leaders interpreted these changes.

This chapter focuses on the changes in the collective representations of the world, which were presented in the documents of the World’s Alliance of YMCA. The perspective on these changes is from the point of view of what kind of impact they had on the mission view of the World’s Alliance. First, I look at the changes in the Zeitgeist through the opportunity structures of the World’s Alliance. Second, I make a short review of developments in different continents. The third context of the World’s Alliance, the fieldwork, will be treated in chapter 6.3, when I look at how the YMCA applied its mission in different activities. The fourth context, the Geneva international society started to develop only in the 20th century³ and does not need a special chapter but I bring it up occasionally in the text.

¹ Latourette 1957, 16.
² Turner & Killian 1959, 40.
³ When the Central International Committee (CIC) of YMCA got its permanent headquarters in Geneva, only the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), founded in 1863, was located in
Before I go into details, it might be good to give some kind of overview on changes in the YMCA during the period 1855-1955. In the historical outline below, significant moments in the history of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs are mentioned. In the left column, are important decisions. In the middle column, are changes in the structure, and in the right column some significant events that had an effect on the YMCA mission.

4.1. World of Changes

This sub-chapter focuses on those historical events that were important for the mission of the World’s Alliance. However, because the purpose of this research is to study the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, the word ‘important’ in the previous sentence needs some definition. As I have noted earlier, my aim is to reveal in which way the leaders of the YMCA saw their environment and how they, from that collective representation, developed their mission. Thus, the focus is on the history of the YMCA mission view instead of on general history or YMCA history. More specifically, I try to tell how historical changes can be seen in the documents of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. The World’s Alliance was mainly a Western organisation focusing on ‘Western issues’ during this period. There might have been, of course, important events in other parts of the world that have had effect on the World’s Alliance. However, if they did not ‘exist’ in the realm of the leaders of the World’s Alliance, they are excluded from this analysis.

I draw my information mainly from the Reports of the Central International Committee/World’s Committee. However, except for the First World’s Conference, these reports did not include any contextual analysis until the 1926 World’s Conference. Thus, for those early days the approach is somewhat indirect: instead of looking at ‘questions’, one must look ‘answers’. Reports, for example, tell of which kinds of activities the YMCA launched. However, in explaining the context of these activities, I have to rely on previous YMCA histories.

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1 I mainly follow Clarence Prouty Shedd and others’ History of the World’s Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations (1955). Other major sources are articles in the Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (1991) and four World’s Committee / General Secretary reports to the World’s Conferences (WComR 1926; 1931; 1937; 1955)

2 On the period, see, for example, articles in The New Cambridge Modern History, volumes X- XII and Latourette’s A History of the Expansion of Christianity, volumes IV-VI.

3 Up to 1900, the name of the organ was Central International Committee (CIC)
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1 In 1955, there were Young Men’s, Secretaries’ and Y’s Men’s Conferences, and Older Boys’ Camp, attached to the main Centennial Conference. Thus, when I use the singular form, I mean the main conference and when I use the plural, I mean them all.
4.1.1. Benefiting from Growing Prosperity

Economic opportunities of all voluntary organisations improved because of industrialism. There were two major factors influencing the mission view of the World’s Alliance: factors that facilitated information exchange and travels, and factors of income generation.

**INFORMATION AND TRANSPORTATION** changed the world permanently. In his address to the Centennial Conference in 1955, J.F Wolfenden notes that “our world is becoming, as we say, smaller.” With this, he referred to the travel and communicating systems that enlarged the horizons of individuals. Travelling possibilities in 1955 were totally different from those of 1855. Here and there in the YMCA documents, there are mentions of the emerging railway and telegram systems. Industrialisation changed the frame of time and space and made international communication possible. Europe had built its main railway network by 1870, and by 1874, there were already five telegraph cables across the Atlantic. In the United States, the railway networked the country (except the Pacific Coast) by the end of the 1850’s and in 1861, a transcontinental telegraph line was completed. Tourism as a phenomenon took its first steps. Because of these new means of transportation and communication, the world became smaller and people were able to communicate faster than before. For international organisations, this definitely meant new possibilities when compared to the time when it took several months to travel across the Atlantic and when even correspondence was limited because of slow connections.

In the YMCA, there was a continuous process from a network of loosely attached local associations towards an organised world organisation, which went in tandem with developments in the communication and transportation. This does not mean that these devices were determinants of organisational development. Rather, they enabled the organisation to avoid hindrances that did not allow it to function according to its core values. When the main railway network in Europe was ready in the 1870’s, the YMCA established its Central International Committee in 1878. On the European level, reports until the end of 19th century note visits to member movements as being one of the main tasks of the general secretary. On the world level, YMCA leaders organised trips to conferences and world mis-

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1 WConf 1955, 63. Another note, which Wolfenden made on of the world becoming smaller, was the use of loud-speakers which enabled large crowds to come together to hear a speech.
2 For example, as early as in 1862, Christian Klug mentions their use of railroads when he reported the Third World’s Conference (London 1862) to Germans (Shedd 1955b, 166).
3 The effects of the railway were significant: they changed the relation between time and space, and forced, for example, distant areas to harmonise their local times (Schivelbusch 1996, 33-43).
4 In its 1881 Report (WComR 1881, 9-13, 18), the Central International Committee mentions the use of telegrams by its International Information Agency.
6 Hopkins 1951, 12. See also a quotation of William H. Neff from Cincinnati where he parallels the railroads as national bond to the ‘Saviour’s cause’ as a spiritual bond (Idem. 54).
sionary tours of its evangelists. When relatively quick travel to Geneva from various parts of the world was possible, the YMCA created a practice of annual plenary meetings of the World’s Committee. When telegram enabled fast communication, the YMCA was able to enlarge its executive by making members residing outside of Geneva part of the Executive Committee. The process reached its peak when airlines made possible the trip to Geneva a matter of hours instead of weeks. In 1955, the YMCA changed its constitution and truly became a similar federation to how its national members had been for a long time. Hindrances of distance no longer defined the structure, and it could be organised according to the core values of the movement.

GROWTH OF PROSPERITY was another factor in the growth of the YMCA in general. As people achieved prosperity at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, they had more extra money to donate. This increased the economic resources of voluntary organisations. We have already seen how the London YMCA got a remarkable share of its income from its wealthy members and other philanthropists. On the World’s Alliance level, the work of the first General Secretary, Charles Fermaud was made possible by similar donations.

Especially in the United States, this growth of prosperity led to a growth of the voluntary sector, and voluntary organisations got huge donations for their activities. Welfare Capitalism was based on the idea that voluntary associations would take care of social services. The YMCA benefited from this: for example, its railway work was mainly supported by railway companies. In general, railways heralded both the new prosperity and a new world-view of the western world.

The growth of wealth (and donations that the YMCA received), especially in North America, was almost continuous until the First World War. The war caused an economic setback. In his report to Helsingfors World’s Conference, Karl Fries describes the effects of both material and human losses of the First World War and after it. Along with the general review of the economic catastrophe, he points out the effects which it has had on the life of young men. Fries mentions particularly unemployment, the housing problem and malnutrition.

Five years later, the World’s Committee Report to the Cleveland World’s Conference

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1 See McCarthy & Zald (1977,1224ff.) theses in chapter 2.3.3.
2 The First Report of the Central International Committee (WComR 1881, 6) mentions that grants came from several national committees but Shedd (1955b, 229, 232, 236) tells that, in practice, they came from individuals.
3 Hall 1987.
4 WConfPrep 1884, 9.
5 In North America the increase continued until the Great Depression (Latourette 1957, 70. See also Morse 1913, 251).
6 Documents of the conference use the Swedish name of Helsinki, Helsingfors, continuously. I follow the use of the documents when they refer to the conference. However, when referring to the town independently, I use the better-known Finnish form, Helsinki.
7 This was based on the ILO publication Enquête sur la Production by Edgard Milhaud in 1925 (WComR 1926, 1).
8 WComR 1926, 1-6.
in 1931 was titled *Facing a World Crisis*. It summarises the period between 1926 and 1931 as follows:

The outstanding fact in the economic development of the last five years is the economic crisis... No other event of the same period is so definitely a world phenomenon... Dr. Felix Somary has said: “No country, no people, no branch of economic life has been spared from its onslaught”... The crisis is finally not due to purely economic causes but rather to a lack of confidence in the political and social situation of the moment. Or to put it positively: the only way out of the crisis is that which leads to the restoration of confidence between national and social groups.¹

After mentioning the consequences of the crisis, especially unemployment, the report wanders: “There is reason for astonishment that there is not more delinquency or more desperate radicalism among these youths.” This seems to be one of those prophecies that have gone astray: only one and half year after the conference, Hitler came into power in Germany and the turbulence began².

After the Depression, the discussion on the economy changed in the YMCA. The World’s Conference in Mysore in 1937, discussed the world economic structures based on western domination of the rest of the world³. For the first time, the World’s Conference was in a developing country and the emotional view of the world situation was different to that of an intellectual. Combining these emotional and intellectual views led to an awareness of global responsibility. The conference asserted that the YMCA should more closely study social problems and “that the YMCA more thoroughly identifies itself with the socially oppressed and the under-privileged, and seeks to serve them more permanently.”

The clouds of war were gathering on the horizon and war broke out while the participants of the Amsterdam World Youth Conference were still on their way home. For the next five years, Christian youth movements had to reflect on the theme of Amsterdam, *Christus Victor*, from a very dark perspective. I deal this theme later when I focus on the service for prisoners of war and, thus, I will skip it here.

Economic opportunity structures in 1955 were rather different from the depression of the 1930s. The last pre-war World’s Conference in 1937 took place

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¹ WComR 1931, 55.
² WComR 1931, 56.
³ Ten years later, in 1942, Talcott Parsons (1959) analysed the Fascist movement and argued that “Fascism is not ‘old conservatism’ of the sort especially familiar before 1914.” Instead, it was a “radicalism of the right.” (Idem. 83) Parsons uses Durkheim’s concept of anomie as an explanation to this radicalism. Parsons (Idem 85ff.) identifies several root causes for this anomie in Europe: Industrial Revolution, migration from rural areas to towns, immigration to the US, instability of the new economy, rapid changes of fad and fashion, collapse of traditional values, development of mass education and mass means of communication, process of rationalisation, new technology, codification of personal rights and liberties, changes in role behaviour and the role of science in modern society. In this situation, Fascism seemed to give a concrete system of symbols, which helped individuals to interpret the world around them. The importance of Parsons’ analysis lies in his view that there were not one or two determinants that caused the turbulence. Instead, it was a result of many cumulating factors.
⁴ WConf 1937, 9-19
⁵ WConf 1937, 18.
near the end of the depression. The report to this conference mentioned that some movements had gone near bankruptcy. Although the World War II caused severe damage especially for the defeated countries, recovery and rebuilding was fast. The decade between 1945 and 1955 brought an economic boom in many countries, especially in North America and Europe. Meanwhile the economic problems in many Asian countries remained, because of conflicts and famine.¹

In his report to 1955 Paris World’s Conference, general secretary of the World’s Alliance, Paul Limbert, wrote as follows:

Whereas the 1930s had been characterized by world-wide depression and unemployment, the decade between 1945 and 1955 brought in many countries a building boom, accelerated industrial production, and unprecedented prosperity. Nevertheless, looking at the world as a whole, it is estimated by Technical Assistance experts that more than half of the people are still living in underdeveloped countries.²

One consequence of the War was the increasing economic role of the state. Because, as Limbert reports,

the government should take responsibility for financing both war and reconstruction. The state has taken over more and more control of welfare work as well as of production and investment. People have come to rely on the government more fully and to feel that their private contributions are unnecessary. Large fortunes have dwindled away or passed into the hands of more impersonal foundations.³

Limbert’s notes mean that sources of contributions were changing from private to public funds. This also meant that the role of voluntary organisations differed from country to country. In some countries, the state built its own service organisations while in others the government relied on existing voluntary agencies. In the former cases, the role and opportunities of voluntary agencies are more limited than in the latter cases.⁴

In the case of international aid from wealthier movements to new and poorer ones, there have been two practices. First, some older movements, like those in United Kingdom and France, have felt the responsibility to support younger YMCAs in their former colonies. Some other movements have regarded support to new YMCAs as part of their missionary enterprise. In both cases, the economic transactions have been independent of the World’s Alliance.⁵ Second, some extension and service projects are managed by the World’s Alliance and thus, these projects compete with those of national movements for the scarce resources available. The problem of the YMCA movement has been that there has not been satisfactory co-ordination of service projects. Moreover, the lack of co-ordination has

¹ WComR 1955, 189-192.
² WComR 1955, 24.
³ WComR 1955, 192.
⁴ Unfortunately, there is no comparative research on third sector from this era. Some comparisons can be made through the historical reviews in country reports in the following anthologies: The Nonprofit Sector in International Perspective (1989), Government and the Third Sector (1992), Defining the Nonprofit Sector (1997), Global Civil Society (1999). On different European welfare models, see Muukkonen 2000, 27-39.
⁵ WConfPrep 1955a, 100f.
meant that not all YMCAs have been involved in fund-raising for international projects.¹

Alongside the monetary resources, there was a need for human resources as well. *The Fellow Workmen For God* notes that the establishment of a new YMCA in a new country needs people that are ready to carry responsibility for the new enterprise. In countries where Christians are a minority, this is more difficult because, although the YMCA welcomes members from other faiths, “only Christians can be expected to bear witness to their faith in Christ.” Moreover, in many cases there was no knowledge of the organisational skills needed to run an organisation. In those cases it has often been the case that a fraternal secretary has come from some foreign country or that a new movement has sent some of its promising leaders to other countries for special training with a special fellowship.²

The changing economic situation had certain consequences for the World’s Alliance as well. First, the economic strength of the North American Movements has increased their share of all contributions from national movements from 60 to 65 per cent. This inevitably has had other consequences as well. Second, when the war work and European refugee work were reduced the contributions to these activities and charges from them also became smaller. Thus, the World’s Alliance organisation which had been fixed to meet the needs of victims of war had to be re-fixed to meet the needs of peacetime.

In this way, the YMCA in general, experienced the expansion of capitalism, both its positive and negative consequences and became aware that the situation outside the western world requires significant change in the collective worldview.

**THE INCOME OF THE WORLD’S ALLIANCE** was generated in this general economic setting. However, the wealth of national alliances, which accumulated until the First World War, did not always filter to the World’s Alliance. National alliances were hesitant about giving any (administrative or economic) power to the World’s Alliance³. It was not until the 1930s, when the Depression forced everyone (Americans especially) to work together that the work of the World’s Committee expanded. Until that, the reports continuously noted that some projects could not be launched or some important needs not fulfilled because of lack of money⁴. Tracy Strong gives a brief outline how the work of the World’s Alliance was funded between 1878 and 1946:

Since 1878 when George Williams and Richard C. Morse made personal guarantees towards the salary of young Fermaud, there had always been a few individuals who made substantial gifts... In general, however, support has come from national movements in accordance with their interest and capacity to contribute. Before the First World War, four Movements [Great Britain, Switzerland, the United States and Germany] carried the main burden... During the First World War, there was practically no money from European countries with the exception

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¹ WConfPrep 1955a, 104.
² WConfPrep 1955a, 102s.
³ For example, in 1878 when the CIC was founded and grants were collected for the salary of the secretary, the German *Rheinisch-Westfälische Bund* stated in its minutes that “it should be made clear that we reject all international solidarity (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 232).” German-speaking Switzerland and Holland also refused to grant funds for the purpose (Idem 236).
⁴ Shedd 1955b, 219, 229, 308, 433f.
of Switzerland. The war work was supported largely by the War Work Council of the International Committee [of the North American YMCAs]. At Pörtschach 1923, by a special Appeal for the Boys of the World, Robinson secured contributions and pledges sufficient to add five new secretaries to the staff. During this time several National Alliances - Sweden, Great Britain, Holland, and the United States - supported secretaries on the World’s Committee staff.

From Helsingfors to Mysore, a large number of national alliances accepted responsibility for regular national contributions. In the days of the depression of 1931-6, budgets were greatly reduced and large deficits incurred. During and following the Second World War funds … were secured from 28 countries, from national war funds, governments, Churches, and the prisoners of war themselves. While a number of national movements during 1939-46 continued to make their contributions to the regular budget of the World’s Committee, nearly 40 per cent of the expenses were covered by war funds.¹

Strong’s text notes four special economic opportunity structures that had impact on the World’s Alliance: individual donations, contributions from national alliances, both World Wars and the global regression of the 1930s. In economic terms, the most important contexts of the World’s Alliance were those of its own member organisations and niches where it worked. This can be seen in Table 6, which describes the major income sources in selected years. We can see that, except for 1904-1905, contributions have been the major source of income, forming circa 90 percent of income. Thus, it seems that the World’s Alliance was almost fully depended on contributions from its member movements. This might be a purposeful policy. The policy guaranteed three things. First, the final decision-making remains in the hands of national movements. Second, the organisation does not become depended on some exterior power that could guide its policy. Third, the World’s Alliance was not able to challenge the bilateral work that North American and British movements, especially were engaged in.

Table 6: General income sources of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, 1884-1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1884-5</th>
<th>1904-5</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1954</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFr</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>SFr</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>SFr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>10,058</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>9,605</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>202,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>21,144</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>17,139</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>19,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,152</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30,779</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>221,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is based on the following reports: Report of the World’s Committee 1905, additional sheet; WComEx 1926, 2; 1935, 23; ExCom 1955, 28; 1956, 89f.

¹ General contributions - do not includes contributions for the Work for Refugees and Migrants.

The view of dependency on contributions changes dramatically when we combine the figures of the general financial statement with those of the separate Work for Refugees and Migrants. In 1954, the change is remarkable. Table 7 shows the share of total incomes in 1954. We can see that in 1954 the share of Work for Refugees and Migrants was 72 percent of all income of the World’s Alliance. In

¹ Strong 1955a, 540.
the case of contributions’ share (42 per cent), one must remember that the financial statement does not explain what is included in the 55 percent of ‘field incomes’. The figure might have included local donations as well as sale of services. Other possible sources were various UN agencies, local governments and sales of services (camps) and products. In any case, local income form 77 per cent of all refugee and migrant work income. This may reflect the YMCA principle of local/national responsibility.

Table 7: Sources of income of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs in 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SFr.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SFr.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SFr.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National contributions</td>
<td>480,021</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual: Switzerland</td>
<td>44,450</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual: Other countries</td>
<td>14,621</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of General Contributions</td>
<td>539,093</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24,338</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of General income</td>
<td>595,431</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFUGEE &amp; MIGRANT WORK INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;M church donations</td>
<td>246,592</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;M N-A YMCA</td>
<td>107,006</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;M field income</td>
<td>1,171,536</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of R&amp;M income</td>
<td>1,525,128</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>2,120,559</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER INCOME COMPARED</td>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All contributions together</td>
<td>892,685</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;M field income in countries of operation</td>
<td>1,171,536</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>24,338</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is based on information of the Report of the Executive Committee 1955.

Geographically, the World’s Alliance was almost totally (over 90 percent) dependent on European and North American contributions throughout the whole period 1855-1955. In Table 8, we can see that until 1925, Europe was the major contributor to World’s Alliance, giving more than 50 percent of contributions. Moreover, in Europe, resources came mainly from two countries, Britain and Switzerland, both giving over 20 percent of the contributions. North America’s share remained around 30 to 40 percent. However, after the Second World War the situation changed. The share of Europe had dropped below 30 percent and that of North America had increased to 65 percent. Inside Europe, other national movements had increased their share, so that Britain, Switzerland and others all had equal 10 percent share of the contributions to the World’s Alliance. When we add the figures of the Work for Refugees and Migrants, the European share decreases to under 20 percent and North American increases to over three fourths.
Table 8: General contributions by country to the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, 1884-1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1884-5 general contributions</th>
<th>1925 general contributions</th>
<th>1925 with contributions to migrant work</th>
<th>1954 general contributions</th>
<th>1954 with contributions to migrant work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFr. %</td>
<td>SFr. %</td>
<td>SFr. %</td>
<td>SFr. %</td>
<td>SFr. %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>619 0.4</td>
<td>619 0.4</td>
<td>4.394 0.8</td>
<td>4.394 0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>5.515 3.6</td>
<td>5.515 3.3</td>
<td>14.173 2.6</td>
<td>14.173 1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- China &amp; Hong Kong</td>
<td>2.000 1.3</td>
<td>2.000 1.2</td>
<td>2.207 0.4</td>
<td>2.207 0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- India</td>
<td>1.000 0.7</td>
<td>1.000 0.6</td>
<td>4.883 0.9</td>
<td>4.883 0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Japan</td>
<td>2.000 1.3</td>
<td>2.000 1.2</td>
<td>1.663 0.3</td>
<td>1.663 0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Philippines</td>
<td>2.782 0.5</td>
<td>2.782 0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.782 0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other Asian Countries</td>
<td>515 0.3</td>
<td>515 0.3</td>
<td>2.639 0.5</td>
<td>2.639 0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>6.968 69.3</td>
<td>76.664 50.4</td>
<td>148.749 27.5</td>
<td>148.749 16.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Britain</td>
<td>4.113 40.9</td>
<td>36.267 23.9</td>
<td>53.400 9.9</td>
<td>53.400 6.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Denmark</td>
<td>4.200 2.8</td>
<td>4.200 2.5</td>
<td>10.365 1.9</td>
<td>10.365 1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Netherlands</td>
<td>5.000 3.3</td>
<td>5.000 3.0</td>
<td>6.888 1.3</td>
<td>6.888 0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- France</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>2.011 1.2</td>
<td>1.112 0.2</td>
<td>1.112 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Germany</td>
<td>320 3.2</td>
<td>2.762 1.6</td>
<td>12.479 2.3</td>
<td>12.479 1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Norway</td>
<td>1.000 0.7</td>
<td>1.000 0.6</td>
<td>1.718 0.3</td>
<td>1.718 0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sweden</td>
<td>3.157 2.1</td>
<td>3.157 1.9</td>
<td>8.619 1.6</td>
<td>8.619 1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Switzerland</td>
<td>2.294 22.8</td>
<td>23.258 14.9</td>
<td>34.624 20.6</td>
<td>34.624 10.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other countries</td>
<td>124 1.2</td>
<td>1.171 0.8</td>
<td>1.158 0.2</td>
<td>1.158 0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>3.976 26.7</td>
<td>3.976 2.6</td>
<td>3.472 0.6</td>
<td>3.472 0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>3.090 30.7</td>
<td>62.582 41.2</td>
<td>62.582 37.2</td>
<td>347.000 64.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>1.500 1.0</td>
<td>1.500 0.9</td>
<td>6.682 1.2</td>
<td>6.682 0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous from various countries</td>
<td>1.153 0.8</td>
<td>2.691 1.6</td>
<td>14.621 2.7</td>
<td>14.621 1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>513 100</td>
<td>152.009 100</td>
<td>168.417 100</td>
<td>539.091 99.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination from WComR 1888, 18; WComEx 1926, 2; 1955, 28; 1956, 89f. There are differences between the 1954 financial statements in the reports of the Executive Committee in 1955 and 1956. I have followed the report from 1955.

It can be said that the World’s Alliance has managed to use the growing wealth of western societies, but it has never been prosperous. Its business possibilities have been limited because it has not had permission to interfere with the life of existing national movements – all fundraising and sales campaigns had to be made in co-operation with national movements. Thus, prosperous national alliances could have used this as a means to control the World’s Alliance. Although the Global Depression of the 1930’s forced large national movements to co-operate more intensively through the World’s Alliance, the economic strength of the YMCA has been on the local level. The higher we go in the hierarchy, the thinner the economic basis becomes. As we have seen, this has mainly been an ideological decision, which can be traced to the Reformation.  

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1 This can be seen, for example, in the ratio of secretaries: General Statistics 1955 show that there have been 5,793 local and national secretaries in member movements. At the same time there has only been 80 fraternal secretaries and only 22 serving in the staff of the World’s Alliance (WComR 1955, 218f.). Although the two last figures are supposedly partly overlapping, it does not change the general view.  

2 The issue of local priority pro international centralism has been dealt with in chapter 3.3.3.
When we try to frame what kinds of potentials the changes in funding caused, the most evident hypothesis is that the voice of North America has increased. With a 65 percent share in 1954 (if refugee and migrant work is included: 80%), the Americans played a crucial role in funding the World’s Alliance. Their withdrawal for any reasons would have cause a critical situation in the World’s Alliance economy. Thus, it is more than probable that the North American interpretation of the YMCA mission got more resonance in the YMCA family. Moreover, as we will see, many new YMCAs were economically depended on North Americans, which increased the American voice in the movement. The American movement, in turn, was dependant on American churches, businessmen and the state\(^1\).

On the other hand, the growth of refugee work to the largest project of the World’s Alliance had a balancing effect. Refugee and migrant work constituted 72 per cent of total income (although it had a separate budget). Field income constituted a 76 per cent share of this (55 per cent of total income), which in 1954 would have given the World’s Alliance some economic freedom in its actions. In any case, the old British-Swiss dominance had disappeared.

**TO SUM UP,** the economic opportunity structures of the new World’s Alliance of YMCAs constituted of betterment of communication channels (telegram and travel) and sources of income. In 1855, the World’s Alliance was founded at the dawn of new communication devices. At this stage, distances were hindrances, which did not allow the movement to act according to its ideals. Parallel to the development of communication and travel devises, the World’s Alliance changed its structure from a centralised agency to a representative federation. Along with industrialism, the prosperity in North America and Europe increased, and people got surplus money, which was partly directed to voluntary organisations as donations. the North American YMCA in particular took advantage of the ideology of Welfare Capitalism, which saw social service as the field of voluntary organisations. However, this wealth of national movements did not filter to the World’s Alliance, perhaps on purpose: it was one way to keep decision-making in the hands of national movements instead of international staff. During the period, 1855-1955, the Alliance was almost totally funded by American and European movements. In the beginning, the funding was European dominated but by the 1950’s, the Alliance was heavily dependant on American YMCAs. This evidently meant that American views and models became dominant in the movement.

### 4.1.2. Changing Along with Modernity\(^2\)

Some cultural opportunities of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs changed remarkably during the first 100 years and some have remained constant. There were at least four cultural trends that can be found in the YMCA documents, which had

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2. I use concepts ‘Modern’ and ‘Modernity’ in a meaning of an era, like Romanticism, Enlightenment or Middle Ages.
impact on the YMCA framing of the world: urbanisation, expansion of education, Westernisation and its counter-effect indigenisation, and scepticism.

**URBANISATION** was one of the general trends in the second half of the 19th century. Young people were increasingly moving to towns. Karl Fries mentions in his *History of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs* that

the tendency among the populations, and very specially among the young men, of moving to the big cities raises problems of particular importance to the YMCAs. These considerations had led to the evolution of a special type of associations, which, preeminently in America, has been the means of exercising a far-reaching and deep influence on the social life in general, besides leading countless young men into the Christian life, who would not have been reached in any other way.¹

Urbanisation that had already begun before the foundation of the World’s Alliance continued with increasing speed. When young people moved into towns, they faced problems that were unknown to their parents. They had to solve these problems by themselves. Accompanied to this migration, there was an increase of population in Europe because of descending death rates. This caused both growth of cities and emigration, which caused problems that the YMCA tried to solve with its special activities, like migration work² and service projects for youth in military service, railways, etc.

Although there were old cultural models as guidelines, the general tendency was that of change. New values and norms emerged³ and were often in conflict with established institutions. From the organisational point of view, an important aspect was the general attitude towards associations. In Germany, the *Kulturkampf* established the principle of subsidiarity and created protected niches for associations and foundations⁴. In the United States, because of the significance of the Evangelical Network and Boston Merchants during the Civil War, the third sector had established itself as a permanent part of American society⁵. In Britain, as we have already seen, the government had favoured the solution of social problems through voluntary organisations⁶. Due to this favourable attitude towards associations, the largest national YMCAs were in the US, Germany and Britain.

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¹ WConfPrep 1905e, 8f.
² The first YMCA activities in the field of migrants were launched in the US when the State Commissioner for Immigrants suggested in 1906 that the YMCA could help immigrants. The International Committee of North American YMCAs answered the challenge. Tens of thousands of immigrants were taught English in educational classes. Social and religious projects were carried out. Personal help was given from the ship to the point of destination. The work expanded from the US to 17 ports in Europe where emigrants were waiting. The work included information, educational classes, social and religious projects and personal counselling. (WComR 1909, 9f.; 1913, 12f.; 1931, 33f.; WConf 1909, 5; 1931, 9f.; *Told in Pictures*, s.a.; Shedd 1955b, 440-443; Hopkins 1951, 477f.; Ross 1951, 131f., 183f)
³ Emerging norms have been studied by early collective behaviour scholars, especially Turner and Killian (1959, 58-64).
⁵ Hall 1987, 6-10.
⁶ Thane 1990, 1-8. It was only in the 1940s that the government took “primary responsibility for the delivery, financing, and regulation of welfare (Taylor 1992, 148f).”
Towns did not grow simply because young people moved from countryside to towns. In the chapter on economic opportunity structures, the work among migrants was already mentioned. The migration to North America from Europe was one significant phenomenon in western culture, one which brought masses of young people to American towns. The needs of these young people were even larger than of those moving inside the country - and the YMCA saw the need and responded to it.

Urbanisation brought other cultural effects as well. James L. Houghteling and Charles K. Ober reported to the Berlin World’s Conference in 1884 as follows:

The business enterprises, the colleges and the professional schools of our cities attract thousands of young men, just starting out in life. Leaving behind them the joys and restraints of home, they take up their quarters in uncomfortable boarding houses. Another large class of young men, although living at home, crave, from one cause or another, the companionship of other young men, and are in danger of seeking it in places of evil resort, unless it is offered them under healthful influences. To all these young men the Association extends a warm welcome to its rooms, which are kept open day and evening.¹

Along with urbanisation, we can see here two other phenomena that enabled the YMCA to grow. I have already spoken about the growing middle class. The YMCA, to a great extent, responded to the needs of the growing middle class. Residing away from their homes, young people were torn away from their traditional ties. This was accelerated by the emergence of new problems that their parents had never faced. Thus, the old values and lifestyles made way for new ones. From the YMCA point of view, there were thousands of lonely young men who were seen in need of ‘homes away from homes’ and bricks to build their lives.

**EXPANSION OF EDUCATION** is another phenomenon that Houghteling and Ober mention in their report. This is not the place to discuss the significance of education for emerging capitalism². What is significant is that YMCA leaders saw students as a strategic group in society and directed much of YMCA resources for the work among students. Students were not only a target to the YMCA, they were also a remarkable resource for its work. The YMCA was able to recruit these young students as domestic secretaries and fraternal secretaries working aboard.

**WESTERNISATION** was a major trend on a global level, although after WWI, critical voices emerged in the Third World. The superiority of western military and economic power forced other cultures to adopt western practices. In this process, the YMCA was a means for both western governments and for Third World governments to fulfil this task. For example, the first YMCA fraternal secretary from North America went to Japan by request of the Japanese government to teach English in government schools³. In other countries, the YMCA was also involved in education and especially furthering physical education, both of which met an insatiable need.

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¹ WConPrep 1884, 7f.
² On education in the 19th century, see, for example, Ipfling & Chambliss 1994, 42-45.
³ Latourette 1957, 40, 165f.
After the First World War, the criticism of Westernisation took root, and after the Second World War, it led to the independence of former colonies. In this cultural mood, the YMCAs faced the claims that they were western products and even vehicles of western economic, military and cultural imperialism. However, this criticism speeded up the indigenisation process of Third World YMCAs - it was not the primary cause of indigenisation but rather a speeding catalyst. North Americans especially, had always stressed local independence, which was also applied in the case of new YMCAs. As result, Asian YMCAs especially, started to stress their national cultures and interpret Christianity in other words that those of the Occident. This, in turn, forced the World’s Alliance to look at the world, not only from a western perspective, but also from the global one.

The world after the war was becoming global in many senses. In the West, awareness grew of the problems and hopes of the Third World. As the war was fought in the name of freedom, it was hard to justify own imperialism any more. Thus, after the war, one major trend in the world was the search for independence from old colonial powers. Another phenomenon emerged through technical progress. The world became smaller as communication facilities enabled information flow and flight connections enabled travel. The YMCA, which had traditionally been a Western phenomenon, had also to face its new role as a global organisation after the war.

SCEPTICISM was one major trend after the Second World War. The war had shown the worst aspects of civilisation and people were shocked about the Holocaust and other cruelties. The YMCA leaders saw the world as being in cultural crisis. Liston Pope expressed it in his address to the Centennial Conference as follows:

The outstanding thinkers of the nineteenth century, Marx, Comte, Spencer all agreed that an age of universal peace and brotherhood would dawn in the near future. Yet here at the middle of the twentieth century we see a world deeply divided in national, racial, economic, and religious terms. And we have lost that optimism which surmised that these divisions could be easily overcome... At best we adopt as our own Alexander Pope’s version of the Ninth Beatitude “Blessed is who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.”

It was a crisis of human’s existence. Limbert describes this crisis in the World’s Committee report to the Centennial Conference as follows:

In the face of the tragic conflicts and bitter tensions of the last two decades the Christian movements have seemed at times almost powerless. Young people have wondered what Christianity has to say to our world. Communism and other mass movements seemed to have clear answers whereas Christians had no concrete program of common social action to offer.

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1 It is hard to say how much these claims were true. Risto Ahonen (1983) has criticised John R. Mott sharply in his dissertation, for mixing Christian mission with American imperialism. Europeans, in general, have not always been happy with the self-sufficiency of Americans.
2 WComR 1955, 35, 42.
3 WConf 1955, 63.
4 WConf 1955, 41.
5 WComR 1955, 34.
Thus, there was a cultural shift from old worldviews to new ones, and Christian organisations seemed unable to handle this new Zeitgeist. Nevertheless, as Hans Lilje points out in his address to the Centennial Conference, answers cannot be found in science. He said that

the most astonishing thing is that the scepticism of the world has also lost its penetrating assurance. It can no longer oppose Christianity with a patronizing attitude of presumption because the problems which face us all today are deadly serious. Faced with the frightening possibility of mankind’s self-destruction, rationalistic pride in human reason is boundless naiveté. This tragic development has brought about a great gain: a unique and radical awareness of the gravity of the problem.¹

Of course, the attitudes were different in different countries. For defeated ones, it was a question of survival among ruins. However, the rebuilding soon started and West Germany especially experienced its famous economical miracle. This rebuilding led people to focus on material issues, which was one dominant mood in the Zeitgeist. Related to this, another typical phenomenon in the beginning of the 1950s was an emphasis on different systems. In Eastern Europe, Communism was changing the world on the basis of a Marxist analysis of social structures. In the US, the structural-functionalists, especially Talcot Parsons, created theories of society and its hidden and visible systems. People desperately wanted to guarantee security and predictability, to forget the horrors of the war and build their lives anew.

TO SUM UP, there were five major cultural forces that have influenced the YMCA: urbanisation, expansion of education, Westernisation, its counter-effect indigenisation, and scepticism. The YMCA, primarily as urban movement, benefited from the migration that supplied it with a new recruit basis. When these young people got the opportunity to educate themselves, the YMCA used universities and schools as strategic points of recruiting new leaders and influencing the growing middle class. On the international level, the trend of Westernisation paved the way for the YMCA when it extended to new countries. When the tide turned, the new YMCAs in these countries indigenised themselves and often managed to survive and expand. Finally, scepticism was a trend after the Second World War when the illusions of modern man’s development had vanished into the Holocaust of concentration camps. It was a time when traditional institutions had lost their strength to maintain social values.

4.1.3. Promoting International Understanding Amid Political Tensions

Political opportunity structures between 1855 and 1955 went through similar changes to cultural and economic ones. In general, two important periods had an overall influence on the YMCA and other voluntary organisations. First, the 1870s were a watershed period in many respects. From then on, governments took more responsibility for social care and education than ever before². Two nation

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¹ WConf 1955, 50.
states, Germany and Italy emerged in Europe, Liberalism was at its zenith and Socialism was to come. This period was also the last period of colonialism, especially of the British Empire.

Other important periods were those of both World Wars. When presenting the political situation in his report to the Centennial Conference, Paul Limbert quotes Kenneth S. Latourette who has described the period between 1914 and 1944 as follows:

The most obvious of the general characteristics was storm. The time was one of world-wide war and revolution. There had been earlier ages when portions of mankind had been as profoundly shaken. Never within recorded history, however, had all of the human race been so clearly on the march.

In this political context, some special trends were important to the YMCA. First, the political attitude towards voluntary organisations defined how the movement could act in various countries. Second, how colonialism and anti-colonialism directed the YMCA. Third, wars from the North American Civil War to the Second World War had an enormous impact on the YMCA mission and activities. Fourth, the political movements, Nationalism, Fascism and Communism, were often major rivals of the YMCA. Finally, the emergence of the international community in Geneva placed the YMCA in a central point where it was easy to create contacts with other organisations.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS in general, played a significant role in the largest ‘YMCA countries’. The Kulturkampf in Germany, the British philanthropical tradition and American emphasis on Welfare Capitalism favoured the work of the YMCA in general. The tension between Socialism and Conservatism had a similar effect, when state leaders tried to make reforms in order to avoid revolutionary tendencies. The YMCA, along with other voluntary welfare organisations, was a perfect tool for their purposes. When the YMCA focused on individual character building and mainly served the middle class, it offered reformative solutions for social grievances instead of revolutionary ones.

From the YMCA point of view, there were opposing trends. In most countries, the YMCA enjoyed the positive attitudes towards voluntary organisations. Especially in the US, the YMCA had friendly connections with the White House. John R. Mott, the General Secretary of the North American YMCA, knew closely most presidents of the US at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In Europe, the YMCA had similar contacts with top people in society.

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1 Schieder 1970, 243.
2 Latourette 1945, 409, quoted in WComR 1955, 18.
4 One interesting feature is the connection between the YMCA and European monarchs. Many YMCAs emerged when members of royal families actively supported the idea. The most significant example has been Prince Bernadotte in Sweden who was a president of the Swedish YMCA from 1892-1943 (Shedd 1955b, 331; Andersson 2002). There were also other monarchs who were involved in the YMCA or supported it: In England, Prince Albert was a friend of the London YMCA (WConf 1855a, 67); in Yugoslavia, Prince Paul was a president of Yugoslavian YMCA (Anderson 1963, 25; Larger values of International Collaboration of the Young Men’s Christian Associations
Negative attitudes towards the YMCA emerged first in Russia, where the Communists forbade the organisation after the revolution. Later, in the 1930’s in Austria and Germany, the Nazi party absorbed all youth movements in the 1930s and YMCAs were either abolished or were changed as church youth groups. The German YMCA movement was restored after the war. In the beginning of the Second World War, the associations in the Baltic countries ceased to exist because of the Soviet occupation. After the war, Europe was divided into two blocks and YMCAs were abolished in the Communist countries. One of them, the Polish YMCA, moved to London.

1955 saw the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany and the independence of Austria. From then on the German YMCA meant the movement in West Germany - in the East it was forbidden. The preliminary study material of the Centennial Conference, Fellow Workmen For God, summarised the national level political hindrances as follows:

There are national governments which will not allow the formation of any youth-serving organization unless it is under the direction and supervision of the state. This has ruled out the YMCA along with other voluntary religious organizations.

There are countries where the government, seeking to maintain a secular state, restricts very sharply the operation of any organization with a religious purpose and program.

There are other countries where the state is so closely allied with one religious system or one Christian confession that it creates practical hindrances to the YMCA which, although inter-confessional as a world body, may be identified locally with a particular Christian confession.

There are parts of the world where the YMCA movement is regarded as closely associated with a particular economic or political system or with a particular racial policy. In such situations it is difficult for a country with greater resources to send financial aid or a fraternal secretary without arousing suspicion or resentment.

On the international level, a new organisation emerged after WW II to play a major role in the niche of INGOs, namely the United Nations. The YMCA has taken a special interest in five of the UN’s special agencies, namely UNESCO, WHO, ILO, FAO and IRO (and its successors UNHCR and UNRRA), in fields of relief, resettlement, health, education, and social reconstruction.

COLONIALISM helped the YMCA to extend to new territories. The first YMCAs in the Third World were typically religious clubs of westerners residing in the country. The British and French especially (but also the Dutch) extended the YMCA in their colonies, as can be seen in maps in chapter 4.4. However, colonialism was a double-edged sword for all Christian missionary work. While missionaries could follow colonial troops safely to new areas, they were identified

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1 Latourette 1957, 373; Anderson 1985, 20-23.
2 The YMCAs of the World 1958, 10, 74; WComR 1955, 42; Stursberg 1977, 199-240; Kupisch 1958, 99-117.
3 WComR 1955, 43f.
4 WConfPrep 1955a, 96. These references meant, among others, Turkey, Spain, Italy, East Europe and South Africa.
with the new rulers even though they often criticised the system. The connection between missions and colonialism tended to influence the goals of missions by including the planting of a Western life-style in missionary tasks.1

There were two important changes in 19th century colonialism that influenced the YMCA. First, Germany became a colonial power in 1884. This changed the status of German missionaries who until then had been politically neutral. Especially during WW I, their status became a big issue when German missionaries were arrested and interned. Another change was that the US also joined the colonial powers when it occupied the Philippines in 1898. North American expansion, which was directed to the west in the American continent, turned to other directions.2 The American missionary movement went hand in hand with this new American imperialism. Extending American democracy and Christian mission was, to a great extent, the same thing for many leading missionaries and presidents. John R. Mott, the general secretary of the North American International Committee, had a special role in this process. His influence in missionary and Ecumenical Movement has been outstanding. In Mott’s thinking, Americanisation and Christianisation were the same thing.4

Paul Limbert reports to the Centennial Conference that after WW II, colonial-ized countries started to fight for their independence. In Asia; Burma (Myanmar), India, Indonesia, Malaya (Malaysia), Pakistan and Philippines got their independ-ence. In these countries, the YMCA formed new national alliances. In China, the Communists took power. However, they did not abolish the YMCA at this point like in Europe but used the YMCA as a tool to wipe out the illiteracy. Taiwan did not officially become independent, but in practice separated itself from the People’s Republic. Japan was occupied after the war and American influence in that country, as well as in many other Asian countries, increased enormously. The Korean war was fought from 1950 to 1953 and the peninsula was divided into two parts. Shortly after the Second World War, the French Indochina War broke out when Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia aimed to get their independence from France.

The major challenge for the YMCA was whether the YMCAs in these coun-tries were to be seen as foreign implants or as indigenous movements. This

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1 Ahonen 1983, 12f.
2 Hopkins (1951, 11) notes that the extension to other countries had already begun in the 1850’s when Commodore Perry opened Japan to American trade.
3 A theological basis came from Josiah Strong who saw that “We [Anglo-Saxons] are the chosen people (Ahonen 1983, 30).” Ahonen (Idem. 31) notes (following Sidney Ahlstrom) that during the period from McKinley to Roosevelt patriotism, imperialism and American Protestantism fused to-gether. American presidents were ardent supporters of missions.
4 Ahonen 1983, 13ff., 119-126. Ahonen notes in his English abstract (the dissertation is in Finnish): “Mott was not an imperialist in any sense. He only desired to remain an ecumenical statesman, but his dependency on American society resulted in features of his thought which actually contained an imperialistic tone (Idem. 7).” One example of Mott’s thinking is when he compared the US troops in WW I to Old Testament Israeli forces: “I hear them marching - “the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof (Idem. 121).”
5 WComR 1955, 21f.
pushed the third world YMCAs to emphasise their eagerness to take in part nation building, as the process was called.¹

**WARS** had a tremendous effect on the mission view of the YMCA. Owen E. Pence described this effect in his study in 1948 as follows:

> War years are years of concentration, when all of the instrumentalities of society are called upon to contribute their utmost to the common struggle. Neither churches nor associations are exempt. Postwar years are years of reorientation, when no agency of human expression or human betterment may merely resume what it was doing when war necessities intervened, or assume that its responsibilities and relationships remain as before.²

We have already seen how the tension before the North American Civil War caused Stevens to deliver the First Additional Proposal of the Paris Basis. When the war broke out, it had direct consequences for the YMCA work. Stephen H. Tyng talked to the London YMCA in 1862 about the beginning of the work with armed forces as follows:

> As soon as it broke out, our Young Men, in all parts of the country, flocked to the army; they were removed from our influence and the influence of the Church, and we were obliged to follow them... As the army has spread the work has gone on, and last winter a conference of all the associations was held at New York, for the purpose of uniting the different efforts and of forming a Christian mission, the object of which is to evangelize the army.³

Besides spiritual guidance, the work also included nursing and carrying messages home. However, at this stage the work could be described merely as a temporary project. The work among soldiers obtained its permanent place in the US YMCA during the Spanish-American War in 1898⁴, in Britain in 1902, in India in 1907⁵ and in Germany in 1914⁶. The earliest records from Switzerland are already  

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¹ WComR 1955, 171ff.; Latourette 1957, 131ff., 137ff. The tension between the British and Indian emphases in the Indian YMCA can be seen, for example, in the Report of Committee of Enquiry of the National Council of India from 1927 (Enquiry Report 1927). In the report, the European Associations in India accuses the YMCA staff of giving their time to anti-British political movements and promoting anti-British propaganda in their work.

² Pence 1948, 2.

³ Quoted in Shedd 1955, 164. On the Civil War and the YMCA, see Morse 1913, 60-65; Hopkins 1951, 84-98.

⁴ WConfPrep 1902, 7-10. In some documents, it can be traced from 1861 but could be explained as an omission of details. The work started then but it got permanent status in the US Army and Navy in 1898.

⁵ David 1992, 132.

⁶ Hjelt 1918, 4-6.
from 1856. Before the First World War, young men in armies were served by the national YMCAs in all major wars.

The Franco-Prussian War in 1870-1871 also had a direct effect on the YMCA. The war was the first real test of the YMCA unity. Christian unity was, unfortunately, suppressed under nationalistic emotions, and relationships between German and French YMCAs were as bad as the relationships between these peoples in general. During the war, the Geneva YMCA tried to maintain some kind of relations through its publication *L’Evangéliste* where letters from both sides were published. After the war, relations between the French and German Movements were rather chilly. When emotions were calmed, the Amsterdam World’s Conference in 1872 unanimously resolved that

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this conference reaffirms the Basis of confederation for YMCAs which was adopted at the First World’s Conference at Paris, viz... [Now follows the English text of the Fundamental Principle]

... And further, in view of the differences of judgement which must often arise between men of different nationalities, and between members of different ecclesiastical organizations, it confirms and commends again to the attention of the Associations of all countries, the principle adopted at Paris as a sequel to the foregoing Basis: “That any differences of opinion on other subjects, however important in themselves, but not embraced by the specific designs of the Associations, shall not interfere with the harmonious relations of the confederated Societies.”
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With this decision, the first ‘proposal’ was added as a Second Fundamental Principle along with the Fundamental Principle.

The two World Wars affected the YMCA as well although not as directly on the Paris Basis as the Franco-Prussian War. On one hand, the World Wars reduced normal activities but, on the other hand, they created needs for new ones.

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1. AFCos 1960, 11. Three years later Henri Dunant found himself in Solferino battlefield in 1859 helping the wounded. Dunant was one of the founders of World’s Alliance of YMCAs and the *primus motor* of Geneva YMCA. In 1864, when it was sure that there would be a ‘Geneva Convention’, he returned to Geneva and urged Geneva Association to remember the religious needs of soldiers. He planned that the association of Geneva could even be the centre, or at least one of the centres, of the spiritual branch of this relief action. The assembly was interested in his short description of the activity carried by the American Associations during the Civil War. However, according to the Geneva Association, “his ideas were too vague!” (Shedd 1955, 175, note 1)

2. Civil War, USA (1861-65), German-Danish (1864), Franco-Prussian (1870-1), Spanish-American (1898), British-Boer (1899-1902) and Russo-Japanese (1904-5). Strong 1955b, 546n.


4. WComPle 1953b, 4; Shedd 1955a, 190; Willis 1972, 4. From this time on, the role of two other proposals, namely, international correspondence and international membership card diminished. In the later reaffirmations, these proposals were not mentioned. This does not mean that the items were not discussed. As a good guess, I would say that they were no longer needed as separate statements. In the case of correspondence, history bypassed the resolution on correspondence centres when associations in different countries organised themselves as national councils. From then on, it was natural that the correspondence was between the World’s Alliance and national offices. The international membership card has occasionally popped up but only as a practical issue, not as an ideological one. The item itself, the mutual acknowledgement of members from other countries, is expressed already in the Preamble, which speaks about the existing unity between members.
Governments needed services that the YMCA gave to armed forces\(^1\). These included canteens and other recreational services that helped to keep up the morale of the troops. The political atmosphere during WW I was so favourable that the YMCA practically took care of the whole canteen service for soldiers in the US and Britain\(^2\).

The work during the First World War was shared in such a way that the ‘big YMCA countries’ took care of themselves\(^3\), and the World’s Alliance started the work in those belligerent countries where such work did not exist (Austria-Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria). Often this work was closely related to Red Cross relief activities\(^4\). YMCA work with armed forces also created civilian YMCA countries where soldiers were served. Most YMCAs, for example, in the Balkans were founded at that time\(^5\).

The World Wars directed the YMCA mission to other activities as well. The work for Prisoners of War (POWs) was a natural continuity to the work with armed forces (prisoners were also part of armed forces). During the First World War, the Prisoners Aid of YMCA ran projects in Austria-Hungary, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria\(^6\). In Great Britain, the responsibility lay

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\(^1\) On the YMCA work with soldiers during the First World War, see, for example, *Service with fighting men* (1922) and Conrad Hoffman’s *In The Prison Camp of Germany* (1920). On the Second World War, see André Vuillet’s (1945; 1946a,b) three reports on the War Prisoners’ Aid and Hugo Cedergren’s memoirs *Mit Liv med KFUM [My Life with the YMCA]* (1969). On both wars, see Strong 1955b; Hopkins 1951, 485-504, 711-714;

\(^2\) In Anglo-Saxon countries and in India, YMCA Armed Services Departments were official organs of the armies. During the First World War, 9/10 of the welfare work among American forces in Europe was conducted by the YMCA. More than 26 000 professional workers were recruited to serve about 19 million men (AFCons 1960, 7). In the British forces, a YMCA unit was in every division and 50 000 women were working through the National Women’s Auxiliary (AFCons 1960,8f.). The Indian YMCA had 591 secretaries in France, India, Mesopotamia (Iraq), Egypt and Palestine (David 1992, 133). The Indian YMCA might well be the first Third World organisation that has sent Christian workers to work in Europe. The tide of one-way missionary work had changed.

In other countries, the YMCA did not have as clearly an official status but the monarchs often supported and sometimes asked the YMCA to start working with armed forces (Anderson 1963, 24f., 27. Guskov 1995, 17) and thus the YMCA had a semi-official status. In Germany, for example, there were 1000 Soldiers’ Homes in 1918 (Hjelt 1918, 6). In Switzerland, the earliest records of YMCA Army-work are from 1856 - three years before Solferino (AFCons 1960, 11).

\(^3\) In 1940, the US system was changed. YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Service, Salvation Army, National Jewish Welfare Board and National Travellers Aid Association founded the United Service Organization (USO) to run the joint task of service for armed forces. Similar trends also took place in other countries but in practical terms, not much changed. For example, in Britain, the share of YMCA was larger than other organisations’ share together. (AFCons 1960, 7, 9)

\(^4\) Strong 1955b, 550f.


\(^6\) The most serious crisis in its work happened when the USA joined the war. Because the majority of YMCA work among POWs was done by Americans, the German War Ministry forbid all YMCA work among POWs. The World’s Alliance had to question if American aid could be acceptable at all when it produced such results. After negotiations work was continued among the Central Powers by the Swiss and Swedish workers (Strong 1955b, 553).
with the British National Council. In non-belligerent countries such as Denmark, Holland, Japan, Sweden and Switzerland services were given to internees.¹

Before the Second World War, in 1939, the Executive Committee had resolved that:

...in the event of war where service to the men in the military forces is undertaken, this should be the responsibility of the National Alliance concerned; whereas service of an international character, such as work for prisoners of war, should be the responsibility of the World’s Committee.²

This meant that the World’s Alliance work among military forces ceased and it concentrated on prisoners of war. In practice, the World’s Alliance negotiated with the national alliances before it started work in any country. The role of national alliances was to help with contacts with governmental and church authorities. The representatives of the World’s Alliance were from neutral countries and they ran the work for POWs.³

Most of the work was on a reciprocal basis - all prisoners were helped in the same way on both sides of the frontier⁴. Exceptions to this rule were the Soviet Union and Italy, which did not give the YMCA the permission to work in their territory and, thus, Russian and Italian prisoners were excluded from the help. At last, as Cedergren reports, out of sheer pity many of the camp commandants in Germany urged the YMCA to send supplies to the Russian POWs as well⁵. Although War Prisoners’ Aid was not allowed to work in Italy, it served Italian prisoners in Allied countries.⁶

The work among POWs was so important that it took up the whole capacity of the World’s Alliance staff during wartime⁷. It also influenced the future policy of the World’s Alliances to such an extent that one cannot understand the period after the war without it.

After both World Wars there was a huge refugee problem and the YMCA found its niche among Russian emigrants (after WW I⁸) and European and Pales-

¹ Strong 1955b, 546-552.
² WComPle 1953a, 28.
³ Strong 1955b, 559.
⁴ Often this work was done with the International Red Cross. There was a mutual understanding in co-operation between these two organisations. A formal agreement was never made but unofficially the burden was shared in a way that War Prisoners’ Aid of the YMCA took care of educational, recreational, cultural and spiritual activities of prisoners. The International Committee of the Red Cross concentrated on camp inspection, organising a central information agency with mail facilities, handling of all shipments and distributing all materials sent by the national Red Cross Societies. (Strong 1955b, 557f.; Cedergren 1969, 70)
⁵ Cedergren 1969,73f.
⁶ Strong 1955b, 562, 573.
⁷ Cedergren 1969,94.
⁸ The majority of the YMCA emigrant work was done in France, and Paris became a centre for Russian emigrants. The work revolved around YMCA Press, Theological Academy and Technical Institute but it also contained traditional YMCA activities such as camps, choirs etc. YMCA Press in particular, greatly influenced the maintenance of Russian identity and culture by publishing Russian Classics, Orthodox liturgical books etc. (Anderson 1985, 27-78; Latourette 1957, 374-382; Rouse 1993b, 605; Zernov 1993, 661f.)
tinian refugees and displaced persons (DP)\(^1\) (after WW II). It was estimated that in Western Europe there were half a million refugees after the Second World War\(^2\) at a time when the normal apparatus of government and social control had collapsed in Germany and East European countries. The work amongst POWs turned to work among refugees\(^3\) and displaced persons\(^4\). Refugee work was done mainly in Europe but also happened in the Near East and in India. This work grew to be the widest activity of the World’s Alliance for decades\(^5\). The work had certain consequences. The work among Russian refugees also paved way for the YMCA dialogue with the Orthodox churches\(^6\).

The flight of European Jews to Palestine led to the independence of Israel and to the Palestinian refugee problem. Along with new international organisations, the YMCA was involved in helping these people in Europe and the Near East. In Palestine, Jerusalem YMCA membership was mainly Arab-Christian. When the Israel state was founded they had to flee among the, at least 850 000 others to the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza strip. Since that time, local YMCAs in Jerusalem, Jericho, Nazareth and World’s Alliance in Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria have organised activities for Refugees and Resettled people. The work was carried on with the support of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

\(^1\) There was a difference in the terms. A refugee is a person who has fled from his/her country to another country, a displaced person (DP) is a refugee in his/her own country. Their status was officially different. For example, if someone from the Eastern part of Germany fled to the Western part (s)he was a DP, but if (s)he fled, for example, to Austria, (s)he was a refugee.

\(^2\) WComR 1955, 20.

\(^3\) Strong 1955b, 572-578. Officially YMCA joined seven other agencies by signing a common contract with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), and officially started its work under the contract in 1945. However, that was officially. The term that was used PWX - ex Prisoners of War- describes the YMCA situation: the YMCA was already in the refugee camps serving these PWX’s. It was there in two senses: First, the YMCA had been in the same camps when the camps had been prison camps. Second, many of the refugees who had been YMCA members in their own countries organised the work by themselves in the refugee-camps. In a way nothing new was added - the projects that were carried out during the past decades were simply transformed to the new situation. One good example was YMCA/YWCA warehouses, which were full of supplies for POWs. This material was given to refugees. These houses also became the channels for distributing supplies from the UN, from armies and from churches to refugees. (Kilpatrick 1955, 592ff.). For two years, the YMCA was ‘the umbrella’ under which the churches initiated their spiritual ministry until they secured their own agreements with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) (Strong (memorandum)1951, 1).

\(^5\) In its refugee work, the YMCA maintained close working relationships with most of the intergovernmental agencies, churches, YWCA, Red Cross and other voluntary movements (Kilpatrick 1955,608f.). When the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) started its work after the war, the first and largest agencies that gave assistance were five denominational agencies and the YMCA (Holborn 1975,124f.).

\(^6\) The prominent figures in these negotiations were John R. Mott and Paul B. Anderson. Anderson’s memoirs (1985) reveal how he was able to create personal contacts with the Orthodox hierarchy and thus foster mutual trust.

\(^7\) WComR 1955, 20, 52; Graham-Brown 1989, 97-110; Latourette 1957, 352-358.
THE MAJOR POLITICAL MOVEMENTS of the first half of the 20th century had their impacts on the YMCA as well. In 1931, the report for the Cleveland World’s Conference saw two movements above all: Nationalism and Communism. Nationalism was a force that saw everything from the perspective of a nation state. Tracy Strong, former general secretary of the World’s Alliance, describes this in his report to Geneva Plenary 1953:

It was in Japan in 1923 that I first saw a boy and his father worship reverently at the Shinto shrine of the nation. I learned of the spirit of the Samurai whose members observed rigid discipline, gladly sacrificed home, wealth and position for the divine Emperor who personified the nation. Later I watched in Italy and Germany the totalitarian control of all life, the devotion of youth to the living creed ‘everything for the State - nothing against the State - nothing outside the State’ as youth found a new meaning for life, self-respect, status and a chance to live.¹

Associated with the ideology of the nation state, there was also the question of war guilt after the Franco-Prussian war and WW I. In disputes on the problem, national loyalties often surpassed other loyalties, including Christian unity². Similarly, as the report says, “if Nationalism holds up the nation as an exclusive loyalty before Youth, Communism does the same with class³.” In Communist countries, the YMCAs were abolished and its property was transferred to Communist youth organisations. The spread of Communism explains a great deal about the decrease of the YMCAs in Europe between 1937 and 1955. After the Cleveland World’s Conference, the third major political movement of the era emerged: Fascism, which required similar loyalty as Nationalism and Communism. As we have seen, it also resulted in the abolition of the YMCA in Germany.

GENEVA and its international community were a significant factor that enabled the YMCA to fulfil its mission. Tracy Strong writes in his General Secretary report to the World’s Committee in 1953 as follows:

The World’s Alliance has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. It is incorporated under the laws of Switzerland and ‘one of the objects of its activity is work amongst prisoners of war’. Without this legal status in a neutral country the service in thirty-seven countries would have been impossible. The unique role and spirit of the Swiss with their ‘technical know-how’ in all matters of positive, creative activities ‘without political nonsense’ combined with constructive humanitarian neutrality produced a sound base from which such an international service could be rendered.⁴

The international community in Geneva changed along with the changes in the world. The International Red Cross (ICRC) was there already before the founding of the Central International Committee of the YMCA. The League of Nations functioned there from 1920 to 1946; WSCF moved its headquarters to Geneva in

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¹ WComPle 1953a, 5. Before coming to the staff of the World’s Alliance, Tracy Strong made a long career in American YMCA as a Boys’ worker. His American background might have coloured his attitude towards the state. Traditionally, Americans have not valued a strong state because many early settlers were refugees who escaped the persecution of both state and church.
² Shedd 1955a, 180-185; Strong 1955a, 475-482; Pierard 1986.
³ WComR 1931, 50.
⁴ WComPle 1953a, 28f.
1920\(^1\) and World YWCA in 1930\(^2\). Thus, what can be termed ‘Geneva society’, was formed round the ICRC and YMCA. These two ‘children’ of Henri Dunant were in close co-operation, especially during both World Wars\(^3\). Later, when the amount of organisations in Geneva increased, the YMCA co-operated with other organisations as well. These co-operative relations had several unofficial ‘ranks’. The closest co-operation has always been with the World YWCA and WSCF. These three organisations had numerous joint programs and sometimes it was difficult to distinguish them even organisationally\(^4\). Along with the World Council of Churches (or its Provisional Committee), they arranged World Conferences of Christian Youth (Amsterdam 1939, Oslo 1947, Travangore 1952) and organised Emergency Committee of Christian Organisations (ECCO) for the work with prisoners of war (POWs)\(^5\). From the 1930s on, there were also other Christian organisations that were in co-operation with the YMCA: the International Social Institute of the Universal Christian Council of Life and Work, the Department of Social and Industrial Research and Council of the International Missionary Council, and the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. All these Christian organisations established a Library Study Centre, known as Cercle Söderblom. Strong notes that “the World’s Committee became an integral part of eighteen inter-organizational committees.”\(^6\)

Along with the official organisational contacts, there were also personal networks: Paul Des Gouttes, the secretary of the ICRC was also the president of the World’s Alliance (1913-1926)\(^7\). The next president, John R. Mott (1926-1947) was a close friend to the president of the ICRC, Max Huber\(^8\), and there were several staff members of the ILO in the Boys’ Work Committee of the YMCA\(^9\). Moreover, many younger Christian organisations had former YMCA secretaries on their staff or as board members\(^10\). In short, the Ecumenical movement in its early stage seemed to consist of co-operation between old friends.

\(^1\) Rouse 1948, 88n.
\(^2\) Strong 1955a, 532.
\(^3\) Strong 1955a, 470; 1955b 546n2, 557f.
\(^4\) Through Student YMCAs, the WSCF and The World’s Alliance of YMCAs had an overlapping membership basis. Mott was in the leadership of both, and sometimes YMCA and YWCA secretaries organised and carried out student organisation in some new field.
\(^5\) Strong 1955b, 557.
\(^6\) Strong 1955a, 501; see also WComR 1931, 77f.
\(^7\) Strong 1955a, 470; History of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs 1955, 725.
\(^8\) Strong 1955b, 557.
\(^9\) Johannot 1955, 622.
\(^10\) For example Joseph H. Oldham in the IMC and W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft in the WSCF and later in the WCC. In the WSCF, five of the six first presidents were former YMCA secretaries (Strong 1955a, 533). These personal networks were evidently important but, unfortunately, I have not found any network analysis on the Ecumenical movement.
4.1.4. Proclaiming the Gospel in a Secularised World

Religious opportunity structures changed as well. From the YMCA point of view, the major aspects of religious opportunity structures were those of religious trends and movements, relations to churches, ecumenism, secularisation and rise of old faiths along with the independence movements in the third world.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND TRENDS of the 19th century influenced the YMCA in several ways. First, as noted before, Evangelicalism in the 19th century gave rise to the YMCA. The Evangelical spirit remained in the YMCA during most of the period although there were already signs of separation when the YMCA developed its Four-fold Programme and started focusing on the service of the whole man. Another movement, along with the YMCA, was the Sunday School Movement. George Williams and many pioneer leaders of the YMCA were also Sunday School teachers. Third, there was Muscular Christianity, which aimed to make religion more masculine. This movement had a great impact on the development of the Four-fold Programme and YMCA physical education.

Fourth, there were student awakenings in the US, which gave rise to Student Volunteer Movement inside the YMCA and helped the movement to expand to new ‘unoccupied lands’. Fifth, along with the decline of the Evangelical Alliance the YMCA became the main stream for the Ecumenical movement until the emergence of the World Council of Churches. Sixth, liberal theology and the Social Gospel movement influenced the YMCA by challenging it to study social problems and modify its policies. Finally, the Missionary Movement had already started before the first YMCAs emerged. It can be said that the YMCA was one manifestation of the Missionary Movement of the 19th century. At the same time, the YMCA acted as a facilitator of missionary activities. In many countries, the

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1 In the Jubilee Declaration (WConf 1905) in 1905 there was still a direct reference to the “spirit of Evangelical Alliance” (see appendix B) but in the Centennial Declaration in 1955 (see appendix C) the ‘Protestant Catholicity’ had changed to interconfessionalism and a wider Christian perspective than pure evangelism (WConf 1955, 8f).

2 This can be seen in the processes when evangelists George S. Fisher and Dwight L. Moody resigned in 1891 and 1894 (Morse 1913, 122ff.; Hopkins 1951, 187ff., 350-354; Latourette 1957, 49f.; Zald 1970, 52f., 78).

3 WConfPrep 1931b, 4; WComR 1931, 24.


6 Shedd 1955b, 278f., 302f., 305; Rouse 1948, 34ff. The concept ‘unoccupied lands’ was widely used in the YMCA extension work and meant countries where the YMCA did not exist.

7 Hopkins (1951, 511) notes referring to Association Men, a publication of the North American YMCA: “As the years passed, the names of more liberals were seen in its pages than were those of conservatives.”

8 International Survey of Young Men’s and Young Women’s Associations 1932, 57-59, 336-341; Latourette 1957, 28; Hopkins 1951, 532-538.

9 Especially the Evangelischer Jünglingsverein of Basle, which was a model for German associations, was in close relationship with the Basle Mission House (Senaud 1955, 11f).
YMCA supplied mission societies with funds and missionaries and, in general, the YMCA trained the leaders of the emerging international missionary bodies. Often it is impossible to say where the chicken is and where the egg is - the YMCA was so intermingled with these movements. Their leaders, especially John R. Mott, were YMCA leaders as well. One important future study would be a network analysis of the early Ecumenical Movement.

**SECULARISATION** was, along with religious movements, a major trend in the modern era. The Report of the World’s Committees to World’s Conferences in Helsingfors (1926), Cleveland (1931), Mysore (1937) and Paris (1955) describe the religious opportunity structures after the First World War. The perspective of YMCA leaders was rather pessimistic. They saw that two important pillars of Christianity were threatened: family and church. Karl Fries describes the generation in former belligerent countries “who have grown up without the guiding and educating influence of a father… have lost faith in the fatherhood of God.” This was accompanied by the loss of confidence in churches because of their inability to prevent the war and because of their being “willing tools of the governments for propagating the war spirit.” Fries refers (without giving reference) to studies among combatants that “revealed the fact that what these men expected from the Christian Church is in the first place a new and more definite emphasis on those aspects of the Gospel which have an application on social and international relationships.” Whether this analysis of the time is valid or not, it created a potential for the YMCA mission view: the YMCA has to do something to recover young people’s trust in family, church and God. This task led to the reaffirming of the Christian purpose of the YMCA in a situation when the movement faced a “danger of becoming a mere human institution.” This general view was seen especially in John R. Mott’s evangelistic journeys.

The report of the World’s Committee to Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931 continues on the same lines. According to that report, the general tendency was that Christianity was under attack in Russia and China especially but also in

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1. WComR 1926, 52.
2. For example, V.S. Azariah, Charles Brent, J. Merle Davis, John R. Mott, J.H. Oldham, William Paton. Philip A. Potter (1991, 691), former general secretary of the WCC, writes on the emergence of the International Missionary Council (IMC) as follows: “The formation of the IMC was above all the work and achievement of a dedicated band of men and women of many nations who had their apprenticeship in the ecumenical youth and student lay movements - the World’s Alliance of YMCAs (1855), the World YWCA (1894) and the World Student Christian Federation (1895).”
3. WComR 1926, 8.
4. WComR 1926, 8.
5. WComR 1926, 9.
6. WComR 1926, 23.
7. WComR 1926, 23.
8. *Facing a World Crisis* (WComR 1931, 64) refers both to persecutions that “are known to all who have followed the recent discussions in newspapers, books, and magazines” and to “information from the Communist themselves” which report of closing of churches. However, no references are given.
9. *Facing a World Crisis* (WComR 1931, 64) refers (without references) to reports of captures and killings of Christian missionaries during 1930.
countries where nationalistic movements were strong. Secularisation had become a worldwide tendency. As a reaction to this, the report notes several general trends or movements within Christianity like syncretism, religious humanism, the new revivalism, the new confessionalism, Catholicism, and the Theology of Crisis (Barthianism). Many of these movements presented opposite views. When they were present in the YMCA as well, it was “tremendously difficult task of creating unity out of this complexity of tendencies.” The new situation also removed the distinction between so-called Christian lands and missionary lands, and fostered missionary and ecumenical co-operation.¹

The 1931 report refers to the IMC conference in Jerusalem in 1928 on secularism:

…the typical characteristics of modern civilisation as compared with older civilisations is that modern civilisation tends to reject religion as a basis for its life, is by no means new. But what is new, is that it is now being approached as a world problem.²

The report continues with an analysis of realisation of this new phenomenon:

…there is a growing realization on the part of Christians all over the world, that there is no longer any room for a distinction between the situation of Christianity in so-called Christian countries and the situation in ‘missionary lands’, for the essential question to be faced everywhere is the relation of Christianity to an increasingly unified and increasingly secularised world-civilisation.³

The report also notes that the secularisation raises “the question of relationships between the different religions.” What it means - the report does not answer but rather represents the claims of different views. After the Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931, the turbulence continued. The tendencies after 1931 are summarised in a report of the Second Conference on Policies and Extension in 1953 as follows:

Religious confessions and denominations professing the same God jostle with each other as they form world councils by gathering together, or seek for sacramental unity by emphasizing claims of inherent authority. Other religions form pan-this-or-that on an international scale. Mocking them all are the rejectors of God, the ultimate secularists who, whatever they say, seek unity by force rather than by acts of love.⁴

We can clearly see that YMCA leaders saw various modes of secularism as a major threat to their work. Along it was the fragmentation of Christianity, which handicapped the Churches, so that they could not do their work properly.

‘MANMADE FAITHS’, Communism, Nationalism and Fascism, were another threat to Christianity, as Limbert describes in his report to the Centennial Conference. Already in Mysore World’s Conference 1937, their challenge was one of the main themes. This question of ‘isms’ claiming loyalty was also a theme in the preparatory material of the World Conference of Young Men, which was

¹ WComR 1931, 62-72.
² WComR 1931, 65.
³ WComR 1931, 65.
⁴ WComR 1931, 65.
⁵ WComPle 1953c, 3.
one of the Centennial Conferences. Limbert reports: “Although a ‘what-do-we-care’ cult became popular in some circles as result of frustration and disillusionment” people were forced to take a stand. In this context, “many who were only nominal Christians came to take their faith seriously.” At the same time as the secularisms won followers “evangelists like Dr. Billy Graham drew unprecedented crowds.”

When Nazis instructed everyone to read Mein Kampf, the churches responded by urging people to read the Bible. The Biblical revival continued after the end of the war. It could be seen in the emergence of ‘Biblical theology’, in the new translations, in distribution of Bibles, etc. In general, there was “a close tie-up between Biblical renewal and evangelism.”

ECUMENISM was a third major theme in the YMCA. Although born as a Protestant revival movement, the YMCA nurtured a sense of ecumenism through its history. Along with Protestant churches, the relationship to the Orthodox churches could be described as friendly. When the Ottoman Empire had made the co-operation of Orthodox bishops difficult, the Orthodox world had been isolated from the rest of Christianity. When the doors opened at the beginning of the 20th century, the YMCA along with WSCF was the first organisation to give opportunities to Orthodox priests to make contacts with Western Christianity. Some leading Orthodox ecumenical leaders, like Patriarch Athenagoras and Professor Hamilkar Alivisatos, have grown in the YMCA. In general, other Orthodox leaders also had a positive attitude towards the YMCA. Latourette notes, in the case of Greece that “so close was the connection with the Orthodox Church that in various archdioceses the Association was asked to lead in promoting Sunday Schools, Bible classes, and the study of church history.” However, there were also critical voices, especially among the Supreme Church Administration, which was an organ established by emigrant Russian bishops.

If the attitude of Orthodox leaders was mainly positive, the same cannot be said about the Catholic Church. Vatican I in 1870 did not facilitate ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic Church had a negative attitude towards the YMCA. In 1920, the Holy See sent a letter to Catholic bishops where Catholics were forbidden to join the YMCA. Although this was the official policy, there were also Catholic priests in the Movement. However, the relations to Catholic Church restricted the opportunities of the YMCA in countries where it was a dominant religion.

Ecumenical development in the 20th century begun with promise. The student work of the YMCA, YWCA and SCM started to bear fruit. Those young men who had become friends in the international conferences of these organisations, became adults and rose to significant positions in their churches – and transformed the lay koinonia to official ecumenism. As result of their work, the first Interna-

1 WComR 1955, 26, 39.
2 WComR 1955, 30ff.
3 Latourette 1957, 385.
4 Latourette 1957, 379ff., 383-387; Anderson 1963;
5 Fallon 1922.
The National Missionary Conference was held in Edinburgh in 1910. However, the First World War, the seizing of German missionaries and the war guilt question froze the development for more than a decade. A new start emerged in 1925 when, again a YMCA leader, Nathan Söderblom, launched the first Life and Work Conference in 1925. These tensions were present in the YMCA as well. It was only in the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926, when emotions had been calmed that unity was restored.

The challenges of the 20th century led Christians to focus on their own vocation and what it means to ‘be called’ to be part of the ekklesia, the church. Limbert describes this trend as follows:

This fresh recognition of the significance of the Church is not confined to any one confession; it has led to new vitality at many points within the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches as well as among Protestants. This is a conviction about the importance of the Church not primarily as an institution but as the “household of faith” (oekumene). The essential character of the Church as an indispensable community of believers came to be stressed as over against earlier tendencies to regard the Church largely as a means to an end or as one among many human organizations.

However, it was not only a common threat from the non-Christian religions and ideologies that drew Christians together but common experiences during the war as well. Limbert describes the atmosphere after WW II: “Under a common suffering, a common defence against secular pressures, and a common service to the victims of war, there developed during the war an even stronger sense of fellowship among the Christian Churches.” As a fruit of this unity, the World Council of Churches was founded in 1948. However, along with the ecumenical development confessional tendencies grew as well.

From the YMCA point of view there were conflicting consequences. On one hand, the WCC was a continuation of the ecumenical work of the YMCA, YWCA and WSCF. When those young people who had grown up in the ecumenical spirit of these movements grew up and got leading positions in their churches they moved their informal friendships to the official level. At the conference table

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1 Stranksy 1991, 527; Potter 1991, 691.
2 Pierard 1986.
3 Fries (WComR 1926, 27) quotes Söderblom’s words in 1914: “In your [YMCA] circles I have found friends. The ties of friendship thus formed have been strong and will, I am sure, last as long as life... At he the time when the mind is most open, the YMCA led me into circles, into international meetings [first at Amsterdam 1891] where the breath of the Spirit was very powerful and where I received impressions, which have exercised an influence on my whole life.” Söderblom’s biographer, Tor Andrae (1931, 92) notes as follows: “That the ecumenical thought of Söderblom is a child of the YMCA and the internationalism of the American Student Movement will not be disputed.”
4 WComR 1955, 27.
5 WComR 1955, 28.
6 On these tendencies, see Limbert’s report (WComR 1955, 24-35). Limbert (idem 29) quotes W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft, the general secretary of the WCC, on the relationship between confessional and ecumenical loyalties: “The great question for the future is whether the new confessional emphasis will lead to a deadlock in the ecumenical discussions between the Churches, or whether it will lead to an encounter on a deeper and therefore more fruitful level.”
there were not enemies but old friends who respected each other’s faith. In this sense, the mustard seed of those twelve young men in London in 1844 had grown into a tree.

On the other hand, the WCC came to act in the same niche where the YMCA had previously been a major player. This meant organisational campaigns for the same resources, namely the donations of churches and individual Christians. Additionally, when the YMCA was a lay movement and the new WCC was an organisation led by clergy, there was a potential threat that the clergy would concentrate on this new organisation and leave the YMCA. Thus, the new religious opportunity structure also affected its economic opportunity structures. On the other hand, the more the YMCA sought support from states and modified its organisation according to nonprofit standards, the more churches started to question the religiosity of the YMCA.

**THE PARIS BASIS** became a model for other ecumenical organisations when the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) also adopted a basis similar to the Paris Basis. This was quite natural for several reasons. First, the YMCA and the YWCA have always been sister movements, and the YMCA, as an older brother, has given a model to its little sister. Second, the WSCF grew from the College YMCAs in North America and was closely connected to the YMCA on the international level as well.

Third, the WCC was the fruit of these three organisations. In the standard histories of the WCC, it is often mentioned that the modern Ecumenical Movement has its roots in the the Missionary Council in 1910 in Edinburgh, in the Life and Work Movement, and in the Faith and Order Movement. However, leaders of these early ecclesiastical ecumenical bodies, as well as those of WCC’s, came from these three youth movements. Ruth Rouse informs us that in the First Assembly of WCC in Amsterdam 1948 (and other such ecumenical assemblies), about “four-fifths of those assembled on these platforms probably owed their ecumenical inspiration to some connection with the YMCA, with the YWCA, or with the closely-connected Student Christian Movement.” Therefore, it was no wonder that the modified Paris Basis was also accepted as the basis of the WCC.

The similarities and differences between the bases of the YMCA, YWCA, WSCF and WCC with their modifications can be seen in synopsis in Table 9:

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1 Strong 1955a, 533.
2 Rouse 1993a, 327. This information from Rouse is quite often quoted by omitting the word ‘probably’. Anyway, Rouse, who was one of the leaders in the WSCF, obviously felt that there were only old friends present in those conferences.
3 This is a common trend in social movements. They adopt many of their practices from the previous movements. When the movement activists shift to a new movement in the same cluster, they normally bring their practices with them. See, for example, McAdam & McCarthy & Zald 1988, 716.
4 See Rice 1947, 53, 131ff., 276; Seymour-Jones 1994, 12. Both authors refer only indirectly to the fact that the change of the basis was in 1914. This is expressed in Rouse 1993b, 641.
### Table 9: Synopsis of bases of ecumenical organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YMCA 1855</th>
<th>WSCF 1895</th>
<th>YWCA 1898</th>
<th>WSCF 1913</th>
<th>YWCA 1914</th>
<th>WCC 1948</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Young Men’s Christian Associations seek to unite those young men</td>
<td>The objects shall be...</td>
<td>The World’s Young Women’s Christian Associations seeks to unite those young women</td>
<td>The objects shall be:</td>
<td>The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, Jesus Christ as only Saviour and as God</td>
<td>who, regarding the Lord Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, in God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit-</td>
<td>in God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit-</td>
<td>Faith in God the Father as Creator, and in Jesus Christ His only Son as Lord and Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit as Revealer of Truth and Source of Power for life and service,</td>
<td>which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be his disciples in their doctrine and in their life,</td>
<td>according to the Holy Scriptures,</td>
<td>according to the Scriptures</td>
<td>according to the teachings of Holy Scripture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) To deepen the spiritual life of students</td>
<td>are vitally united to him through the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and</td>
<td>and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ b) To deepen the spiritual life of students and to promote earnest study of Scriptures among them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.</td>
<td>c) To enlist students in the work of extending the Kingdom of Christ throughout the whole world</td>
<td>desire to associate their efforts for the extension of his Kingdom among all young women</td>
<td>c) To influence students to devote themselves to the extension of the Kingdom of God in their own nation and throughout the world</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The paragraph of that does not fit with the structure of other bases 1913: “d) To bring students of all countries into mutual understanding and sympathy, to lead them to realize that the principles of Jesus Christ should rule in international relationships, and to endeavour by so doing to draw the nations together.” In its 1914 Constitution, the YWCA moved some parts of the Basis to the Principles, which includes, among other, the following: “The World’s YWCA desires to be a representative of all sections of the Christian Church in so far as they accept the basis. It… desires to enlist the service of young women for young women in their spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical advancement, and to encourage their fellowship and activity in the Christian Church.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**underlined** = same text in Paris Basis and other bases; **bold** = differences between the Paris Basis and other bases; **italics** = the meaning of the Paris Basis with different words
As can be seen in the synopsis, the YWCA Basis from 1898 was almost exactly the same as the Paris Basis. The only significant differences are addition of ‘Holy Spirit’ and - as a new theme - mentioning the criteria for acceptable methods. The WSCF Basis of 1895 has more differences but, basically, the content is the same. The differences can be seen to refer to the missionary enthusiasm of North American YMCAs at that time. The adoption of the Paris Basis ideology evidently justified and strengthened the status of the Paris Basis in the YMCA. The more interesting thing is that both the YWCA and the WSCF changed their bases less than 20 years later.

The need for the Trinitarian wording came at almost the same time that all three movements entered Catholic and Orthodox soil. At the Berlin Conference of the YWCA in 1910, Orthodox delegates were present for the first time. The WSCF, in turn held its 1911 conference in Constantinople (Istanbul). In that conference, the Ecumenical Patriarch gave his blessings to the conference. As consequence, Rouse mentions that this required removal of all restrictions against Orthodox members. Both movements went further. They did not only lift the restrictions of the membership obstacles but modified their bases according to the theology of these old churches. Rouse notes that the (a) in WSCF basis was modified in 1913 “to show that the Federation endeavours to lead students to the historic Christian faith as held by the Church through the centuries, thus making approach easier to the students in Roman Catholic and Orthodox countries.” The WSCF followed next year, in 1914. Rice comments on the decision as follows: “The effect of this revision was to reaffirm in unmistakable but entirely non-sectarian terms the commitment of the World’s YWCA to the historic Christian faith.” Thus, both the allies of the YMCA had changed its basis because of their extension to Orthodox and Catholic countries.

In the YMCA, there were no such modifications. There might be several reasons. It was only less than a decade when the Paris Basis was affirmed in the Jubilee Conference in 1905. First, the storm before the conference on the movement basis almost tore the YMCA into two. This evidently made the leaders unwilling to open the question again. Second, the Paris Basis served as a personal basis in countries where the North American International Committee worked. Thus, the YMCA experience was that the Paris Basis was acceptable to Orthodox and

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1 It is significant to note that, although the North American Student YMCAs were officially part of the North American YMCA, they were freed from the Portland Basis of the NAIC and could use a personal basis for membership requirements. (Rouse 1948, 149f., 156).
2 The Student Volunteer Movement, the missionary wing of YMCA student work, was a child of the Second Awakening. One of the first milestones of that movement was the First World Student Conference held in 1886 in Mt. Hermon, Massachusetts, where hundreds of students offered their lives to foreign missionary service. According to the most conservative estimate, 20,500 students had reached the field by 1945 (Shedd 1955b, 278; Rouse 1993a, 328).
3 Rouse 1993b, 607.
4 Rouse 1948, 152.
5 Rouse 1948, 317.
6 Rice 1947, 133.
7 See chapter 6.2.1.
Catholic members without modifications. Third, WW I interrupted the international communion of the YMCA for more than a decade. The first post-war conference was held only in 1926 and, supposedly, the reasons that had led the YWCA and WSCF to modify their bases had disappeared. The other modifications were not as challenging as the trinity question.

The wording of the Paris Basis got support when, first the formula ‘God and Saviour’ emerged in the basis of the Faith and Order Movement (F&O) in 1910 and, later in the WCC Basis of 1948. However, there is no direct evidence that either the F&O expression or the WCC Basis came from the Paris Basis. T.K. Thomas and A.W. Martin trace the roots of the WCC basis to the basis of the Faith and Order Movement (F&O) from 1910, which declares

...that all the Christian Communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with us...

A. W. Martin deals with the question: From where did the wording come to the F&O. First, he notes that “a number of persons have taken for granted that the Basis was taken directly from a declaration of the YMCA in Paris in 1855.” Then he refers to the fact that “Visser ‘t Hooft in his report to the Central Committee of the WCC in 1960, commented, ‘Bishop Manning, who had offered the original resolution, has... said that he was not aware of any connection...’ between the resolution and the YMCA basis.” However, Martin notes that there might be a link through Bishop Charles H. Brent, who was “the ‘father’ of the Faith and Order movement”. Martin sees that the problem is whether Bishop Charles Brent (who was later involved in the War Work of the YMCA during the First World War) knew the Paris Basis or not in 1910. If Brent knew the Paris Basis before

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1 Adoption of the methodology in 1914, as well as by the WSCF’s in 1913, seems to have been influenced by the American YMCA Triangle Principle (body, mind and spirit) and Four Fold Program (Triangle + Social work). In the question of acceptable methods, these two movements differentiated themselves from the YMCA, which guaranteed complete independence to national movements on this issue.

The WSCF 1913 Article d can be partly seen as a reaction towards the huge rearmament of the European nations and the Balkan War in 1912-13. On the other hand, this was not the whole background. The former general secretary of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, Tracy Strong (1955a, 461), writes about this period, when he was still a local boys’ work secretary:

When youth was dragged from its natural pursuits and became ‘destiny’s draftees’, facing a world of paradoxes and clashes such as the ‘Clash of Arms’, the ‘Clash of Colour’, the ‘Clash of Ideas’, and the ‘Clash of Faiths’, the YMCA tried to interpret to youth the worldwide slogans and the spiritual engines of propaganda... When in the days of realism every utopian element was rigorously excluded, the YMCA with words of encouragement called for the concentrated strength of active patience. When youth longed for status and equality, and masses followed the leadership of those who trust solely in material and secular values, YMCA leaders, together with other Christians, reasserted that they must grapple with this new manifestation of the emancipation of the human spirit.

Thus, it was the whole atmosphere of the period, that aroused a reaction in the YMCA and especially in the SCM.


3 The words are from the invitation to form a common body. This invitation was made by American Protestant Episcopal Church. (Tatlow 1993, 408)
1910, then there would be a direct link from the YMCA to the F&O. However, Martin leaves the question open.¹

What possibilities are there, then, if the WCC basis is not from the Paris Basis? There are three probable traditional streams from where Manning has got it. First, it was in the bases of the YWCA and the WSCF. In this case, it came indirectly from the YMCA. Second, the expression was in common use among Evangelicals at the beginning of the 19th century. Finally, the expression can be found in old Ecumenical resolutions. In this case, both the Paris Basis and Manning’s invitation had common roots but are not dependant on each other. In all these cases, the expression ‘God and Saviour’ would have become a common property in the Evangelical Movement without special identification to a particular organisation.

It would, however, be simpler to suppose that the leaders of the WCC brought the expression with them when they moved from the YMCA to the WCC via the WSCF, the F&O and the L&W². Wolfdieter Theurer supports this interpretation. According to Theurer, in the discussions on the new formulation about the WCC Basis before the WCC New Delhi Assembly 1961, the tradition of the Paris Basis was continuously referred to³. Although the Trinitarian formula was added to the WCC Basis, the ‘God and Saviour’ formula remained untouched. Moreover, the ‘missing’ formula of ‘according to the Holy Scriptures’ was also added⁴.

ANCIENT NON-CHRISTIAN FAITHS, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, campaigned for souls as well. Related to the struggle for independence, these religions rose their heads in Asia and the Near East. Christianity was easily interpreted as a foreign importation, which a true patriot would not accept. Additionally, there was also a revival from within these religions. This, in turn, led to pressures on Christian minorities in these areas. Along with the challenge of secular ideologies, this pushed Christian churches to redefine their mission. It also challenged the churches and YMCAs in these countries to become national, independent ones, instead of being Western affiliates.⁵

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¹ Martin 1981, 253ff. Strong (1955a, 462f.) refers to the same problem when he writes: “While there is no direct evidence that Bishop Brent knew of the Paris Basis of the World’s Alliance of YMCA’s, although throughout his life he was a friend of the YMCA, it is significant that he uses the same phrase as that found in the Paris Basis.” Willis, in turn, argues that in 1911 at the latest Brent was familiar with the Paris Basis. Willis (1955, 695) writes: “No less a figure than Bishop Charles Brent took a leading part in persuading the [North American] International Committee that by declaring their agreement with the terms of the Paris Basis, male members of good standing in the Roman Catholic Church might become active members of this [Filippino]YMCA.” Hopkins (1979, 309) speaks indirectly of the issue when he says that Brent encouraged Mott to an inclusive membership policy in 1907.

² Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison (1991, 98f.) argue that movement intellectuals have a trend to “seek legitimacy in more established intellectual contexts.” When they ‘institutionalise’ themselves they also diffuse the main ideas of the movement to a new context. The authors also argue (Idem. 115) that the main task of intellectuals is to create a frame of meaning in which the actions of individuals and groups can be understood.

³ Theurer 1966, 118f.

⁴ Bent 1991c, 1092.

⁵ WComR 1955, 32f.
Interfaith dialogue was a logical next step from ecumenical dialogue. Continuing contacts between Christians and Moslems, on one hand, and Christians and Eastern religions, on the other hand, forced both churches and lay organisations to reflect the issue. On one hand, as referred to above, secularism was felt to be a common enemy, which led to dialogue. On the other hand, the rise of old religions in combination with the independence process of colonized countries led to attacks against Christians in these lands.\footnote{WComR 1931, 64; 1955, 33.} I deal with this issue in detail later in the next sub-chapter (Near East, India and China).

**TO SUM UP**, the YMCA was intermingled with such religious movements and organisations, like the Evangelical Alliance, Sunday School Movement, Muscular Christianity, student awakenings, Social Gospel, Ecumenical Movement and Missionary Movement. Along with them, the movement opposed secularism and ‘manned faiths’, which were seen as the major opponents of Christianity. As the YMCA was from the beginning an ecumenical organisation it is not surprising that the Ecumenical Movement was a dear child of the YMCA, although it threatened the YMCA's organisational strength. Other ecumenical bodies, World YMCA, WSCF and WCC adopted a basis similar to the Paris Basis although the YWCA and the WSCF later modified it towards Trinitarian emphases. In the Near and Far East, the YMCA had also to face the resurrection of ancient faiths and interfaith dialogue was a continuation of ecumenical dialogue where the YMCA had been a pioneer.

**4.1.5. Influence of Modernity on the Mission of the YMCA**

This sub-chapter has given a short overview of those factors that influenced the World’s Alliance of YMCAs during its first 100 years. As the quotation of Latourette at the beginning of this sub-chapter stated: the world was facing a revolution. In this turbulence, the YMCA expanded and extended; growing from a network of small local Bible clubs to a world organisation.

Economically, the industrialism both gave wealth which the YMCA benefitted from, and ‘compressed’ the world so that it became possible to create a global organisation. Drawing its major income from prosperous countries, keeping its bureaucracy small and acting through its member movements, the World’s Alliance was able to extend its activities to new areas even at the time of economic crisis.

Urbanisation, the expansion of the middle class and of education made the YMCA primarily an urban middle-class movement whose special strength was in universities. Globally, the YMCA benefited from the triumph of Western culture but was able to transform its national organisations to indigenous movements when the tide of colonialism turned.

The political emphasis on voluntary organisations as solvers of social problems in Britain, Germany and the USA helped the YMCA acquire legitimacy in these countries. When WW I broke, the YMCA was respected and ready to serve
youth in armies, which, in turn, increased the legitimacy of the movement. After WW II, the YMCA war service organisation was modified to meet the next large challenge, that of refugees.

Religiously, the YMCA was a fruit of 19th century revivalism. The tension between revivalism and secularism was the most typifying character of the religious context of the YMCA during its first hundred years. Free from the direction of church leaders, the YMCA sought lay responses to the challenge of secularisation and secularist ideologies, especially those of Nationalism\(^1\) and Communism. In this attempt, the YMCA also pioneered the Ecumenical Movement by training future ecumenical leaders. Especially in its religious context, the YMCA was both actor and subject.

The YMCA leaders interpreted their environment and made strategic and tactical choices based on their deep values. A host of methods and activities were developed to ‘extend His Kingdom’, as the Paris Basis states. When time passed, these strategies and activities institutionalised, became ends in themselves and the YMCA had to continuously question itself: where is the ‘C’? These themes are dealt with again in detail below when I focus on the special activities of the YMCA. The next sub-chapters will give a short description how the YMCA expanded in North America and Europe, how it extended to new continents, and what kinds of effects this process had to the mission view of the World’s Alliance.

In movements, distinctions according to formal movement organisations are often lines drawn in water. Although the World’s Alliance of YMCAs is a formal organisation with defined structure, staff, budget and processes, its membership is also an essential part of the organisation. The federation is not only the organ at the top but the totality of all its elements. Below we will see that the World’s Alliance was heavily dependant on its member movements, both financially and in the case of leadership. Moreover, as we will see, leaders of member movements made up various boards of the World’s Alliance. In this sense, the World’s Alliance was not an independent organisation but only one part of the organism. At the same time, its member movements constituted an important part of its environment. They were both clients and competitors of the Alliance. In the following sub-chapters, I focus on the developments of YMCAs in different continents.

\(^1\) Although Nationalism is not always secularistic but mixed or allied with some religion, YMCA people saw it as being secularistic in the sense that it claimed supreme loyalty to the state instead to God. Since the Franco-Prussian War, leaders of the World’s Alliance have seen that this claim confronts international Christian unity.
4.2. Character Building in North America

Although the YMCA was a European ‘invention’, the most remarkable development occurred in North America, where both the expansion of the movement and development of new models for work played a crucial role for the understanding of the YMCA mission. The first American YMCAs, Boston and Montreal, were modelled according to the London YMCA but the North American Confederation of YMCAs emerged from German influence. Along with these foreign influences, domestic determinants moulded the new movement. The expansion of the YMCA in North America was linked, according to Macleod, to three factors: immigration, urbanisation and the rise of the middle class. Hopkins adds revivalism and Latourette Social Gospel as further factors. These were, however, in resonance with each other. It was largely the needs of emerging middle class that modelled the North American YMCA.

The North American influence on the World’s Alliance can be seen as four-fold. First, when the former was the largest of YMCA movements, it had a voice to implement its basic policies on a world level better than any other movement. Second, related to the previous, the North American movement supplied many of the most influential leaders to the World’s Alliance - as well as to the whole Ecumenical Movement. Third, many YMCA methods were invented in North America and, thus, the continent became an area where advice was looked for. Lastly, the North American YMCA had large foreign work both in the ‘unoccupied territories’ as in European continent. All these aspects had their influence in the modification of the mission view of the World’s Alliance.

4.2.1. YMCA Expansion in North America

The YMCA expanded rapidly in North America as Table 10 shows. The membership has increased a hundredfold during a hundred years. The number of

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1 Morse 1913, 14ff.; Hopkins 1951, 16-19; Shedd 1955a, 68-73.
2 Hopkins 1951, 57; Shedd 1955a, 58f.
4 Hopkins 1951, 6ff.
5 Latourette 1957, 18ff., 24, 28.
6 In YMCA language, ‘expansion’ means the growth of existing local and national organisations. ‘Extension’ means entering an unoccupied field.
7 The US YMCA was practically the whole North American Confederation of the YMCA because it has constituted all the time circa 95 percent of the movement. It was only in 1955 that the ratio of Canadian secretaries has increased to eight percent from the four percent in 1938. In spite of this, the Canadian YMCA was larger than European ‘middle-sized’ YMCAs.
8 Zald (1970, 30) notes that “growth in membership has clearly outstripped the general population growth from the beginning. This was true even after the YMCA had become firmly established during the last decades of the nineteenth century.”
secretaries, in turn, has increased two-thousandfold but the number of associations increased to be ‘only’ 35 times larger in 1955 than in 1855. This indicates that the American movement had chosen a strategy of large city-associations with paid staff. These Metropolitan Associations resembled the London parent-association model as they had several relatively independent branches or departments in various parts of the town.

Table 10: Expansion of North American YMCAs, 1855-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1855</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members (x 1000)</td>
<td>Members (x 1000)</td>
<td>Members (x 1000)</td>
<td>Members (x 1000)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-A Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of the following sources: World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1938; 1955; Langdon 1856; Morse 1913.

a 1855 figures are based on Langdon’s report to the First World’s Conference(WConf 1855, 88).
Morse’s (1913, 39) smaller figures (36 associations and 14,000 members) probably refer to active members.

b Fries (1905, 24f.) gives smaller figures (1,815 associations, 373,502 members, 1,893 secretaries) but his figures are from the beginning of the year.

These branches were units that might have been independent Associations in a European context. The American model ensured long-term stability when the Metropolitan office could direct funds and supervision to branches that would be in crisis if they were independent associations. This evidently reduced organisational mortality when the organisation was “better able to absorb shocks from the environment”, as Miller McPherson puts it.

Although there had been large Metropolitan YMCAs, like Boston (2,500 members) and New York (1,604 members), in 1855 already, Table 11 shows that the expansion trend only started to influence the mean figures in the 20th century. This might be due to organisational mortality of the smaller (rural?) associations

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1 On the Metropolitan YMCA structure and polity, see Zald (1970, 81-111).
2 Pence (1939, 48) noted that between 1860 and 1890 that more than 40 percent of associations listed in the North American YMCA Yearbook was not listed at the beginning of the next decade anymore.

3 Miller McPherson (1983b) has studied the size of voluntary organisations. She argues, first, that “organizations in larger communities are substantially larger than those in smaller communities (idem. 1054).” Second, nationally networked organisations are larger than purely local ones (idem 1046f., 1054). Third, professional groups are larger than social, neighbourhood or community groups (1047f., 1054). Fourth, “large organisations are more stable in membership (idem 1044).” Fifth, “large size is related to core activities of the community system while more peripheral activities occur in smaller groups (idem. 1059).”

4 WConf 1855a, 88.
and the expansion of the city associations. The professionalisation of leadership had started a bit earlier: already in 1891, the North American YMCAs had more secretaries than associations - a situation that no European national movement achieved. The North American YMCA model was based on four points: 1) General Secretarship, 2) building with sports facilities and social work, 3) Bible study and 4) Work for young men exclusively. This concept was introduced by Americans in the Berlin World Conference in 1884.

Table 11: Ratio of associations, members and secretaries in North American YMCAs, 1855-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1855</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members / associations</td>
<td>Members / secretaries</td>
<td>Associations / secretaries</td>
<td>Members / associations</td>
<td>Members / secretaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-A Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1937; 1938.

The North American YMCAs balanced between the homogenising effects of the existing models of large Metropolitan Associations and adaptation to the needs of their constituency. In this tension, the YMCA created both city association models and special associations for students, railwaymen, military personnel and minority groups, like Native Americans and African-Americans. I focus on these special groups later. Here it is sufficient to note that city associations were always the backbone of the North American YMCA, although many new inventions emerged in special associations. Zald notes that the proportion of secretaries serving in city associations was from two thirds to four fifths between 1912 and 1956.

Along with the special associations, the role of the North American International Committee has been remarkable for the whole YMCA movement. From the very beginning, the International Committee was restricted to be “merely an agent to carry out the views and wishes of all or a number of the confederated societies, and to give special attention to the collection and distribution of interesting and important information.”

The American emphasis on local independence had certain consequences. First, in spite of a common name, local YMCAs were free to develop their pro-

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1 WConfPrep 1884.
2 Zald 1970, 63.
3 WConf 1855a, 77.
grams and constituency basis. This led to a focusing on local needs rather than focusing on universal mission. In the US, the International Committee and special associations, which it supervised, were the nodes of revivalistic spirit while the city associations focused more on the needs of their clientele\. Second, the independence option also modelled the foreign work of the North American YMCA: new associations abroad were meant to become independent and self-supportive as soon as possible. In this, the American ideology and mission view differed from the British one. This different approach could be seen especially in India where both movements had fraternal secretaries. Third, Americans have not always respected the role of the World’s Alliance as a co-ordinating organ of the YMCA. This, in turn, has lead to controversies between European and American movements\(^2\).

Along with the organisational innovations, the North American YMCA developed several activity models, which spread through the YMCA network around the world. Most important of these models were attached to youth and young men’s work. It can even be said that many of the modern youth work methods have been founded in the American YMCA\(^3\). Especially important have been the idea of body, mind and spirit, which gave rise to physical education, which, in turn, became the ‘flagship’ of the North American YMCA. Along with physical education, emerged boys’ clubs, camps, student conventions, international meetings, etc. I deal with these later in detail. Here is sufficient to note that the aim of the Four-fold Programme was “to spiritualise the secular\(^4\)” With the Four-fold Programme, the YMCA meant the triangle principle (body, mind and spirit) plus society. It gave legitimacy to activities that were not strictly religious, in the name of character building. However, it often led to specialisation of various activities and “secularisation of the spiritual movement\(^5\)” In no other activity, the means have become ends to the same degree as in YMCA physical education.

**TO SUM UP**, the North American YMCA chose a model of large metropolitan associations with semi-independent branches, which enabled effective use of

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1 Nina Mjagkij (1994) shows how the independence of local associations maintained the racial segregation in the US YMCAs.
2 The first storm broke when Friedrich von Schlümbach, secretary of German YMCAs in North America, planted an American type city-association to Berlin in 1883. The German leaders of *Jünglingsvereine* did not like it at all. It was a question of planting an American type interdenominational association into a German context where associations were attached to Lutheran/Reformed/United Church. (Shedd 1955b, 248f., 270) Another problem was in the role of North American International Committee, which, as Europeans felt, acted like another World’s Committee (Shedd 1955b, 368, 384). Although John R. Mott acted to calm down controversies (Shedd 1955b, 439), his own dilemma whether he was Christian or American first almost ruined the work among prisoners of war during WW I (Strong 1955b, 553f.). I deal with these controversies later (in chapter 6.3.5.) in detail.
3 See chapters 6.3.1. and 6.3.2.
4 L. Wilbur Messer (WConfPrep 1898a, 8) in his report to 1898 Basle World’s Conference.
5 Latourette (1957, 28) mentions that “men, whether secretaries or lay members, who gave their major attention to one aspect of the program, whether it was physical education or the various classes in secular subjects, tended to leave the ‘religious work’ to secretaries who began to be appointed as specialists in that field.”
resources and reduced organisational mortality. Large units required professional staff and the North American YMCA developed a model of association, which included general secretary and association building with facilities like gyms and dormitories. Along with local associations, the YMCA created a system of special associations for students, railwaymen, soldiers and ethnic minorities. These served the special needs of their constituencies. The latter ones were under the supervision of the North American International Committee, which, in general, had a restricted mandate because of the YMCA emphasis on local independence. Along with organisational innovations, the North American YMCA created new activities like physical education, youth work, student work, camps, etc. The major invention of the North American YMCA was, however, the Four-fold Programme, which saw a man as a combination of body, mind, soul and society. The new invention of this program was the use of physical education as a method of Christian nurture. I focus on that theme in the next chapter.

4.2.2. Physical Education in the North American YMCA

Americans, in particular, have continuously emphasised the freedom of local associations and national movements to develop their own definitions of purposes. For them, the Paris Basis has been an international bond - not the basis for all associations. Accordingly, there have been different bases in America. These bases were modified according to national and local needs. One principle that became a major YMCA symbol was the unity of body, mind and spirit. This principle was heavily bound to the emergence and expansion of physical education for young men.

Elmer L. Johnson, in his *History of YMCA Physical Education*, notes that the roots of physical education were in German and Swedish systems of gymnastics in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. When immigrants from these countries arrived in the US, they introduced their systems to their new country. Physical education had played a minor role in North America during the occupation of the frontier land in the West. When, in the second half of the nineteenth century the frontier faded, American society started to change from being simply a rural society to a complex industrial one. The emergence and development of YMCA physical education was part of this process.\(^1\)

However, physical education of the YMCA was not just a case of copying models from other countries. Behind the emergence of physical education in the YMCA, there were religious, cultural and economic factors, which enabled its emergence and spread. One of the most important questions was whether physical education was acceptable at all in a religious organisation.

**THE RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTS** were those that gave legitimacy to physical education. In the arguments we can see an influence of two movements in North America: Muscular Christianity and Social Gospel\(^2\). These two movements

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\(^1\) Johnson 1979, 17ff. see also Macleod (1983, 3-28).

\(^2\) The influence of Social Gospel on the YMCA has been generally accepted (see Hopkins 1951, 391-
were commingled in the North American YMCA and their emphases found an expression in YMCA physical education and social work.

In the 19th century, there were signs of more positive attitudes towards recreation, sport and amusements than before. One major movement to pave the way was the Muscular Christianity. It was, according to Clifford W. Putney, “a movement geared toward reinjecting health and manliness back into Victorian religion.” It emerged in Britain in the mid-1800s and spread soon to North America as well. Best known of its outcomes have been YMCA physical education, the Boys’ Brigades, the Scout movement and, to some extent, the Salvation Army. In the case of the two latter mentioned, the influence of Muscular Christianity can be seen especially in the use of uniforms and military ranks. Along with the emphasis on manliness, “its adherents sought to reduce women’s influence in the Protestant churches.” The movement declined after the First World War but had an influence on YMCA physical education and restriction of its services to men and boys only.

Muscular Christianity had to face negative attitudes towards sports and amusements in general. Because these attitudes were justified by theological doctrines...
of Calvinism, Pietism and Methodism, the positive attitude had to be based on theological arguments as well. Max Weber has argued that Western asceticism had developed a systematic method of rational conduct with the purpose of overcoming the status naturae, to free man from the power of irrational impulses and his dependence on the world and nature. It attempted to subject man to the supremacy of a purposeful will, to bring his actions under constant self-control with a careful consideration of their ethical consequences.

When sports were seen as worldly amusements, it was no wonder that Evangelicals had a negative attitude towards them. Muscular Christians, instead, saw physical education as a way “to consent to his service, as far as may be, all the powers of the body, soul and spirit.”

The first theological justification in the YMCA for amusements and physical education was given at the Second World’s Conference of YMCAs in Geneva in 1858. John H. Gladstone, one leading member of the London YMCA, argued in his presentation that associations should offer good recreational programs to young men and defended his thesis mainly with historical examples and with some Biblical quotations. His argumentation started (according to Evangelical thinking of focusing on heaven instead of earthly matters) from the question whether recreational activities are meant to serve God or ourselves. He also made a distinction between detrimental and innocent recreation that saves people from bad habits. It is in this latter case that YMCAs have some responsibility for their members. There is always a danger that “an ignorant Christian and restrictive and narrow-minded spirit are often obstacles of the Gospel.” Thus, according to Gladstone, a Christian association should avoid extremes and consider three questions. “Whether the situation require them? Does they harm the more important activities? Are its pious members able to sanctify the means which they will adopt?” In relation to the last question, Gladstone mentions that in America and England associations offer reading rooms that have journals and periodicals in order to serve people’s intellectual, social and political benefit. In Germany, people gather to sing to their Lord to show their joy. In Holland they cultivate poems and stories in order to learn how God guides peoples of the earth. Thus, Gladstone’s thesis for the legitimacy of recreation rests a lot on the Christian use of arts.

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1 See Weber’s (1970a, 95-143) arguments on the asceticism of Calvinism, Pietism and Methodism.
2 Weber 1970a, 118f. According to Weber (Idem 107), this theology was expressed in John Bunyan’s (1951, 104) Pilgrim’s Progress, which described how the Pilgrim escaped from the City of Destruction. During his journey the Pilgrim entered Vanity Fair where “lusts, pleasures, and delights of all kinds” was sold, among others, and where people were hostile to those who wanted to “buy the truth (Bunyan 1951, 104, 107).
3 Kingsley in 1858 (according to Bloomfield 1994, 174).
4 It seems that during this time, Muscular Christianity was in a stage which Herbert Blumer (1953, 199-202) has called general social movement. In this early stage, a movement is more like a cultural trend without any specific organisation and expresses itself in texts of movement intellectuals who “are likely to be ‘voices in the wilderness’, pioneers without any solid following (idem 201).”
5 WConfPrep 1858; Shedd 1955a, 157.
The theme was, according to Shedd, serious. He counted that “47 of the 268 pages of the Report are devoted to this question.” The Conference adopted the following resolution:

After having examined the question of the need of recreation natural to young men, ought it to occupy the attention of the YMCA? In what measure can the Associations satisfy it? The delegates recognize that the Associations ought to occupy themselves with this need of recreation, but as sanctifying it - leaving to each association a certain liberty to choose the nature and the mode of recreation according to national taste and local convenience.

Seven years later the Fourth World’s Conference adopted a significant resolution that directed YMCA thinking in future.

The Conference considers that a proper combination of a worldly and an eternal profession is the best means of proving a living Christianity
The Conference recommends that the employment of leisure time be devoted to the service of God and considers a diligent study of God’s Word, the visiting of the poor and the sick, and teaching in Sunday Schools as the most appropriate occupations.
The Conference considers it a duty to call the attention of its members to the fact that a strengthening of the physical body through swimming, gymnastics, and such sport, is also a task which the Christian young man ought not to neglect.

In this resolution, there are several important aspects. First, it recalls of the principle of the Great Command (love God above all and your neighbour as yourself) when it parallels the worldly profession with that of the eternal one. Second, it emphasises the importance of leisure time which was increasing because of new labour legislation. Leisure outside the noble class was a new phenomenon and the YMCA wanted to give models of good leisure. Third, the resolution recognises that the body, created by God, has its legitimate needs and YMCAs should not concentrate solemnly on the soul of young men.

Gladstone’s presentation and the resolution cited above gave legitimacy to the physical education and leisure activities of the YMCA. Although Germany had a longer tradition of gymnastics, the most important development of YMCA physical education took place in America.

In 1866, the New York YMCA, which was the pioneer of physical education, accepted the following statement of its mission: “The object of this Association shall be the improvement of the spiritual, moral, social and physical condition of young men.” This was the first time when the idea of the Four-fold Programme was included in a mission statement of any YMCA. A few years later, in 1869, the Association Building was erected with a gymnasium, library, class-, reading- and social rooms.

The philosophy of the triangle principle (body, mind and spirit) and Four-fold Programme (triangle plus society) had its Biblical roots in Luke 2:52 (KJV): “And

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1 Shedd 1955a, 158.
3 Report of the Fourth World’s Conference 1865 (quoted in Shedd 1955a, 168f.).
4 WComPle 1922a, 1; Morse 1913, 79.
5 A Brief History of the YMCA Movement 2001.
6 Morse 1913, 77.
Jesus increased in wisdom (mind) and stature (body), and in favour with God (spirit) and man (society).” Other frequently cited verses that legitimate physical education were 1 Cor 6:19 (KJV): “know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost” and Mark 12:30 (KJV): “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”. It is also good to remember that the whole verse of Juvenal’s famous saying reads as follows: “Oraendum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano (It should be prayed for a sound mind in a sound body)”. Thus, along with body and mind the saying contains the spiritual aspect as well.

The physical activities were seen as an extension of the social work of the YMCA. In this sense, it was only an enlargement of the classical Christian diakonia. However, the fundamental question was “Will the gymnasium secularize the Association, or can the Association Christianize the gymnasium?” The New York Association defended their program by noting that associations often failed to hold members once converted - young men away from home needed wholesome recreation. If the YMCA did not give it, they would fall into temptation. Thus, physical work was seen as one method in the ‘post-evangelisation’ work of the association.

1 Henri Johannot (1955, 651f.) says that Gladstone used this argument for physical education in 1858. However, it does not exist in Gladstone’s presentation or in the report of the conference.
2 Juvenalis 100-154, X 356.
3 Morse 1913, 166.
4 Macleod 1983, 73; Johnson 1979, 27-42.
5 Social Gospel was a movement in American Protestant churches at the end of the 19th century and at the first decades of the 20th century, which tried to find Christian answers and solutions to problems of industrialism. Among its major proponents were reverends Walter Rauschenbusch, (whose Theology for Social Gospel from 1918 was a major definition of movements goals), Washington Gladden (‘the father of Social Gospel’), Shailer Matthews, Josiah Strong, and economists Richard T. Ely and John R. Commons. The movement rose both from the experiences of these men in their work and as a reaction against too individualistic a Christianity, which focused only on salvation of souls.

The Social Gospel emphasised the social teachings of Jesus and saw the Kingdom of God as a ‘brotherhood of men’ or ‘family of God’ where justice, peace and unity prevails. Referring to Kirby Page’s book Jesus or Christianity from 1929, Richard H. Niebuhr (1988, 117) argues that this “family of God” in Social Gospel theology was actually “family of Man.” In this theology, the Kingdom of God has become immanent and Jesus of has become an “utilitarian moralist” while “the cosmic problem retires into the background.” The task of Christians, according to this theology, is to implement God’s will on earth. For many Social Gospel promoters this meant, as the statement above says, “peace and justice”. Referring to the upcoming Disarmament Conference (in Lausanne June-July 1932??), Visser ‘t Hooft (1973, 26) notes that some Europeans criticised the idea by saying that “according to Americans, the definitive abolition of war and the adoption of prohibition meant that the Kingdom of God was just around the corner.”

In the Social Gospel theology, there were competing views on the kingdom. For example, Reinhold Niebuhr draws a different picture in his Moral Man and Immoral Society from 1932. Reinhold Niebuhr’s Jesus was not a utilitarian but a perfectionist who had a transcendent dimension in his life. It was because of the uncompromising transcendent ideal that leads to the demand “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect (Mt 5:48).” Reinhold Niebuhr’s Jesus is not a fighter for moral or social progress but a servant of the transcendental ideal. (Niebuhr Richard
pansion of recreational work. It can be said that it widened the Four-fold ideology from individual welfare to welfare of the community. When the basic idea of the Four-fold Programme was to develop a symmetrical man, this could not be done in a vacuum and, thus, this led to focus more fully on those conditions, which affect individuals. The significant change in thinking was the shift from reactive philanthropy to preventive social reformism.

The main idea of the Social Gospel was to implement Jesus’ social teachings in society. For its proponents, the Kingdom of God was not only transcendent, but immanent as well. The whole earth is God’s creation and it should follow the law of God. The proponents of the movement held that in Jesus, the Kingdom of God had come on earth and salvation was seen as “getting into right relations” with God and neighbour. This led Social Gospel proponents to emphasise the immanent aspect of the Kingdom of God.

The YMCA was slow to get involved with the Social Gospel. Hopkins argues that “the first decade of the twentieth century... had seen a few YMCA leaders interested.” This may sound odd because of the long history of YMCA philanthropic work among soldiers, railwaymen, and new approaches to industry and projects among immigrants. One important factor was that the YMCA was governed by business class members who opposed Socialism and everything that sounded like it. Another reason was, as Hopkins expressed it, that:

The YMCA was completely immersed in the task of explicating the fourfold program, which seemed to be the answer to all problems. Its all-round activities were expected to develop good citizenship as well as Christian character: some leaders therefore thought it unnecessary to stress public affairs.

The peak of Social Gospel was the decade before the First World War. For example, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America endorsed it in 1908. The movement faded after WW I. On Social Gospel, see Hopkins 1967(1940); White & Hopkins 1976; Handy 1966; Visser ’t Hooft 1928; Niebuhr 1937; 1988. H. 1988, 118f.)

1 Gladden 1902, 11f. In this, Gladden was closer to the Semitic understanding of sedek, righteousness than his contemporaries who often saw it as an individual’s property instead of seeing it as a relational concept (On righteousness, see Achtemeier 1986, 80f.).

2 H. Richard Niebuhr (1988, 115) argues that there was a variety of theologies on the kingdom: One practically identifies the Christian gospel with utopian socialism or utopian communism; another interprets it in liberal fashion and believes in the education of Christlike personalities active in social affairs; while the third school, represented by an individual, finds values in the gospel which transcend both socialism and liberalism, social programs and personal ideals, but discovers in it no powers adequate for the control of social life, though it contains elements which are necessary to human existence. Within this group of modern social gospel representatives, there are further differences of opinion about the use of coercion in social change, about the meaning of religion, and about the role of the church. Thus, the Social Gospel movement was not a homogenous entity.

3 Hopkins 1951, 534.

4 Hopkins 1951, 220ff.; 475-479; Shedd 1955b, 440-443.

5 Hopkins 1951, 393, 536.

6 Hopkins 1951, 393. The relationship between the YMCA and the Social Gospel is not clear in Hopkins’ works. He gives interesting hints of connections between these two movements in his
Student YMCAs paved the way. Already in 1898, Mott had declared a spiritual war on social evils around the world in his address at his home-town, Postville. From then on, the Student Christian Movement started to emphasise social aspects in its Bible study materials.¹

In 1906, a group of YMCA secretaries founded *The Society for the Promotion of Social Service*, which aimed to implement Social-Gospel-inspired programs in the YMCA². In 1909, the social issue was discussed in the Barmen-Elberfeld World’s Conference³. However, it was only in 1919 when the NAIC accepted the social creed of the Federal Council of Churches⁴. Hopkins explains that the resistance of the YMCA was “due doubtless to institutional inertia, close ties to wealth and business, and the belief that the traditional attitude was adequate⁵.” It was only after experiences in the First World War and, especially, Sherwood Eddy’s conversion to Social Gospel that the North American YMCA started to focus on social issues seriously. In this, Social Gospel provided a suitable theology. The idea of an immanent God’s Kingdom where people love each other resonated with the YMCA emphasis on unity. From here on, we can find Social Gospel expressions in many YMCA documents although the Social Gospel in the YMCA seemed to have been a moderate version of it.

The Social Gospel in the YMCA was not a similar *terminus technicus* as the Four-fold Programme. The impact of Social Gospel was more in the thinking of people and a supply of Christian vocabulary to face social problems. In its focus on these problems, the YMCA remained a middle-class movement. Their point of view was mainly that of traditional philanthropy: the thrifty saw they had a moral duty to help the less lucky but social problems were not actually their personal problems. Like in Social Gospel movement in general, there were neglected voices in the YMCA as well. The most significant neglected groups who did not have their own voice heard were women and African-Americans, although there were activities for them as well⁶. I will focus on sex and race issues in the YMCA in chapter 5.1.

¹ Hopkins 1979, 274ff., 725 n.5; Putney 1995b, 277f. On Social Gospel in Mott’s theology, see Hopkins 1979, 622-633.
² Hilmer, email 18.2.2002.
³ Shedd 1955b, 451.
⁴ Hopkins 1951, 529.
⁵ Hopkins 1951, 532.
The influence of the Social Gospel in the North American YMCA was three-fold. First, the old principle of neutrality in controversial political issues was partly abandoned. This does not mean that the YMCA started to produce statements on every social evil but it means that taking a stand was no longer a similar taboo like in the 1850s, when the slave question was the topic. Moreover, because of local independence, the YMCA was divided in its attitude towards social problems. Second, along with the Social Gospel, sociology\(^1\), and social and behavioural sciences in general, became important in the YMCA as well\(^2\). The YMCA bureau of surveys was established in the Detroit Convention in 1919\(^3\) and it focused both on the work of the movement and on those social problems, which the movement had to face. Third, in its approach to social problems, the association wanted to use mere indirect ways to influence affairs. The YMCA kept the old principle that members and leaders can take part in political life as individuals but the associations should stay neutral\(^4\). The task of the YMCA was to educate young men to take responsibility in their country and societies. For this purpose, the movement launched the Christian Citizenship Program in the 1920’s. In cases when the YMCA was involved in labour problems, it aimed to create friendly relationships between employers and employees\(^5\).

The view of an immanent Kingdom of God explains some aspects in the YMCA mission. Although the wording of the mission “extending His Kingdom among young men” was the same, the content of the kingdom changed. It was no longer transcendent, with contacts only with individual souls but was manifested already on earth where justice and peace were present. As Latourette have said, when the YMCA program specialised, the special secretaries tended to leave religious issues to the general secretary. It could be supposed that for these secretaries, who were more interested in their specialised activity (like basketball), the Social Gospel gave legitimacy to their work. Team unity and club-life could be interpreted as manifestations of this kingdom. Moreover, physical education was an effective mean to extend this immanent kingdom\(^6\). George J. Fisher, the secretary of physical education, reported to the Edinburgh World’s Conference in 1913 on physical education and social responsibility as follows:

The Young Men’s Christian Association must appreciate more fully the relation of play to the development of social ethics. The playground is a laboratory for the development of right social relationships, for teaching cooperation, team work, self-control and self sacrifice, which are basal to charactermaking... A modern Christian agency will seek to bring to bear the principles of the Kingdom of God upon the whole life of young men and shape every influence which acts upon his life.\(^7\)

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1 Richard T. Ely, Josiah Strong George D. Herron and John R. Commons founded the American Institute of Christian Sociology in 1893 (Gonce 1996, 3).
2 Hopkins 1951, 535.
3 Hopkins 1951, 438.
4 Hopkins 1951, 535.
5 WConfPrep 1905a, 23; Hopkins 1951, 539, 567ff.
6 On physical education as a mean of missionary work, see Ha & Mangan (1994).
7 WConfPrep 1913b, 6.
The concept of the Kingdom of God as a community of converted souls changed to an earthly just society. It is a matter of taste if this is called ‘sacralising the gymnasium’ (as the YMCA intended) and ‘Christianizing the Social Order’ (as Rauschenbusch declared in the title of his book) or secularisation as opponents of the Social Gospel argued. Anyway, the same happened with the extension of this kingdom. Hopkins writes that in the 1920’s

Personal evangelism came to be looked upon, as George Stewart and Henry B. Wright phrased it, as “the art of helping men in their quest for a complete life through the processes of friendship.” Ultimately evangelism came to mean the total impact of the Association program upon the campus, including Bible and mission study, social study, and service, together with the public and personal presentation of the gospel in such a manner as to bring students face to face with their obligations to God and man.2

In time, this new emphasis led to the decrease and almost disappearance of Bible-clubs in the Campus YMCA’s. It is interesting to note that when Bible study decreased in North America, the World Conference of Christian Youth in 1939 in Amsterdam stated in its message: “many of us have discovered the Bible afresh.” This, in turn, may have been one spark for the Biblical renewal during and after WW II.

CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES resonated with religious ones. David I. Macleod has argued that the rise of physical education was linked to the urban middle class and its need to protect its lifestyle. He even notes that “this, rather than the better-known Social Gospel, was the churches’ primary reaction to social change.” In addition to this, urbanisation brought the fear that “middle-class boys were growing weak and effeminate,” as Macleod has said it. This turned men to Muscular Christianity, which emphasised male forms of religiosity. In the eve of the North American Civil War was especially “an era of beards and boots.” Along with the later uniform-dressed religious organisations (like the Boys’ Brigades and Scouts), YMCA physical education answered the need of masculinity.

Macleod argues that when the character-building program developed it was legitimated by popular psychology beliefs that the mind is “composed of several major faculties: intellect, emotion, will, and sometimes conscience.” These could be trained, like muscles, through exercise. The philosophy of the character builders was expressed by George J. Fisher in Edinburgh World’s Conference in 1913 as follows:

1 Rauschenbusch 1916(1912).
2 Hopkins 1951, 644f.
3 The number of students in Bible classes dropped during the 1920’s from 30,000 to 4,000 (Hopkins 1951, 645).
5 WComR 1955, 30f.
6 Macleod (1851, 12f.) notes that the rapid urbanisation also increased crime and argues that the Temperance Movement, reform movements, Tract and Bible societies, etc. were reactions to this.
7 Macleod 1983, 35.
8 Macleod 1983, 44.
9 Macleod 1983, 45.
Body, mind, soul, are one. Character has a physical basis... Brain and muscle are linked together as compactly as a chain of steel. Each muscle, directly or indirectly, is related to a cell in the brain. The initial movement of the muscle causes this brain cell to throw our processes. The more muscles used, the more cells thus stimulated... Motor cells may empower the cells of the intellect and the soul. That is to say by right bodily training we store up power in the motor brain which can be transferred to our intellects and our wills and our emotions empowering the former and enriching the latter, so that our bodies become the power stations of our higher life.1

Although the thinking was based on positivistic-naturalistic anthropology, there was some empirical wisdom in it. If a man is in good condition, his brains get more oxygen and he is not as tired as his fellow in bad condition is. In this sense, muscles influence mental condition, which, in turn, may influence, for example, man’s god-representation2. However, the important issue is that the idea of a link between muscles, brains and even soul legitimated the YMCA emphasis on physical education as a method of Christian youth work.

THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES of the physical education programs for associations helped the diffusion of the idea. When the gymnasium had gained legitimacy within the YMCA, the idea could start to spread. The expansion started in the 1880’s in the US. While in 1876 there were only two gymnasiums and three physical directors, ten years later, there were 101 gymnasiums and 35 physical directors. In 1896, the figures were 495 and 220.3 The expansion of gymnastics was favoured by the diminishing of revival and of participation in religious meetings. The idea also spread to other countries and the idea of Four-fold work was accepted in Europe as well4. Mayer N. Zald, who looks at the YMCA from the organisation study perspective, underlines the economic opportunity structures in the development of the gymnasium in the YMCA. He argues that traditional collections and philanthropical donations “did not provide much financial stability” and that both residences and gymnasiums stabilised the economic status of YMCAs.5

Zald notes that in the first half of the 20th century business income (= accommodation and gymnasium services to non-members) was almost half of YMCA income. However, the larger the association, the larger role that business income had in its budget. In this sense, the YMCA of the US was economically no more

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1 WConfPrep 1913b, 4.
2 For example, if one is tired and everything seems to fall on him, it is easy to see God as Demander, as well.
3 Zald 1970, 33; Shedd 1955, 289.
4 Senior Director of Physical Education for Europe, Geo E. Goss (WComPle 1922a, 1) reported to the Copenhagen Plenary in 1922 as follows: “The second Association to include physical activities in its programme was Lausanne, (Switzerland) which took this action in 1872; the third, Liverpool, (England) in 1877; the next associations were: Montreal and Toronto (Canada), Stockholm (Sweden) and Paris (France), all of which commenced in 1888.” Goss probably meant that in these years those associations officially accepted the Four-fold Programme as their mission. As we saw above, there were already 101 gymnasiums in the US in 1886.
5 Zald 1970, 43ff.
“a membership organisation, since many non-members paid for services”, as Zald puts it.¹

TRADITIONAL EVANGELISM and the Four-fold Programme became two alternate ways of activities in the US. When the New York Association led the development of the Four-fold Programme, the Chicago Association remained in the traditional Evangelical program. Morse describes the difference between these associations with the following quotation of an International Committee member:

In the year 1870, soon after the New York building had been dedicated, I visited Chicago, and as a beginner in Association work was deeply impressed with the contrast between the building which I had just left in New York, and the one in Chicago, with its very large hall and ample provisions for general evangelistic services for all the community, held there every Sunday. But I found in this Chicago building comparatively little accommodation for the fourfold, distinctive work for young men. These two buildings stood, in 1870, for the two different phases of work then prevalent in the Associations.²

This difference of approaches was seen in a meeting of American secretaries in 1879 at Baltimore, when the former secretary of Chicago YMCA, Dwight L. Moody, explained his resignation from the YMCA:

There are many ways of reaching young men; I would recommend a gymnasium, classes, medical lectures, social receptions, music, and all unobjectionable agencies; these are for week days. We do not want simply evangelistic meetings. I have tried that method in Association work and failed; so I gave it up and became an evangelist. You cannot do both and succeed. …Again, let me say, a man cannot be an evangelist and a general secretary without spoiling his work in both.³

From then on, the Four-fold Programme became the major strategy of the association work instead of large Evangelical campaigns. This does not mean that religious activities were downplayed. On the contrary, the idea of symmetrical manhood was understood as means of evangelisation. L. Wilbur Messer, general secretary of the Chicago YMCA, expressed the mission in his address to the Basle World’s Conference in 1898 as follows: “The association seeks to preach the Gospel to young men - good news, the full and free salvation, which purifies the heart, redeems and sanctifies the body, enlightens the mind, anti brightens and makes attractive the social nature.⁴”

A bit later in Messer’s paper the missionary emphasis was even more stressed:

The membership, where suitable equipment is provided, is composed more largely of non-Christians than of professed disciples of Christ. This fact is inspiring because it enables the association to reach religiously and develop broadly great numbers of young men who are prejudiced against Christ and his Church. The command of our Master, ringing down through the centuries, is to ‘preach the gospel to every creature.’ The association seeks to obey this injunction among all young men.⁵

¹ Zald 1970, 45.
² Morse 1913, 77ff.
³ Morse 1913, 123ff.
⁴ WConfPrep 1898a, 5.
⁵ WConfPrep 1898a, 6.
On the other hand, although the idea of the Red Triangle was to develop the whole man, in time the idea led to specialisation of various activities. In some fields, like boys’ work, the basic idea was kept. However, among older age groups the specialisation led to a situation where the idea of the Red Triangle was manifested only in national and association levels – no longer on an individual level. Thus, the association might have Bible classes, choirs and sports facilities but these activities served separate constituency segments. In this sense, ‘means became ends by themselves’ when special programs got their independent status and were just tools of the missionary work any more.

TO SUM UP, physical education in North America was legitimat ed by religious arguments that the movement got from Muscular Christianity and Social Gospel. In the YMCA, the first legitimisation was given in the 1858 World’s Conference, when ‘amusements’ in the YMCA were allowed. This was linked to cultural trends, which emphasised manliness in religion and popular psychology arguments that said that with training muscles one can also train mental and spiritual virtues. Economic consequences of the adoption of physical education were favourable for the YMCA because they gave a stable flow of income. This, in turn, increased the popularity of the Four-fold Programme, and traditional evangelism started to diminish in the YMCA.

4.2.3. World Service of the North American YMCA

The North American YMCA model was largely related to this Four-fold Programme. Since the North American YMCA was the largest and most prosperous, it was inevitable that the model also spread to other parts of the world through their foreign work. In Europe, the model caused controversies, but in other continents, like in South and Central America and Asia, it was an effective tool for adaptation to new areas. The North American movement had established a good secretary education system through two training schools in Chicago and Springfield and these schools trained secretaries from other countries as well. Thus, the American YMCA idea diffused through leadership education. I deal with this aspect more in detail below.

The leaders that the North American YMCA supplied to the World’s Alliance were many. Some of them served as members of various boards and some belonged to the staff. Among them were Luther Wishard, John R. Mott, Walter W. Gethman, Tracy Strong, Edgar M. Robinson, Owen E. Pence, Paul M. Limbert, and numerous others who carried responsibility for the global mission of the YMCA. Especially after 1926, when John R. Mott was elected as a president of the World’s Alliance, American influence increased and tensions between the

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1 Latourette 1957, 28 (see note 5 on page 154).
2 This expression is from Robert K. Merton (1957). David Sills (1957, 62-69) made the classical application of Merton’s thesis in voluntary organisations. The basic idea is that the more an organisation bureaucratises, the more the final end is set aside and practices, procedures and activities replace them.
Alliance and the NAIC were reduced. For example, the three next general secretaries came from the USA.\(^1\)

The foreign work, or as it was later called, World Service\(^2\), of the North American YMCA had, however, perhaps the most longstanding effects on the mission view of the whole YMCA movement, World’s Alliance included. The foreign work, which started in 1880s, was intimately linked with the Student Volunteer Movement of the YMCA. It was from its ranks that the ‘fraternal secretaries’ as the YMCA foreign workers were called, were recruited. It was the YMCA student movement, which took as a declaration of its purpose “the evangelization of the world in this generation\(^3\).” It was also among this movement where the policy and practices of the foreign work were developed.\(^4\)

The principles of the foreign work were as follows. First, the task was not general missionary work but work among young men in respective countries. Second, the task was to plant “self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating” indigenous YMCAs. Third, to enter a new field required a call from Evangelical missionaries working in the country. Fourth, fraternal secretaries should have experience in general secretary work and have a university degree. Fifth, the expansion work could be done on a bilateral national basis instead of via central supervision of Geneva.\(^5\)

In its foreign work, the North American YMCA, like many other missionary agencies, frequently confused their Christian mission and American patriotism. From the European point of view, this was seen as American imperialism\(^6\). There is, however, also a positive explanation for this bias that is directly linked to the extension of God’s Kingdom. H. Richard Niebuhr\(^7\) has argued that the early settlers of North America constructed their new settlements according to the Bible. Free from political struggle for survival (like its European counterparts) progressive Protestantism was free to implement Christian principles in society. This thinking laid the foundation for the view of America as a Christian nation. Thus, when American Protestantism started its missionary work, there was still an inherited view that spreading the American way of life was one essential part of spreading the gospel. Now, we must remember that this view of America as a Christian nation was an idealised one. It ignored the rights of the working class, as the Social Gospel stated. Moreover, it also ignored the rights of native Americans and African-Americans. However, the rise of the Social Gospel strengthened the

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2 On World Service, see Latourette (1957).
3 Expression “evangelization of the world in this generation” is originally from Arthur T. Pierson who used it in his sermon during the Mt. Hermon student conference in 1886 (Hopkins 1951, 297; 1979,70). The expression has become known via John R. Mott (see chapter 5.3.4.), who used the slogan in the title of his manual for Missionary Movement in 1900 (Mott 1900).
5 Latourette 1957, 50, 97; Shedd 1955b, 306ff., 310f.
6 See Ahonen 1983.
7 Niebuhr 1959, 45-87.
idealised view of America and it was this idealised version of Christian social life that was preached, not the cruel reality.

The major foreign fields where the North American YMCA worked during 1888-1955 were Asia, South and Central America, and Europe. In the first two continents, the work was extension work whereas in Europe the work focused on migrants, prisoners of war, refugees and support for the establishment of North American-type city associations. Map 2, adjoining reveals where the North American fraternal secretaries worked before 1955 \(^1\).

**TO SUM UP**, the North American YMCA supplied many leaders to the World’s Alliance who bridged the gap between the Alliance and the NAIC. The World Service of the NAIC was closely bound to the Student Volunteer Movement, which had the watchword “evangelization of the world in this generation.” The work was carried out in co-operation with local missionaries and the goal was the establishment of independent new YMCAs. The major fields, where 700 Americans worked were Asia, Europe and Latin America.

### 4.2.4. The Paris Basis and Other Bases

In North America, the Boston YMCA copied the London purpose but restricted its membership to men from Evangelical churches \(^2\). When the North American Confederation was founded, it adopted the same test. This did not change when both the 1855 Convention in Cincinnati and the 1856 Convention adopted the Paris Basis as “binding upon the Confederation and upon its Central Committee \(^3\).”

Because of the pressure from Protestant churches, the Evangelical Test of the Boston YMCA was adopted in 1869 as the Portland Basis, which restricted membership to Evangelical churches. The Portland Basis was to be the basis of American associations until 1931 when it was revised. The Portland Basis of 1869 stated as follows:

**Resolved**: That the Associations organized after this date shall be entitled to representation in future conferences of the Associated Young Men’s Christian Associations of North America, upon condition that they be severally composed of young men in communion with Evangelical churches (provided that in places where Associations are formed by a single denomination, members of other denominations are not excluded therefrom), and active membership

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\(^1\) The map base is from Latourette (1957, cover sheet). I have omitted from his map those YMCAs that did not receive North American help and added the projects that ended before Latourette’s publication (he illustrated only those projects that were ongoing in 1957). I have also added the years when aid was given.

\(^2\) Shedd 1955a, 70f.

\(^3\) Quoted by Hopkins 1951, 80. See also Ross (1951, 49f.). Morse (1913, 52) says that the Paris Basis was “adopted as a basis of world fellowship.” However, this might be a simplification of the process. Both Hopkins (1951, 362-369) and Ross (1951, 57ff.) state that the restriction to Evangelical churches was made in 1869 and that the interpretation of the Paris Basis as an international bond occurred only then.
and the right to hold office be conferred only upon young men who are members in good standing of Evangelical churches.\(^1\)

The definition of Evangelical churches had already been made in Detroit in 1868:

…And we hold those churches to be Evangelical which, maintaining the Holy Scriptures to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (the only begotten of the Father, King of kings, and Lord of lords, in whom dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and who was made sin for us, though knowing no sin, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree) as the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved from everlasting punishment and to life eternal.\(^2\)

Thus, the North American movement restricted its membership to ‘Evangelical’ churches. However, the NAIC refused to give a list of churches it regarded as ‘Evangelical’\(^3\). In most cases, it meant exclusion of non-Protestant, Universalist and Unitarian churches but, when the local associations had the right to define the concept, there were also Catholic members in the North American YMCA. As we have seen, the problems of the Portland Basis emerged when the North American movement started its missionary work. In Latin America and in Asia, the Paris Basis was a more suitable basis because it focused on personal faith and did not mention organisational affiliation to churches.

Experiences in the missionary field created pressure to widen the Basis in North America as well. In 1907 a process\(^4\) of changing the membership requirements started when Student YMCAs were authorised to use a personal test, which followed the wording of the Paris Basis. In 1922, 10 per cent of board members were allowed to be other than Evangelicals (i.e. Catholics) and in 1931, the International Convention in Cleveland adopted the following Basis, which replaced the Portland Basis:

The Young Men’s Christian Association we regard as being, in its essential genius, a worldwide fellowship of men and boys united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ for the purpose of building Christian personality and a Christian society.\(^5\)

This statement of purpose stressed religious commitment rather than belief\(^6\) and incorporated the Four-fold Programme into its basis. In this, the statement was loyal to the original YMCA idea: it was not a question of believing something but acting according to the belief. At the same time, the decision gave rise to criticism. For example, Visser ‘t Hooft, the future general secretary of the WCC, criticised somewhat similar objectives as being “secularized Christianity”. Other critics feared that the YMCA would lose its Christian character. In practice the Cleveland Basis legitimised practice in North America. When the YMCA became

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\(^1\) Morse 1913, 279f.
\(^2\) Morse 1913, 279.
\(^3\) Morse 1913, 127; Latourette 1957, 25.
\(^4\) On the process, see Hopkins (1951, 414ff., 512ff., 519-537), Ross (1951, 326-333, 341-347).
\(^5\) Hopkins 1951, 521, 524ff.; Ross 1951, 58, 341.
\(^6\) Hopkins 1951, 520.
\(^7\) Ross 1951, 346.
more and more a community agency, a pressure emerged to open YMCA boards to influential Catholics and Jews in society. In principle, the Cleveland statement did not restrict the membership to Christians any more: it was the individual’s own decision as to what he understood by loyalty to Jesus Christ.

**TO SUM UP**, the North American YMCA adopted the Paris Basis but soon replaced it with the Portland Basis, which restricted the membership to members of Evangelical churches. In foreign work, however, it proved to be impractical and there the Paris Basis was frequently used as a personal test for membership. In the beginning of the 20th century, pressure emerged in North America also and the Portland Basis was replaced with a basis that stated loyalty to Christ instead of church membership.

### 4.2.5. North American Contribution to the YMCA Mission View

The main contribution of the North American YMCA on the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs was definitely the planting of the Four-fold Programme in different YMCAs of the world. Although the origins of the program can be traced to European YMCAs before the Paris meeting in 1855, the totality was an American product. Along with the other impacts of the North American movement, came from the challenge of the Social Gospel. In general, the impact of the adoption of Four-fold Programme and emphasis on social issues has widened the mission view of the YMCA from traditional evangelism to general welfare concerns. While traditional Evangelicalism emphasised evangelism, Bible classes and Christian charity, the Four-fold Programme expanded charity to mean the well being of the whole man, and the Social Gospel expanded it to be the welfare of the whole society. At the same time, the focus changed from reactive charity to prevention of the need of charity by teaching hygiene, giving education and advocating a healthy lifestyle. Although the core of physical education was in gymnastics and sports, it also included the whole range of human physical well being. With the Four-fold Programme, the YMCA aimed to sacralise the secular.

When the idea of the Red Triangle was legitimated, it had similar consequences to those which are known from the missionary fields. If proclaiming the Gospel is impossible, it can be put aside because other fields of activities compensate for the lack of preaching (like missionary hospitals in countries that do not permit religious preaching). As we will see below, in Latin America, religious activities were impossible because of Catholic resistance. In that situation, concentration on social work and physical education was not seen as giving up on the final goal.

Other North American contributions to the mission view of the YMCA were more strategic and tactical. Planning was definitely one of them. North Americans were the first who started to plan how the YMCA could act as an effective organisation. They were the ones who further developed the early organisational models of large city associations with large buildings, general secretaries, boards, fund raising campaigns, social security of the staff (retirement fund), etc. Their secre-
tary training colleges in Chicago and Springfield taught these organisational models both to Americans and YMCA secretaries of other lands. Along with this, their vast foreign work planted the North American YMCA model into other countries. In the next chapters, we will see how the YMCA developed in other parts of the world - with and without North Americans.
4.3. Expansion of Evangelical Activities in Europe

4.3.1. YMCA Extension and Expansion in Europe

THE EXTENSION OF THE YMCA IN EUROPE started from two centres: Elberfeld in Germany and the Central International Committee in Geneva. The role of German Jünglingsvereine in European diffusion is emphasised when we get a piece of information from Shedd that the Russian YMCA got its start through a German pastor residing in Paris. Thus, also the Russian YMCA was born among Germans residing in that country. The German movement served for long as a mother organisation for these Jünglingsvereine outside the country. Along with the direct affiliation of associations to the German movement, the Jünglingsvereine gave a model for the Nordic YMCAs as well. A closer look at those countries where the YMCA extended during its first 40 years shows that they were, except for Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, all influenced by the German movement either directly or indirectly. The influence of the World’s Alliance, in turn, was seen in Eastern European countries. Other old YMCAs had a minimal influence in YMCA extension in Europe.

In Map 2, the ways that the North American YMCA supported both old and new European YMCAs are presented. I return later to deal with this issue and its consequences for the world movement but now I focus on the early expansion of the European YMCA. As a Protestant Movement, the new potential territories for YMCA expansion were the Protestant areas in Europe. The YMCA expansion in Europe can be seen in Map 3 and in Table 12.

British YMCA missionary work in Europe seems to have remained in the British Isles. American influence came only after the turn of the century. The expansion work of the World’s Alliance focused first on Latin countries, where YMCAs had emerged independently, and only in the 1890s did their gaze turn to the East. Thus, it could be supposed that the German Jünglingsvereine model would have some effect on the association frame of these new movements.

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1 Shedd 1955, 253f. The Norwegian YMCA also had, in part, its roots in the German branch of the Paris YMCA: Peter Waage, one of the founders of the Norwegian YMCA, got his first contact with the YMCA when he studied in the town (Idem 256).

2 Map 3 and table 12 are based on information in the following documents: The YMCA of the World 1958 (9, 51, 58, 65, 80f., 85f., 99f., 144,173f.); Latourette (1957, 363-429) Shedd (1955b, 252-267); World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909; WComR 1884, 1891, 1898, 1905 and 1955.
Map 3: YMCA extension in Europe
Table 12: First YMCAs in Europe outside the founding countries of the World's Alliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>First YMCAs</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Source if YMCA influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>&lt;1868-1938, 1945-</td>
<td>Early groups got their impact from German <em>Junglingsvereine</em>. Early support also from the World’s Alliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>1883-1951</td>
<td>Fermaud’s initiative during his travel. Frequent visits by Geneva Executive members. NAIC influence since 1888.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>1878-</td>
<td>Originally domestic Lutheran organisation. German influence through articles in <em>Junglingsbote</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Narva</td>
<td>1919-1940</td>
<td>Founded by NAIC fraternal secretaries returning from Russia. German ethnic groups affiliated to the German <em>Junglingsbund</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Turku</td>
<td>1886-</td>
<td>Impact from Swedish YWCA 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helsinki</td>
<td>1888-</td>
<td>Direct influence of the Stockholm World’s Conference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>1892-</td>
<td>Organised by Wishard. NAIC fraternal secretory since 1918.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>1879-1949</td>
<td>Founded as a German <em>Junglingsverein</em> (??*). Reorganised by Fermaud in 1883.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Reykjavik</td>
<td>1899-</td>
<td>Founded by an Icelandic pastor who studied in Copenhagen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>1949-</td>
<td>Part of the YMCA of England, Ireland and Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Piedmont Valley</td>
<td>1851-</td>
<td>Waldesian initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venice</td>
<td>1868-</td>
<td>Non-Waldesian domestic Protestant origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turin</td>
<td>1853-?, 1878-</td>
<td>Early Catholic group. Later one domestic Protestant origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Riga</td>
<td>1919-1940</td>
<td>Begun as military work. NAIC fraternal secretary 1919-34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Stavanger</td>
<td>1868-</td>
<td>Founded by a student who had contacts with Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Warsaw</td>
<td>1884-1949</td>
<td>Founded after Fermaud’s visit. NAIC fraternal secretaries since 1919. German ethnic groups affiliated to the German <em>Junglingsbund</em>. Polish YMCA in London since 1939.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Porto</td>
<td>1894-</td>
<td>Founded by a local who was a friend of Mott. Swiss fraternal secretory from 1902-?. NAIC support 1905-32.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumania</td>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>&lt;1902-47</td>
<td>Founded by the former president of Brussels YMCA 3. Re-started as military work. NAIC fraternal secretaries 1916-41.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>St. Petersburg</td>
<td>&lt;1856-?, 1900-17</td>
<td>Early German <em>Junglingsverein</em> contacts. NAIC influence since 1900. Philidus’ travel 1902.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Jönköping</td>
<td>1855-</td>
<td>Modelled according to German <em>Junglingsvereine</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>1862-</td>
<td>First group inspired by the EA. Second impact from Paris and World’s Alliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>Belgrad</td>
<td>&lt;1913-1938</td>
<td>Organised during Johannot’s travels. Mostly German members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Louhivuori 1915, 17ff.
2 Mentioned in a letter from Johannes Koenig to Fermaud (Shedd 1955b, 263).
3 WComR 1905, 45f.
### Table 13: Expansion of European YMCAs 1855-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Secretaries</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>abolished</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Belgium</strong></td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,383</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bulgaria</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Czechoslovakia</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>29,163</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,385</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Estonia</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>8,654</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>1,385</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9,220</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,385</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1,996</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3,320</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Great Britain</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5,640</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>76,161</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>98,186</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td><strong>Greece</strong></td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1,532</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3,636</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>336</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3,173</td>
<td>44,995</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>8,879</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>827</td>
<td>1,875</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,875</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italy</strong></td>
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<td>36</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1,523</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latvia</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Luxembourg</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>abolished</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norway</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>abolish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poland</strong></td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>4,363</td>
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<td><strong>Portugal</strong></td>
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<td>250</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,227</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>abolished</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rumania</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,996</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>25,645</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Russia</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,927</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>7,511</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>20,663</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>75,432</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweden</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>5,247</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>8,504</td>
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<td>489</td>
<td>11,625</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Switzerland</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9,402</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>abolished</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>293</td>
<td>13,496</td>
<td>2,633</td>
<td>149,595</td>
<td>93,504</td>
<td>305,154</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>8,537</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>5,905</td>
<td>608,538</td>
<td>1,108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of the World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1937; 1938.

* Austrian and Czechoslovakian figures in 1891 are from the 1891 Report of the World’s Committee (WComR 1891).

1 Includes Scotland

2 In 1938, Russian Student Christian Movement outside Russia

3 = Data not available in source statistics

### THE LARGEST MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE have been in Britain and Germany. According to Table 13, they have constituted more than half of the associations, from 40 to 90 per cent of membership, and from 61 to 100 per cent of secretaryship. The German YMCA has continuously increased in all measurements (except during the Nazi period when the movement was abolished). In Britain, on the other hand, there was a dramatic turnover in the number of associations between 1905 and 1938. From then on, their number has decreased. During this period, a drop of members also occurred. Although the membership in the British movement later...
increased, it did not reach the 1905 amount. Only the number of British secretaries grew steadily. This has been the only figure that has been (except 1905) higher all the time in Britain than in Germany.

A second block among European YMCA s was formed by the Nordic countries, Czechoslovakia, France, Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland, which during the period reached over 10,000 members. Together they formed 42% of membership, 54% of associations and 27% of secretaryship in 1938. During WW II, the abolition of the Czech and Polish YMCA s reduced the share of these ‘middle-sized’ YMCA s. In 1955, they constituted 26% of membership, 35% of associations and 23% of secretaries. The weak YMCA movements could be found in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox countries.

The Central International Committee of the World’s Alliance was founded in 1878. Although the restrictions of mandate limited the possibilities of the Central International Committee, their work started to extend in Europe. In Geneva 1878 there were already representatives from Australia, Denmark, Italy, South Africa, Spain and Sweden1. From then on the work started in Norway, Russia, Baltic provinces, Bohemia, Hungary, Finland and Portugal. Until the end of 19th century, the only European countries where the YMCA did not exist were Serbia and Montenegro.

The Cleveland 1931 report mentions that “another striking characteristic of this epoch was the internal organisation established in nearly all the countries mentioned.” Although many national movements already had their national alliances, Britain and Germany lacked national committees. It was a lot due to international contacts that such committees were founded in those countries, as well as in Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain and Switzerland. During this period, the World’s Alliance became a federation of national alliances instead of local associations.2

THE RATIOS OF ASSOCIATIONS, SECRETARIES AND MEMBERS are presented in Table 14, which has the figures of the largest national YMCA s in Europe from 1855 to 1955. We can see that the average number of members per association in whole Europe was rather stable during the whole period, being circa 50 members per association. However, after the Second World War the average membership ratio doubled. It seems that there have traditionally been more members per association in Britain than in Germany and other European countries. The British trend intensified in the 1930s when a dramatic decrease of British associations occurred (from 1,996 in 1905 to 602 in 1938). In the group of ‘middle-sized’ YMCA movements, the ratio of members per association has always been lower than the European average. It has even been lower than in Germany (except in 19383). When the relative power of the ‘middle-sized’ YMCA s in World’s Conferences and World’s Committee continuously increased4, it might be

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1 WConPrep 1905e, 6f.; Shedd 1955b, 214.
2 WComR 1931, 21f.
3 In 1938, Poland and Rumania increased this figure because they had few associations with large membership. Evidently, American influence was seen, which favoured large city associations.
4 I deal with this later when I focus on the changes of the structure of the World’s Alliance (in chap-
supposed that a potential emerged that the World’s Alliance would focus on issues that were important to small associations. While large associations (and national movements) were self-sufficient, the small associations (and national movements) did not have similar capacity for leadership training, camps, producing material, doing research work etc. Thus, it would be in their interest that the World’s Alliance would organise these services for them. To some extent, the World’s Alliance responded this need.

Table 14: Ratio of associations, members and secretaries in European YMCAs, 1855-1955.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1855</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany Members / associations</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3,214</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain Members / secretaries</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2,820</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-sized YMCAs Members / associations</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1,764</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe Total Members / secretaries</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1575</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The absolute and relative increase of secretaries from 1855 to 1955 shows that in the YMCA there was an ongoing professionalisation process. Although the majority of associations were still on a voluntary basis in 1955, importance of professional secretariats seems to have increased. As we will see later, this was the model that the North American YMCA in particular, favoured. Most secretariats assumedly being in large city associations; this created a twofold potential for the YMCA mission. On one hand, it downplayed the influence of small associations, as professionals could occupy a central role in national policy making either directly or indirectly. Directly they could influence various committees and conferences because lay people did not have similar possibilities to attend as professionals, who could use their work time for policy planning. Moreover, it may be supposed that small associations did not send delegates to national meetings as often as the large ones did. Indirectly, professionals developed organisational centres, which served as models for other organisations in the same field. On the other hand, Zald (1970, 31) refers to this problem when he notes that “Historically, it has been the smaller Associations that did not report. In general there has been an increased rate of report filing as Associations developed permanent staff and achieved stability.” In institutional theory, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have noted how institutional isomorphism

1 For example, the Report of the World’s Committee 1926 to Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference (WComR 1926, 70f.) emphasised these themes.
2 Zald (1970, 31) refers to this problem when he notes that “Historically, it has been the smaller Associations that did not report. In general there has been an increased rate of report filing as Associations developed permanent staff and achieved stability.”
3 In institutional theory, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have noted how institutional isomorphism
other hand, increase of the influence of professionals, in general, tends to ‘com-
mercialise’ nonprofit organisations and there is a tendency that ‘members’ be-
come ‘clients’. Often, this also means that ‘means’ become ‘ends’ when employ-
ees in special fields strive for the institutionalisation of their particular activity.
From this perspective, the increase of professional influence in the YMCA also
created a potential for the change of the YMCA mission. Especially since, as said
above, the link between special activities and the YMCA Christian mission weak-
ened.

TO SUM UP, YMCA extension in Europe after 1855 was mainly due the
work of the German Jünglingsbund and the World’s Alliance. Other ‘old
YMCA’ played a minimal role in Europe. Germany and Britain have been the
two largest national movements and the ‘middle-sized’ block has been constituted
of movements in Protestant countries, France and Poland. It is evident that the
German association model became dominant in Europe. In general, European
YMCA were relatively small, average membership per association being from 50
to 90 during 1855-1955. This meant that they, in general, did not have resources
to organise leadership training by themselves. When they had a majority in the
World’s Committee, their needs directed the policy of the World’s Alliance. Al-
though professional leadership increased in Europe as well, the majority of asso-
ciations were on a voluntary basis in 1955.

4.3.2. Paris Basis in European Movements

In Europe, there were differences in attitudes to the Paris Basis - depending both
on the country and on the time. It was used as a personal statement of faith, a ba-
sis of national and/or local associations or, like in North America, as a bond be-
tween national movements.
In France and Switzerland the Paris Basis was used both as a statement of purpose
for local associations and cantonal federations and frequently as a personal con-
fession of faith\(^1\). A candidate was to sign it before he was accepted as a member.
The French movement and some local associations in Switzerland (like Geneva)
added to it a reference to the Divine inspiration of the Bible\(^2\), which the Swiss had
proposed in Paris in 1855. In general, the Swiss movement has been faithful to the
Paris Basis. In 1930, the French movement returned to the original wording al-
though the Basis text was accompanied by an article, which had been influenced
by the American Four-fold ideology: “The YMCAs of France encourage the de-
leads to similar policies and practices. In this process, normative institutional isomorphism, related
to professionalism, is one significant factor.
\(^1\) James Barrelet from Lausanne presented this double view in the Jubilee Conference in 1905: “The
terms of the statutes… are a confession of faith; they are Christians who speak thus. By this decla-
ration, they distinguish their society from many other excellent associations, which have not this
religious character (WConfPrep 1905d, 4).”
\(^2\) WConf 1855a, 21.
velopment of the personality of their members in all ways, religious, moral, intellectual and physical.”

In other middle-sized movements in the Nordic countries, Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Paris Basis was primarily used as a basis of national movements and, in some cases, also as a basis of local associations. Especially in Denmark and Norway, it was only a basis of national movements.

In Britain, the London YMCA had its rule VII, which defined the membership requirements in the London YMCA to be either membership in a Christian church or proof of personal conversion. This was the requirement for an association to become a branch of the London YMCA. Associations, which adopted the Paris Basis, but not Rule VII, were affiliated with the World’s Alliance but not with London. When the national alliances was formed in 1882, it adopted the Paris Basis in its English form (=doctrine pro faith).

In Germany, the Paris Basis was not adopted in the same way as in other European countries. The Jünglingsvereine had adopted the following principle in 1850: “[Jünglingsvereine] should not be based on a humanistic, but on a firm Christian basis. However, they should be open to everyone, and a free social intercourse should not be limited.” After the Paris Conference in 1855, the Rheinisch-Westphälische Bund made the following decision:

Up to the present it has always been a principle of our Rheinisch-Westphälische Bund to admit as members not only those young men who give a proof of their faith but also those who fulfil purely moral requirements; the Committee therefore is of opinion that it is neither advisable nor practicable to alter our activity according to the Paris principles. However, it is convinced of the importance of the resolutions adopted in Paris and wishes that our Rheinisch-Westphälische Jünglingsbund, while retaining entirely its own characteristics, enter into the Alliance with the right to send its members to all other allied Associations, in which case it is admitted that the allied Associations have the right to judge if they will admit them as active members or only as participants.

In this decision one emphasis of the German movement was seen. As we have seen, the Germans accepted as members young men of moral character as well - not only converted ones. The faith requirement of the Paris Basis was stricter than their requirements. Another emphasis of Germans was their loyalty to their majority church. The German movement understood the Paris Basis as a bond between the national movements in the World’s Alliance, like the Preamble of the Basis states. Germans, along with Americans, stressed the words ‘whilst preserving a complete independence as to their particular organization and modes of action’. These national movements had their own bases. The quotation of the Preamble made it possible to look the needs of local society and adopt the work in different contexts.

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1 WComPle 1953b, 12f., 15 (quotation p. 13); Shedd 1955a, 142.
2 WConf 1855a, 59; Shedd 1955a, 25.
3 WComPle 1953b, 12; Shedd 1955a, 142f., 148f., 203f., 250.
4 Quoted by Stursberg 1977, 38 (my translation from the original German text).
5 Stursberg 1977, 58 (English translation from the German original text in Shedd 1955a, 142 - italics from Shedd).
6 Shedd 1955a, 143.
This different view of the role of the Paris Basis led to a serious confrontation in 1905 that almost broke the World’s Alliance. The confrontation was overcome and the Jubilee Conference affirmed the Paris Basis. This seems to have had an influence in Germany where the National Committee did not accept the Hesse association to the Bund in 1908 because it did not fully accept the Paris Basis. Senaud theorises that another reason for the change was the fear of theological controversy in the next World’s Conference in Germany, which would take place in Barmen-Elberfeld in 1909.

In general, the national church context of German Jünglingsvereine, seem to have pushed it to formulate its mission in traditional theological language and to fit it to the doctrines of the church. In 1906, after the adoption of the Jubilee Declaration, which was signed by the German movement as well, the German National Council adopted the following declaration:

The Board of Directors of the National Alliance of Protestant Young Men’s Associations in Germany acknowledges the Paris Basis with all its supplements as the foundation of its missionary work amongst young men, and will strive to further this work:

(a) whilst asserting its faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour, who is true God, born by our eternal Father, as well as true man, born by the virgin Mary, and with the explicit objective of guiding young men to Jesus, so that they will acknowledge him as their Lord and Saviour;

(b) in loving harmony with all faithful Christians belonging to the Christian Church in accordance with Article 7 of the Augsburg Confession, regardless of their membership in any particular church, notwithstanding the fact that, generally speaking, due to the historic development of the Christian Church in Germany, individual regional churches constitute the ground on which our work must be done;

(c) in steadfast pursuance of the objective of encouraging and calling upon each individual member to take an active part in the extension of God’s Kingdom amongst young men, whereby the scope and nature of their cooperation has to be determined by the local conditions.

With this decision, the Board of Directors does not wish to establish a legal framework, but merely set forth a direction and objectives for a development deemed necessary in the alliances and local organisations.

The important point in this statement is that although the Council expresses the mission in theological language, it is only advice as to how the mission should be interpreted in the future.

While the Paris Basis had been a problem to Jünglingsvereine, the American-type City YMCAs did not have any problems with the Basis. The Berlin CVJM

1 WComPle 1953b, 13.
2 Der Vorstand der Nationalvereinigung der ev. Jünglingsbundnisse Deutschlands - In Germany, there were several regional Bunde, which were organised on basis of German Landeskirche. Thus, the National Council was a co-operative organisation of these relatively independent Bunde. Additionally, there were also independent American-type city-associations. (see Shedd 1955b, 365, 388) On the organisation of German YMCA, Paul Limbert (1997, 227), who was the general secretary of the World’s Alliance 1953-1963, said: “Their national organization was complicated and I am not sure if I ever understood it fully.”
3 Stursberg 1977, 132f. (I thank the German National Council Staff on the translation from German to English)
had adopted the Paris Basis in its constitution from the beginning and other city YMCAs followed suit.¹

Although Jünglingsvereine were de facto church associations, they were de jure independent. It was more a question of personal than organisational union. The problem got a new dimension in 1884 when the German Baptist Young Men’s Union² officially requested membership of the World’s Alliance. This time it was a question of an organisation, which was also de jure denominational body. Formal affiliation became the dividing line and the admission was rejected³. Thus, the Paris Basis had become an interdenominational criterion for membership. Organisations that accepted members from only one denomination could not be members of the World’s Alliance. A similar problem also occurred in the case of the Danish and the Norwegian Movements, which were officially Lutheran organisations at first. Neither of them were accepted as a member until they changed their rules in 1899 and accepted the Paris Basis as their basis⁴.

TO SUM UP, in the Latin Europe, the Paris Basis was frequently used as a personal test and a basis of national movements and local associations. In middle-sized movements, it was primarily a national basis but it was often also in constitutions of local associations as well. In Britain, there were two kinds of associations, those that followed the Latin model and those, affiliated with the London YMCA, who followed the membership requirements of the London YMCA. For them, the Paris Basis was a bond between national movements. Germany also had two kinds of associations. Old Jünglingsvereine kept their old membership criteria but the new American-type city-associations accepted the Paris Basis in their constitutions. Thus, in membership requirements, the model of the Paris Basis as a national and local basis has been prevalent.

4.3.3. European Contributions to the Mission View of the YMCA

As the YMCA is a European invention, it is natural that European emphases have had important part in the mission view of the World’s Alliance. However, as we have already seen in chapter three, there were basically two competing YMCA models in Europe. In this sub-chapter, we have seen that in Europe the German model was prevalent. German Jünglingsvereine were able to diffuse their model in new countries and they adopted the German parish-attached model of the YMCA. This had some consequences. First, YMCAs were ecclesiolae in ecclesia - small groups, which saw themselves as parts of their respective national churches. Only in Britain, did the YMCA develop a clear interdenominational identity. Second, perhaps because of these links to parishes, the YMCAs on the Continent remained small and they were mainly on a voluntary basis. Third, European YMCAs did not form similar common organ as the North American

¹ WComPle 1953b, 14.
² The movement was not small - it comprised 98 associations.
³ Shedd 1955b, 251.
⁴ Shedd 1955b, 360ff.
International Committee was on the other side of the Atlantic. Because of all this, European YMCA did not have the same abilities to concentrate their resources as Americans did. For Europeans, the World’s Alliance was their international committee and, as we will see, they expected it to organise leadership training and international co-operation. Along these requests, the World’s Alliance had to solve several special questions that arose from the European context.

Special questions in Europe also became important questions for the whole movement. In brief, the important questions of the European YMCA were as follows. First, in Nordic countries, the YMCA faced a situation that natural peer groups contained both boys and girls and that led to the question of mixed associations. Second, in Southern Europe and in Poland, the YMCA faced the Roman Catholic Church, and in East Europe, there were the Orthodox churches. Interaction with the constituency coming from these churches led to interconfessional dialogue instead of original interdenominational unity. Third, wars that tore Europe apart led the movement to focus on work for the victims of war. In the beginning, it was work among soldiers, then among prisoners of war and lastly work for refugees and migrants. Finally, the emergence of several national movements, as well as the work of the North American International Committee, led to a need for organisational restructuring and division of tasks between national organisations and the World’s Alliance.

In the case of the Paris Basis, European YMCA had different attitudes. In Latin Europe, it was often used as a personal confession of faith and basis of local/national associations. In Britain, some associations followed the membership requirements of the London YMCA while others were close to the Latin model. In Germany, Jünglingsvereine had traditionally seen the Paris Basis as an international bond but the newer American-type city-YMCA accepted the Paris Basis in their constitutions. In the rest of German-influenced Europe, the Paris Basis was normally accepted, at least in the constitution of national movements and often in local constitutions as well. The trend was continuously towards accepting the Basis in the constitutions of all associations.

Thus, during its first hundred years, the YMCA in Europe grew from a small mustard seed to an organisation of 609,000 members, 5,900 local associations and 1,100 professional secretaries. The YMCA spread in Europe mainly from Germany and Switzerland. When many of the new ‘middle-sized’ YMCA were in countries of one denomination, the German model of the YMCA became the major model of the European YMCA. Later we will see how this fact almost tore the YMCA into two movements when the British and American movements worried that the German YMCA model would overcome the Anglo-Saxon interdenominational model. The questions of the YMCA in Europe became, in general, questions of the whole movement. In the next chapter, I focus on the other continents where the YMCA faced the challenges of interconfessional dialogue with Roman Catholics and interfaith dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

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1 Shedd 1955b, 405. I deal with this theme later in chapter 5.1. when I focus on membership.
4.4. Extension of the YMCA to the Third World

The YMCA movement, which in 1855 was composed of eight national movements, representing 348 associations and 35,000 members, spread rapidly to other continents and in 1955 it was expanded to 8,504 associations and 4,683,000 members in 66 countries. In this sub-chapter, I give a short summary how the YMCA extended to new regions and which kind of new impulses these new regions gave to the World’s Alliance.

4.4.1. Facing Catholic Resistance in Latin America

The Latin American1 YMCA, although relatively small, contributed important lessons to YMCA in relation to the Catholic Church. In South and Central America, the YMCA tried to avoid being labelled a sect. The YMCA minimised its religious activities and concentrated on social work, recreation and leadership training.

The YMCA story in South and Central America began as early as in the 1880s. In the 1888 General Statistics of the World’s Alliance4, there were mentions of existing associations in Argentina, Chile (two associations) and Mexico. They were all temporary groups that disappeared in few years5. The first sparks came from the US and groups were mainly ‘Northern Associations in the South’ i.e. their members were Evangelical Europeans or North Americans. Sometimes (as in Chile) they regarded their Association as a branch of the North American movement7. In Latin America, there are two groups of YMCA, which have a dis-

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1 I use the expression ‘Latin America’ to mean America south from the US border. Thus, it also includes the Caribbean area. This is not quite an exact expression because, strictly speaking, the Caribbean islands are much influenced by British culture. However, because of the pre-British history of the islands, the expression can be used for them as well. Moreover, the World Alliance of YMCA has used the expression in its statistics since 1955. In the case of alternative concepts, there are problems with them as well. The expression South America does not include Central America and the Caribbean and, thus, it is improper to use it in this sense. The Caribbean, from the YMCA point of view, is also problematic because the Caribbean Area Service Committee had overlapping membership with both the US YMCA (Florida, Puerto Rico) and the South American Federation of YMCA (Colombia, Venezuela). Thus, when I use the expression South America, it means the South American continent and YMCA in the continent.

2 The story of the Latin American YMCA can be read in Latourette (1957, 201-244).

3 The more detailed story can be found in The YMCA's of the World 1958 (1-4, 14f., 22-29, 42ff., 102-105, 129ff., 149-153, 169-172, 188ff., 202-207) and Latourette (1957, 201-244).

4 The time of the Stockholm World Conference (World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909). - In the 1881 statistics for IXth World Conference in London there were no mentions of associations in Latin America (WConf 1881,4).

5 The YMCA's of the World 1958, 1, 28, 42, 129. The only exception is British Guyana, which has had some YMCA association continually since 1882, but even there, no local association has survived without a break.

6 WComR 1891, 11.

7 The YMCA's of the World 1958, 42.
distinct history and culture: members of the South American Federation of YMCAs\(^1\) and the Caribbean group. In Map 4\(^2\) the way how the YMCA entered in the region is presented. Early attempts in the 19\(^{th}\) century to establish YMCAs had mainly remained short-term. Only the associations in Barbados and Rio de Janeiro can trace their history from the 19\(^{th}\) century. The new impulses came mainly from two sources: Britain and America. Moreover, British influence could be seen only in the Caribbean region while the Latin American YMCAs were almost totally of North American origin.

\(^1\) From 1962 on the organisation has been called South American Confederation of YMCAs (The YMCA of the World 1962, 116).

\(^2\) Information in the map has been collected from the following sources: The YMCA of the World 1958, 1, 12, 14, 22-29, 42f., 103, 129f., 150, 170, 189, 202f., 206; New Horizons in the Caribbean.
Table 15: First YMCAs in the Caribbean and South America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>First YMCAs</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source of YMCA influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>1870-</td>
<td>Founded by British settlers. Reorganised according to London model in 1889. From 1902 to 1930 NAIC fraternal secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Nassau (?)</td>
<td>?-?, 1950</td>
<td>Early temporary groups organised by British settlers. Reorganised by a Jamaican fraternal secretary in 1950.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Bridgetown</td>
<td>1880-</td>
<td>In the beginning, affiliated to the London YMCA. British support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td>1943-</td>
<td>SACC initiative. NAIC fraternal secretary since 1946.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>1875-</td>
<td>First temporary groups organised by British residents. Reorganised in 1885 according to the Scottish model. Permanent work organised in 1893 by a NAIC fraternal secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Guiana (Guyana)</td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>1882-90, 1907-15, 1921-</td>
<td>Founded by a Guianese who had experience on the London YMCA. Permanent association organised by a British travelling secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Concepción</td>
<td>1881-?, 1927-</td>
<td>Early groups by Anglo-American residents. Restarted by locals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valparaiso</td>
<td>1912-</td>
<td>NAIC initiative. NAIC fraternal secretary 1912-38.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Havanna</td>
<td>1905-41</td>
<td>NAIC fraternal secretary 1904-31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Port au Prince</td>
<td>&lt;1888-?</td>
<td>Association of British settlers and merchants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td>1891-?, 1902-</td>
<td>Founded by a NAIC fraternal secretary. Permanent NAIC support since 1902.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>Asunción</td>
<td>1943-</td>
<td>Founded by a local physician who had studied in Montevideo and been in touch with the YMCA. NAIC fraternal secretary since 1952.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Lima</td>
<td>1920-</td>
<td>NAIC fraternal secretary since 1920.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>Port of Spain</td>
<td>1920’s-?</td>
<td>Organised by British businessmen. Alive only for few years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>San Fernando</td>
<td>1954-</td>
<td>Organised by locals who had YMCA experience from abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>&lt;1894-1908(?)</td>
<td>Early emigrant groups from Waldesian Valleys in Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Caracas</td>
<td>1946-</td>
<td>NAIC fraternal secretary since 1946.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The growth of the Latin American YMCA was modest, as Table 16 shows. The YMCAs in the region constituted only one percent of the world figures in 1955. Moreover, the membership was concentrated in the four largest national movements (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay), which formed 70 per cent of Latin American membership, 78 per cent of associations and 68 per cent of secretaries in 1955. Although Latin American national movements were smaller than the ‘middle-size’ movements in Europe, the associations were rather large and strong. There were approximately 1,265 members per association in 1955 when the world medium was 550 and European medium 120 members per asso-

1958, 28-32; World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909; Shedd 1955b, 330.
ciation. When located in the capitals of their respective countries, it can be supposed that they formed a critical mass, which ensured their visibility and influence\(^1\).

Table 16: Expansion of Caribbean and South American YMCAs, 1891-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argentina</strong></td>
<td>1 ? 0 1 620</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6,604</td>
<td>17 5 10,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bermudas</strong></td>
<td>1 ? 0 1 50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil</strong></td>
<td>9 874</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,308</td>
<td>16(^6) 5 10,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Br. Guyana</strong></td>
<td>1 ? 0 ? ? 2 282</td>
<td>1 3</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chile</strong></td>
<td>2 ? 0 1 20 0 3 1,149</td>
<td>5 3 2,842</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dutch Guyana</strong></td>
<td>2 ? ? 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mexico</strong></td>
<td>1 ? 0 4 1,200</td>
<td>4 2 3,986</td>
<td>10 5 6,030</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paraguay</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peru</strong></td>
<td>1 434</td>
<td>4 1 1,063</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uruguay</strong></td>
<td>3 47</td>
<td>0 1 2,902</td>
<td>7 5 5,866</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venezuela</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,851</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Indies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bahamas</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>0 3</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Barbados</td>
<td>1 356</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 618</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jamaica</td>
<td>1 436</td>
<td>1 2 1,384</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>12 ? 0 24 3,033</td>
<td>9 17 20,457</td>
<td>61(^4) 34 42,996</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of the World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1937; 1938; 1955.\(^5\)

\(^1\) General Statistics 1855-1909 note that there were 3 associations, 222 members and 1 secretary in West Indies (Caribbean).

\(^2\) There must be a mistake in the 1938 General statistics in the case of Brazil (162 secretaries) – 1937 General statistics give a more moderate figure (16) which is also in line with January 1, 1937 figures given by Limbert.

\(^3\) Data not available in source statistics

The ratio of secretaries in 1955 was 2.5 secretaries per association or 500 members per secretary as Table 17 shows. In the largest movements, there were five secretaries per association in 1938! This was far more than in any other part of the world. Compared to European figures, the ratio of secretaries per association especially, was far more than in Europe where there was one secretary for eight associations\(^2\). On the world level, there were only 1.4 secretaries per association\(^3\) and even in North America only 3.0 secretaries per association\(^4\).

1. On critical mass in social sciences, see Marwell & Oliver (1993).
2. See Table 14 on page 178.
3. See Table 23 on page 210.
4. See Table 11 on page 153.
Table 17: Ratio of associations, members and secretaries in Latin American YMCAs, 1905-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members / associations</td>
<td>Members / secretaries</td>
<td>Associations / secretaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-A large four</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small movements</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of the following statistics: World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1937; 1938.

It can be said that the South and Central American YMCAs were expressions of the American missionary strategy to use ‘model associations’ in the extension of the movement. The idea was to establish strong American-style associations with buildings and secretaries in central locations. Following their doctrine of local independence, the American movement also stressed the need to build strong indigenous leadership and a firm economic basis for new associations. The aim was to make these associations self-sustainable as soon as possible, so that they could take the responsibility of the extension of the movement in their region. In this strategy, the American approach differed from the old European approach where the idea diffused freely from place to place.

The oldest of the contemporary associations in the region was founded in 1893 in Rio de Janeiro. It also became one node of the YMCA entering the continent. The association had some typical features that many Latin American (and other Third World) YMCAs adopted:

1. The movement came to the country by local request and the help of North American International Committee.
2. The movement continued its spread inside the country from the main centre to the area centres.
3. The concept of the local YMCA was copied from North America. The main difference to this model was the adoption of Catholics as members. This was done first by Mexico City YMCA in 1907 and then by the South American Federation of YMCAs in 1914. In the latter case, the 1914 resolution welcomed both those associations who followed the American Portland Basis and those who required personal signing of the purpose equivalent to the Paris Basis.

---

1. Latourette (1957, 203) mentions that before the permanent existence, there had been several attempts to found an association according to either the Scottish or London model.
4. The ‘personal basis’ accepted those who confessed “their faith in Jesus Christ as their Divine and only Saviour, the sufficient source of moral strength for the individual and society, their desire to be His disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and their purpose to unite with other Christians, irrespective of church affiliations, for extending Christ’s influence among young men, especially by
4. The associations were, at first, founded by Evangelicals residing in the town. The YMCA concentrated on physical education and sports although there was some religious teaching as well. This was mainly because of the strategic situation. The Catholic Church saw the YMCA as a Protestant sect, prohibited Catholics to join the movement and opposed its work. The YMCA wanted to avoid this stigma and kept "an absolutely neutral position in the ecclesiastical field".

The association in Rio de Janeiro played an important role in the rise of new associations and it was a model for other Latin American YMCAs. Of the seven charter associations of the South American Federation, it sparked off four: Brazilian Porto Alegro, Sao Paolo and Recife, and Buenos Aires in Argentina. However, in spite of these sparks, the work would not have been possible without the fraternal secretaries sent and supported by the North American International Committee of YMCAs. On the other hand, every North American fraternal secretary tried to "work himself out of a job" in order to transfer the work to the hands of nationals.

The South American Federation of YMCAs was formed in the first Continental Convention in 1914. There were three main reasons for the Continental Federation. The first was that YMCAs existed only in a few large cities in the area and only Brazil had more than one association (Brazil had founded a national alliance in 1903). The other reason was the model of the North American International Federation. A third reason was the need for indigenous continental planning instead of goals given by North America. The Convention accepted statutes for the federation. Following YMCA practice, local autonomy was granted for each association with one exception mentioned in the first paragraph: "All Associations belonging to the Federation must be non-sectarian, with an interconfessional membership policy."

---

1 Latourette 1957, 207.
2 Latourette 1957, 218, 235.
3 Officially, Roman Catholics were forbidden to be members of the YMCA in the Warning of the Holy Office Against the YMCA - a letter to bishops sent in November 5, 1920 and signed by R. Card. Merry del Val (quoted in Fallon 1922).
4 In 1922, after the letter of the Holy Office, the attack was so vigorous that the Lima YMCA had to close for a while The YMCAs of the World 1958, 151ff.
5 New Horizons in the Caribbean, 1958, 39f.
6 The YMCAs of the World 1958, 25.
7 Along with these five associations, other founders of the South American Federation were Valparaiso in Chile and Montevideo in Uruguay.
8 Latourette 1957, 97.
9 The YMCAs of the World 1958, 170. See also Latourette 1957, 208. One implication of this policy was that the YMCA did not send full official delegates but fraternal ones to the (Protestant) Congress on Christian Work in Latin America held in Montevideo in 1925. Latourette (1957, 51) notes that "both the International Committee in New York and the Continental Committee tried to make it clear that the action was not from lack of sympathy with the evangelical movement, but rather from fear that if the Associations were fully to identify themselves with the evangelical (Protestant) movement they would be regarded by many non-Protestant - both among Catholic and secular youth - to whom they sought to minister, as a proselyting agency and so would awaken needless
The exclusion of sectarianism was a clear policy statement and it is noteworthy that the paragraph uses the word ‘interconfessional’ instead of ‘interdenominational’. The latter was normally used to describe contacts between Protestant churches and the first expression included all Christian churches\(^1\). Thus, at this point the Latin American YMCA had a different view to their supporter. In North America, the YMCA had their ‘Portland Basis’, which restricted their membership to ‘Evangelical churches’\(^2\).

In spite of the small proportion of Latin American YMCAs in the world movement, their potential role was increasing, especially in YMCA-Catholic Church relations. In 1938, their membership was two thirds of YMCA members in European Catholic countries and in 1955, Latin American YMCAs outnumbered the YMCAs of European Catholic countries\(^3\). This means that after the abolition of the Polish YMCA, Latin America became the centre of Catholic – YMCA relationships.

**TO SUM UP**, the Latin American YMCAs started with temporary groups of North Americans and Europeans residing in the continent. The first permanent YMCA was established in Rio de Janeiro according to the American model. From Rio, and directly from North America, the movement spread to other Latin American countries. In the Caribbean area, the sparks came mainly from Britain. Primarily, the Latin American YMCA was, however, an American plant. Latin American YMCAs were mainly large city-associations in large metropolitan areas. Despite the small number of the total membership in Latin America, the city- YMCAs were relatively large, the medium membership per association being 1200 in 1955. The amount of secretaries per association was large as well. In general, the Latin American movement followed the American association model with large city-associations, paid staff and equipped buildings. Because of the Catholic context, the Latin American YMCA did not adopt the American Portland Basis but mainly remained on the Paris Basis. Because of Catholic pressure, the movement also minimised its religious work leaving it on behalf of churches. The YMCA concentrated on social work, physical education, recreation and leadership training.

### 4.4.2. Interfaith Challenge in Asia

If expansion in Europe and Latin America challenged the YMCA to interconfessional dialogue, extension to Asia brought interfaith dialogue into the YMCA. In this sub-chapter, I focus on the extension of the YMCA to Asia and its consequences on the YMCA mission.

---

1. WComEx 1927b, 2.
2. Morse 1913, 91f. The Portland Basis was valid in the North American YMCAs until 1930s (Hopkins 1951, 520f.).
3. In 1938, there were 33,782 YMCA members in Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain. In 1955, Belgium, France, Italy, and Portugal had 29,523 members. World’s Alliance Statistics 1938; World Alliance Statistics 1955.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>First YMCAAs</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source of influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Early groups</td>
<td>1880-</td>
<td>British groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rangoon</td>
<td>1898-1940, 1947-</td>
<td>Founded by British fraternal secretary. NAIC influence since 1906. Part of the Indian National Council until 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>1880’s-?</td>
<td>Association for foreign residents in the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hankow</td>
<td>1894-?</td>
<td>Association for foreign residents in the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1890’s-, 1901-</td>
<td>Association for foreign residents in the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>1870’s-?</td>
<td>Association for foreign residents in the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foochow (Fuzhoy), Tungchow</td>
<td>1885-?</td>
<td>Student YMCA in missionary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hankow</td>
<td>1894-?</td>
<td>Association for foreign residents in the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1890’s-, 1901-</td>
<td>Association for foreign residents in the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>1854-?, 1895-</td>
<td>British influence from the beginning. NAIC influence since 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
<td>1873-</td>
<td>British influence from the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>1875-</td>
<td>British influence from the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>1890-</td>
<td>First native Indian YMCA. NAIC support 1890-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Djakarta</td>
<td>1929-40, 1946-</td>
<td>First Dutch Military YMCA. Indian fraternal secretary 1953. NAIC fraternal secretary since 1954-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>1926-</td>
<td>British Military YMCA. Indian YMCA since 1914. British fraternal secretaries since 1922.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>1878-?, 1890-</td>
<td>British missionary influence. British YMCA, support NAIC fraternal secretary since 1920.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nazareth</td>
<td>1950-</td>
<td>Work for Arabs. NAIC fraternal secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>1952-</td>
<td>Started as refugee work by former Jerusalem YMCA secretaries. Egyptian YMCA support since 1953. World’s Alliance secretary for work in Gaza since 1954.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>First groups</td>
<td>&lt;1875-?</td>
<td>Association for foreign residents. Wishard’s and Mott’s tours in 1893 and 1896. NAIC fraternal secretaries since 1888.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>1887-</td>
<td>First Student YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>1878-</td>
<td>First City YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>East Jerusalem</td>
<td>1948-</td>
<td>Former Jerusalem YMCA secretaries started work among refugees. NAIC support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>1900-</td>
<td>NAIC fraternal secretaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaya</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1903-39, 44-</td>
<td>British initiative and support. 1946: a separate Chinese YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Manila</td>
<td>1898-</td>
<td>Started as an American military YMCA. Civilian association 1904-. NAIC fraternal secretaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>1892-</td>
<td>Initiative of a Thai educated in the US. NAIC fraternal secretary since 1930.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Early groups</td>
<td>1870’s-?</td>
<td>Groups started by missionaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adana, Aintab, Marach</td>
<td>&lt;1883-&lt;1918</td>
<td>Local -originated groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constantinople</td>
<td>1885-?, 1913-</td>
<td>Starting as an association of English speaking residents. NAIC fraternal secretaries since 1911.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the YMCA point of view, there have been three different environments where to adapt in Asia. The Near East has been the territory of Islam with its ancient civilisations. The Indian peninsula, in turn, is the sub-continent of Hinduism and Indian culture. Finally, the Far East has been very influenced by Chinese culture and Buddhism.

In Map 5 and Table 18, we can see that, first, there had been some indigenous YMCA groups even at the time of the Paris Conference in 1855. Second, most of the impulses for the new YMCAs came from Britain and the USA. In this sense, Asia was a continent where the YMCAs were founded according to the Anglo-Saxon YMCA model with large city associations, buildings and employed secretaries.

In Table 19, we can see how the YMCA expanded in the Asian continent. Compared to Map 5 and Table 18, Table 19 tells that, although there were some early associations, YMCA expansion in Asia was during the first half of the 20th century. When in 1905 there was a modest number; consisting of 14,501 members and 59 secretaries, in 1938 the number of them had increased almost tenfold to 113,479 and 500, although the number of associations had only doubled from 268 to 500. This might mean that the focus had shifted (at least temporarily) from extension to new areas, to expansion and strengthening of the existing associations.

The figures also show that the largest movement in Asia was the Chinese YMCA, which constituted more than half of the membership, almost one third of secretaryship but only four percent of associations. The figures of 1938 show even more show that China was the main missionary field of the YMCA in Asia before WW II. In this time, more than half of YMCA secretaries in Asia worked in the country. However, the Chinese YMCA was to later face the fate of East European movements. The next largest movements in 1955 were India, Japan, Korea and Philippines, which were all about the same size as European ‘middle-size’ movements. The figures also show that all larger movements were in the Far East while all YMCAs in Moslem countries have been rather small. Moreover, all large movements have been either founded or strongly affected by the American movement.

Table 20, in turn, shows that the average membership ratio in an association was higher than in Europe but lower than in Latin America. However, this was due to large diversification. For example, Indian YMCAs varied from large metropolitan YMCAs in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, with a membership up to 4,000, to small rural ones with 20 to 50 members. In general, however, it seems that the YMCAs in Asia are somewhere between the American-type professional association-work and European-type voluntary based activity.

---

1 *The YMCAs of the World 1969* (28) notes that “Since 1958, there have been no official contacts… It is known that several Associations continued to exist for several years but reports indicate that the Cultural Revolution of 1966-67 brought an end to the work of the YMCA.”

2 *The YMCAs of the World 1958*, 89.
Table 19: Expansion of the Asian YMCAs, 1855-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1855</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1905*</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Hong Kong</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Korea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Taiwan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Burma (Myanmar)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pakistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ceylon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Malaya (Malaysia)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Philippines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Thailand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,160</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jordan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lebanon</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Palestine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Turkey</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of the following statistics: World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1937; 1938.
* Figures are from Fries (1905) and Eight General Report to the World’s Committee (WComR 1905). They are from January 15th, 1905. World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909 give slightly different figures for India (137 associations, 7,957 members, 27 secretaries) and China (69, 4,741, 24). It does not inform whether the statistics are from the beginning or from the end of the year.
** Figure from 1950. * Figure from 1958.
† Figure from 1956 (YMCA of the World 1958, 116).
# Figure from 1951 (YMCA of the World 1958, 115).
+ David (1992, 48f.) gives different figures: India 35 associations and 1,896 members; Ceylon 17 associations and 555 members. However, he does not mention figures of Pakistan and Burma (Myanmar). Report of the World’s Committee 1891 (14) mentions 37 associations in India and 14 in Ceylon.
§ Philippine Associations are formally branches of one national Association (YMCA of the World 1958, 157).
| Figure from 1937.  |
\[ a \] Figures are based on estimate based on Report of the World’s Committee 1898 (WComR 1898, 2) where “Asia (except India and Japan)” consisted of 27 associations and 904 members.
\[ b \] The YMCA of the World 1958 (46, 192) notes that the Turkish YMCA in 1958 consisted only of the American School of Foreign Languages and Commerce in Istanbul.
\[ c \] Data not available in source statistics.
Table 20: Ratio of associations, members and secretaries in Asian YMCAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members / associations</td>
<td>Members / secretaries</td>
<td>Associations / secretaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1937; 1938.

1 Secretaries per associations
2 Associations per secretary

THE NEAR EAST was mostly occupied by the Turkish Ottoman Empire during the last century. Thus, it is adequate to start looking at YMCA expansion, first to Turkey and to look at the characteristic features of the Turkish YMCA. The history of the Turkish YMCA starts from the 1870’s when individual missionaries and Christian leaders founded YMCA groups in Constantinople (Istanbul), Antab, Adana and Marach. The number of members has always been small. The membership remained under 100 for the whole 19th Century. The work was strengthened by two American fraternal secretaries in 1911. The beginning of their work coincided with the calling of a World’s Student Christian Federation Conference in Constantinople (Istanbul) in the same year, at which John R. Mott’s leadership gave huge impetus to both the student and the city Association work. This Conference was also important to YMCA-Orthodox relations.

The new YMCA in Constantinople (Istanbul) was opened in 1913. It had an interfaith constituency but only men who signed the Paris Basis could serve as board members. This was a natural decision in a country where there was a minimal amount of Protestants. Using the Paris Basis as a personal criterion, the movement avoided widening the definition of Evangelical churches.

The new model for Turkish YMCA was laid during the vast changes in the country in 1920-3. The revolution caused many YMCA leaders to flee the country.

1 World’s Alliance Statistics 1855-1909.
2 Rouse (1948, 154) mentions that “The Ecumenical Patriarch gave the Conference his blessing. ‘I consider such a conference to draw Christians into fellowship and co-operation as one of the most sacred causes, and I will help it in any way in my power.’”
3 The YMCA of the World 1958, 191; Latourette 1957, 340ff.
4 The YMCA of the World 1958, 191; ExCom 1959, 47.
5 This discussion occurred in the Jubilee Conference in 1905 when Professor Eliou of Constantinople (Istanbul) proposed that the definition ‘Evangelical’ would include Orthodox and Roman Catholic as well as Protestants. For the moment, the proposal was rejected. (Shedd 1955b, 423)
because of personal dangers and YMCA work was greatly consolidated. Turkey became a strongly nationalistic and secular state. Along with other religious organisations, except for churches, the YMCA had to limit its activities to those of a purely social service or educational nature. Religious, and especially Christian propaganda was forbidden. The government kept close control over the program, and permits had to be obtained for all special gatherings. Moreover, according to government regulations, educational work had to be organised in a separate institution from other types of work. In this situation, the YMCA had to think how it could continue. One important factor in the solution was that the foreign secretaries were Americans and funds came mostly from North America. The YMCA limited its work to Istanbul and, in 1926, became a holding company of a new organisation called ‘American School of Foreign Languages and Commerce’, which continued the work.¹

The Nationalistic (and Islamic) mood in Turkey raised proposals to drop the ‘Christian’ out of the name.² The work, which focused on physical education, could be continued in the same way but without any Christian emphasis.³ Gradually, more Turkish and non-Christians came on to the staff and Boards. By 1929, the Stamboul Branch staff was made up entirely of Turkish nationals, and other branches followed suit. The Constitution was revised so that any member could sit on Boards and Committees, regardless of his religious affiliation.⁴ This model was followed in the Near East in various ways. Tracy Strong reported to the Executive Committee in 1959 on the issue as follows:

Generally, the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors are constitutionally limited to members of a Christian Church or Mission, or to laymen who have personally signed the Paris Basis. In one Association two Muslims were appointed to the Board, while in another National Movement 25% of the Board can constitutionally be those of other faiths than Christian. The program of activities, however, when there are special committees responsible, are planned and carried on by the participants in the activity, thus stressing the principle of learning to cooperate by cooperating.⁵

Although the Turkish YMCA was small, it challenged the whole movement’s core values: for the first time, non-Christians were accepted as leaders in the YMCA. In practice, this did not mean that the whole organisation was turned upside down. Although Turkey was a Moslem country, Moslems were a minority in the Turkish YMCA.⁶ What it meant was that YMCA work fully concentrated on

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¹ The YMCA of the World 1958, 192; Latourette 1957, 343f.; Strong 1959, 47. The issue of mingling YMCA mission and Americanism is dealt with by Risto Ahonen (1983) who argues that Mott could not differentiate between them.
² Latourette (1957, 343) notes that “the traditional connotation of ‘Christian’ to the Turks… was identified not primarily with religion but with the communities which bore that name and presented historic political tensions and offensive racial and cultural characteristics.”
³ International Survey of Young Men’s and Young Women’s Associations 1932, 366f.
⁴ The YMCA of the World 1958, 191.
⁵ ExCom 1959, 136.
⁶ According to International Survey of the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations (1932, 80, 87f.), Turks occupied 22% of membership, Greeks 27%, Armenians 10%, Jews 30% and others (mostly Christians) 11%. Thus, the proportion of Christians was almost half of the member-
the physical and mental dimensions of the triangle. The Four-fold Programme justified the change of the mission view in Turkey because, after all, it was serving the whole man. The Turkish YMCA also served as a laboratory in the development of mutual understanding between Christians and Moslems. Both understood secularism as a common threat, and that created ground for seeking a common basis.

Turning to other YMCA in the Ottoman empire, we see that the first YMCA in the Near East was founded in Beirut in 1854 where a group of young men of various denominational backgrounds came together to form a Christian Association. The work was modest. It was not until 1930 when more active work began with the assistance of the French National Council. From this time on, British influence also grew because of British rule over this previously Turkish area.

The population of the country was half Christian, and half Moslem and Druse. This created both opportunities and complications. The Maronite Church had, in general a positive attitude towards the YMCA in that period. The words of the Patriarch of the Maronite Church are cordial:

The Church looks on the YMCA as a social corridor of the Church where youth can meet in genuine fellowship. An adequate YMCA building in Beirut would meet one of our greatest needs.

The year 1948 meant a change for all YMCA in the area. The Palestinian refugee flood has been a dominant phenomenon in all YMCA since then. The work of the YMCA has centred around refugees and activities for them. YMCA work with Palestinian refugees had its roots in the Jerusalem YMCA. It was founded by a British missionary in 1878. The work was on a modest scale until the British occupation of Palestine in 1917. It was divided into four sections according to nationality: Arab, English, Hebrew and others. During the Mandate period, the YMCA in Palestine became active and flourished. Although it was a Christian organisation promoting Bible teaching, it became aware of the multi-religious nature of the society. While some members still hoped for conversions, more stress was laid on bringing together young men of different faiths to share recreations and to study. In this period, a landmark of West Jerusalem - Jerusalem YMCA- was built and decorated with the symbols of three faiths: Christianity, Islam and Judaism, which all regard Jerusalem as their holy city. Near the end of the Mandate period, the membership had grown near 2000, of which two-thirds were Christians of various denominations and the rest fifty-fifty Jews and Moslems. Things were not, however, so calm. According to Graham-Brown, both

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1 The YMCA of the World 1958, 118; Graham-Brown 1990, 95.
2 ExCom 1959, 9.
3 The YMCA of the World 1958 (97, 110) report that 85% of the former leaders and members of the Jerusalem YMCA had to flee because of the 1947-1948 war. They erected a new YMCA building in East Jerusalem. Since that time, the Jordan YMCA has served refugees.
Jewish and Moslem communities anticipated YMCA as a Christian, foreign controlled and foreign financed organisation.¹

During the battles of 1947–49 the Jerusalem YMCA was in the eye of the storm: King David Hotel - the headquarters of British Forces - was across the road. When it was blown up, the British placed a ‘security zone’ and stopped almost all activities in the house. When British forces withdrew and Jewish Haganah took control of the hotel, all the area around it became free-fire zone. The YMCA house survived, first secured by the Red Cross and later by the US Consulate, but after the armistice it was a house of empty walls - 85% of its users had fled and the Jerusalem YMCA was scattered into pieces.² As the American fraternal secretaries were the only YMCA people who were permitted to cross the Israeli-Jordanian boarder, the new YMCAs were founded in Jordanian East Jerusalem and Jericho.³ The work was similar to the work done in Lebanon. Later in the beginning of the 1950s, a new YMCA was founded in Israel in Nazareth, which was the only city in the country with an Arab majority - many of them being Christians.⁴ In the Gaza strip, the work was started with Egyptian YMCA assistance and Near East Christian Council support.⁵

As seen above, YMCAs in the Near East were founded to serve the Europeans in the area. In most cases, services were also given to the natives. Especially the members of the Eastern Churches, Copts, Greek Orthodox and Maronites, took the movement as their own. Although there were old hostilities between Christians, Jews and Moslems, YMCA was practising dialogue on a grass-root level. In the Near East, two factors paved the road for the YMCA: the work with armed forces and the Palestinian refugee problem. The work among Palestinian refugees is the oldest continuous relief project of the World YMCA. It has brought the YMCA to stand with those who are naked and homeless. The transition from the revival movement to a global social service agency was largely a result of this work⁶. The Near East YMCAs were also pioneers in Moslem-Christian dialogue in the YMCA⁷.

**THE INDIAN YMCA** has played a central role in the Asian YMCA and has had remarkable influence on the World’s Alliance as well. The first YMCA in India was organised in Calcutta in 1854 but it soon ceased to operate⁸. It took several decades for the YMCA to acclimatise itself to the Indian situation. In 1891, 35 associations formed the National Council of YMCA of India, Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon. These associations were however ‘European YMCAs

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¹ *The YMCA of the World 1958*, 96.
⁵ *The YMCA of the World 1958*, 72.
⁶ I deal with this work closer in chapter 6.3.5.
⁷ This theme will be focused more closely in chapter 6.3.4.
⁸ A new attempt was made in 1857, but a permanent Association managed to survive only since 1875. It was launched as a result of the evangelistic campaign of a Scottish Free Church Pastor. (*The YMCA of the World 1958*, 87; David 1992, 19f.)
located in India’. Their membership was not open to Indians and they lasted as long as the founder worked, but if he left the town, the Association also collapsed.1

The general atmosphere was not conducive to the growth of the movement. The YMCA was Christian, Western and especially British. The Great Rebellion of 1857 caused British officials to be cautious about any missionary support. This was further underpinned by Hindu revivalist movements, which were acting against the aggressive missionary evangelistic onslaughts on the Hindu religion.2

The first YMCA open to Indians was founded in Madras 1890 by an American Fraternal secretary, David McConaughy3. Its concept of urban YMCA became a model for Indian YMCAs. In its first meeting these principles were launched:

- It would be the work of young men, by young men, for young men.
- It would minister to the whole man - body, mind and soul.
- Its privileges would be extended to all young men of good character, without distinction of race, rank or religion.
- The management was confined to active members, who were in full communion with Evangelical Christian churches.
- It would be extended only so far and so fast as funds were locally forthcoming.4

In the principles, the influence of both the World’s Alliance and the American YMCA can be seen. It was not a general missionary agency, but specialised its work among young men, as the Paris Basis stated and Americans emphasised5. In its mission, it had a larger task than just welfare of men’s soul - a clear loan from the American Four-fold Programme but well in line with traditional European philanthropic ideals. The membership was open to all young men. In this, the Madras YMCA differed from previous British YMCAs in India (as well as from most local American YMCAs who did not accept African-Americans or Native Americans in their membership)6. The reference to rank referred to the Indian caste system, and the Indian YMCA welcomed men from all castes and from outcasts7. Thus, the Indian YMCA followed traditional YMCA policy, which was later expressed with a slogan ‘open membership, Christian leadership’. The leadership was still restricted to members of Evangelical churches - as the American Portland Basis stated.

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1 David 1992, 22ff.
2 David 1992, 6.
4 David 1992, 28.
5 The North American YMCA had restricted its membership to men only in 1867 (Sweet 1953, 4).
6 According to David (1992, 30) “of the 250 members of the Madras YMCA in 1891, 56 per cent, that - is, 140 - were Indians, 82 Eurasians and 28 Europeans. 151 members were Christians (41 being Indian Christians) and 99 non-Christians, of whom 92 were Hindus, 4 Muslims and 3 Parsis.”
7 Traditionally, outcasts were denied permission to enter Hindu temples (Latourette 1957, 107). The YMCA policy was expressed by Rev. E. Yesudian in his address to the First National Convention in 1891 when he suggested that Christians practising the caste system should be excluded from active membership (David 1992, 34).
From that time on, American assistance grew, so that the Indian YMCA was almost a branch of the American YMCA. Sports and physical education became the most influential elements, as in North America. They were the features that created the public image of the YMCA. However, contrary to Latin America, which focused almost entirely on physical education, the Indian YMCA had balancing effects: the Student Christian Movement and the Christian Ashram Movement. The Student Christian Movement came in India in 1893. After the revivalistic student conference series of John R. Mott and Sherwood Eddy in 1895-6, it extended to several Indian towns. The significance of the Student Christian Movement, attached to the YMCA, was that it trained most prominent leaders of the Indian Church. Ashram was a way to Indianise Christianity. It used the Yoga system in meditation and music in Indian Bhakti (worship of personal God) style.

Although American fraternal secretaries were inspired by the Northfield student revivals, they did not practice aggressive and confrontational evangelism in India. Instead, they tried to convince non-Christians by their care and high level programs. Eddy noted that, when presenting Christianity to students, attacking Indian traditional religions would only arose “all their patriotism and prejudice and pride to try and prove they are right.” It was much better to lead “them lovingly and sympathetically and dispassionately seek what is the truth, and to be unconsciously drawn to Him who will draw all men to Himself, if He is set forth openly crucified before them.”

The work of YMCA grew so fast that in 1907 the Indian movement was financially almost self-supporting: 12 Associations had their own buildings and 25 had rented ones. The well-founded basis gave fruit during the ‘Great Decades’ of Indian YMCA, from 1910-30. According to David, its people-oriented activities, indigenous leadership and catholic approach “brought it closer to the Indian people than most of the missionary bodies which remained sectarian, European-managed and distant.”

There were especially three projects, which along with physical education indigenised the YMCA movement. The Rural Reconstruction Programme, started in 1913, stimulated nation-wide growth of rural development schemes and was a model for Government programs. By 1930, YMCA had organised 700 Co-operative Credit societies, 600 of which had been taken under the regular Government Co-operative Department. Especially after the First World War, Indian

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1 YMCA physical education made possible for India to participate in the Olympic games in 1924 for the first time (David 1992, 170-174; Dunderdale 1993(1962), 98ff.).
2 It seems that in Latin America, the YMCA had to fight on two fronts: avoiding Catholic critics but attracting secularised people. In this situation, avoidance of religious activities seemed purposeful. In India, instead, the main aim was to preach the Gospel to non-Christians and strengthen the identity of Christian minority.
4 Latourette 1957, 112.
5 David 1992, 10f., 90.
6 Catholic in the sense that Creeds use it: universal, common, entire, all.
7 David 1992, 10f., 96, 308.
YMCA directed itself more towards the Social Gospel, although some revivalist attitudes remained in the new Constitution of 1920. From then on, the Indian YMCA has focused on community service. That led to a great growth of non-Christian membership. In an International survey from 1932, 56 per cent of the membership of 6000 was non-Christian. The rural project was a manifestation of the vision of the first Indian General Secretary, K.T. Paul.

The war work was another major project. Like in Britain, the Indian YMCA received official status to give service for soldiers during the First World War. The Indian YMCA served both Indian and British troops in France, Mesopotamia (Iraq), India, East Africa, Egypt and Palestine. This work made the YMCA highly conspicuous in the public eye in India, as well as in other parts of the world. This service had no equivalent in other Third World countries. It probably also gave the Indian YMCA the pride to look at European and American YMCAs on an equal basis.

The third major project was that of literary production and publishing, which meant a change from the interfaith confrontation of Protestant missionaries to an interfaith dialogue. The prominent name was John Nicol Farquhar, an Oxford scholar and expert on Hinduism, who, along with Kenneth J. Saundes, a specialist of Buddhism of Cambridge, and Howard Arnold Walter, an Islamic scholar of Princeton, started a research and publication project on Indian religions. They believed that a conciliatory approach to Hinduism was the only way to mutual understanding. For 21 years, from 1912 on, Farquhar’s project published 40 studies on India, and especially on Indian religions. Latourette describes the studies in The Religious Quest of India series as follows: “In each volume there was a careful comparison with Christianity. The approach was not polemic, but one of sympathetic appreciation of the non-Christian faiths.” According to David, Farquhar’s project had two major achievements (along with its scientific value): First, it “broke ground in bringing smoother relations between missionaries and Hindus, though it certainly did not help in the spread of Christianity.” Second, “for the first time the Protestant Missionaries were exposed to the new knowledge of the actual content of higher Hinduism.” Along with its religious series, the project published other Indian literature as well.

The success of the Indian YMCA was largely due to the work of its General Secretary, K.T. Paul, who was one of the most prominent Indian Christian leaders. His, as well as the fraternal secretaries’, view was to Indianise the YMCA,

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1 International Survey of Young Men’s and Young Women’s Associations 1932, 80. David (1992, 204) refers to this survey but mentions 75 percent non-Christians, which must be a mistake. The proportion was 75 percent in 1957 (The YMCAs of the World 1958, 89).
4 Latourette 1957, 115.
5 David 1992, 151.
7 On Paul, see Popley (1958; 1987).
and the projects mentioned above were applications of this goal. As a result, the Indian YMCA became “the first amongst all missionary organisations in the country who were engaged in the great task of discovering and training Indian leaders of adequate education and entrusting to them larger responsibilities.” Thus, the Indian YMCA educated the indigenous Christian leadership to Indian Christian churches. Among them were Vedanayagam S. Azariah, the first Indian bishop in the Anglican Church, Paul D. Devanandan, and Daniel T. Niles, all distinguished leaders in the Ecumenical Movement.

The contribution of India to the mission view of the World’s Alliance was for the foremost in the fields of rural projects and interfaith dialogue. There were also the Indian YMCA leaders who continuously stressed “our responsibility to non-Christian members”, as Paul Devanandan titled one of his booklets. It was the Indian YMCA that was advised by Mahatma Gandhi: “Help the Moslems and the Hindus to be Christian towards one another.”

**OTHER FAR EAST YMCA MOVEMENTS** in Burma (Myanmar), China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaya (Malaysia), the Philippines and

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1 Although there was general agreement to indigenise the Indian YMCA, the project did not happen without tensions between local and fraternal secretaries. David (1992, 184f) mentions that some fraternal secretaries “felt it humiliating to obey an Indian boss.” Latourette (1957, 132) notes that Mott could not accept Paul’s opinion that fraternal secretaries should be “subject to the authority and discipline” of the Indian National Council, stating that those words would cause difficulties in recruiting them. Along with these internal YMCA tensions, there was also a tension between Indian secretaries, who strove for an independent India, and Canadian fraternal secretaries, who were loyal to the British Commonwealth (Latourette 1957, 137).


4 WComR 1955, 84f.

5 One significant hallmark in this dialogue was the Kandy Consultation (1953a) in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) where the YMCA mission in Buddhist lands was reviewed.

6 Kandy Consultation 1953b.

7 WConf 1955, 53. Gandhi’s words were to K.T. Paul when the latter asked what the YMCA could do for an emergency service after violent riots between Moslems and Hindus. Here we can see Gandhi’s respect for the ideals stated in the Sermon on the Mount.


Thailand\(^1\) had their impact on the world movement, which, however, was not as significant as that of the Indian YMCA. Japan was the hallmark of the World Service in a sense that the first foreign secretary from North America went there. In the Philippines, there were similar struggles with the Catholic Church as in Europe and in Latin America. In Indonesia, the YMCA worked in a Moslem context, although there was the largest Protestant minority in the Far East here\(^2\). As I already mentioned, China was the largest YMCA in Asia but it contributed surprisingly little to the thinking of the World YMCA movement.

**THE IMPACT OF ASIAN YMCA\(^s\)**, especially those of the Near East and India, on the mission view of the YMCA has been significant. In Asia, there were more large and influential YMC\(\)As than in other parts of the Third World. Chinese, Indian and Filipino YMC\(\)As were among the ten largest YMC\(\)As in the world in 1955. Their special influence was in bringing nation building and community-work for worldwide discussion. In his report to the Asian YMCA Leaders Conference 1953, the Area Secretary stressed seven achievements of the YMCA in Asia.

1. ...Both government and people in every country have been awakened to the importance of youth, but the YMCA has been the prophet and pioneer in this connection.
2. The YMCA in Asia has succeeded in bringing men and boys together in common tasks transcending national, racial, communal and class differences...
3. The YMCA has pioneered in the field of leisure time activities... for wholesome recreation, for spiritual, cultural and vocational improvement, and for social service...
4. The YMCA has meant to a large number of laymen in Asia, as elsewhere, practical religion in which they can find a place of responsible leadership...
5. The YMCA in Asia has rightly put the emphasis upon common agreements rather than mutual differences in its approach to the non-Christian people and in its relations to the Christian community...
6. The YMCA has demonstrated through its World Service Program in Asia international co-operation a high plane, with no ulterior motive, with no sense of imposition or encroachment upon others, but with mutual understanding and close collaboration between co-operating movements...
7. The YMCA... has been able to present the Christian message to youth in terms that are more readily intelligible to them...\(^3\)

In the report, we can see that the YMCA applied its Western model to Asia with some success. It cannot be said that the success was only in numbers, it also had a ‘domino effect’: many activities of the YMCA were new in the area and they were soon copied by other organisations. In this sense, the Asian contribution was to confirm the workability of the American YMCA model especially.

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\(^1\) On the Thai YMCA, see *The YMC\(\)As of the World* 1958, 183ff.; ALConf 1953, 28-32; Latourette 1957, 328ff.

\(^2\) The number of Christians among 80 million people was 3 million in 1953, this being larger than the whole population of such ‘Christian’ countries as Iceland, Jamaica, New Zealand and Paraguay, being almost the same as in Norway and Uruguay. In general, when we look at the absolute number of Christians in Asian countries, they often outnumber the membership of western churches.

\(^3\) ALConf 1953, 4f.
Cultural influence was not, however, a one-way transportation of Western ideals. The World’s Alliance learned from Asia the necessity of interfaith dialogue. In the Near East, this was with Moslems, and in India with Hinduism and Buddhism. Eastern religions even influenced Christian prayer-life by introducing the Ashram to the West. In future, it would be an important task to study what the Indian YMCA has contributed to the interfaith dialogue of the World Council of Churches and other official bodies.

Asian YMCAs influenced the World’s Alliance in other respects, too. When the European and American YMCAs had been mainly urban organisations, the Asian YMCAs emphasised rural youth. Asian YMCAs also brought organisational developments to the World’s Alliance. The Helsingfors World’s Conference in 1926 recommended that a Far Eastern Area Committee should be held. This, along with the South American Federation of the YMCA, was a starting point for future YMCA area organisation system.

**TO SUM UP**, there had already been small YMCA groups in 1855, but major inputs came from Britain and North America some decades later. The largest YMCA in Asia was the Chinese YMCA but the major innovations came from India. Asian YMCAs varied from small, 20-50 member groups to large 4000 member city-associations. In the Near East, the Turkish YMCA served as a model to some extent. It was the Turkish YMCA which first accepted non-Christians as board members. In general, the membership of Near East YMCAs constituted of the Orthodox population residing there. In the Near East, the foundation of Israel created a vast refugee problem, and the World’s Alliance has been involved in this work since then.

The Indian YMCA served as a model for the rest of Asia. It was at first, a club movement of Europeans, but in 1890 the Madras YMCA was established as the first indigenous association. The Indian YMCA developed a large rural work, played an important role in training Indian leadership for the Indian churches, and was active in ecumenism and in interfaith dialogue. The latter led to a vast literary project in which the YMCA published many studies on Indian culture and religions. The major impact of the Indian YMCA on the World’s Alliance has come in its emphasis on rural work and interfaith dialogue.

Thus far I have focused on America, Asia and Europe. The YMCA entered Africa and Oceania as well, although their contribution to the World’s Alliance remained minimal during this period (1855-1955).

### 4.4.3. Emerging YMCAs in Africa and Oceania

The YMCAs in Africa were mainly British and French-type small YMCAs constituted primarily of European residents in the area. In Oceania, the YMCAs were modelled according to the British system.

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1 WConf 1926, 239.
Map 6: First YMCAs in Africa
AFRICA was a continent whose “long-neglected call” was heard in the YMCA, on the world level, relatively late, in the 1940s. Although there had been small YMCAs in Africa in the 1860s already, they were associations of young British settlers and businessmen living in South Africa (Cape Town 1865) and Nigeria (Lagos 18??)2. The native African YMCAs were founded in Liberia (Cape Palmas 1881), Ghana (Accra 1890) and Sierra Leone (Freetown 1912)3. The special feature in Africa has been the impact of French influence. The French YMCA was active in the 1920s, but associations that were founded were small and often short-lived. In general, those that survived lived quiet lives and there was not similar rapid expansion as in Latin America and Asia. In 1955, there were 88 associations with 16,000 members in the continent, which means that the share of the African YMCA in the world movement was less than half a percent.

If one had to draw a picture of a typical African YMCA, the drawing would be of a tree with roots in the colonial motherland, strong Evangelical emphasis with connections to Missionary Societies, social and recreational activities and a lack of resources. To add some nuances to this picture would mean noticing the YMCA membership policy that kept the leadership Christian, but opened the membership to everyone - in an African context this also meant Moslems.

The remarkable phenomenon in the African YMCAs was the secondary place of sports in activities. This is extraordinary when compared with, for example, Latin American YMCAs where sport was number one, and which had minimal spiritual activities.

YMCA extension to Africa can be seen in Map 6 and in Table 21.

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1 The expression is from Limbert’s report to the Centennial Conferences (WComR 1955, 115).
Table 21: First African YMCAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>First YMCA</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source of YMCA influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alger</td>
<td>Algiers</td>
<td>&lt;1854-</td>
<td>Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroons</td>
<td>Douala</td>
<td>1924-</td>
<td>Based on a local group. A visit from the World’s Alliance in 1929. Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>Cotonou</td>
<td>1937-</td>
<td>Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>1892-</td>
<td>English fraternal secretary 1892-1913. North American fraternal secretaries since 1913. British war-work secretaries during WW:s. A Danish POW work secretary during WW II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Addis Ababa</td>
<td>1948-</td>
<td>Egyptian fraternal secretary until 1951 when replaced by an American secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Congo</td>
<td>Brazzaville</td>
<td>&lt;1954-</td>
<td>Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keta</td>
<td>1890-?</td>
<td>Bremen missionaries support for the YMCA work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>Abidjan</td>
<td>1937-</td>
<td>Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>1910-32, 1943-</td>
<td>First started by missionaries. British military and POW work during WW II. British fraternal secretary 1947-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Cape Palmas</td>
<td>1881-&gt;1906</td>
<td>Local initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Port Luis(?)</td>
<td>&lt;1955</td>
<td>Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Casablanca</td>
<td>1919-</td>
<td>Started by Frenchmen acquainted with the YMCA during WW I. POW work of the World’s Alliance during WW II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>18??-?, 1944-</td>
<td>Founded by British residents in the country. British military work during WW II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>1927-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Dakar</td>
<td>1937-</td>
<td>Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Cape Town</td>
<td>1865-</td>
<td>Founded as an association for British residents in the country. North American fraternal secretary 1922-1940. British military work and POW work during WW II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>Lome</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Founded by Bremen Mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunis</td>
<td>Tunis</td>
<td>&lt;1933-</td>
<td>Affiliated to the French YMCA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Table 21 and Map 6 are based on The YMCAs of the World 1958 (15-18, 33ff., 48ff., 54ff., 62ff., 77ff., 111ff., 119-125, 132ff., 141ff., 167ff., 187ff., 193-196); Shedd (1955a, 75); Cedergren (1955, 676); Latourette (1957, 333-339, 345-352), The Report of the First West African Area Conference of YMCAs (AfAConf 1953, 14-20), World’s Alliance Statistics, 1937, 1955; Extension Committee Report to the 1933 Executive Committee meeting (WComEx 1933a); Extension Committee Executive Report 1955 (ExtCom 1955).
OCEANIA was another area, although it had strong associations in Australia and New Zealand. However, these mainly followed the lead of the British YMCA and did not contribute any significant innovations on a world level during this era. The YMCA extension to Oceania can be seen in Map 7 and in Table 22.

Map 7: first YMCAs in Oceania

Table 22: First YMCAs in Oceania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>First YMCAs</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Source of YMCA influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>1850-</td>
<td>Branch of London YMCA. British influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>1855-</td>
<td>Branch of London YMCA. British influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahiti</td>
<td></td>
<td>1954-</td>
<td>Started by a French missionary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TO SUM UP, Africa was, for long a neglected continent for the YMCA. Due to European colonialism, the main impact came from Britain and France but also from Belgium, Germany and the USA. In general, associations were small and often short-lived. Compared to other Third World regions, African YMCAs focused more on religious activities than those in other continents. Oceanian YMCAs lived the same quiet lives as their African brother movements. They were mainly copies of British associations.

4.4.4. Influences of Extension and Expansion on Mission View of the YMCA

Table 23 is a combination of how the movement expanded in different regions. The YMCAs in the Third World were relatively small. Only the Chinese, Indian and Filipino movements had over 30 000 members. In Africa, the total of all members together remained under 20 000. The Near East and Latin American
Movements vary from hundreds to 10 000. However, if we focus on the size of associations, some of the Third World local associations were among the largest in the world. This was due to the American strategy of founding ‘model associations’ in strategic cities in the world. The relative smallness of national movements in these countries was partly because of religious resistance (Catholic or non-Christian), partly because of their relative short existence.

Another phenomenon was that, except for Asia, the YMCA was an urban movement. It was established in large towns and its functions were based on central buildings. The Indian idea was that as the majority of the people live in rural areas the YMCA had to go to these areas.

The YMCA idea came mainly from North America and Britain. Only in Africa and the Near East, was the French influence dominant in some countries. Dutch and Belgian movements had also occasionally started YMCAs in their former colonies. German and Scandinavian influence seems to have been quite minimal during this early period.

The YMCA adapted itself in new regions through different concepts. In Latin America and other Roman Catholic contexts, the YMCA tried to avoid conflict by leaving religious work to the Churches. In other parts of the Third World, religion was an important part of the program. Although YMCA beginnings were strictly Evangelical, an attitude grew towards dialogue with other faiths. In India and Palestine especially, the YMCA tried to find what was common in religions instead of looking for differences. In the Near East, the Orthodox churches adopted the YMCA as one way to work.

Membership was mainly according to the principle: ‘open membership - Christian leadership’. This was done by a division between active and associate members. The first ones were either members of Christian Churches or those who signed the Paris Basis. Board members and secretaries were from this category. The exception was the Near East where this division was relinquished.

In many countries, the YMCA was a pioneer of youth work and physical education. The two World Wars increased work among victims of war, and most YMCAs were somehow involved in it. On the international level, work with refugees became the largest activity of the World’s Alliance.

Although the YMCA was founded as a revivalist movement, it had already turned to be more a Social Gospel relief organisation. Christianity was the basis of the work but religious activities were not dominant.

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1 For example, in 1969 the South American Confederation (up to 1962 the name was South American Federation of YMCAs) reported that it had 150,000 members (The YMCAs of the World 1969, 116f.) compared to 46,000 in 1955 (table 15).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1855</th>
<th>1878</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>- Associations</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>1,395</td>
<td>2,632</td>
<td>5,512</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>8,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>149,292</td>
<td>305,265</td>
<td>507,568</td>
<td>493,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secretaries</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>- Associations</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>1,868</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>1,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>227,090</td>
<td>405,789</td>
<td>739,438</td>
<td>1,310,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secretaries</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>2,392</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>4,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>- Associations</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>3,033</td>
<td>6,068</td>
<td>21,192</td>
<td>46,307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secretaries</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>- Associations</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>4,258</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>4,750</td>
<td>16,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secretaries</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>- Associations</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>4,160</td>
<td>14,501</td>
<td>35,481</td>
<td>113,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secretaries</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>- Associations</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>3,832</td>
<td>12,418</td>
<td>16,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secretaries</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>- Associations</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>4,231</td>
<td>7,736</td>
<td>8,789</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>385,547</td>
<td>738,205</td>
<td>1,312,707</td>
<td>1,960,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Secretaries</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>2,739</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>5,844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is a combination of the following statistics: World’s Alliance Statistics, 1855-1909; 1937; 1938. * Includes Near East
* Does not include British secretaries.
* 1894
* European figures include World’s Committee that was counted separately in 1938 General statistics.
* There must be a mistake in 1938 General statistics in the case of Brazil (162 secretaries) –1937 General statistics give a more moderated figure (16) which is also in line with January 1, 1937 figures given by Limbert.
* Membership statistics from China are from 1950
* Totals are counted from the known figures.
* = Data not available in source statistics.
Table 23 shows how the movement expanded, although the table must be read with some caution. However, the general trend the table shows is that the expansion of the YMCA was largest in its first and second quadrennials. From 1855 to 1878, membership increased by 380 per cent and from 1878 to 1905 with 550 per cent. After that the increase calmed down to become ‘only’ 250 per cent per quadrennial. We can also see that in 1878 North American membership had passed the amount of Europe, forming half of the movement, and that their proportion reached 75 per cent in 1955. In case of secretaries, the development has been similar as well. We can also see that in the case of associations the trend is not the same. North American associations compose only 22 per cent of the world total. While in Europe there was an average of 122 members in each association, the rate in North America was 1854 per association. The only exceptions in this expansionary trend were drops in the amount of associations in Europe and in the figures on secretaries in North America and Asia.

What do these remarks mean? First, it seems that the YMCA was in its expansionary stage through the whole of the period. In this sense, it has been a successful movement. In this work’s Introduction, we saw that expansion has not stopped. The reduction of Associations in Europe is partly due to the abolition of East European YMCA by Fascist and Communist governments. However, this only explains the loss of 697 associations out of a total loss of 2,633. Only Germany, Austria (which was included in Germany in 1938) and to a small extent, Belgium increased their number of associations. In most European countries, the number of associations was reduced. In the case of secretaries, 1938 seem to have been a kind of a small peak. However, the change is so small that it can be explained by annual changes in recruitment and retirement. In Asia, the drop in the amount of secretaries all comes from China. Limbert estimates that in 1954 there were 75

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1 Compared to the statistics that Karl Fries gave in his *History of the World’s Alliance* in 1905 (WConfPrep 1905e, 16f.), there are several differences.
2 Membership rate in 2002 is ca. 45 million (*Mission & History* s.a.).
3 There seem to have been three waves in the abolition of European YMCA. First, during the war (Estonia, Germany, which was re-established after the war, Latvia, Spain, Yugoslavia). Second, just after the war (Bulgaria and Rumania). In 1949, there were still 7,869 associations in Europe. Finally, between 1949 and 1951 the last three strong movements, Czechoslovakia (138 associations, 8,879 members and 10 secretaries in 1938), Hungary (466 associations, 29,163 members and 29 secretaries in 1938) and Poland (5 associations, 10,649 members and 41 secretaries in 1938), were closed down or transformed to Communist youth organisations. (WComR 1955, 42-45; World’s Alliance Statistics 1938; Johannot 1955, 647)
4 World’s Alliance Statistics 1938, World Alliance Statistics 1955. Greece, Iceland and Portugal remained stable while in other countries there was a reduction of associations: Denmark (from 666 to 604), England, Wales and Ireland (from 500 to 371), Finland (from 281 to 351), France (from 240 to 100), Italy (from 38 to 10), Netherlands (from 1734 to 854), Norway (from 474 to 28), Scotland (from 102 to 67) Sweden (from 260 to 181) and Switzerland (from 489 to 288).
5 On January 1, 1937, there were 3,942 secretaries in North America (WComR 1955, 186), and at the end of the year 4,119 (World’s Alliance Statistics 1937).
secretaries left in the country while on January 1, 1937 there were 559. By the end of 1937 the amount had dropped to 270, which was also the 1938 figure.

A second phenomenon was that the “power centre” of the movement shifted from Europe to North America during this era. The North American Movement composed the majority of the membership and resources of the World’s Alliance. However, Americans have not channelled their World Service resources entirely through the World’s Alliance but focused on direct bilateral extension programs. Europeans often expressed their fear that the North American International Committee acted like there was no world body at all. Behind this fear, there was a disagreement whether extension work should be the responsibility of national movements or under the control of the CIC. A third remark is that the American model of large associations was economically more effective and brought more stability than the European model of small ones. Large associations had better resources to maintain buildings and hire secretaries. The weakness was that when work was based on the efforts of paid staff, responsible members were turned into clients consuming YMCA services.

Richard C. Morse gives an interesting piece of information related to the attitude of small and large associations to central bodies. When W. Chauncy Langdon, the corresponding secretary of the Washington YMCA, contacted American associations in order to establish a national committee, he received little sympathy from the large Metropolitan Associations. Morse sums up that “the early and successful federation of the Association brotherhood, therefore, owes its origin to sympathy and cooperation from the smaller Associations.”

4.5. Impact of Context on the Mission View of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs

The YMCA changed from a small revival movement in 1855 to a world organisation a hundred years later. Its membership expanded from 35,000 to 4.7 million from 1855 to 1955. This expansion was partly due to favourable opportunity structures which the YMCA could benefit from. Economically, the YMCA was a product of industrialism and a growing middle class in North America and Europe. The middle class had both a need for YMCA services and the ability to pay for them. At the same time, the same middle class supplied the YMCA with leaders who could use their business methods in Christian work. On the other

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2 World’s Alliance Statistics 1937; 1938.
3 On North American World Service, see International Survey of the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations 1932; Latourette 1957; Hall 1962.
4 Shedd 1955a, 368, 383f., 439.
5 Cedergren 1955, 662f.
7 Morse 1913, 27.
hand: ‘the customer is always right’ - the YMCA had to modify its mission and activities according to the needs of its customers.

Cultural opportunities largely followed the path of industrialism. A constant phenomenon is a move - from countryside to towns, from Europe to North America. In this situation, the YMCA, which had a mission to serve young men, modified its activities to meet the needs of youth on the move. At the same time, the fragmentation of society created special groups of young men who had special needs: soldiers, railwaymen, racial minorities and students. The last group was especially important because youth in higher education had expanded in order to meet the growing needs of industry and business. University youth was not only a strategic target for the YMCA mission - it was also a source of recruits for the work. When Western culture triumphed round the globe, these young men implanted Christianity, western education, sports and lifestyle - and new YMCAs - in Africa, Asia and Latin America. When the mood changed and Nationalism raised its head in these continents, the YMCA had enough indigenous leaders in these areas to enable the organisation to adapt into a new cultural climate.

Politically, the YMCA emerged in a time when, in Britain, Germany and North America, the associations were seen as tools for solving social problems. When the YMCA had institutionalised itself, it had the capacity to serve governments - and individual young men - with its knowledge of physical education and recreation. Need for these services emerged especially during the First World War when almost the whole YMCA machinery was modified to serve men in armed forces. This, in turn, created a good reputation for the movement (except, of course, in Soviet Russia) and it was able to enter as yet unoccupied areas. One thing led to another: work for soldiers led to work for prisoners of war and work for refugees, migrants and displaced persons.

The YMCA was a fruit of the Evangelical Revival of the 19th century. Contrary to several other revival movements, which were separatistic, the YMCA idea was based on a sense of unity among Christians. This led the YMCA to co-operate - often lead - with the major streams in the Ecumenical Movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. The YMCA leaders were active in the Evangelical Alliance and Sunday School Movement; they were in the spearhead of the Muscular Christianity and student awakenings; they were inspired by the Social Gospel movement; they led the first meetings of Missionary Movement and the World Council of Churches. Although the YMCA was Protestant in origin, it also adapted itself to Orthodox and Roman Catholic contexts. In general, the attitude of Protestant and Orthodox church leaders was positive, while that of Catholics was negative. In all different religious contexts, the YMCA aimed to lead youth to their respective churches.

Extending out of Europe and North America, the YMCA faced new problems and sought answers to them. The area that had, along with the two ‘Christian continents’, the most profound effect on the mission view of the YMCA, was Asia. In the Near East, the YMCA faced Islam and in India, it faced Hinduism and Buddhism. In both contexts, the movement took the lead in interfaith dialogue with
these world religions. Additionally, in India, the YMCA faced the problems of rural youth - and aimed to adapt itself to their needs.

However, these new historical moments and experiences in new continents do not automatically change any organisation. The new situation must be interpreted at first, and it is the task of the leadership to formulate in words what the members are thinking¹. In the next sub-chapter, I focus on the changes in leadership, membership, symbols and structure of the World’s Alliance.

¹ Georg Simmel (1950, 185) expressed this idea by quoting a German party leader: “I am their leader, therefore I must follow them.”
5. From a Network to an Institutional Organisation

The previous chapter reviewed significant changes in the context of the World’s Alliance and their impact on the movement. This chapter, in turn, focuses on the shell of the organisation. The model that was presented in the introduction frames the shell through four aspects, membership, organisational structure, leadership and social objects. The aim of this chapter is to find out what kinds of changes happened in the organisational shell of the World’s Alliance and what potentials these changes created for the modification of the mission view of the World’s Alliance.

5.1. A Membership Movement

In the previous chapter, I already presented how the YMCA expanded and extended in various parts of the world. The perspective was on how the YMCA modified its message into different contexts and how it expanded there. This chapter also focuses on the World’s Alliance membership. However, the point of view is on the composition of membership. From the perspective of the mission view, there are three important aspects: global diffusion, demography of members and membership categories. In this sub-chapter, I will study how these aspects of membership changed, and discuss what impact these aspects have on the mission view.

5.1.1. Western Dominance in Membership

In 1855, all the founding members were from Europe and North America. The constituency of the YMCA also remained mainly Euro-American during its first hundred years. However, American majority in membership increased continuously, giving a hint that American views would have a larger impact on the mission view of the World’s Alliance.

Table 23 on page 210 shows how the membership increased during the next 100 years. The representation in the World’s Committee was counted first, according to the number of associations and, later, according to the number of members in each country. It is interesting to see that these two factors of membership differed rather sharply.

When we look at the share of membership, we can see that the majority of members have always been in North America. In 1855, 57.1 percent of all YMCA members were in the US and Canada. This share was rather stable between 1855-1920. From then on, the North American share started to grow; 66.9 percent in 1938 and 75.2 percent in 1955. At the same time, the share of Europe diminished from 42.9 percent in 1855 to 15.3 percent a hundred years later. On the basis of membership, it could be said that the YMCA in 1955 was mainly an American movement.
The share of other continents remained minimal. The only significant phenomenon was the rise of the Asian proportion, which had grown to 7 percent in 1955. This was a sign of the effectiveness of American missionary enterprises in that continent. Latin America comprised 1.0 percent of the YMCA membership in the world. Africa was definitely 'a forgotten land' with its 0.3 percent share although its membership had tripled between 1938 and 1955. While commenting on the figures, Paul Limbert notes that "on some continents the YMCA has barely kept up with the increase in population." This has been the case particularly in Asia and Africa. In Latin America, the YMCA has concentrated on large cities and the rural areas have been untouched.¹

The number of associations was important, because the World’s Alliance did not have individuals as members but associations (and later national movements). When we look at the number of member associations, we see that Europe dominated these figures. In 1855, Europe comprised 84.2 percent of all YMCAs while North America had only 15.5 percent. Between 1855 and 1955, Europe also lost ground in this factor as its share dropped to 69.4 percent in 1955. Other continents had an even smaller share of associations than that of members: Asia 6.4 percent, Latin America 0.4 percent, Oceania 0.4 percent. The only exception is Africa where the share of associations (1 %) was larger than that of members. This is a result of European dominance in the formation of African YMCAs. When we look at the number of national movements (Table 10 on page 152, Table 13 on page 176, Table 16 on page 187, Table 19 on page 194 and Table 25 on page 240), we can see that the European structure favoured European leadership in the World’s Alliance. When the basis of representation was on a national basis, Europe had always more representatives in the Central International Committee / World’s Committee than its share of members or associations would have required. Throughout the period 1855-1955, they have always outnumbered representatives of other continents. In this sense, the World’s Alliance was a European organisation.

The background of this difference between share of members and share of associations is, as we have seen, in the organisation of the movement in different continents. Europe favoured small *ecclesiola in ecclesia*- type groups that were connected to the parishes and were, as Americans repeatedly accused, church associations. They were more spiritual groups than community organisations. In North America, instead, society required YMCAs to take responsibility for some community services - libraries, gymnasiums, etc., which were organised in Europe by other agencies. To meet the needs of the society, North American YMCAs had to create effective organisations, which could meet the economic challenges of the work.

The increase of American membership created a potential to change the organisation and the power share in it. Along with the pressure on the power-share in the movement, there was evidently a potential to modify the mission according to American pattern. Moreover, when the North American model diffused more

¹ WComR 1955, 179.
rapidly than the European model, it supported the American understanding of the YMCA. This would mean that, in time, the World’s Committee would increasingly resemble the North American International Committee in its mandate and policy. It would also mean that the content of its work would increasingly be that of the NAIC. In other words, this means that the Four-fold Programme was becoming the main line of YMCA work on a worldwide level.

**TO SUM UP**, the American movement has always been largest, ranging from 57 per cent in 1855 to 75 per cent of membership in 1955. At the same time the European share has diminished from 43 percent to 15 percent, and the Asian proportion had grown from zero to 7 percent. In the number of associations, Europe dominated although its share dropped during the hundred years from 84 percent to 69 percent. Since Europe also had more national movements than other continents, it has kept in power in the World’s Committee. The American expansion created a need to change the power structures of the World’s Alliance in order to give Americans a greater voice in decision-making.

### 5.1.2. Young White Protestant Middle-class Men - and Some Others

The YMCA started as an organisation of white Protestant middle-class young men. In the course of time, the membership basis widened. There have been five demographic factors that have been discussed widely in World’s Conferences and Plenaries: sex, age, class, race and religious affiliation.

Demographic factors in the structure of membership are presented in Table 24. Although one must deal with the YMCA statistics with care because of different ways of collecting data in each country, we can see some general trends.

**WOMEN** have been part of the YMCA almost from the beginning. The statistics of 1855 do not differentiate male and female members, although there were women both in Europe and in North America. Helen F. Sweet states that “membership status, either associate or active, was granted to women as early as 1856 in some local associations [in North America].” The exclusion of female members from the NAIC occurred only in 1869 but some local associations still kept female membership although, as Sweet puts it, “women members went ‘underground.’ That is to say, local Associations continued to enrol them in many places, but as far as the national body was concerned they did not exist.”

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1 This process will be reviewed below in chapter 5.2.
2 Limbert (WComR 1955, 179f) notes: “Some Movements include in their annual reports those who are part of the constituency of the YMCA. Others make a clear distinction between ‘members’ and ‘participants’… The constituency of the YMCA in all countries is much larger than the registered membership. If these participants were included, as well as all who were enrolled as members in YMCAs at any time during the year, the total figure in Table I [Here Limbert gives a wrong reference: it should be Table IV in the page 183 of his report] would be larger by more than 1,000,000.”
3 Sweet 1953, 9; Hopkins 1951, 39.
4 Sweet 1953, 9; Morse 1913, 92. Hopkins (1951, 115) notes that already in 1866 “the Convention refused to seat several women delegates, voting that ‘representation be based on male membership.’
5 Sweet 1953, 10. See also Hopkins 1951, 240.
only in 1933 that the North American YMCA officially accepted female membership\(^1\).

Table 24: World YMCA membership combination related to age and sex, 1920, 1938, and 1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All members and participants (^a)</td>
<td>507,568</td>
<td>441,651</td>
<td>493,445</td>
<td>717,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 18</td>
<td>106,870</td>
<td>194,730</td>
<td>221,215</td>
<td>12,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 18</td>
<td>400,698</td>
<td>246,921</td>
<td>232,995</td>
<td>14,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other (age &amp; sex not known)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12,227</td>
<td>66,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All members and participants (^a)</td>
<td>739,438</td>
<td>990,797</td>
<td>1,310,710</td>
<td>3,523,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 18</td>
<td>181,656</td>
<td>261,212</td>
<td>391,254</td>
<td>-827,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 18</td>
<td>557,782</td>
<td>729,585</td>
<td>611,992</td>
<td>869,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other (age &amp; sex not known)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>209,832</td>
<td>155,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and Central America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All members and participants (^a)</td>
<td>6,068</td>
<td>22,243</td>
<td>21,192</td>
<td>46,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 18</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3,515</td>
<td>4,352</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 18</td>
<td>5,868</td>
<td>18,728</td>
<td>11,653</td>
<td>4,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other (age &amp; sex not known)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,021</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All members and participants (^a)</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>4,778</td>
<td>4,750</td>
<td>16,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 18</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>-2,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 18</td>
<td>2,52</td>
<td>4,033</td>
<td>3783</td>
<td>-4,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other (age &amp; sex not known)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia (^b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All members and participants (^a)</td>
<td>35,481</td>
<td>83,028</td>
<td>113,251</td>
<td>344,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10,810</td>
<td>28,120</td>
<td>-19,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71,218</td>
<td>81,181</td>
<td>38,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other (age &amp; sex not known)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,504</td>
<td>2,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All members and participants (^a)</td>
<td>12,418</td>
<td>17,396</td>
<td>16,763</td>
<td>33,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 18</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>7,636</td>
<td>7,768</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 18</td>
<td>12,171</td>
<td>9,760</td>
<td>8,873</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other (age &amp; sex not known)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All members and participants (^a)</td>
<td>1,312,707</td>
<td>1,558,893</td>
<td>1,960,226</td>
<td>4,683,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 18</td>
<td>289,393</td>
<td>478,648</td>
<td>653,649</td>
<td>13,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 18</td>
<td>1,014,525</td>
<td>1,080,245</td>
<td>950,857</td>
<td>15,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other (age &amp; sex not known)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>327,252</td>
<td>243,062</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^a\) Totals show more than sum of cells because many movements do not record in detail

\(^b\) Membership statistics from China are from 1950

\(^1\) Supposedly mainly male.

In Europe, female membership first occurred in Nordic countries, which had both mixed associations and mixed national movements. In Norway, the first mixed association was founded in 1879 and in 1892, the first YWCA joined the

\(^1\) Sweet 1953, 10; Hopkins 1951, 565.
national alliance of YMCAs. The problem was complicated. First, in principle, the YMCA was not a general Evangelical agency but was aimed to focus on young men exclusively. Second, frequently women did not have right to vote. Third, mixed associations caused troubles with the YWCA, which opposed them because of the lower status of women in the YMCA. All these reasons favoured the exclusion of women completely. On the other hand, especially in the rural areas, there were no YWCAs at all, and girls were used to being in the same classes and activities as boys. They could not simply be thrown away. Moreover, the number of mixed associations increased at the beginning of the 20th century.

The World’s YWCA raised the problem of mixed associations in 1908, and it was taken in the agenda of the Geneva Plenary in 1908. Charles Fermaud, the first general secretary of the World’s Committee, had made a trip to six countries and surveyed the problem. According to his report, there were altogether, 588 mixed associations in Austria, Finland, Norway, Scotland and Sweden. Of these countries, Denmark and Sweden were officially against them, Scotland neutral, and Bohemia, Finland and Norway for women’s participation in the YMCA on an equal basis. The plenary adopted the following resolution:

1. The World’s Committee of YMCAs recognizes the difficulties which in certain countries have led to the formation of mixed Associations of YMCAs and YWCAs, but they can neither recommend the formation of such nor co-operate.

2. The national alliances of countries belonging to the World’s Alliance of YMCAs may, if circumstances do not allow the formation of separate Associations for young men only, admit the male sections of mixed Associations, provided that these have adopted the Paris Basis.

3. The World’s Committee of YMCAs recommends to the national councils of YMCAs, in such countries as are concerned, to work to the effect that women members of mixed Associations in their respective nations should be induced to join the national organization of YWCAs of their own country.

In the resolution, we can see the basic negative attitude towards mixed associations. The main line in both North America and in Europe was that mixed associa-

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1 Shedd 1955b, 256.
2 The argument was exactly the same as with the black YMCAs in the US, as seen below: if some group is not treated on an equal basis, the group prefers to have its own associations.
3 Shedd 1955b, 256, 446f.
4 WComPle 1908b, 2.
5 Bohemia saw that the mixed associations were favourable from the point of view of the church, and Bohemia was the only country where mixed associations were in towns. In Norway, mixed associations had been a tradition since the beginning of the movement in the country, and they suited local needs. In the case of Finland, Fermaud’s report referred to the unique political situation in the country: “ladies not only have the right to vote, as in Norway, but may also enter Parliament.” Finland and Norway also mentioned long distances and scattered settlement. Bohemia and Finland referred to the needs of church and lack of staff as well. (WComPle 1908b, 2)
6 WComPle 1908a, 10 (English text quoted in Shedd 1955b, 447). The Barmen-Elberfeld World’s Conference in 1909 agreed with the decision and stated: “We agree wholly with the position taken by the World’s Committee concerning mixed Associations... We must bear in mind the historical development of our own work and continue to concentrate our efforts on work among young men (WConf 1909, 4).”
tions were not according to the YMCA ideal as a men’s organisation only, and the World’s Committee expressed this in the resolution. This policy of separate groups was also the policy of the YWCA. On the other hand, the YMCA had always stressed the right of local associations to define their membership policy. The Plenary had to make a compromise between these two principles. In Fermaud’s report, there is one significant reference that might explain the ‘yielding’ to the mixed associations arguments, as the YWCA felt the resolution remained.

In the Swedish report, it was hoped that the problem of the few members in rural areas would be solved once a revival would bring more members, and thus, mixed associations were only needed temporarily. The issue was, however, more fundamental. Strong comments on the situation that existed a few years later and says that while leaders favoured separate associations, “young people favoured mixed groups.”

Attitudes changed slowly. In 1933, the North American YMCA officially accepted women as members, when the NAIC authorised local associations to define their membership requirements for themselves. This decision was preceded by several studies, which dealt with women in the YMCA. Hopkins refers to that of Herbert N. Shenton and reveals an interesting difference in YMCA and YWCA policies, which might have fostered the acceptance of women in the YMCA. Hopkins notes that the YMCA was “concerned to shape public opinion and promote the American women’s movement, neither of which purposes were congenial to the YMCA.” Women who were interested in the Y, but did not want to be engaged in political activities, may have felt the YMCA more suitable for them than the YWCA which was becoming a ‘Christian women’s movement’. Another fostering element might have been that women had been active in the war work of the YMCA. During WW I, the ‘Red Triangle Girl’ became legendary. After the war, the major increase of women in the North American YMCA was in the segment of teen-age girls in Tri-Hi-Y clubs and young adults in student work. In 1934, when women and girls were first reported, there were almost 60,000 of them in 275 North American associations.

In 1950, the North American movement made a study on women and girls in the YMCA. The study showed that 79.5 percent of North American associations

1 The Executive Committee of the World’s YWCA (July 16, 1907, quoted in Rice 1947, 145) had given a statement that “such Associations do not fulfil the YMCA and YWCA ideals.” The policy of the YWCA “hitherto has been to suggest to such mixed Associations the advantages to be derived from separate meetings, where, necessarily, more frank treatment of many subjects can be adopted.” Mrs. E.W. Moore, as a fraternal representative of the YWCA, also expressed this opinion to the YMCA Plenary (WComPle 1908a, 6).
2 WComPle 1908b, 3.
3 Rice 1947, 145f.; Shedd 1955b, 448.
4 WComPle 1908c.
5 Strong 1955a, 466.
6 Hopkins 1951, 565.
7 Tri-Hi-Y clubs were high school clubs for girls (Hopkins 1951, 564). Hi-Y clubs were for high school boys (Idem 467) and Gra-Y clubs were for grade school boys (Idem 553).
8 Hopkins 1951, 564ff.; Sweet 1953, 4-11.
reported female membership and 94.8 percent of the remaining had women and girls as participants. The highest proportion of female members was in smaller associations - thus, in cities where there was no YWCA. The fastest growing segment of membership was girls under 18, who constituted 16.2 percent of members by 1950. Moreover, the associations reporting female membership also showed higher gains in male membership than associations limiting their membership to men only.\(^1\)

In 1951, the Young Men’s Consultation in Oberlin dealt with the question and agreed with the opinion of one British delegate:

> We must accept and welcome the inevitable fact that women have come into the YMCA to stay. They are entitled to our full respect and to responsibilities as equal members.\(^2\)

We can see that although the YMCA in 1955 was still mainly a men’s organisation, and women and girls constituted only 15 percent of the reported members, the proportion of women and girls had been increasing all the time. This definitely created a potential for the YMCA to drop the ‘men’ from the mission view and focus on both sexes.

**AGE** was another question in the YMCA. The movement was originally a movement of *young men*, which meant, in 1855 that phase of life between leaving the family home and marriage. In practice it meant the years from 15 to 30. In the course of time, the age limits expanded in both directions. On one hand, the young men that had joined the YMCA in their youth, remained ‘young men’ even decades later. Thus, the older age cohorts expanded in a natural way. However, in part, these older members organised themselves in the Y’s Men’s Clubs, which were independent men’s clubs that aimed to serve the YMCA. On the other hand, physical activities created for the young men also attracted younger generations, which led to the YMCA boys’ work\(^3\). This work, which started in the 1920s, had borne fruit.

The proportion of male members under 18 years increased from one fifth in 1920 to over half in 1955. More detailed statistics in 1955\(^4\) show that circa two thirds (circa one fifth or quarter of the whole membership) of those over 18 years were under 30 years\(^5\). This means that circa three-quarters of the membership can be regarded as youth. The YMCA was a movement of *youth* – not only an organisation for youth. This would mean that the mission of the YMCA would focus on the needs of adolescents and young men.

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1 Marche 1953, 12, 15, 30.
2 YMWConf 1951, 19.
3 Along with its own boys’ work, the YMCA has been active in forming YMCA Scouts troops. The Scout Movement can be seen as a foster child of the YMCA. In some countries, it has grown, independent of the YMCA, in some countries, scouting is a significant part of YMCA youth work. On the YMCA and Scouts, see Macleod (1973), Johannot (1955, 623f), Hopkins (1951, 468f), Born at the YMCA (2000), Tolin (1989) and Warren (1986).
5 Both Zald (1970, 43) and Limbert (WComR 1955, 181) note the decrease of membership in this age group.
THE SOCIAL CLASS basis of the YMCA has often been regarded as being middle-class. However, there are no statistics on the proportion of different social classes in YMCA membership. The class basis can only be seen indirectly. Zald\(^1\) and Macleod\(^2\) have noted that through its history the US YMCA was mainly urban middle-class\(^3\). On the other hand, the German YMCA especially was based on working-class membership from the beginning, and Indian YMCA focused on rural youth. The Paris Centennial study material *Fellow Workmen for God* informs that

in National Movements where YMCAs are to be found chiefly in large cities, by far the greater proportion of members are clerical or sales workers, managers and officials, and professional workers. In these countries, in spite of efforts to reach more industrial and rural workers, the gain is slow.\(^4\)

The study-material explains this by referring to the cost of maintaining a voluntary association, since members have to maintain it\(^5\). On the other hand, according to the study-material, “in Associations related closely to a parish and in cities or towns largely of one social and religious tradition, the membership of the YMCA may include a very representative portion of the young people of the community\(^6\)” Moreover, Limbert reports of “expansion of work in relation to particular groups.” In this way, he indirectly gives information on the constituency basis as well. The groups, which Limbert mentions, are underprivileged boys, industrial youth, university students, men in Armed Services and young women and girls\(^7\).

One reason for the lack of lower-classes in the YMCA was that the middle-class constituency did not really want them in their associations. Macleod quotes the Association Men in 1900: “Boys of good morals should not be exposed to contamination with boys who have grown up without good home training.” He also argues that although there were some attempts to approach working-class boys, these were to have been kept separate from those of ‘better’ families.\(^8\)

Thus, the class distribution in the YMCA leads to three potential outcomes. First, if the members regarded the YMCA as their social club, it would lead to concentration on the needs of the existing membership groups. Zald describes this

---

1 Zald 1970, 40ff., 182
2 Macleod 1983, 72-82.
3 The 1910 Yearbook of the North American YMCA (quoted in Zald 1970, 40) notes that “only 20 per cent of the membership is drawn from the industrial workers who form 75 per cent of the population.” Macleod (1983, 10) is in the same line: “Starting before the Civil War… moral reformers soon divided their clientele along class lines: YMCA and Sunday schools for the middle class and boys’ clubs and mission schools for the lower class.”
4 WConfPrep 1955a, 28. *International Survey of Young Men’s and Young Women’s Associations* (1932, 86) gives similar results in countries where the NAIC worked.
5 Macleod (1983, 217) mentions the same barrier. He also notes that employed boys in the YMCA were from the upper tier of the working class, where existed extra money for recreation.
6 WConfPrep 1955a, 29.
7 WComR 1955, 196.
8 Quoted in Macleod 1983, 214, 216.
tendency and notes that membership changes to clientele. Second, some YMCA leaders have emphasised that the YMCA mission is to extend to other social classes as well. Along with this, some countries have focused on the needs of rural and industrial youth. Three, the specialisation of work among various segments of the population might lead to differentiation of work to one’s own organisations, outside the YMCA. Examples can be seen in the formation of the United Service Organisations (USO), which was an umbrella organisation of the Army and Navy work of the North American YMCA and other organisations. In other countries, student work was often organised by WSCF and, for example, in Finland railway work was organised by the Railwaymen’s Christian Association, student work by the Student Christian Associations and military canteens by the Finnish Military Canteen Association.

THE RACE QUESTION was a problem in the YMCA, mainly in the US and in South Africa. It first occurred when the North American movement faced the question of slavery - and swept it under the carpet in 1854. Europeans faced the problem when Harriet Beecher Stowe, the writer of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, was invited to participate in the Annual Breakfast Meeting of the London YMCA. This was too much for the Washington YMCA delegate, Clement M. Butler who withdrew from participating in the breakfast. As we have seen, the slavery question was behind the Paris 1855 adoption of the first proposal on avoiding controversial issues.

Nina Mjagkij has studied racial segregation in the US YMCA, where it became an established policy from the beginning of the movement. When the NAIC was founded, its status was so weak that general secretary William Chauncy Langdon was afraid that even discussion of slavery would alienate southern associations. Thus, in order to save the YMCA confederation, he sacrificed the principle of equality. This, in turn, caused the Toronto YMCA to withdraw in 1855, as a protest against this policy. Moreover, the policy was fruitless because only two associations in the south survived the Civil War. Neither Mjagkij nor Hopkins tell why Northern YMCAs did not open their membership to African-Americans, but encouraged them to establish their own associations.

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2 Mrs Beecher Stowe was a sister of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, who was active in the New York YMCA. In spite of this, Mrs. Beecher Stowe’s book was banned from the New York YMCA library. (Hopkins 1951, 51)
3 Shedd 1955a, 78. Hopkins (1951, 56f.) does not mention the controversy at all, although he describes how Butler was accredited to the meeting and what results his journey had.
4 Mjagkij’s work focuses on the African-Americans only. This far, I have not found similar studies on the YMCA work among other ethnic minorities, as Native Americans or Latin Americans. Both Morse (1913, 230f.) and Hopkins (1951, 210f., 475) deal with the Native American work only briefly, and I did not find any reference to Latin Americans.
5 Hopkins 1951, 211-220
6 There was a similar phenomenon in both American Labour Unions and in Social Gospel. They concentrated mainly on white workers and left blacks on the periphery. (Lindley 1990)
7 Mjagkij 1994, 10-16.
The segregation in the US YMCA was complicated. As in the case of women and working class, the middle class excluded African-Americans from their local associations. If they were accepted, they did not have an equal status. While the local YMCAs and the NAIC were not ready to accept African-Americans as equals, African-Americans preferred their own associations as means for racial improvement. When equality was impossible for the blacks, the black YMCA secretaries tried to draw strength from segregation, and rely on self-help and racial solidarity. Mjagkij underlines the role of black YMCA secretaries as role models for young African-Americans.

In Africa, Max Yergan, a formed secretary of the Coloured Men’s Department in North America, was appointed as a fraternal secretary to British East Africa. His work was meant to be a joint British-American project. However, when the governor of East Africa vetoed it, and said that he did not “consider it advisable to introduce into East Africa Negroes of a different calibre from those to be found in East Africa itself,” the British withdrew from the project. Yergan was sent to South Africa instead. In South Africa, like in the US, the work was segregated. Although Yergan achieved some progress, the racial policy of the South African Government made him resign in 1936. From then on, responsibility for South Africa was the work of the British movement. They would have welcomed North American aid, but not in the form of an African-American secretary.

The problem of racism emerged in the World’s Conferences for first time after the First World’s Conference in 1855, as late as 1926 in the Helsingfors (Helsinki) Conference. There, the African-American national secretary, Channing H. Tobias addressed the Conference:

> It is a puzzled Negro youth who turns his eye inquiringly towards Helsingfors tonight. From South Africa he is asking how it is that many Christian leaders either through active advocacy or passive acquiescence give their support to such measures as the Color Bar Bill… The Negro of the United States is puzzled about a Christian leadership that has for more than 50 years without serious protest witnessed flagrant violations of the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution.

Tobias’ address was significant in two senses. First, it was important to coloured YMCAs, who in this way got their voice heard on the global level, although it took twenty years to abolish Jim Crow policies from the US YMCA. Second, this was the first time when the World’s Alliance took a stand on a political question. The conference resolved that “we cannot in fidelity to Christ, in whom there is no racial division, rest without pressing further our efforts towards the practical solution of this problem.” Then, the conference gave a ten-point list what the YMCAs should do in order to abolish racism. Among the points, there was also a

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1 This was exactly the same argument that the YWCA used when it campaigned for separate associations for men and women: in men’s world, women only have a voice if they have their own organisations.
2 Mjagkij 1994, 66.
3 Latourette 1957, 335ff.
4 WConf 1926, 173.
5 WConf 1926, 234.
task for the World’s Committee: “The World’s Committee is urged to press upon National Alliances the carrying out in local YMCA’s of the views here expressed without entering into political entanglements.”

The World’s Committee appointed a commission, a decision which, in turn led to a deep study process of intercultural and interracial questions. It was not a question anymore of American associations, the problem was worldwide. In this work, the YMCA was not alone - churches and the International Missionary Council had appointed similar research projects. The attitude towards racism was turning, and Christian leaders increasingly saw it as a violation against the will of God. The commission delivered its report to Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931. The conference adopted a long resolution, where the issue was dealt with from the point of view of Christian ethics. As a part of this resolution, the conference adopted the following statement:

It recognises that there may be difficulties at present as to the distance any local Association may go in serving various racial groups together, but urges upon every Association the obligation to take the above next steps, in order that the Movement may the sooner come to what the Conference believes is the ideal. namely, the making possible of the enlistment and full participation in the Association enterprise of all classes of young men and boys in the community without distinction of race, culture, or nationality.

In the Mysore World’s Conference in 1937 there were three reports on the racial problem from the US, Great Britain and South Africa, which described the local situations and problems. Along with these, the Commission appointed by the World’s Alliance gave its report. On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission, the Conference

2. records its belief that discriminations based on race and colour are contrary to the will of God;
3. holds that no Association or Branch should adopt a racially exclusive membership policy, or close its activities to any man on the ground of his race or colour.

Thus, the enlargement of the membership to the non-white population had finally led the YMCA to reflect on its deep values and to define racism as unchris-

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1 WConf 1926, 235.
2 WComR 1931, 189-200.
3 A practical ethical question occurred before the World’s Conference. Mjagkij (1994, 121) tells that “the convention hotels in Cleveland refused to accord ‘equal treatment to darker-skinned delegates’. The American YMCA, fearing international embarrassment, threatened to withdraw the conference. The hotel managers, apparently concerned about the financial loss, reversed their decision.” Mjagkij (Idem.) argues that this debate was evidently behind the conference decision, as it made the question concrete to the delegates. She also tells that racial discrimination was an established policy, even of the Executive Committee of the NAIC and of the YMCA training school at Blue Ridge, North Carolina (Mjagkij 1994, 107, 112)
4 WConf 1931, 5.
5 WConfPrep 1937b.
6 WConfPrep 1937c.
7 WConfPrep 1937d.
8 WConf 1937, 39f.
9 WConf 1937, 41.
tian. However, it was only after the Second World War that the US YMCA adopted racially inclusive policy. It became unbearable to claim that America defended human rights when it itself violated them. In 1946, the National Council passed a resolution to urge local associations to “work steadfastly toward the goal of eliminating all racial discrimination.” Mjagkij says that this resolution was “the beginning of the end of segregation in the YMCA” of the USA.¹

The problem was not over. The World’s Alliance commission on the study of interracial questions recorded its belief that “more positive and courageous steps should be taken to avoid the formation of new Associations on the basis of racial segregation.”²

Although the number of coloured people was still rather small in the YMCA constituency in 1955, they had profoundly challenged YMCA basic values. The rights of African-Americans were no longer an issue that could be sacrificed on the altar of white unity. The race question had become a question of faith and, thus, it challenged the validity of the First Additional Proposal, which had become a Second Fundamental Principle of the Paris Basis. If racism was against the will of God, other political issues could also be. The YMCA had come a long way from its non-political roots as a revival movement. Political issues were also becoming issues of faith in the YMCA. Moreover, if segregation based on race was a sin, what about segregation on other bases? One of the most important segregations in the YMCA was traditionally based on religion.

**THE EVANGELICAL** revival had created the YMCA at the beginning of the 19th century. In the course of time, the movement has spread to Orthodox, Catholic and non-Christian territories. The issue of religious requirements of members was discussed in 1865 (Elberfeld World’s Conference), 1879 (correspondence and 1902-1905 (preparation of the Jubilee Conference)³. The British YMCA required conversion⁴, North Americans membership in an Evangelical church⁵, and YMCAs in France and Switzerland personal signing of the Paris Basis⁶ as a criterion for full membership. Germans, in turn, accepted “all young men as long they behave decently and can be trusted⁷.” Thus, while other movements had some religious requirements, the German movement had only moral ones. However, the open membership policy of Germans did not mean that there was no nucleus of committed Christians. Thus, all movements emphasised Christian commitment of members, but Germans saw that “conversion is the grand aim, but it is not made the condition of admission.”⁸

Behind these differences of membership-requirements were both theological and strategic differences. First, at the time that the membership requirements were

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¹ Mjagkij 1994, 123-127. see also Hopkins 1951, 727-730.
² WComR 1955, 126.
³ Discussion on this theme, see Shedd 1955a, 167f.; 1955b, 273-276, 392-416.
⁴ London YMCA Rule VIII (Shedd 1955a, 25).
⁵ WConf 1855a, 90.
⁶ Shedd 1955a, 142; 1955b, 275.
⁸ WConf 1855a, 52
laid, Anglo-Saxon movements\textsuperscript{1} represented revivalism-Christianity\textsuperscript{2} while Germans represented nurture-Christianity\textsuperscript{3}. Werner Jentsch has noted that in the German movement “there is in addition to this zeal for conversion the ‘pastoral care’ motive which takes into account the growth, the development, the doubts, and the special situation of the individual\textsuperscript{4}.” Second, there was a link from membership to leadership. As seen, Anglo-Saxon, French and Swiss movements were mainly lay-led, while the German associations were clergy-led. It can be supposed that in lay movements the need for criterion for membership was higher than in church-affiliated ones because in the latter case final leadership was in the hands of the clergy\textsuperscript{5}. Pastors who led the movement, saw the YMCA as a tool for their work. It was the church, not the YMCA, which was the society of believers\textsuperscript{6}. The YMCA was a net “catching good and bad fish alike; the ultimate selection is in God’s hands”\textsuperscript{7}. Third, there was also a difference in understanding the concept of Evangelical. In the US, the definition of ‘Evangelical church’ meant a revivalistic church\textsuperscript{8}. In Europe, the term was used for Protestant churches and some pre-Reformation groups (like Waldesians) who had a similar theology to Protestant churches. Thus, in American free church context, the membership of an Evangelical church meant a basic commitment to Christianity. In Europe, as noted already in the 1855 Conference, the membership of an Evangelical church “does not necessarily imply any personal profession\textsuperscript{9}.” Therefore the British, French and Swiss movements required personal criteria. Although Germans differed from others in principle, they were, however, in practice, on the same line as others. While Anglo-Saxons had created a two-level membership - active and associate - Germans had similar distinctions as they required personal belief from leaders and members of various committees\textsuperscript{10}.

\textsuperscript{1} As we have seen, the American situation was twofold. On one hand, the expansion of the Four-fold Programme diminished the impact on revivalism and religious activities in general. On the other side, revivalism was largely alive in the Student Christian Movement, which supplied leaders to the North American International Committee, which was relatively independent from the control of local associations. It was only after the change of the structure of the American YMCA in the 1920’s that local views became dominant in the national level.

\textsuperscript{2} The London Rule VIII (revised in1846) emphasised conversion, while stating: “That any person shall be eligible for membership who gives decided evidence of his conversion to God.” (Quoted in Shedd 1955a, 25n.2).

\textsuperscript{3} WConf 1855a, 51.

\textsuperscript{4} Quoted in Shedd 1955a, 57.

\textsuperscript{5} Alfred Klug (WConfPrep 1905b, 16) also mentions what Friedrich von Schlümbach, the founder of the American type Berlin CVJM, had told him. Schlümbach said that contrary to the American situation, in Europe “people are Christianized... In many cases there ensued a Christian education and many have been brought over by a faithful confirmation teaching.” Thus, even the ‘unconverted’ had a basic Christian frame of thought.

\textsuperscript{6} WConfPrep 1905b, 2f.

\textsuperscript{7} Report of the IVth World’s Conference, Elberfeld 1865 (quoted in Shedd 1955a, 168).

\textsuperscript{8} See Shedd 1955a, 70f.

\textsuperscript{9} WConf 1855a, 17f.

\textsuperscript{10} WConf 1855a, 52; Shedd 1955, 57.
At the Paris Jubilee Conference in 1905, one agreement emerged on membership criteria. In the Jubilee Declaration, the Paris Basis was reaffirmed and the Conference declared that the Basis required “personal and vital Christianity on the part of the members†.” However, this declaration did not solve the difference between Anglo-Saxon and German movements. Anglo-Saxons still had their distinction between active and associate members, while Germans practised a more open membership policy. The theme was to appear again in later years when the YMCA entered non-Protestant lands.

At the end of the 19th century, the YMCA entered Orthodox and Roman Catholic areas. The St. Petersbourg YMCA had opened its membership to the Orthodox in 1900. The Mexico City YMCA modified its rules in 1907 and “became the first Association to include the Roman Catholic Church among those fulfilling the definition of evangelical Churches.” The trend was towards inclusion of Orthodox and Roman Catholics as full members. An agreement with the Orthodox churches was later accepted that the work in Orthodox countries should be carried on according to Orthodox teaching†. While the relationships with the Orthodox churches developed in mutual understanding, the relationships with the Catholic church suffered from the negative attitude of the Vatican, which remained until the Second Vatican Council.

**TO SUM UP, THE** constituency of the YMCA changed remarkably from 1855 to 1955. It did not only expand to be more than 100 times larger that it was in 1855, but it extended to all continents. Moreover, membership composition shifted from young white urban middle-class men between their 20’s and 30’s, to older and younger age cohorts as well as to women, other races, other classes and other religions.

These changes created several potentials. First, American influence on the World’s Alliance could have increased until Third World movements had expanded so much, till they too occupied a larger share in the definition of policy-making of the World’s Alliance. It seems that Europe, in general, was losing its status as a leading force on the international level. This would mean that World’s Alliance would have adopted the American emphasis on the Four-fold Programme instead of traditional European *eclesiola in ecclesia* type associations.

Another possible change in the mission of the YMCA is, probably the dropping of the ‘men’ from mission statements. The role of women, adolescents and pre-adolescents increased all the time and thus, it is probable that the focus would have been on ‘youth’ instead of ‘young men’.

A third change in the policy, but not in the mission view, might have been that, instead of focusing on middle-class urban youth, the YMCA would have focused also on problems of other classes. In particular, rural and industrial youth were possible new target groups.

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† WConf 1905.

† Willis 1955, 695.

*Objectives, Principles, and Program of YMCA’s in Orthodox Countries*, 1933, 16. This interpretation of the Basis was from John R. Mott who presented it already in 1912. (Shedd 1955b, 438)
Finally, the extension to the non-Christian world increased the proportion of non-Christians in the membership. In general, they only had the status of associate members, with no right to vote. However, along with the emphasis on democracy and equality, the YMCA faced a problem on how to accept everyone in decision-making, without losing its Christian nucleus.

5.1.3. Evangelical Mission and Membership Categories

The mission of the YMCA in the beginning was to extend God’s Kingdom among young men. Often this meant urban middle-class men. The demographic changes in the membership composition created the potential that the mission would be reoriented to meet the needs of young women and girls, rural and working-class youth and youth under 18 years. Along with this, the movement got a remarkable share of people of other confessions and faiths. As we have seen, this forced the YMCA to focus on the problems and redefinition of membership. The early solution was the separation of active and associate membership.

Unfortunately, there are no statistics available of the percentage of representatives of different denominations, confessions or faiths in the whole movement.

The Fellow Workmen for God notes that

in most countries the membership of the YMCA is predominantly of one confession: Protestant (referring here only to ‘full’ membership) in a large part of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, South and East Asia; Orthodox or Coptic in Greece and the Middle East; Roman Catholic in Latin America and the Philippines. In the United States and Canada, on the other hand, there is a great mingling of confessions. About 25 per cent of the members of YMCAs in the United States are Roman Catholic and this number has been increasing steadily. Again, among the many thousands who have migrated or fled from Eastern Europe since the Second World War are many YMCA members of Roman Catholic and Orthodox background.

The study-material referred only to active or full members, which in most countries should have been members of a Christian Church or have personally signed the Paris Basis. This left the associate members out. From the International Survey of the Young Men’s And Young Women’s Christian Associations of 1932, we see that, already in the beginning of the 1930s, the percentage of non-Christians in YMCA membership in non-Christian countries was 78 percent.

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1 Interdenominational means usually interaction and dialogue between Protestant churches (or exactly Evangelical in the Reformation sense because there are some pre-Reformation groups, like Waldesians, that are Evangelical but not Protestants). Interconfessional, in turn, means dialogue between three confessional groups, Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic. (WComEx 1927b, 2.) Interfaith, then, means dialogue between different religions.

2 As far as I know, the only statistics are found in International Survey of the Young Men’s And Young Women’s Christian Associations from 1932 but, even if it only includes data from countries where the North American World Service has its projects.

3 WConfPrep 1955a, 29.

4 International Survey of the Young Men’s And Young Women’s Christian Associations (1932, 80). In the case of predominantly Christian countries, the results are similar to the above note of the Fellow Workmen for God (WConfPrep 1955a, 81f.).
As seen, in the course of time, YMCA membership policy changed and some YMCAs accepted non-Protestant Christians first, and then non-Christians in their active membership and boards. The former group was generally accepted as members after the First World War but the overall non-voting status of the latter group created a need to clarify the membership policy of the YMCA, and its relationship to its mission view.

At the time of the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference the question was still mainly interconfessional. Karl Fries reported to the conference on membership criteria of the South American Federation. It accepted, as members, both associations that had the North American Portland Basis as an active membership criterion and those, who required signing a statement that resembled the Paris Basis. However, the Conference did not make any resolutions on the issue. Thus, at that time, it was mainly a question of accepting Catholics as members. In general, Orthodox membership has not been a problem in the 20th century.

After the First World War, Catholic membership increased and the movement faced the question of non-Christian membership as well. In 1929, the Geneva Plenary appointed a committee to investigate the “question of active membership.” The work of the committee was published in the Study Outline No XI of the Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931. The report listed three tendencies. First, there were those associations that were firm in keeping the membership idea of the Paris Basis. Second, some associations distinguished the requirements of members and those participating in services. Third, there were associations, which had focused primarily on the services without paying attention to religious issues. The report continues with a notion that there were two types of membership structures in the associations, single and dual, the latter being majority practice.

The same report also identifies two kinds of associations and calls them dogmatic and purposive. The dogmatic associations emphasise the words in the Paris Basis: “young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures.” The purposive associations, instead, underline the words: “The Young Men’s Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who… desire to be His disciples in their doctrine and life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.” Then the report criticises the former in that they do not reach the youth that do not come from Christian families and have a Christian world-view. The purposive associations face the criticism that they dilute Christianity to character building, and regard “Jesus Christ as the Great Model of Youth” only, and that in these associations “Christianity has ceased to be a living force.”

The World’s Committee Report to Cleveland Conference in 1931 presented the different membership practices around the world and summarised it rather sceptically:

1 WComR 1926, 35.
2 With single membership, the report meant that there was only one membership category. Dual membership meant that there were both full and associate members.
3 WConfPrep 1931a, 4-7.
4 WConfPrep 1931a, 11-14 (quotations idem 14).
So different are all these groups which we call YMCA’s in the various lands and continents, that World’s Alliance which would embrace them all, except as it is in a position to promote a certain feeling of international friendship and brotherhood, must of necessity become a somewhat characterless institution.\(^1\)

The Cleveland World’s Conference emphasised both the status of the Paris Basis as the basis for affiliation with the World’s Alliance, and the autonomy of local associations. In spite of this autonomy, the conference recognised the ‘danger’ of the trend that the YMCA was becoming a service agency with clients instead of a movement with members. In order to avoid this kind of secularisation, the conference laid down minimum requirements for membership. The conference made the following resolution:

The Conference holds that in order to preserve and promote the Christian and missionary character of the Associations the following should be regarded as minimum requirements for those admitted to the governing or active membership:

(a) A personal commitment to the purpose of the Association.

(b) A personal commitment to the Christian fellowship of the Association and its obligations

(c) Active participation in the work of the Association.

(d) Admission to the membership by a worthy initiation service, a public declaration of allegiance to Jesus Christ, or by an adequate ceremony, and not by the mere payment of a fee.\(^2\)

The Mysore World’s Conference in 1938 discussed the need to increase membership\(^3\). The commission was appointed to study membership, and it warned about the emphasis on quantitative goals only:

The Commission considers it of utmost importance to place emphasis on the central aim and purpose of the Association in any effort to enlist larger numbers of members. The attraction must be the claims of a fellowship with a mission and not the enjoyment of privileges.\(^4\)

Thus, the commission saw it as being problematic if membership increased without new members having a sense of mission. The question of membership was one of the important questions in the Centennial Conferences in 1955. At the Centennial Conferences, the policy was that of ‘open membership - Christian leadership’.

**TO SUM UP**, in most countries, active or full membership was constituted from one confession in each country, Protestant, Orthodox or Catholic. Along with these, there were associate members with no right to vote or to enter leadership positions. Up to the 1920’s, the question was mainly interconfessional and from then on, it became an interfaith issue. Although there were a variety of practices in local associations, the general principle was that of open membership and

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\(^1\) WComR 1931, 163.

\(^2\) WConf 1931, 2.

\(^3\) “In the view of the coming centenary [of London 1844] in 1944 that National Alliances be invited to undertake a campaign for a substantial increase of membership, aiming at a million new members, the majority of whom should be boys and young men below the age of 25 years (WConf 1937, 85).”

\(^4\) WComR 1955, 70.
Christian leadership. The latter required either membership in a Christian church or a signing of the Paris Basis or equivalent.

5.1.4. Membership Changes and Mission

In this sub-chapter of membership, we have seen that the YMCA widened its constituency from a small group of Evangelical Europeans and Americans to all continents of the world, to both sexes and all classes. This sub-chapter aims to focus on what kind of impact these changes in membership had on the mission of the YMCA. More specifically, this sub-chapter focuses on how the mission was seen in Centennial Conference documents and how the membership was related to the mission of the YMCA.

Paul Limbert summarised the problems related to membership into two questions. First, “who shall be counted as members and what shall be their function?” Second, “how can more effective participation by members be assured in determining policies?” The first question is directly connected to the Paris Basis words “those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life.” Is the emphasis on the content of belief or on the desire? The second question relates to the question of local autonomy and the lay character of the movement.

As we have seen, in North America, the emphasis had been on the content of belief when the Portland Basis restricted the membership to those of Evangelical faith. This, in turn, increased the number of associate members who were more clients of the organisation than members of the movement. Their needs created the emphasis on professional leadership, which, in turn, required financial support from this clientele, which, in turn, required more services for their money, etc. When this model diffused, it replaced, to a great extent, the European type ecclesiola in ecclesia type YMCAs, which were intimately attached to the local parishes.

THE IMPACT OF THE DIFFUSION on the policy of the World’s Alliance was dealt with in the Centennial Conferences’ preparatory study materials, Fellow Workmen for God and We Are Not Alone. These materials strongly emphasise the diversity of the movement. The task of the World’s Alliance is to ensure that this diversity is respected. In other words, in spite of North American dominance, the extension of the YMCA has emphasised the significance of the words in the Paris Basis Preamble: “whilst preserving a complete independence as to their particular organization and modes of action.”

Thus, in spite of the growing American dominance in the movement, the YMCA did not want to harmonise its membership criteria according to the American pattern. This was understandable for two reasons. First, the American

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1 WComR 1955, 70.
2 WConfPrep 1955a, 26ff.
3 WConfPrep 1955b, 12f., 53ff.
emphasis has always been on local independence and on local right to define their policy. Second, North American movement had wide diversity of membership criteria among its member associations. It would have been difficult to define what was the North American policy of membership. In this sense, for both ideological and practical reasons, ‘celebrating diversity’ suited the American movement as well as other movements.

**THE IMPACT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES** on the mission of the World’s Alliance was many-faceted. The YMCA had extended its membership from young urban protestant middle-class white men to women, younger generations, other classes, other confessions and religions and to all races. All these changes created potentials for the modification of the mission of both the World’s Alliance and the YMCA, in general.

The potential for changing the mission from one sex to both was seen in the Centennial Conference, where Section II made the following recommendation:

Recognizing the changing status of women and girls in all parts of the world and the extensive and growing participation of women and girls in the YMCA, and cognisant that differing local situations call for different approaches, the Section recommends:

5. *That* cordial and cooperative relations be maintained with the YWCA, locally, nationally, and internationally;

6. *That* wherever local conditions permit, YMCAs accept women and girls on some membership basis, and that adequate provision be made for leadership and facilities;

7. *That* the World Council of YMCAs continue to study the membership problems involved in the participation of women and girls in the YMCA and continue its consultations with the World’s YWCA;

8. *That* the World Council of YMCAs urge National Movements to continue the study of the participation of women and girls in the Association in consultation with the YWCA in their respective countries.¹

This recommendation had similar elements to that of the 1908 Plenary. The difference was that the rhetoric was more positive: there is nothing like “neither recommend nor co-operate” as in the 1908 statement on mixed associations. Thus, the YMCA was, in principle, ready to drop the ‘men’ out of its name. Later, this led to three different solutions. In some countries, the national movements followed the Scandinavian model where YMCAs and YWCAs were a joint movement. They adopted either a joint name YMCA-YWCA or some form of YCA as their name. In some countries, like in Germany, the last M in CVJM means today Menschen - people². In countries where the language did not make it easy to modify the name, the name YMCA remained although M did not have any significance any more. In Anglo-Saxon countries, the YMCA logo was widely replaced with a stylised Y where the triangle was embedded in the other peg. The development towards a both-sex movement was established, anyway before the Centennial Conferences in 1955.

In the case of age, diversification has occurred in many respects. On one hand, the ageing of the movement retained those who were still ‘young’ in their sixties.

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¹ WConf 1955, 71f.
² The History of the YMCA in Germany, 2000.
On the other hand, the majority of members were below 30. The large variation in the age of membership led to both organisational modifications and policy definitions. Some activities gave birth to new organisations attached to the YMCA and some remained inside the YMCA. Y’s Men’s Clubs emerged in the 1920’s as a YMCA version of Rotaries and, as we have seen, a lot of the student work was organised through Student Christian Movement. Moreover, in many countries, the work with armed forces was transferred to special agencies. This leak in membership led the YMCA to focus especially on younger generations, between 7 and 18. This trend was accompanied with the Four-fold Programme philosophy of nurture Christianity instead of revivalism.

It is rather surprising that, in spite of the central role of the Standing Committee of Boys’ Work in the World’s Alliance, there were no resolutions or recommendations on the boys’ or youth work in the Centennial Conferences. The mission of the YMCA in youth work was only dealt with in Section IV of the Centennial Conferences. The section recommended: “that the World Alliance make the subject of work with and by young men one of its major program studies in cooperation with the various National Movements”.

One possible impact that young people might have on the mission of the YMCA can be seen in the topics of the Young Men’s Conference in the Centennial Conferences. Along with Christian faith and other ideologies, there were political themes like pacifism and disarmament; war and military service, racial and national discrimination; political and economic conditions; nationalism, internationalism and colonialism; the United Nations and world government. This indicates that when these young men grew older and took responsibility in the YMCA, these issues would become central issues in the YMCA. This took 14 years till, in the Nottingham World Council these questions became central themes. The Seeds of the ideas of the 1960’s were already seen in 1955.

The issues of class basis and race were not explicit themes in the Centennial Conferences. Indirectly, they were seen in the recommendations of Section VI, which focused on social responsibility of the YMCA. The section referred to the Mysore resolution on the race question and emphasised the responsibility of the YMCA on refugees, homeless people, migrants and poverty, in general. The clearest focus on other classes was in the Young Men’s Conference, where the Commission II, Young Men and Society, suggested “that YMCA services be strengthened in the areas of greatest needs, such as among industrial workers and rural workers.” However, the frame was more that of a philanthropy organisation than that of a self-help group. Thus, the emphasis emerged more from the responsibilities of wealthy ones, than from membership structure.

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1 WConf 1955, 74.
2 WConf 1955, 108-120.
3 WConf 1955, 77ff., 112.
THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS DIFFUSION in the YMCA constituency on the mission of the YMCA was a topic of several sections. Section I emphasised that “the Christian mission of the YMCA should be expressed in all that the association does, and that we must promote Christian brotherhood by word and deed.” Section II went along the same lines when it recommended “that in Art. V (b) of the new Constitution of the World Alliance of YMCAs2 ‘registered membership’ shall mean those members who have expressed agreement with the purpose of the YMCA.” Section IV, in turn, recommended “that the World Council appoint a commission to study the ways and means of recognizing and giving expression to the Christian obligation of youth to help non-Christian and nominal Christian youth to acknowledge the claims of Christ as God and Saviour.” Finally, Section V expressed that “the YMCA should continue its pioneering work seeking the close harmony of all Christian confessions, by welcoming members of all confessions into its membership at all levels of Association activity.”

In all these recommendations, there is an emphasis on Christian membership. In this emphasis, the membership basis had changed from that of early Evangelical requirements. The YMCA was an interdenominational organisation any more but an interconfessional one. On the other hand, the painful question of non-Christian membership emerged only implicitly in Section II’s requirement that registered membership should be limited to those who accept the purpose of the YMCA, i.e. the Paris Basis. The theme was faced up to only in the Young Men’s Conference, which made three recommendations related to non-Christian membership. It recommended

That the World Alliance should avail itself of every opportunity of bringing youth belonging to non-Christian and anti-Christian ideologies into the full Christian fellowship.

That, in predominantly non-Christian countries, the YMCA is urged to interpret its programme so as best to meet the needs of non-Christians without compromising our Christian principles. It is reaffirmed that without the preaching of the Gospel the work of the YMCA is of no avail. In our work we should respect fully the dignity of men remembering that all men are children of God.

That further study of membership requirements be undertaken by the World Council in cooperation with National Movements.

In these recommendations, we can see that, first, the aim of opening up membership to non-Christians had a missionary purpose - they were brought to hear the Christian message with the hope that they would convert to Christianity. Second, respect for the dignity of those of other faiths is in accordance with the Fourfold Programme emphasis on the first paragraph of the Creed: all people are

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1 WConf 1955, 70.
2 On the form of the organisation’s name, see note 4 on page 16.
3 WConf 1955, 71.
4 WConf 1955, 74.
5 WConf 1955, 76.
6 WConf 1955, 124.
7 WConf 1955, 125.
8 WConf 1955, 125.
God’s children on the basis of Creation. Third, the question of full membership requirements was still unsolved in the YMCA and it needed further study.

**THE PARIS BASIS MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**, as we can see, were not seriously challenged. The main points were the extension of membership to both sexes and seeing politically controversial issues, like the problem of racism, as a question of Christian faith. This was linked to the inclusiveness of the Paris Basis. When racism was seen as a sin and a false criterion to distinction, other means of distinction also came into discussion. Other themes in membership discussion were more questions of practice than questions of mission or ideology. On the other hand, they were surely questions of collective ideology. I discuss these themes more in the next main chapter.

In this sub-chapter, I have given a view on how the changes in membership have influenced on the mission of the World’s Alliance. In some points, I already referred to the organisation structure of the World’s Alliance. The next sub-chapter will focus on that issue, and how the structure changed the mission.

5.2. Developing New Organisational Models

In the previous sub-chapter, I focused on membership and its changes. The changes in membership, however, do not automatically manifest themselves in the policy of an organisation. The structure of the organisation defines, to a great extent, who has a voice in the decision making process and how loud this voice is. In this sub-chapter, I will focus on the organisational structure of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs and what kind of impact the structure had on the mission of the Alliance.

Before I focus on the World’s Alliance, it is useful to remember that there were two types of local YMCAs from the very beginning of the movement. Americans had an interdenominational model where the associations were independent from local churches. German *Jünglingsvereine*, although nominally independent, were practically youth divisions of their respective parishes. In 1903, the general secretary of the North American International Committee, Richard C. Morse presented the distinction as follows:

*The laical and interdenominational type:*
- Laical because laymen were its founders, leaders, officers, and workers.
- Interdenominational because members of more than one group of churches or one denomination were admitted to membership and leadership.

*Of this type the British and American Associations were examples. Perhaps to this type - though less sharply defined - belong the Dutch, the Swiss, to some extent the French Associations....*

*The ecclesiastical and clerical type:*
- Ecclesiastical because its leaders and workers were identified with one Church.
- Clerical because its leading officers and workers were from the clergy.

*The German Jünglingsvereine were of this type - also the Associations of Scandinavia...*

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1 Morse 1903 (quoted in Shedd 1995b, 398).
Although Morse stated that this division was a product of evolution from 1855 to 1878, the basic difference was already present from the very beginning. Shedd says that, except for the French and Swiss movements, “none of the other founding Movements or Associations changed their requirements for membership after their adoption of the Paris Basis.” This difference was no problem in Paris 1855 because the focus then was on the Christian commitment of members, not on organisational affiliations or denominational differences. However, when the YMCAs institutionalised, the flame of the spirit was accompanied by organisational principles and, thus, questions of organisation, membership basis and leadership became serious issues in the YMCA. There was from time to time, a debate as to what was the YMCA and how it should be organised. These different views also had an impact on the organisation of the World’s Alliance: in 1905, the movement was in real danger of splitting into two separate entities.

5.2.1. From Network to Organisation

The newborn World’s Alliance of YMCAs was primarily a loose network of local associations. London served as a centre of correspondence, and the responsibility for organising World’s Conferences was the hosting association’s. The organisation started to change when, in 1878, the Geneva Organising Committee was elected as a permanent Central International Committee with corresponding members from each movement. At the same time, the headquarters was established in Geneva and the first World’s Secretary, Charles Fermaud, was appointed. From then on, the development of the organisation has gone in pace with developments in communication and travel: the better they became, the more the World’s Alliance resembled a federation with democratic representation.

The structure of the World’s Alliance developed slowly in the beginning. The report of the World’s Committee to the Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931 included a 75-year history of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. The period from 1855 to 1878 starts with a question: “How does it come about that after a period of such enthusiasm, which seemed to ensure the rapid development of the Movement in most European countries we find almost the same delegations at Geneva in 1878 except as regards numbers?” The 1931 report gives both negative and positive reasons for this notion. First, “there was fear of any super-structure which might become an obstacle to the spiritual life and autonomy of the local Associations.” Second, this was a time of expansion on the national level. The report notes that “all work for Youth manifests a certain instability, particularly in its beginnings.” Thus, this was the time when the new organisation sought stability in its existing contexts.  

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1. Shedd 1955b, 275
2. This should mean Hamburg 1875 instead of Geneva 1878, since there were eight new countries represented in Geneva (see Shedd 1955b, 214; WComR 1931, 19).
3. WComR 1931, 17f.
The structure of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs was unofficial and informal during this early period. There were no official rules and no permanent organisation\(^1\). The unifying factors were international correspondence and World’s Conferences. As the London YMCA served as a centre of this correspondence, it was, de facto, the headquarters of the international YMCA and its secretary, Edwyn Shipton, World’s Secretary ex officio\(^2\). During this era, the World’s Alliance was more a network of national organisations and local associations than a federated organisation: leaders of national organisations and the largest associations formed the leadership in the World’s Alliance. The committee for the World’s Conferences rotated from one organising town to the next one.

The Geneva World’s Conference in 1878 is a hallmark for international NGOs because, in that conference, the Central International Committee (CIC)\(^3\) of the YMCA and the first World’s Secretary, Charles Fermaud, were appointed. Thus, the World’s Alliance of YMCAs became, along with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Nations and the International Labour Office\(^4\) “one of the first four permanent world organisations established in” Geneva\(^5\). Shedd mentions the significance of the conference as follows:

> It was of great significance for other later international organizations because it broke with the patterns of an inspirational international assembly as the sole vehicle for international unity, and it also broke with the conception of national movements and local Associations depending heavily on the great generosity and devotion of one “parent” national movement.\(^6\)

The Conference laid, however, several important restrictions on the CIC mandate. First, it could not take “any important decision ‘before consulting the outside members’ - one for each country.’” Second, “it did not have any ‘legislative power’ or ‘right to intervene in the decisions of’” national and local organisations. Third, it could “not involve the Conference in any financial responsibility.”\(^7\) These restrictions were similar to those of the NAIC\(^8\).

When the CIC was founded, there were no preliminary models for the work\(^9\). Moreover, as the 1881 Committee report notes, “its task was no small one\(^10\).” Thus, it is natural that the form and composition of the committee changed through the years as the organisation was modelled through a test process. Table 25 represents how the Central International Committee / World’s Committee has changed.

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\(^1\) Shedd 1955a, 153.
\(^2\) Shedd 1955a, 139f. WComR 1931, 19.
\(^3\) The name was changed to World’s Committee in 1900 because of the continuous confusion of the name with North American International Committee (USA and Canada). (Shedd 1955b, 377)
\(^4\) With this name from 1901 to 1919. From that on its tasks were carried by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (Yearbook of International Organizations 1996/1997, 993).
\(^5\) WComR 1931, 20.
\(^6\) Shedd 1955b, 208.
\(^7\) WComR 1931, 19f.; see also Shedd 1955a, 219.
\(^8\) See chapter 4.2.1.
\(^9\) WComR 1881, 4f.; 1931, 19f.; Shedd 1955b, 219.
\(^10\) WComR 1881, 5. On tasks of the CIC, see page 264.
In 1878, there were seven members residing near Geneva and nine corresponding members. When the movement expanded, the new countries received their representation in the Committee. This, in turn, awoke questions of fair representation and, again, an increase in representatives where large movements received more places than small ones.

The division between ‘executive members’ and ‘consulting members’ was a practical question which every international organisation has to face: for effective action there must be a group residing near enough each other that they can meet frequently together. On the other hand, the system concentrated the power in the hands of the Geneva residents. The Geneva residents were all Swiss citizens and, thus, the World’s Alliance was de facto a Swiss organisation. The tension between the Executive and Deliberative Committee in determining policy and details of work led to the need for a permanent solution where all members of the CIC would be equal. Correspondence was not an effective way for the CIC to act as a world committee. An attempt to solve this occurred in the Berlin Conference in 1884 where it was resolved as follows:

That the Conference recommends the calling of an annual meeting of all members of the C.I.C. (those living aboard as well as those resident in Geneva), but without the C.I.C. having to bear any of their travelling expenses.

This decision meant that the YMCA created a system of plenary sessions. Although the intention was to improve democratic representation in the World’s Alliance, it must be noted that the clause concerning travelling expenses restricted the possibility of weaker movements outside Europe to participate - all, except two Plenaries (as well as World’s Conferences) before 1955 were held in Europe. The first plenary met in Geneva in 1886, but after that, there were none for the next ten years. Shedd wonders about this because, according to him, many future problems could have been avoided if leaders had the possibility for face-to-face discussions. Shedd notes that “the Geneva Executive was in a position of splendid isolation” during the years when the two greatest forward movements in the period covered by the history of the World’s Alliance were taking place – mis-

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1 Shedd 1955b, 268.
3 Shedd 1955b, 251; 267f.
4 The two Plenaries outside Europe were held attached to Cleveland and Mysore World’s Conferences in 1931 and 1937.
5 The World’s Committee reports 1891 and 1894 (WComR 1891, 1894) do not even mention the Plenary institution. In the World’s Committee report to Stockholm 1888 World’s Conference (WComR 1888, 9), there is a revealing choice of words, which describes the attitude of the Geneva Executive: “… in the interval of the Universal Conferences, our two Commissions, Deliberative and Executive, should assemble in some central locality (my italics).” The idea that the Geneva group would be the real CIC was in the proposal of the Geneva [Conference Planning] Committee and corresponding members would have a consultative status. (Shedd 1955b, 233). Although this was rejected, the continuous tension between the two sections show that the Geneva group was not always happy with the situation.
Table 25: Representation in the Central International Committee / World’s Committee 1891-1926

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The table is combined from Reports of the Central International Committee / World’s Committee 1881, 1884, 1888, 1891, 1898, 1905, 1909 (WComR 1881, 4f; 1884, 15; 1888, 15; 1891, 21f; 1898, 23f; 1905, 31; 1909, 3f, 10ff); Plenary Minutes 1925, 1926, 1927 (WComPle 1925,1f; 1926, 1f; 1927, 1ff.); Reports of World Conferences 1881, 1909, 1926 (WConf 1881, 22, 62f; 19098ff; 1926, 239-43); Shedd 1955b, 268f.

* Mostly Swiss
* From 1881 on.
1 Morse from the US and Mills from the UK were honorary secretaries.
2 Includes one of seven permanent member of the Executive Committee that the country had right to nominate
3 Includes one of seven rotating members of the Executive Committee that the country had right to nominate.
4 In Budapest 1925, North American International Committee represented last time the two North American movements. In Helsingfors (Helsinki) 1926, both Canada and the US had their own representation.
sionary expansion and work with students1. This isolation had a remarkable indirect effect on the mission view of the World’s Alliance: the initiative was in American hands and the American model of the Four-fold Programme became dominant in the YMCA mission view. This, in turn, stirred emotions in Europe, especially when Americans planted their type city-YMCAs on the continent2. However, because members did not direct enough funds and status to the Central International Committee, it was too weak to take a lead in policy making.

Because of the economic weakness of the Central International Committee, it could not employ the necessary amount of people to fulfil its missionary tasks. In this situation, the committee used indirect means. In missionary work, it authorised national movements to do the work on behalf of the World’s Alliance, while the Central International Committee restricted its work to Europe3. The first one to be authorised to act on behalf of the CIC, was Luther Wishard, who made a 45 month world tour beginning in 18884. After this, all fraternal secretaries nominally became representatives of the World’s Alliance although the work was, in fact, bilateral. However, when the North American YMCA started its foreign work in 1888, the North American fraternal secretaries did not always bother to report their work to Geneva5. Later, this created tensions because there appeared to be, in fact, two World’s Committees - one in Geneva and one in New York6.

The potential that this development created, was twofold. On one hand, there was a trend that Americans acted bilaterally outside the World’s Alliance. On the other hand, the possible split into two separate movements was unbearable. This

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1 Shedd 1955b, 367. World expansion had already started before the next hallmark, the Amsterdam Conference in 1891. American, Luther D. Wishard, had started his missionary tours in Asia. His, and the Englishman, W. Hind Smith’s similar tours gave impulses that “have in most cases been followed by able and well trained secretaries.” It was through Wishard’s tours that the North American YMCA got involved into its foreign work. The North Americans concentrated on Asia and Latin America, and British YMCAs spread associations through the British Empire. The World’s Committee, in turn, strengthened the bonds between the existing organisations and helped countries where the work had met special difficulties, like in Spain, Portugal, Hungary and Italy (WConfPrep 1905e, 10f.).

2 The founding of the Berlin CVJM in 1883 had upset the leaders of the Jünglingsvereine (Shedd 1995b, 248f., 267-270, 296).

3 Later, in his report to the Christiania (Oslo) Plenary in 1902 (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 383), Christian Phildius reviewed the 24-year work of the World’s Committee and noted that its task was: “to make these countries financially more and more independent of outside help. In the so-called missionary fields, outside Europe, a direct intervention on the part of the World’s Committee should not be undertaken. These countries have been provided for as much as possible by other friends. Our own work would be limited, in the measure of our resources, to occasional journeys for information or visitation.”

4 WComR 1891, 9ff.; Shedd 1955b, 279f., 304-311.

5 The President of the World’s Committee, Edouard Barde, wrote (June 23, 1902) to Richard C. Morse, General secretary of the North American International Committee: “In several cases these [American] brethren are now established in various countries doing work without acquainting us with the facts… We are not unmindful of the very interesting reports that our brother Mott sends us from time to time, but they constitute the exception.” (Quoted in Shedd 1955b, 383f.)

6 Shedd 1955b, 384, 439.
situation led to a modification of representation within the CIC, and adoption of the first Constitution of the World’s Alliance.

**TO SUM UP**, in the beginning the movement was a network of local associations. No central committee was founded because of the fear of any superstructure. However, in 1878, the Central International Committee and World’s Secretary, Charles Fermaud, were appointed and a headquarters was located in Geneva. Because of the fear of centralisation, the CIC did not receive enough resources to enable it to take effective leadership. Because of the distances, there was continuous tension between the Executive Commission residing in Geneva and the Deliberative Commission, which consisted of members of CIC outside Switzerland. As a resolution to this tension, the YMCA created a yearly plenary system of CIC. This brought member movements into closer co-operation with the Geneva staff.

5.2.2. From Agreements to Constitution

In Amsterdam, in 1891, the World’s Alliance got its first Constitution. In practice, it only confirmed the existing base of the movement, the composition of the Central International Committee and other practices. Later revisions were normally small modifications, which were due to changes in membership and the need to keep the representation of national movements in accordance to size.

When the movement extended, it became evident that, for example, the composition of the Central International Committee did not represent the constituency. In 1894, the Central International Committee was enlarged and the number of members from each country was linked to the number of member associations. In 1907, at the London Plenary, the number of Executive members residing outside Geneva was raised to seven. Shedd saw that this last decision was important for the future development of the YMCA:

This action and the decision to hold an annual Plenary largely account for the many new ventures undertaken in these years by the World’s Committee. They brought into the administrative and policy-making bodies of the Movement the fresh thinking of new and younger leaders directly related to the Association programme in their countries, and gave a broadened basis for decisions.

1 For the future developments of the movement, the Amsterdam Conference had another impact. In that conference, some future ecumenical leaders met each other, namely Raoul Allier, Karl Fries, John R. Mott, Nathan Söderblom and Luther Wishard. In that conference the plans for the foundation of the World Student Christian Federation were also laid, which then actualised in 1894. (Shedd 1955b, 311-317)

2 In 1894, Scotland got finally a place in the Central International Committee when larger movements got more members in the committee. The membership was linked to number of associations as follows: 1-599, one member; 600-1199, two members; 1200-1800, three members and one member for each additional 600 associations. (Shedd 1955b, 344)

3 WComR 1909, 4; Shedd 1955b, 431.

4 Shedd 1955b, 431.
When, at the Geneva Plenary of 1910, Emmanuel Sautter accepted the position of third secretary, the status of all secretaries changed. Fermaud, as the first secretary had been a member of the Executive from the beginning. When Christian Phildius was appointed as the second secretary in 1896, he got the same status. Now, their number caused problems, and it was solved by their resignation as full members of the Executive but remaining as advisory members without the right to vote. One new practice developed.¹

In the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926, the Constitution was again revised². Shedd summarises the major changes as follows:

1. The Constitution lays down for the first time that the World’s Alliance is composed of national alliances of the Young Men’s Christian Associations.
2. The basis or membership, both on the World’s Committee and at World’s Conferences, is on the basis of the number of members rather than on the number of Associations in any given alliance. Every national alliance is entitled to two representatives on the World’s Committee instead of one, with additional members in accordance with the aggregate membership.
3. The Executive Committee shall be composed of 21 members; seven residing in Switzerland or within a day’s journey from Geneva; seven representing seven of the national alliances as determined by the World’s Conference; and seven the remaining national alliances taken in rotation.³

The revision of the Constitution had certain organisational consequences. The most evident one was that the voice of the US movement increased, both in the World’s Conferences and in the World’s Committee, because they had a large membership but relatively few associations⁴. Another was that the Executive was enlarged and the ‘smaller’ movements had seven seats in rotation. Thus, the World’s Alliance had again faced the dilemma of expanding international organisations: representation and effective action are often in opposition to each other. However, those movements, which did not have a place in the World’s Committee, were represented through membership in standing committees.

The conference also organised the work of the World’s Committee to better meet the different demands of the movement⁵. The conference appointed four standing committees: Business and Finance; Research and Information; Boys’ Work and Young Men’s Work. This reflected the main tasks of the World’s Committee. While, as Karl Fries pointed out in his report, “it should not interfere

¹ Shedd 1955b, 433.
² The Report of the 1924 Geneva Plenary (WComEx 1924, 4) explains that the reason for the revision process was that, because of several modifications, “there are therefore many discrepancies… There are also a number of detailed enactments concerning World’s Conferences which seem rather to belong to Bye-Laws than to a Constitution.”
³ Shedd 1955b, 490.
⁴ The share of the North American YMCA’s rose (in spite of the enlargement of the membership basis) from 10.6 percent of World’s Committee places in 1907 to 12% (Table 25 on page 240). It was still far behind their share of the total world membership, which was 56.3% in 1920 (Table 23 on page 210).
⁵ As Shedd (1955b, 490) puts it, there were “well-organized strong national alliances, less well-organized younger national alliances and movements still in the pioneer stage without any national organization.”
with the internal affairs of any Association or National Alliance”, the committee had a duty to “exercise general oversight and a controlling influence.” Fries continues: “This oversight should, of course, consist not only registering what actually takes place, but watching with deep interest the development of each country in order to discover any special opportunity that offers itself for service to young men and boys.” In this way, Fries expressed the main task of the World’s Committee: to distribute knowledge on how its members can serve boys and young men.¹

After the Second World War, there was again a need to revise the Constitution. This time it was fundamental. The Depression had brought Americans closer to the World’s Committee, the war had expanded the responsibilities of the World’s Committee, and the movement had extended so that the structure did not meet the needs any more. After consulting national movements on their views on the structure, function, staff and financing of the World’s Committee, a new proposal was submitted to the Paris World’s Conference in 1955². According to the new Constitution, the old structure of World’s Conferences and World’s Committee was replaced by a new one: The World Council (replacing both World’s Conference and World’s Committee) became “the executive medium through which the World Alliance³ shall act and which for such purpose shall have all the powers inherent in the World Alliance.” This new organ consisted of presidents, general secretaries and nominated representatives from all member movements⁴, members of the Executive Committee and honorary life members. Additionally, it consisted of a General Secretary and Associate General Secretaries of the World Alliance, and representatives of associate movements with no right to vote. The power share is represented in Table 26. The table also shows that the potential and actual representation in the World Council were two different matters. In principle, the new Constitution guaranteed more potential power to Third World movements than they were able to use. Travel costs were evidently one of the major reasons why Third World movements did not participate to their full extent in the Paris 1955 Conference. Especially Africa, the Near East and Latin America were under-represented. Travel costs may also be the reason why the European share in the Paris Conference was circa 15 per cent higher than it should have been. This comparison shows that not only potential power but the actual possibility to use it is significant.

¹ WComR 1926, 69.
² WComR 1955, 65f.
³ Note the change in writing of the name that occurred in 1955.
⁴ From 2 to 20, depending on the size of the national movement (WConf 1955, 223)
Table 26: Actual and potential membership in the First World Council of YMCAs in 1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country representation</th>
<th>Area representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma (Myanmar)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- India</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Japan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Korea</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Malaya (Malaysia)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Philippines</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Delgum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Denmark</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- England, Ireland and Wales</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Finland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- France</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Germany</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Greece</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Iceland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Italy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Netherlands</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Norway</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Portugal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scotland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sweden</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Switzerland</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brazil</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- South American Conf.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Canada</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- USA</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Australia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New Zealand</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Actual membership (nominated members) figures are based on the Report of the First Meeting of the World Council and of the first Meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom 1955, 35-43). Potential figures are counted according to the new Constitution (WConf 1955, 222), the aforementioned report (ExCom 1955, 30-34) and 1955 statistics (World Alliance statistics 1955). Most Third World Countries did not nominate members to the World Council.

This calculation does not include Executive Committee members who were members of the World Council ex officio.

The new Executive Committee used the power of the World Council when it was not in session. It was to consist of 30 persons elected by the World Council, officers of the World Council, chairmen of the standing committees, and a maximum of five additional persons co-opted by the Commission itself. A third new organ was the President’s Committee, which resembled the old Geneva Executive.¹

¹ WConf 1955, 222ff.
In this way, the World Alliance, as it was called from 1955 on, modified its Constitution according to new realities. The Executive Committee better represented the composition of membership, although US representation was still far from its share of members. This was actually no problem for the US YMCA because they had a large enough voice in the World Alliance. This was mainly due to the economic power of the US movement.

**TO SUM UP**, in 1891 the World’s Alliance got its first Constitution. It only legitimated existing practices. Three years later, when the CIC was enlarged, the representation in plenaries was changed, to be based on the amount of members instead of the number of associations. This change favoured American movements, which had fewer but larger city-associations than Europeans. Further revisions were made in order to keep representation in pace with changes in the membership proportions of different movements. Other significant changes in organisation occurred when, in 1926, there four special committees were appointed under the Executive Committee. The last change occurred in 1955, when the whole Constitution and organisation was remodelled. The World’s Conferences and plenaries were replaced by the World Council of YMCAs, which appointed the Executive Committee and sub-committees. The world had shrunk to the extent that effective federal administration was possible.

### 5.2.3. Individual Donations and Organisational Contributions

One way to look at organisational change is through analysis of the financial reports. I have already focused on the potential impact of income on the mission of the World’s Alliance in chapter 4.1.1. Thus, in this sub-chapter I focus on the expenditures of the World’s Alliance.

In Table 27, there are summaries of expenses of the World’s Alliance from five different years. They are years of normal activity: no wars and no World’s Conferences.

In general, the table shows that the role of the World Alliance has been mainly in helping international co-operation of national movements. It acted as an international information node, collecting and distributing information on the movement and its activities. It arranged international conferences, consultations and seminars. It helped national movements by sending visitors/speakers to the field. It published material and collected publications and other material in its library. Finally, it responded to such problems that national movements could not handle by themselves, like problems of modern migrations.
Table 27: Expenses of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs, 1884-1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1884-5</th>
<th>1904-5</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1954</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>SFr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22,200</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>79,744</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58977</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>225,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>8,351</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>70,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64799</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>267,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>3,642</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>16,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8134</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>59,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>13,528</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28252</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>7,347</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>7,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5378</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>120,056</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2,145</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1,710</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,710</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income production</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2169</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5,275</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5,275</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant/refugee work</td>
<td>25,310</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>7028</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1,635,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,635,395</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18,797</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,188</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>42,411</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>216,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>155,147</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The table is based on the following reports: Report of the Central International Committee / World’s Committee 1888, App.; 1905, Additional sheet; WComEx 1926, 3; 1935, 23; ExCom 1955, 27; 1956, 90.
| a Here taxes, insurance and retirement fund premiums, presented in the 1954 financial statement, are divided between secretaries and office respectively to the ratio of salaries of secretaries and clerical staff.
| b Includes administration in New York.
| c The 1954 figures include gross costs of publications (in the total financial statement of 1954 only, the net cost is counted) and costs of Work for Refugees and Migrants, which were presented in a separate financial statement. Without them, the sum of expenses and share of costs are presented in brackets.

It can also be seen that there has been a general institutionalisation process, in which the share of office (clerical staff salaries, rooms, communication, etc.) has constantly increased. On the other hand, as we have seen, much of the YMCA’s international work was done bilaterally, outside the budget of the World’s Alliance. Thus, the share of the administrative costs in the budget of the World’s Alliance is overemphasised. In this sense, the World’s Alliance had become a bureau for international services. Thus, it might be that the development reflects the YMCA grassroots idea: action belongs on the national and local, not on the international level.

After the 1930s, there seems to have been a change: work for refugees and migrants take 69% share of all funds that the World’s Alliance used. Although this may reflect the expansion of that work, it also gives a hint of changes in structure. The World’s Alliance, as a neutral agency, may have proved to be a better vehicle in this work than direct action of large national movements.

TO SUM UP, the main tasks of the World’s Alliance have been in five fields: to act as an international information node, to arrange international conferences, to send visitors/speakers to the field, to publish and collect needed material, and respond to problems of modern migrations. The increase of expenditure on refugee work especially had directed the mission of the World’s Alliance.

1 For example, the International Committee of the North American YMCA spent 1,400,096 US$ (ca. 7.5 million SFr.) for foreign work in 1922 (Survey of the International Committee 1923, 57, 99). In 1955, the World Service of the North American YMCA budgeted 567,337 US$ (ca. 2.5 million SFr.) for 56 men in 30 countries (YMCA Year Book 1956, 122). The exchange rates (1 US$ = 5.35 SFr. in December 31, 1922 and 1 US$ = 4.4 SFr. in December 31, 1954) are counted via GB£ (The Times, January 1, 1923, p 17; January 1, 1955, p. 14).
5.2.4. Organisational Changes and Mission

The foundation of the Central International Committee in 1878 changed the nature of the World’s Alliance from a network of loosely attached associations to an international organisation. For the first time, the World’s Alliance had its own staff, and the organisation could start its own activities. This does not mean that the CIC could act as it wanted, but receiving ‘own’ staff and budget actually meant the foundation of the organisation. Before that time, it existed merely in the minds of the YMCA leaders.

From then on, the organisational history of the World’s Alliance was that of organisational experiment. Without previous models, and in a rapidly changing world, the CIC developed and tested new organisational models that could best implement the YMCA idea of global unity and local independence. As seen in the chapter on economic opportunity structures, organisational development went in pace with the technical development of communication and transportation. The more that transportation systems developed, the more movements far from Geneva could take part in the decision making process. This was especially important in the case of the North American movement, which started to take its place as a leading force of the World’s Alliance when transportation systems allowed relatively rapid travel across the Atlantic.

The organisational changes in the World’s Alliance were largely due to the expansion and extension of membership. Changes in organisation did not create any special potential for the change in mission view. Rather, they reflected other changes. The former Eurocentrism shifted to American leadership with slight colouring from other continents. However, this did not mean that Americans would have led the CIC alone. On the contrary, the emphasis was on collective leadership.

5.3. Lay Collective Leadership

Leadership of any organisation has two aspects: structural and personal. Models and structures of leadership are important because they set the system of how power is used in the organisation. An organisation benefits greatly if its structures are such that the decision-making system is suitable for its purposes\(^1\). This is why individuals play crucial role in organisations. They give faces to organisations, they make plans, they execute decisions, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to focus both on the impact of some influential individuals and on leadership structure, when we look at what impact the leadership had on the mission view of the YMCA. Moreover, we cannot forget the harmonising effect the education has on leaders’ values and practices.

\(^1\) On the other hand, as my former superior, vicar Otso Sovijärvi, used to say when we made plans for the Jyväskylä YMCA organisation in Central Finland, if there is good will, even a bad organisation functions. If not, then no organisation is good enough.
5.3.1. Leadership Requirements

While most associations in 1855 had developed some kind of associate membership for those who do not meet the requirements of full membership\(^1\), the leadership of the movement was kept in the hands of committed Christians. However, as we have seen, there were different requirements in different countries (membership of Evangelical church, conversion, membership of state church).

Christian leadership became more important than before, when the YMCA expanded to new territories after the First World War. In 1920, the Plenary meeting of the World’s Committee decided that

the control in the YMCAs should be in the hands of those who have a personal faith in Christ and who accept the fundamental principles which have been proclaimed during the Jubilee Conference held in Paris in 1905.\(^2\)

Thus, the function of the Paris Basis and its interpretation - Jubilee Declaration - was changed from being a bond between national movements and the World’s Alliance, to become a criterion of leadership in local associations. This was a new phenomenon. However, it should be noted that these kinds of decisions did not have a legal effect on national movements; they were only recommendations. It still took eleven years before the North American YMCA accepted an ecumenical membership criterion. The background of the Plenary decision was that, in 1920, the YMCA had also spread to non-Christian countries and non-Christians were members of the YMCAs in these countries. From this time on, the issue has been discussed according the theme ‘open membership - Christian leadership’.

The decision about membership had two sides. On the one hand, it included Roman Catholics and Orthodox in the YMCA as full members. Here it is worth noting that there is no preference for Evangelical Christianity in the Paris Basis. On the other hand, the decision excluded non-Christians from the boards and other positions of leadership. However, while this has been an official policy\(^3\), it has not been the practice of all YMCAs in all non-Christian countries. Since the middle of the 1920’s, there have also been non-Christians in the governing boards. The trend started in Turkey after the Turkish Revolution and became a typical phenomenon of the Near East Associations\(^4\). A theological justification can be found in the preparatory material of the Mysore World Conference 1937. An Indian, A.J. Appasamy referred to Jesus’ attitude toward the Centurion, who as a pagan showed more faith than Jesus found in Israel\(^5\). Wilbert B. Smith, in his paper, continues to discuss the present situation and notes that in Islamic countries, religion is tightly bound to nationality and law, and that to change religion in this context is extremely difficult\(^6\). Thus, in these kinds of contexts, the Paris Basis or

\(^{1}\) WConf 1855, 120.
\(^{2}\) WComPle 1953b, 8f.
\(^{3}\) WConf 1937, 49.
\(^{4}\) The YMCA of the World 1958, 191; Kandy Consultation 1953a, 19.
\(^{5}\) Luke 7:1-10; WConfPrep 1937f., 5.
\(^{6}\) WConfPrep 1937e, 2.
its equivalent was a more suitable membership criterion than membership requirement in a Christian church.

Section III in the Centennial Conference in 1955, made the following recommendation, which describes the movement’s leadership policy in non-Christian contexts:

In countries where non-Christians predominate it may be advisable for the YMCA to recruit some of its lay leaders, not including members of governing bodies, from among non-Christian members who are in agreement with its Christian principles. Part of the Section held that this could be evidenced by the acceptance of the statement of purpose of Movements that are members of the World Alliance of YMCAs. Others in the Section insisted that this could be evidenced only by acceptance of the Paris Basis.¹

The YMCA had a dilemma: how to be both a democratic organisation, where all members had similar rights, and how to ensure that its Christian nature and purpose would be maintained.

TO SUM UP, when the YMCA extended outside Protestant territory, leadership requirements became a problem in the YMCA. The movement created a policy of open membership but Christian leadership in order to keep it in the hands of a Christian nucleus. When non-Christian were adopted as leaders, they had to sign the Paris Basis or equivalent.

5.3.2. Leadership Structure of the World’s Alliance

Leadership in the World’s Alliance of YMCAs can be divided according to various periods. In the beginning, there was the ‘old guard’, which arranged issues on the basis of their friendships. After the creation of the CIC, the leadership moved to Geneva and, with the plenary system, it became a collective leadership.

After their important role in the creation of the World’s Alliance, Henri Dunant, both Monniers, Abel Stevens and William Chauncey Langdon somehow disappeared from the scene.² As mentioned above, between 1855 and 1878, the London YMCA was the centre of international correspondence and its secretary, Edwyn Shipton, de facto the World’s secretary. When the American Movement “was so busy growing that it took only a very small part in the World’s Conferences” between 1855 and 1872, as Shedd puts it, Shipton was the most central leader of the movement.³ Other central leaders were George Williams, the ‘father of the YMCA’, from London, Max Perrot from Geneva, Gerhard Dürselen from Elberfeld, Wm. van Oosterwijk-Bruyn from Amsterdam and Jean Paul Cook from

¹ WConf 1955, 73.
² Shedd 1955a, 143f., 175n1. It could be questioned whether the Calvinistic ideas of God’s blessings to the righteous (Weber 1970a, 163) were, in a reversed way, behind the total denial of Dunant after his bankruptcy.
³ Shedd 1955a, 148. Shedd’s explanation seems to be only a partial truth. We have to remember that the Civil War in 1861-1865 limited the chances of take part in two of the four conferences between 1855 and 1872. Another factor was that this was still a time of sailing boats (Wilson 1970(1962), 52) and crossing the Atlantic was a time consuming enterprise.
Paris who developed the new organisation. For them, the World’s Alliance was a tool for practising their spiritual unity. The younger generation saw its tasks differently.

After the creation of the Central International Committee in 1878, the centre of the movement shifted from London to Geneva. Although Shipton was elected to the committee, he was in constant opposition to it. For him the whole CIC was against the Paris Basis ideal of independent associations. Along with the creation of the CIC, there was a question of the change of generation. The ‘old guard’ had already reached 50 and there was a need for change. The CIC, in general, became younger. Of the ‘old guard’ there were only Shipton and van Oosterwijk-Bruyn. Important figures of the new generation were Richard C. Morse from North America and Christian Klug from Germany - and, of course, the first World’s Secretary, Charles Fermaud from Switzerland.

The first years of the CIC were not really that of ‘leading’ the movement, because of the restrictions in its mandate. The decisive power remained in the national movements. Accompanied with this was the pioneer role of the work: there were no previous models for this kind of work and, thus, much energy was used in developing workable models. This was largely due to financial difficulties of the Central International Committee: it had only one secretary until 1895, when Christian Phildius was appointed as a half-time secretary (while the Berlin CVJM paid the other half).

As seen above, the first problem of the CIC was the dilemma between representativeness and effectivity. On one hand, the CIC represented the whole movement and, thus, representatives of member organisations should have a vote on the CIC. On the other hand, 1878 was still a time when travel was a time consuming effort and some decisions required relatively quick resolutions. This dilemma was partly solved by the system of the Executive Commission residing in Geneva and the Deliberative Commission, who interacted via correspondence. Although not ideal, it was an acceptable system.

The formation of the plenary-system was mainly due to the controversy in leadership between the Geneva Executive and the larger movements. The latter felt that the CIC should concentrate on developing strong national movements and associations with buildings and secretaries. Germans were unhappy with the American-type city-associations that had been planted in Germany with the assis-

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1 Shedd 1955a, 144-147.
2 Shedd 1955b, 233ff.
3 Dürselen (1808) was oldest, with 70 years, then came Williams (born 1821), 57, Shipton (born 1825), 53, Cook (born 1828), 50, van Oosterwijk-Bruyn (born 1829), 49 and Perrot (born 1830), 48 (Shedd 1955a, 44, 55, 63, 144-147, 240).
4 Shedd 1955b, 231f.
5 In Germany, the distinction between Jünglingsverein and CVJM was important in this time. Jünglingsvereine were the original German associations and the CVJMs were American type city-associations, first planted in Berlin in 1883.
6 Shedd 1955b, 351. There was for a short time a second secretary in the 1880s (Idem. 248).
tance of the CIC. The Plenary was a means for national movements to control the
Geneva Executive.¹

The next ten years, following the first plenary, were characterised by mission-
ary expansion and a growth of student work. Also during this period, the leader-
ship in the YMCA movement moved to the American side of the Atlantic. The
American leadership in the YMCA was a fruit of student awakenings in the USA.
Former Chicago YMCA secretary, Dwight L. Moody, arranged a series of Student
Conferences starting in Mt. Hermon in 1886². Those conferences were full of
missionary enthusiasm and this, accompanied with the American philanthropic
tradition and emerging prosperity among Evangelicals³, paved the way to Ameri-
can YMCA missionary activity through the Student Volunteer Movement.

The isolation of the Geneva Executive from these processes created a situation
where there were practically two World’s Committees, and there was a growing
tension between these two. It was not only a question of organising the work of
the World’s Alliance, but a significant disagreement on the nature and form of the
YMCA itself⁴. The movement started to experience the costs of extension and
adaptation to different environments and institutionalisation of the work. The
second YMCA generation was not, unlike the first one, only focusing on the final
goal of the movement but was also dealing with details. These details concerning
organisation and modes of action were, in part, behind the storm before the Jubil-
ee Conference of 1905.

The First World War brought a special problem in leadership. While the
American Movement carried the main responsibility in funding War work, the
American involvement in the war threatened the neutrality of the World’s Alli-
ance. In order to continue its services to prisoners of war on both sides, the
World’s Committee replaced American secretaries with men from neutral coun-
tries, like Sweden and Switzerland. Again in the Second World War, the neutral
countries played a significant role in the leadership of the World’s Alliance.

In general, the leadership in the World’s Alliance was collective leadership of
national movement leaders. There were relatively few men who rose above others
in a way that they could be said to be the leader of the World YMCA, instead a
leader. This was on purpose: the YMCA idea is to keep the leadership of the
movement on a grass-roots level. The YMCAs are a patchwork quilt and the lead-
ership of the global movement has to be able to keep different opinions together.
In this sense, YMCA leadership differs sharply from most revivalistic forms of
leadership, where the preacher becomes the authority over others. In the YMCA,
there was no such authority.

¹ On the formation of the plenary-system, see Shedd 1955b, 267f. It is interesting that neither Fries
(WConfPrep 1905e) in his 50 year history nor the 75 year history in the 1931 Report of the
World’s committee, Facing a World Crisis (WComR 1931), mention the foundation of the plenary
system.
² Morse 1913, 189f.; Hopkins 1951, 294-198; 1979, 22-30; Shedd 1955b, 278f.; Rouse 1948, 34ff.
³ Hall 1987, 7f.
⁴ Shedd 1955b, 368, 384, 392-416.
It could be said that the leadership in the YMCA strengthened local independence by avoiding central leadership. In this sense, the leadership system was in pace with the Preamble of the Paris Basis. Another impact of the leadership in the World’s Alliance was that, although there was American dominance, the burden in crisis-situations was on men from neutral countries. In this sense, the leadership strengthened the neutrality policy of the YMCA.

Although there has been many important leaders in the World’s Alliance, there are two who are outstanding in their influence. Charles Fermaud, the first World’s Secretary and John R. Mott, architect of ecumenism, left their fingerprints on the YMCA mission in a unique way. Below I focus on their impact on the YMCA mission view.

**TO SUM UP**, in the network stage of the movement, the ‘old guard’ arranged issues on the basis on their mutual friendship. After the creation of the CIC, the World’s Alliance became a laboratory of both organisation and leadership models. The Plenary system was created to ensure collective leadership. Along with Geneva, the American movement became another power centre of the movement and for years, there were practically two World’s Committees. The problem was solved when Americans took more responsibility in the leadership of the World’s Alliance. In general, the YMCA favoured diffused leadership structures and collective leadership.

### 5.3.3. Embodiment of the World’s Alliance - Charles Fermaud

A Swiss, Charles Fermaud was the first World’s Secretary of the YMCA. He also has had the longest career in that position. It is clear that his fingerprints can be seen in the organisation.

Before the Geneva World’s Conference in 1878, Charles Fermaud was personally unknown to the ‘old guard’ of the YMCA. However, he “seemed to the American delegates, and may others, a man of promise and qualified for this important office [of the general secretaryship of the World’s Alliance].” He was 23 when he accepted the nomination to become the first World’s Secretary in 1879. He had only that knowledge of the YMCA, which had come to him as a volunteer in Geneva and in preparations for the Geneva Conference. There was a certain courage needed to leave a secure, well-paid and respected job in a Swiss bank, and to jump into an insecure adventure with no previous models and no guarantee for the future. Fermaud became, for the next 34 (1879-1912) years, ‘incarnation of the World’s Alliance’ - his career is the longest of any World’s Secretary of the YMCA.

Shedd describes Fermaud’s background as follows:

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1 Richard Morse in his memoirs *My Life with Young Men* (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 226).
2 The expression is from Fermaud, himself. In his letter of resignation Fermaud wrote: “It is not good for a work like ours… that those who direct the work should remain in it for too long time, becoming in a special way an incarnation of the work.” (Quoted in Shedd 1955b, 435)
3 Shedd 1955b, 227-230, 240f.
He was one of nine children brought up in a pious Free Church family. His father died when he was 15, which left young Charles in a sense the head of the family. He received his bacca-
laureat degree at the age of 20. He was a gifted linguist, having done post-graduate study for one year in Germany and one year in England. His beloved grandfather was the distinguished
pastor, Charles Cordes-Hentsch; who profoundly influenced Charles by his life and caused him to develop deep religious sensibilities. He was head cashier in one of the Geneva banks,
a position of great promise for the future. In his work in the Geneva YMCA he had been
greatly inspired and encouraged by his mother.1

Karl Fries adds in his unpublished manuscript that by military rank, Fermaud was a captain in 18782. Fermaud mentions that he received the rank of a Lt. Colonel, and that his military status “opened doors that otherwise would have been shut3.” Experiences in the bank-world and army evidently directed his organisational thinking. Other inputs to his thinking came from the North American YMCA. Richard C. Morse, a secretary of the North American International Com-
mittee (NAIC), acted as his guide in the first years. Morse’s influence might be seen in Fermaud’s positive attitude to American-type city-associations in Ger-
many4. This was furthered by his three-month trip to North American associations just at the beginning of his career5.

In general, there is practically no research on Fermaud’s policy and mission view. As far as I know, there is no biography on Fermaud6, and his policy is not widely discussed in Shedd’s history or in other YMCA histories. This would be one important task for future YMCA research because he was the man who im-
plemented the early models that became organisational resources for the YMCA and other INGOs7. In this study, his policy has to be looked at from what he did instead of what he said.

Fermaud’s main activities, along with running the organisational routines in Geneva, were his travels and visits both to existing associations and to new territ-
ories. The first report of the CIC expresses it as follows:

Knowing the value of personal intercourse, the International Central Committee does not merely enter into correspondence with the Associations, but undertakes to visit them; this is the most interesting portion of our Secretary’s work, and that for which God seems specially to have fitted him.8

1 Shedd 1955b, 213
2 Quoted in Shedd 1955b, 261
3 Fermaud 1909, 3. Thus, we can add one more network to the list, which contained networks of Evangelicals, merchants and royals. The YMCA used all these (and supposedly several others) in its work.
4 Fermaud had proposed to the Stuttgart Jünglingsverein, as early as 1880, the adoption of the American city-association model. Shedd 1955b, 249.
5 WComR 1881, 7, 10; Shedd 1955b, 238, 240.
6 Archives of the World Alliance have only an extract from Young Men’s Era 20, 1894, 35, Aug.,
which gives some details of Fermaud, and a short biography written by Fermaud himself.
7 Shedd (1955b, 272) writes on the Geneva executive: “They blazed new trials not only for the YMCA, but for other world organizations.” Words fit especially to Fermaud because, as Shedd (1955b, 436) says: “In a very real sense the World’s Committee (C.I.C.) during these years was ‘the lengthened shadow’ of Fermaud.”
8 WComR 1881, 9f.
In his first year as a World’s Secretary, Fermaud spent almost half a year in travels. The next two years were not so busy but between 1881 and 1884 he spent 14 months in travel. In general, travels occupied an important share in CIC reports until 1913. Travels were evangelistic in nature. The 1884 Central International Committee report defines the CIC as being missionary; it has an activity of extension, not only maintenance. This policy aroused opposition among Americans who saw that instead of this “general evangelisation”, Fermaud should concentrate on creating strong national councils and associations.

Fermaud took the critique seriously. At the first Plenary in 1886, where the future of the CIC was discussed, Fermaud said:

“We should renounce entirely (except in rare cases) the grand voyages... [The Committee should] choose a few centres and work in them assiduously to see its projects through to their conclusion... [I hope that] the Committee would become more aggressive and more militant, the most important points of attack being that of creation of salaried local secretaries and the organisation of national alliances.”

However, this did not end travelling, but shifted the content of these journeys from general evangelisation to leadership training. In general, Fermaud’s pioneer work was that of experiment - testing and trying. By experiment, he developed a model for the world organisation. His major significance is that through his visits he learned of various emphases in different countries. That knowledge was important since he could use it to bridge different opinions, especially concerning the interpretation of the Paris Basis. However, Fermaud was not only a mediator between various parties in explaining the Paris Basis - he was also one of the interpreters.

The specific points in the Paris Basis that Fermaud emphasised became evident when the draft of the first Constitution was discussed. Fermaud did not regard the Preamble as part of the Paris Basis. Had his opinion won, the ‘independence clause’ that protected local and national movements from interference by the upper level organisation would have been omitted. His stand seems to be in line with the Geneva Executive’s early proposal that CIC members residing outside Geneva would be only ‘consultative members.’ However, as we will see, Fermaud finally won, although post mortem, when the Preamble was not included into the new Constitution adopted in 1955.

On the personal level, Fermaud’s contribution was remarkable. When national movements did not direct funds to meet the need of new secretaries until 1896, Fermaud alone, carried the burden of increasing work with a small budget. The
financial situation was sometimes so bad that the treasurer could not pay his salary. Because of illness in the family and burdens of work, he, on many occasions, felt that he resign.\(^1\) Something about his character is revealed by Edouard Barde’s note on Fermaud’s 25-year secretary ‘birthday party’. The brief report of that occasion tells that members of the Committee gave a gracious sum to him “destined to be spent by Mr Fermaud for his own personal pleasure to be shared by Mrs Fermaud but prohibiting him from devoting any part of it to any kind of charity or giving it to the C.I.C.\(^2\)” Fermaud seems to be one of those ‘faithful servants’ who do not look to their own benefit but who even used their own money to cover the costs of their work. Not a rare attitude among lay workers in revivalistic movements.

The lack of resources had indirect consequences on the mission work of the YMCA. Shedd writes that this lack of assistance led the North American movement to “carry alone its foreign work responsibilities\(^3\)” Fermaud’s burdens, and illness in his family might explain why there were no Plenaries between 1886 and 1896 as Shedd wonders. This was the time when Geneva executive was isolated, American extension started and WSCF was founded as a separate organisation from the YMCA.\(^4\) The answer might be that of personal tragedy: Fermaud did not have the strength any more to react to all the challenges.

Fermaud resigned in 1912 after 34 years of service, but this was not enough - Fermaud was nominated as an Honorary Life Member of the World’s Committee in 1913\(^5\). His main contribution has been that of an administrator. He was the one who had to solve all the new practical problems that emerged in the World’s Alliance, thus developing organisational practices that became resources for both the YMCA and other INGOs as well. Shedd states that the World’s Committee was his ‘monument’\(^6\). His career would surely be worth a biography.

**TO SUM UP.** Fermaud was 23 when he accepted the position of World’s Secretary of the YMCA. He was a clerk in a Swiss bank and achieved the rank of Lt. Colonel in Swiss army. With these experiences, he developed the organisation of the World’s Alliance. Fermaud used much of his time in visiting various national movements and local associations. In the beginning, they were evangelising journeys but changed increasingly to be occasions of leadership training. Fermaud served the movement for 34 years and when he resigned, it was the time for a new ecumenical leader to direct the work of the YMCA.

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\(^1\) Shedd 1955b, 307f., 344. If Fermaud had resigned, the World’s Alliance would look rather different. There are several possibilities as to what would have happened. The most negative result would have been that the Central International Committee was shifted to North America and associated with North American International Committee. The most positive effect would have been that the members would have had to react to the crisis that his resignation would have caused, and to add staff much earlier than actually happened.

\(^2\) Quoted in Shedd 1955b, 396 (my italics).

\(^3\) Shedd 1955b, 344.

\(^4\) Shedd 1955b, 367.

\(^5\) Shedd 1955b, 435f.

\(^6\) Shedd 1955b, 436.
5.3.4. World Citizen - John R. Mott

If Fermaud has remained in the shadows of history, another YMCA leader, John Raleigh Mott (1865-1955), is perhaps the best known figure in the modern Ecumenical Movement. He was a leader of several central organisations that preceded the World Council of Churches. His contribution to the YMCA is as remarkable as to that to the WSCF, the IMC and the WCC. There are several biographies and other studies on Mott¹, thus, his thinking as an ecumenical leader is rather well known and documented. In this sub-chapter, I focus only on his role as a YMCA leader and on his contribution to the YMCA mission view.

Mott was an effective person who could simultaneously hold several posts. He came to the YMCA in 1886 when he took a delegation of ten men from Cornell University to Mount Hermon Student Conference. Two years later, when he graduated, he accepted the post of College Secretary of the Intercollegiate YMCA (1888-1915)². In 1895, when the WSCF was founded, Mott became its first General Secretary (1895-1920). In 1901, he became an Associate General Secretary (1901-1915) of the North American International Committee and in 1915 its General Secretary (1915-1928)³. Hopkins writes: “the American YMCA was the power base for his world-wide enterprises." Along with his work in the YMCA, Mott was a president of the Student Volunteer Movement (1886-1920)⁴, general secretary (1895-1920) and chairman of the WSCF (1920-1928)⁵ and president of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs (1926-1947)⁶ and numerous non-salaried lay offices⁷.

Amsterdam World’s Conference in 1891 was the dawn of a new epoch in the leadership of the World’s Alliance: John R. Mott attended a YMCA World’s Conference for the first time⁹. From then on, he increasingly became a central figure in the movement. In the Versailles Plenary (1900), he became a member of the newly named World’s Committee, representing the American movement. From the London Plenary of 1907 on, Mott was in practice the leader of the World’s Alliance¹⁰. However, he did not accept the presidency of the World’s Alliance.

¹ Risto Ahonen (1983, 17-22) gives a list of research on Mott. Ahonen claims that the largest biographies of Howard C. Hopkins and Basil Mathews are rather uncritical. Ahonen himself gives more room to the criticism of Mott, especially that of Germans.
² Hopkins 1979, 47f.; 454.
³ Hopkins 1979, 234, 454, 662f.
⁴ Hopkins 1979, 616.
⁵ Hopkins 1979, 61, 569.
⁶ Hopkins 1979, 129f., 208, 592, 669.
⁷ Hopkins 1979, 637, 699.
⁸ Perhaps the best CV of Mott can be found in the index of Hopkins (1979, 800). Galen M. Fisher (1952, 113) argues that Mott never received any salary or expenses from organisations he served. However, in Hopkins’ index, there is a clear distinction between salaried positions in the North American YMCA and other positions. Thus, Fisher’s remark seems to mean only positions outside the YMCA.
⁹ Shedd 1955b, 316.
¹⁰ Shedd 1955b, 377.
¹¹ Shedd 1955b, 433.
until 1926, during the Helsingfors World’s Conference, when Paul Des Gouttes (president 1913-1926) resigned from the position\(^1\). He held it until 1947. Mott did not see the Centennial Conference - he died earlier in the year 1955.

Mott’s role in the World’s Alliance was remarkable. Although he was primarily an evangelist, he was also a gifted statesman who could solve controversies between various groups in both the YMCA and in the whole Ecumenical movement\(^2\). He was also an administrator who had the gift of raising funds and using them effectively\(^3\). *The Christian Century* summarised, in 1955, his long career as follows:

> He saw with prophetic clarity the first signs of a new world being born, and he set into motion the ecumenical forces by which Christian churches East and West marshaled their forces to face the changing order… he was an embodiment of a whole cycle of Christian history.\(^4\)

One special feature in Mott’s activity was that, although he devoted his energy to the YMCA, he was not fighting for the YMCA organisation but for the mission. Thus, he organised several other organisations, like the WSCF, IMC and WCC. This policy had its evident merits but it also had negative effects for the YMCA: as long as Mott himself (or some other former YMCA leader) led these organisations, the ‘personal union’ ensured co-operation. However, as we will see later in this work, when ‘there arose a new king who knew not Joseph’\(^5\) mutual connections started to loosen as well.

This ‘personal union’ aspect was one significant feature in Mott’s activity. Visser ‘t Hooft’s mother expressed the essential when she said that Mott “was like a spider and that no one who had been caught in his web could get out of it again”\(^6\). Mott was able to find young men with potential, to whom he then gave adequate training and put to work. It can be said that the Ecumenical Movement of the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century was largely based on this web of Mott’s.

Another feature in Mott’s leadership was his independence, which was seen especially in his relationship to American local associations\(^7\). The North American International Committee was an economically independent organ, which was largely due to Mott’s ability to raise funds directly from wealthy people. This had several consequences. First, as Zald notes, there was growing tension between the NAIC and local associations, due to the NAIC projects among students and railroad men. It was mainly a question of supervision of these special activities on a

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\(^1\) WComPle 1926, 2-5.

\(^2\) Fisher 1952, 167-170, 182-186. However, Mott’s role was not always without problems. Both Ahonen (1983) and Pierard (1986) note that especially Germans, during WW I did not believe in his political neutrality.


\(^4\) Quoted in Reynolds 1986, 282.

\(^5\) Ex 1:8.

\(^6\) Visser ‘t Hooft 1973, 18.

\(^7\) In the 1920’s, the US YMCA went through a transformation when the National Council was established. Zald (1970, 61ff.) notes that this was largely because local associations felt that they had little voice in forming national YMCA policy, which was created by Mott. See also Hopkins (1951, 444ff.)
local level. Zald notes that “this work by the International Committee was widely viewed as a violation of local autonomy.” Second, student associations and the NAIC were more Evangelical and willing to preach Social Gospel than local associations, which focused on serving their clientele.

Mott was a controversial person from the point of view of the World’s Alliance as well. On one hand, he helped the work of the World’s Committee by several means. First, he supplied funds to the world organ and enabled it to expand its work. Second, he was a gifted conciliator in controversial issues. This might be Mott’s most long-lasting influence in the YMCA: he bridged the gap between European and American movements and integrated Americans into the work of the World’s Alliance. In Mott’s era, the Americans directed more and more funds to multilateral projects through the World’s Committee. Third, he was an effective planner, both in the case of conferences and in the world mission. During WW II he once said: “The war cannot last for ever. We must be ready with men and money.” With this emphasis on planning, he changed the World’s Alliance, from a movement to an effectively led organisation. Fourth, although he was controversial, he opened many doors for the YMCA, especially in Orthodox countries. Fifth, he was a man of vision and strong will - thus, providing strong leadership for the YMCA during both World Wars. Sixth, although an American, he emphasised the significance of the Paris Basis for the movement. Actually, one of his prerequisites before accepting the presidency of the World’s Alliance in 1926 was that the Alliance continue to rest... on the Paris Basis with the enduring cornerstone principle.

On the other hand, his internationalism was that of spreading an American lifestyle to other parts of the world, which caused a lot trouble, especially in Europe.

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1 Zald 1970, 59.
2 Zald 1970, 56-64.
3 Mott, for example, emphasised that fraternal secretaries of national movements in mission lands “should send their reports directly to the World’s Committee (Shedd 1955b, 384.).” Shedd (Idem 433) notes that from 1905 on, “the Executive was increasingly to look to him, not only for guidance on North America’s part in the World Movement but also for counsel on the functions and financing of the World’s Committee.” In few years the relationships between the World’s Committee and the NAIC improved. There was less talk of ‘two World’s Committees’ and more concentration on the proper mission. (Shedd 1955b, 439. See also Cedegren 1955, 665.).
4 The direction of American funds through the World’s Alliance started with emigration work, continued in the work for prisoners of war in both World Wars, and in refugee work from the 1940’s on. (Shedd 1955b, 440f., 468; Strong 1955b, 547f., 553f., 560f.; Kilpatrick 1955, 589-594; Hopkins 1979, 450ff.)
5 Shedd 1955b, 522.
7 WComPle 1926, 3.
8 Ahonen (1983, 104, 107) argues that, “According to Mott, healthy morals in the basis of American society is revealed in American democracy in particular, which functions as a model for the rest of the world... According to Mott’s thought, American democracy also includes American lifestyle, although he does not express it verbally... the American model of organisation and leadership should be applied everywhere in society and the church.” (my translation from the original Finnish text)
The aggressive American-type evangelisation, American solo-play in the field of war-prisoner’s aid\(^1\) and the planting of city-YMCAs were the issues that aroused feelings in Europe. Second, although highly educated, his theological views were not clear, something which caused misunderstandings\(^2\). Third, Mott was not always a patient listener of his opponents\(^3\) or did not respect other points of views\(^4\). Fourth, he was not always loyal to organisations he served. For example, the founding of the World’s Student Christian Federation was done ‘behind the back’ of the CIC\(^5\) which evidently weakened the organisational strength of the World’s Alliance. In general, future ecumenical research should clarify why ecumenical leaders, who grew up and were active in the YMCA, were so eager to build new ecumenical organisations instead of using the old ones.

**TO SUM UP**. John R. Mott was appointed as a student secretary of the NAIC in 1888. In 1901 he became its Associate General Secretary and in 1915 its General Secretary. Along with these paid offices, he held numerous voluntary posts in the Ecumenical Movement. He attended the World’s Conference for the first time in 1891, became a member of the World’s Committee in 1901 and its president in 1926. Along with other ecumenical bodies, the World’s Alliance was touched by Mott’s vision of evangelising the world during this generation. It was Mott’s contribution that the World’s Alliance changed from a loose movement to an effectively led organisation. When Fermaud had created the organisation, Mott brought necessary resources to it and showed what to do with it.

In these two small sub-chapters, two YMCA leaders have been presented. Along with them, at least 20 others could have been presented with good reason. However, Fermaud and Mott were first among equals. In principle, the structure

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2. Ahonen (1983, 61f.) argues that “Mott more emphasises the faith itself (*fides qua creditur*), but is not interested in the content of doctrine (*fides qua creditur*). . . . Unclear Christological expressions give reason to suppose that Mott did not have a consistent doctrinal way of thinking.” (my translation from the original Finnish text)
3. Stephen Neill (1960, 15) tells (while describing his role in Edinburgh’s Missionary Conference) that “Mott could be authoritarian, almost brutal, in the Chair. He could give short shrift to any offender against the rules of procedure. Determined to get things done, he at times swept opposition out of his path, and roused hostility by his dictatorial methods.”
4. During WW I, Mott almost ruined the YMCA work among prisoners of war when the US entered the war. Moreover, after the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk (February 28, 1918) when Bolshevik Russia withdrew from the war, the North American International Committee (of which Mott was the general secretary) gave the following instruction on the prisoner of war work: “No American money or supplies should be used for Germans and Austrians or for anything else that would tend to increase the fighting strength of America’s enemies.” European secretaries were shocked and opposed the abolition of POW work among Germans and Austrians. (Strong 1955b, 553f.)
Mott’s actions also had wider consequences. Aila Lauha (1990, 86) argues that “along with his 1917 journey to Russia, Mott lost his reputation as a neutral man of peace. In particular, Germans openly questioned his leadership in the Ecumenical Movement… Mistrust was based on the fact that he had tried to make the Russian Student Christian Movement and the YMCA to serve the American-Russian war machine.” (my translation from the original Finnish text)
5. Shedd 1955b, 354. Shedd (Idem) tells that Luther Wishard had dreamed of building a world student movement under the YMCA but Mott’s vision was to build an independent organisation.
of the World’s Committee more favoured collective than individual leadership. Partly, the unity in the movement was, as was stated already in Paris in 1855: a given unity. In part, it was created by common conferences and leadership training, which is focused on below.

5.3.5. Professional Leadership Training

In Paris 1855, there was one professional secretary present (Shipton) but there was no discussion on the role of professional secretaries in the movement. This was an issue of local organisation on which the World’s Alliance had no power to take action, as the Preamble of the Paris Basis stated. As we have seen in Table 13 on page 176, the number of secretaries in Europe was still less than one hundred in 1891. Moreover, two thirds of them were in Britain. Fifteen years later, in 1905, the number of them was still only 265. There was no real need to establish special training for this small group. In North America, on the other hand, there were 1,140 secretaries as early as 1891. Thus, it is no wonder that the YMCA secretary training started in North America.

The Association of General Secretaries of the YMCAs in the US and British Provinces was founded in 1871 and it started secretary training\(^1\). Before that, secretaries “were usually trained, if at all, through an apprenticeship to previously established secretaries\(^2\),” as Zald puts it. On the other hand, Hopkins points out that “most of the outstanding secretaries were recruited from the ministry or had planned to enter it; many had theological training and not a few were evangelists\(^3\).” In England, the first YMCA secretary, T.H. Tarlton, had such a background: he served the London YMCA from 1844 to 1856, whereupon he entered the ministry of the Anglican Church\(^4\). On the other hand, the first for-life secretary, Edwyn Shipton, was of the first type: he had no special education for his work, but was trained by Tarlton\(^5\).

According to Hopkins\(^6\), it was the Four-fold Programme which created the need for recruiting secretaries in the US. In the beginning, requirements varied, but in 1872 Robert Weidensall first proposed to the North American YMCA Convention that a school of YMCA secretaries should be established. The idea did not take root because apprenticeship was seen as the best method for secretary training at that time. However, in 1879-80, the first of the two to four week short courses for secretaries started and in 1881 the first outline of a curriculum was published by the NAIC. These short courses led to the founding of a permanent YMCA College in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1885. Five years later, a similar

\(^1\) Hopkins 1951, 168.
\(^2\) Zald 1970, 67.
\(^3\) Hopkins 1951, 162.
\(^4\) Shedd 1955a, 25.
\(^5\) Shedd 1955b, 147.
\(^6\) It is interesting to note that the first North American paid YMCA employees were librarians because large libraries were the first secular activity that required full-time professional staff (Hopkins 1951, 43ff.).
College was founded in Chicago. The rest was, as they say, history. Both schools became central institutions in training YMCA secretaries, in developing and planting new methods, and in establishing the secretaryship as a life career.\footnote{Hopkins 1951, 163, 165, 171, 175, 177.}

If Hopkins’ thesis about the relationship between the Four-fold Programme and leadership is true, then the logical conclusion would be that (especially American) secretary-training institutions aimed to train secretaries into this philosophy. As we have seen in the review of YMCA extension, this has mainly been the case. Secretaries from all around the world participated in Springfield courses and brought back the idea of a balanced man. Moreover, when new training centres emerged, they used Springfield as their model\footnote{Shedd 1955b, 353, 443.}. A South American Instituto Técnico was founded in Montevideo in 1923. It was to a great extent a project of the North American fraternal secretary, Philip A. Conard, who also acted as its rector\footnote{Latourette 1957, 209, 213.}. In Europe, the first permanent training school was established in Geneva in 1927. Springfield lent Elmer Barry as its first director and gave a generous annual grant to the new school\footnote{Johannot 1955, 655.}. However, in India, the North American impact was not as clear as in other parts of the world, although it was remarkable. The first head of the Indian YMCA training school in the 1910’s was Kenneth J. Saundes, a Cambridge graduate who served earlier as a professor in Trinity College at Kandy\footnote{Latourette 1957, 121, 145, 471}.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that professional leadership training emphasised the Four-fold ideology and planted it in various parts of the world. The problem of this ideology was that in practical terms, it meant an emphasis on physical education. I already mentioned Latourette’s remark on secretaries’ tendency to leave religious issues as the responsibilities of general secretaries. This was opposite to the original aim of the program. The association did not sacralize the gymnasium but the gymnasium secularised the association. Perhaps this was the reason why Europeans were so reluctant to establish their own training centre - almost 50 years after founding of Springfield College. Another possible explanation arises from the status and function of associations. The European movements, especially in the German block, have merely been small voluntary groups attached to churches, rather than American-type large and independent interdenominational institutions. Thus, in Europe, the associations have served as ecclesiola in ecclesia for lay people while in North America, associations have had a significant role in provision of public services. The YMCA was not, in principle, an agency run by professional staff but a membership movement with voluntary leaders.

**TO SUM UP**, it was the Four-fold Programme, which created the need for trained secretaries because special activities required specialists. The training begun in the US in 1879 and the first YMCA college in Springfield was established in 1885. Five years later, a similar institution was founded in Chicago. Both concentrated on training YMCA leaders according to the Four-fold ideology and

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}}Hopkins 1951, 163, 165, 171, 175, 177.  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{2}}Shedd 1955b, 353, 443.  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{3}}Latourette 1957, 209, 213.  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{4}}Johannot 1955, 655.  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{5}}Latourette 1957, 121, 145, 471
to develop new methods of work. The Indian YMCA got its school in the 1910’s at Bangalore and in Latin America, *Instituto Técnico* was founded in Montevideo in 1923. In Geneva, a similar school was established in 1927. The major impact of these schools was in the professionalisation of the movement and in planting the Four-fold ideology around the world.

5.3.6. Voluntary Leadership

Although the number of professional secretaries grew constantly, the movement was basically a lay volunteer movement. This was already recognised in the 1880’s, when Americans started to create the system of general secretarysthip. At that time, one of the important themes discussed was the danger of ‘secretarialism’, which would lead to authority over members¹. Thus, an organisational culture emerged to keep the secretaries under board control². In this sense, the role of the secretary differed sharply from that of a pastor who was clearly a leader of his congregation. The YMCA, instead, was based on lay leadership.

In the World’s Alliance level, this principle of lay leadership was discussed in the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926. The conference made the following resolution.

The Conference would reiterate its abiding conviction that sacrificial voluntary leadership in all departments, branches, and activities is essential to the fulfilment of the Association’s great responsibility with the boys and young men of the world.

The Conference recommends that in the composition and leadership of committees and in the attendance at and participation in conferences, both national and international, there should always be a much larger proportion of laymen than of secretaries³.

This arises from the conviction that the task of the YMCA is in the mobilisation of laymen; as the Paris Basis states: “unite young men… and associate their efforts… for the extension of His Kingdom.” This task was the ideological basis of the YMCA but it was also a practical wisdom. Johannot writes: “Only as the YMCA is able to mobilize leaders in the business world, both employers and employees, and from the largest possible number of professions, can it hope to have a real influence in national and international life⁴.” In this sense, the role of the YMCA and, especially the World’s Alliance was to serve as an umbrella where lay people could practice their Christian mission. The special mission of the World’s Alliance grew from the task to serve its members and help them to implement their Christian faith in their cultures.

The trails of tasks of the World’s Committee were laid in the 1878 World’s Conference where the CIC was founded. The report made the following list of tasks of the CIC:

1 To publish:

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¹ Hopkins 1951, 169.
² Zald 1970, 64-69. In North America this culture was so strong that Hopkins (1951, 170) can write, “no employed officer ever presided at an International Convention [of North American YMCA].”
³ WConf 1926, 238.
⁴ Johannot 1955, 660.
a) A volume on the conference
b) In three languages the report of M. Krummacher upon the means of increasing spiritual life in our Associations.
c) Periodically a pamphlet upon the experiences of the Associations in the domain of Evangelisation.

2. To study and submit to the next Conference a project for the adoption of an international badge of Union.

3. To facilitate the development of younger associations
4. To establish statistic lists of the Associations throughout the world.
5. To create an International Information Agency for young men.
6. To bring about mutual intercourse between the Associations by means of correspondence, and to surround with a special solicitude those amongst them that are isolated.¹

This list can be completed by three other tasks that were laid upon the World’s Alliance in the course of time.

7. To give help in leadership training to those movements that could not organise training by themselves.
8. To organise special multilateral projects, which are too large for one movement².
9. To notify members on important problems, which require answers on the basis of Christian ethics³.

When the special task of the YMCA was in the field of boys and young men, lay leadership training focused especially on these fields. In this sense, it was not far from the training of the entire membership. The YMCA emerged as a membership movement, and the next sub-chapter focuses on that aspect in the movement.

**TO SUM UP**, the YMCA was basically a lay movement and it purposefully tried to avoid secretarialism. Lay leadership was not only a strategy for the YMCA – it was one aspect of the YMCA mission. The Paris Basis stated that the purpose of the YMCA was to unite young men and associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom. Thus, the YMCA saw it a means whereby laity could give their talents in the service of their Lord. This basic ideology led the YMCA to emphasise lay leadership training.

### 5.3.7. Leadership and Mission

In this sub-chapter 5.3, various aspects the leadership had in the YMCA has been seen. Now it is time to make some remarks on how the leadership influenced the mission of the World’s Alliance. In general, it can be said that the YMCA structure favoured collective leadership on the level of the World’s Alliance (as well as on the national level). This was because of the (almost greedy) tendency to guard local independence. Collective leadership was a strategy to keep leadership on the local level, although this sometimes meant ‘national’ instead of ‘local’. In the Centennial Conferences, Section II focused on leadership and stated:

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¹ WComR 1881, 5.
² These kinds of projects were work among migrants, POWs and refugees.
³ In Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference these kind of questions were sex and race questions (WConf 1926, 233f.).
Leadership includes not only secretaries but also volunteer group leaders and committee members. It was recognised that active participation in the work of the YMCA is one of the essentials of a developing leadership and that many of the best professional leaders began as volunteer leaders.¹

Among the professional leaders, there were two outstanding figures: Charles Fermaud and John R. Mott. Fermaud practically singlehandedly created the Central International Committee during his 34-year career as the first secretary of the Committee. Roughly the same time that he resigned, Mott took increasingly the leadership in the World’s Alliance. Mott bridged the gap between European and American understanding of the YMCA model and made the World’s Alliance an effective international organisation.

Along with these professionals, the YMCA emphasised lay responsibility on the movement work. The Young Men’s Conference recommended

*That the World Council offers an example to National Alliances by giving a greater place of young members in its deliberation and by entrusting greater responsibility to young members for the work of its subordinate bodies.*²

This recommendation implicitly shows that the ideal was not always in concurrence with the reality. The professionalisation process had often shifted decision-making power to professional leaders of strong national or local organisations. Another issue was the presentation of young members in the governing boards, which have become an eternal question in the YMCA³.

The leadership in the YMCA was not based on charismatic people, although there were them as well. The emphasis was heavily on leadership training. Both Centennial Conference (Section III) and Young Men’s Conference emphasised leadership training as essential means in fulfilling the mission of the YMCA⁴. Young men emphasised that the YMCA must be able “to attract young men of creativity and vision, so that the YMCA will not become a routine organization in society, but one which is constantly pioneering to extend God’s Kingdom among men⁵.”

In general, it can be said that the YMCA emphasis on lay local leadership diversified the mission. This was in accordance with the basic values of the YMCA, expressed in the Preamble of the Paris Basis. However, it pushed the World’s Alliance to emphasise the richness of diversity, instead of doctrinal purity or organisational homogeneity. Any possible homogenisation was to happen on a voluntary basis, when people learnt in international contacts how other movements applied different methods in their work.

¹ WConf 1955, 72.
² WConf 1955, 123.
³ The last time it was discussed was in the Coventry World Council in 1994, and I remember that the result did not fully satisfy younger delegates.
⁴ WConf 1955, 73, 112.
⁵ WConf 1955, 112.
5.4. Social Objects

The social objects of the YMCA during its 100 years constituted mainly of Protestant or Christian symbols, people mentioned in the Bible, or figures of the Reformation. Along with these, there were some symbols, heroes, holy places, important periods of the movement, and opponents of Christianity in general. In the following sub-chapters I focus on each on time and look how they modified the mission view of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs.

5.4.1. Symbols of the YMCA

The YMCA has two major symbols, the Badge of the World’s Alliance and the Red Triangle. The creation of the first one was one of the tasks of the new Central International Committee in 1878 and was accepted in 1881. The Red Triangle, in turn, emerged in the US as a symbol of the Four-fold Programme and symmetrical manhood.

The Motto of the YMCA from 1881 also emphasised the unity of the movement. In the emblem of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs there is a reference to John 17:21: “That they all may be one.” Paul M. Limbert, the general secretary of the World’s Alliance, 1953-1962, has explained the motto as follows:

When the World’s Alliance of YMCAs and the World’s Student Christian Federation adopted John 17:21 as their motto, they did not take upon themselves the task of bringing about a union of churches. What they are called to do is to help develop the spirit of unity, to create the atmosphere in which specific projects of church union may effort.

Accordingly, the task of the YMCA is to foster this sense of unity so that Christians could find each other over the frontiers that divide them. This aspect was seen in the French YMCA bulletin a couple of years earlier when it dealt with the wounds of the lost war. The words of this prayer of Jesus were seen as central unifying determinants between the French and German YMCAs. Thus, the link between Jesus’ prayer and the task of the YMCA had been around for some time before it was adopted into the YMCA Badge.

The badge of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs (Figure 6) was accepted in London in 1881 “for the sake of the young travellers” and it has a symbolism similar to that of the Paris Basis. The report of the International Central Committee to the London World’s Conference in 1881, emphasised this symbolism aspect as follows: “It appears to us that far from being arbitrary, or commonplace, this

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1 See Lang and Lang’s definition on page 46.
2 See note 2 on page 45.
3 Limbert 1955, 3.
5 The other symbol of the YMCA - the red triangle refers to the internal unity or wholeness of a man. According to it, a man is a combination of body, mind and spirit. However, until recently, the triangle has not been an official symbol of the World’s Alliance.
6 WComR 1881, 14.
badge of Christian Associations must have the character of a symbol, expressing in a simple and clear manner all the spiritual treasures they possess in common."

The same report explained the badge as follows:

1 To recall to mind the oneness of our Associations in all countries of the globe, a circle divided into 5 segments bearing the names of the five parts of the world bound together by ‘cartouches’ upon which can be read in many languages the initials of our title: ‘Young Men’s Christian Association’.

2 In the circle the monogram of Christ, as the faith of the ancient Christians painted it everywhere in their catacombs, will remind our Associations that Christ is their centre, their true bond of Union, their supreme end, their strength, and their only ‘raison d’être’.

3 To this symbol of Christ we have added the Bible, both because this Divine book is the weapon of warfare which St. John gives to young men, and because it is the distinguishing mark of the great Reformation. - The Bible opens on the Saviour’s High-Priestly prayer, from which we have especially chosen the 21st verse: ‘That they may be one as we are one’ John XVII, 21.

If we compare the badge and its explanation to the Paris Basis, we can see that the first paragraph has ‘enlarged the YMCA territory’ from Europe and North America to five continents. This, along with the motto, is a reminder of the unity presented in the Basis. The cartouches refer, in turn, to the special task of the movement in its work among young men. The second paragraph is equal to “Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour” (although not having similar theological problems). Finally, the open Bible refers to “according to the Holy Scriptures.” On the other hand, the badge does not deal with the themes of local independence in the Preamble, or harmony in the Second Fundamental Principle. In addition, the issue of extension is only there implicitly.

Although the International Badge of the World’s Alliance thus presented the main ideology of the YMCA, it was only used in the context of the World’s Alliance. Ten years later another YMCA symbol became better known than the International Badge, namely the Red Triangle.

This ideology of the Four-fold Programme was crystallised in the symbol of the Red Triangle which Luther H. Gulick, the gymnastic instructor of the YMCA Springfield Training College, proposed in 1891. The triangle with the YMCA

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1 WComR 1881, 15.
2 WComR 1881, 14f.
initials became the best-known YMCA symbol throughout the world. Sometimes the triangle is surrounded by a circle and then it is equivalent to the Four-fold Programme. There are hundreds of modifications of the Red Triangle as different activities have developed their own logos to symbolise both their attachments to YMCA and their special activity. Some of these can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7: YMCA logos

In all levels, the Red Triangle widely replaced the official emblem of the World’s Alliance, during World War I. From 1920 to 1923, Plenary Meetings paid attention to the issue. While proposals were made to adopt the Red Triangle as the official emblem of the World’s Alliance, the 1923 Plenary at Velden, Austria, decided that “the official badge of the World’s Alliance would remain as at present.” Similar decision was taken fifteen years later in the Stockholm Plenary. While the emblem of the World’s Alliance was the Paris Basis in figure form and arose from Evangelical missiology, the Red Triangle arose from the anthropology of the movement. In this sense, the Basis and the YMCA Red Triangle can be seen as supplementary statements. On the other hand, the adoption of the Red Triangle reflected a shift from revivalistic Christianity to ‘nurture Christianity’.

TO SUM UP, the YMCA has two official symbols: the Badge of the World’s Alliance and the Red Triangle. The Badge is actually a visual interpretation of the Paris Basis and focuses on the mission and ideology of the YMCA. The Red Triangle, instead, focuses on the anthropology of the YMCA, and it was developed in the US. It states that a man is a unity of body, mind and soul. Since WW I, the Red Triangle has widely replaced the Badge. This reflects the change from pure evangelism to nurture of the whole man.

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1 Quoted in Shedd 1955, 489.
2 WComP 1938, 47.
5.4.2. Other Social Objects of the YMCA

Along with special symbols, the YMCA had its own ‘saints’, ‘holy places’, ‘holy times’ and opponents. These served the movement by raising *espirit de corps*, and pointing to issues that were important for the movement, like internationalism. However, it seems that the YMCA did not create any special YMCA language, but used everyday expressions.

**SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE OR ‘SAINTS’**, who are not leaders of the movement, have an important role. The significance of these people for the YMCA was that they served as examples in YMCA work. Although the YMCA did not have any personality cult, these people served as role models or respected teachers for younger generations.

In general, there is a significant non-existence of contemporary people that were put forward as examples in the YMCA. A who that was often referred to as a hero of the movement, in documents of this period was its former leader, George Williams. Already in his lifetime, he got the status of ‘the father of the YMCA.’ In YMCA histories and pamphlets it became a custom to refer either to him alone, or to ‘Williams and his 11 companions’ as founder(s) of the first YMCA.

The issues of the ‘first YMCA’ and ‘Williams as the father of the YMCA’ were dealt with before the Jubilee Conference in 1894. Not all YMCAs accepted the date 6 August 1844 as the founding date, and Williams as the founder of the whole movement, although they respected him as one of the founders. The outcome of negotiations was that Williams was seen not as the sole founder, but more than just one founder. Later this nuanced distinction disappeared and Williams was, more and more, seen as the father of the YMCA.

Other figures that were sometimes referred to in documents were evangelists of the movement, Dwight L. Moody, Ira D. Sankey and Luther D. Wishard. In a religious movement, preachers have a special status, which is not actually the status of a leader. They are more like prophets who come and give their contribution and then continue their journey. Their work requires co-operation with the local leaders who make the arrangements for the ‘star’ to come. In some sense, a famous preacher is like a pop star who draws people by his reputation.

Along with preachers, another important group of YMCA people were those who had received a significant status, either in their church or in society. These could be called ‘foster-children’ of the YMCA. Their significance was that ‘their glory as also their parent’s glory’. When the YMCA could show that remarkable men have grown up in the movement, it gave legitimacy to their work. It was also encouraging to youth leaders to see that their predecessors work had some significance. A youth leader does not normally see the fruits of his work and in this sense, it was important to see that the work, in general, had fruits. Men who grew

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1 As we have already seen (see note 3 on page 69.), this was incorrect in two senses. First, the London YMCA is not the oldest of existing YMCAs. Second, as we have seen, the writer of the biography of Williams, Clyde Binfield, questions the number 12, in terms of founders and their equal division to four denominations

2 Shedd 1955b, 331-337.
up in the YMCA, were, for example, bishops Athenagoras (later Ecumenical Patriarch), Vedanayagam S. Azariah, Charles H. Brent, Jaakko Gummerus, Hanns Lilje, Wilhelm Schousboe, Nathan Söderblom, ecumenical leaders Willem A. Visser ‘t Hooft, Joseph H. Oldham, William Paton, K.T. Paul. They had all served the YMCA for some time and, as Shedd puts it, “had their first ‘practice games’ in YMCA and Student Movement circles.”

THE HOLY PLACES of the YMCA were primarily those where some special conference had taken place. The three most important cities were London, Paris and Geneva, although they only symbolised the event, without having a holy status per se. Along with these three, some places had a special meaning only to some segment of the constituency, like students, boys’ workers, etc. Holy moments of the YMCA were, on one hand, dates of foundations and, on the other hand, conferences and annual Week of Prayer.

In the beginning of the previous sub-chapter, the special status of London as the place of the first YMCA was already mentioned. As a tribute to this, the Thirteenth World’s Conference was held there in 1894. Another ‘holy city’ was Paris, because the World’s Alliance was founded there. For this reason, both the Jubilee and Centennial Conferences were held there in 1905 and 1955. Geneva, then, was the place of the headquarters, where most plenaries were held and where national leaders visited to learn about internationalism. In general, Geneva’s status increased when international organisations increasingly established their headquarters there. If the ‘global village’ has a capital, it is Geneva.

IMPORTANT times, were of course, the foundation of the London YMCA in June 6, 1844 and the foundation of the World’s Alliance in August 25, 1855. In particular, the 1844 date became a social object beyond historical facts. As noted before, the London YMCA is not the oldest of even the existing YMCAs. In spite of that, June 6, 1844 became the founding date of the YMCA.

Other important events and places are mainly related to certain conferences, which have had a great impact for the future. Their use has varied in different activities. Thus, for example, Pörtschach Boys’ Work Conference in 1923 was a special hallmark for boys’ work and Amsterdam Christian Youth Conference in 1939 for youth work. From 1944 on, national movements have increasingly celebrated their 100th anniversaries and the World’s Alliance had its own celebration in 1955. The significance of these ‘round years’ is that they are moments of self-reflection. Although they contain largely ‘hey-hey-we-are-good’ mentality, they

1 The list is collected from the index of Shedd. I have omitted those people whose connection to the YMCA I have not been able to verify from other sources.
2 Shedd 1955b, 464.
3 Later the 13th World Council was also held in England in 1994, when the London YMCA and the whole movement had its 150 year celebration. For obvious reasons, in 1944 there were no celebrations.
4 When I have personally talked with some leaders of Geneva based INGOs, they have told me that there are two special reasons why INGOs keep their headquarters in Geneva in spite of its extremely high living-costs: security and stability. Along with the political neutrality of Switzerland, the deposits in Swiss banks certainly play a significant role: political and economic leaders need a place where they can safely keep their money and, thus, they safeguard the status of Switzerland.
are the moments when organisations publish their histories, and reflect on the future in the light of the past. This attitude can be seen in the report of the Centennial Conferences of the World’s Alliance, which was titled *And Now - Tomorrow*.

On an annual level, the YMCA has had one significant time of the year, that of the Week of Prayer. Its roots are in the London YMCA, which, in 1856, adopted “the week commencing Monday 3rd November and ending Sunday 9th November be the period set apart for special Prayer in this Association, and recommended for this purpose to all affiliated and corresponding Associations.” This was the first decision of the establishment of a tradition that became the second oldest week of prayer in the Ecumenical Movement. Ten years later, the Fifth World’s Conference in Paris in 1867 decided “to consecrate Sunday, November 2nd, and every evening of the week following that day, for special prayers for all Associations throughout the world.” The American movement adopted the idea in 1869, but changed the time to be the second week of November. The official adoption of the idea on an international level was at the Hamburg World’s Conference in 1875, when the American timing was also adopted. From then on, the YMCA has celebrated the week both in times of peace and war.

In 1884, the Berlin World’s Conference requested a circular on the theme of the week. Four years later, in Stockholm, a special collection for the work of the World’s Alliance was attached to the week. In 1901, the YWCA requested if it could join the week, and from 1904 on, there has been a joint call for the celebration of the week. From 1952 on, the booklet has also contained a Bible reading plan for the next year.

Shedd describes the significance of the week as follows:

The World’s Alliance was steadily moving towards the establishment of the world-wide Week of Prayer, which was to become increasingly one of the great unifying forces in the World Movement, a force which through the years has kept the sense of world-wide spiritual unity of young men - in fair weather and foul - unbroken. Through this channel young men were to learn how to pray for those whom the governments of the world at fairly frequent intervals were to call their “enemies”.

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1 Quoted in Shedd 1955a, 152.
2 The oldest was that of the Evangelical Alliance beginning on the first Sunday of January (Shedd 1955a, 103n1.). The Ecumenical Week of Prayer, which diffused along with the World Council of Churches, may have its origins in the Prayer Day for Students in the last Thursday of January. This was adopted by the North American Student YMCA in 1875 (Hopkins 1951, 183). The WSCF adopted it in 1899 but without fixed date. Ruth Rouse (1948, 89) mentions that the problem was “how to find one day in the year when all universities of this inconveniently round world will be in session.”
3 Quoted in Shedd 1955a, 177.
4 Hopkins 1951, 183.
5 Shedd 1955b, 194f., 205.
6 Strong 1955a, 541f. Strong (Idem. 542ff.) shows how “the history of the World’s Alliance during the years from 1913 to 1954 could be written around the themes of the Week of Prayer with its Bible texts as the key to an understanding of the creative and perilous times.”
7 Shedd 1955a, 178.
In the YMCA, a united prayer has often been a mechanism to solve mutual problems in a way that fighting parties would not lose faces. After a common prayer, it is legitimate to give up in the name of common unity in Christ. This was first used during the Franco-Prussian war, when the Geneva YMCA called both Germans and French “to join with the Swiss Associations dedicating Sunday, January 15, 1871, as a Day of Prayer for Peace.” This cancelled out the mutual accusations. Another time was before the Jubilee Conference in 1905, when relationships between Americans and Germans were so inflamed that the whole movement was in danger of splitting into two. The prayer meeting of German and American leaders in Saturday before Easter reconciled the storm.1

In general, holy places and moments served as unifiers in the YMCA. This task was fulfilled in two ways. First, they were symbols of significant events, which rose éspírit de corps among the adherency. Second, prayer week especially, introduced the members to different kinds of religious, and especially, ethical issues that might be unfamiliar in some religious tradition. Thus, it served as means to educate members in international thinking.

**LANGUAGE** is one way that a group can distinguish itself from other groups. In this sense, every group has a special ‘language game’, as Wittgenstein expresses it2. The use of language may not be open to outsiders. A special language is often developed in sects and cults, where it has a function in social cohesion. The YMCA has not, however, sectarian tendencies, but quite the opposite, has made efforts towards Christian unity. This might lead to a special ecumenical language or to the use of everyday language.

The report of the Centennial Conferences, *And Now – Tomorrow*, reports that some Catholic “participants expressed the opinion that the exterior form of the Centennial was quite Protestant in nature and that Catholics could not therefore always feel at home.” This note gives a hint of some special practices and modes of language that could be seen as social objects. In a small study that I made some years ago, I looked at the expressions used in the addresses to the Centennial Conferences3. I found that 50 percent of the expressions were spiritual, 25 percent secular, 11 percent ethical and 14 percent were related to YMCA history, mission or organisation. When the paragraphs were classified according to the dominant expressions or according to their content, the proportion of spiritual language grew to 63 and 58 percent. However, there were clear divisions between pastors, YMCA secretaries, and laymen. Laymen in particular, did not use special religious language, even when they spoke on spiritual or ethical issues. My competence, however, does not allow me to study details in the use of the English language. Thus, I could not make any divisions between the religious language used, such as which religious traditions the used expressions came from. One task for future research would be the analysis of the language that the YMCA has used in its conferences and Week of Prayer booklets.

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1 Shedd 1955a, 181ff.; 1955b, 412ff.
2 Wittgenstein 1953, §7 (first mention).
3 WConf 1955, 17.
4 Muukkonen 1997, 11.
Another aspect of the language in an INGO (as well as in all international organisations), is the practical problem of the working language it uses. As we have seen, the language problem was already seen in Paris 1855. The Paris Basis was written in French, as well as the report of the conference. As we have seen, the English report was a translation but some expressions in the French and English texts were different because of cultural and political reasons. A similar problem occurred later, at the time of Jubilee Conference in 1905, when the English language and other languages had different connotations for the word ‘evangelical’.1

Rather soon, the World’s Alliance adopted three official languages, which represented the largest language areas of the movement: English, French and German. The three-language model was practised for the first time in 1875, when Richard C. Morse from the US delivered copies of his address in three languages. Shedd notes that, “this innovation introduced a new technique for the conduct of international conferences, and one that was to be followed by all world organizations.” 2 Along with these three, the language of the conference host was frequently the fourth language3. Later, with the rise of the Latin American movement, Spanish became the fourth official YMCA language.

Since the Central International Committee was located in Geneva, and members of the Executive committee and staff were French speaking, it is easy to understand that much of the interaction in the office was done in French. In the course of time, the increase of the American influence gave rise to English as the international working language of the movement although, in principle, it was only one of the official languages. In practice, English became the most important language in the World’s Alliance. In this, the movement followed the general trend in the world4, but guarded, to some degree, its diversity.

Language was, however, not only a practical problem. Different languages were part of the identity of the people who spoke them. Along with different cultural and religious practices, language was a potential obstacle for unity in the movement. As a Christian movement, the YMCA could overcome this barrier by referring to the Pentecost story in the Bible: in the Holy Spirit, there are no language barriers5.

Related to language are stories. The YMCA has been, and is, full of stories that are meant to raise éspírit de corps. They may have a historical background but they have been told in a timeless mode. It is normal that documents give minimal or no information as to the source of these stories. In these stories, people are mainly anonymous. Thus, they pay tribute more to the ‘unknown servant’ than some special hero of the movement.

1 Shedd 1955b, 414, 416, 421n.
2 Shedd 1955a, 193.
3 Shedd 1955a, 188, 190; 1955b, 287, 313, 385f.
4 Abram de Swaan (1999) has argued that the English language is not the most important language of the world because it is the most spoken one. The importance of English arises from the fact that it is the most spoken second language.
5 Shedd 1955a, 166; 1955b, 497.
OPPONENTS OF THE YMCA represent another type of social objects. Social objects do not only include those aspects that have a positive connotation in the minds of adherents but also those with negative ones. For the YMCA, the negative object, above all, was secularism, which was seen as a challenge to the movement from 1855 to 1955. When the World’s Committee reports began to include contextual analyses from 1926 on, secularism was the constant target. Alongside secularism, were those secular movements that competed with Christianity: Communism, Nationalism, Fascism and sometimes science. Although the attitude was not unanimous, these movements were seen as causes of secularisation. Thus, secularism and secularisation were seen as the major challenges of the YMCA.

To a lesser extent, the Catholic Church also served as a negative social object. Especially at the beginning of the movement, there were anti-Catholic tendencies. For example, in North America, the Portland Basis was targeted against the Catholic Church. However, in general, the attitude towards Catholics as individuals was positive, although the official Church did not accept the YMCA.

TO SUM UP, the YMCA had relatively few saints who were not its leaders. The most mentioned person, George Williams was a founder of the London YMCA but was accepted as ‘the father of the YMCA’ by other movements as well, although this status was disputed. Other figures that have been social objects, were evangelists and those YMCA people that had achieved an influential status in their lives, like bishops and leaders of the Ecumenical Movement. Their success gave legitimacy to the youth work and leadership training of the YMCA. Holy places and times of the YMCA were not holy per se, but served as symbols of significant events. London and Paris, as well as the founding dates of the London YMCA and the World’s Alliance, represented the foundation of the movement. Other places, like Northfield and Pörtschach, represented some special event to a constituency segment, like students and boys’ workers. As negative social objects, the YMCA had its opponents such as secularism and the major social movements of the 20th century: Communism, Nationalism and Fascism. Occasionally also the Catholic church has this role although, in general, the YMCA tried to win its acceptance. As a lay Ecumenical Movement, the YMCA used everyday language instead of some special tongue that only insiders could understand. In spite of this aim, the tone in the language was mainly Protestant.

5.4.3. Social Objects and Mission

YMCA social objects were not primarily models for the YMCA than models of the YMCA. By this statement, I do not mean that they were also models for the movement. I mean that they mainly reflected other changes. They did not create potentials for the change of the mission view by themselves. Replacement of the Emblem of the World’s Alliance by the Red Triangle just reflects the change from pure revivalism Christianity to nurture Christianity. In theological terms it would mean a shift from the second paragraph of the Creed (Paris Basis emphasises Jesus Christ) to the first paragraph (the whole man is a creation of God). The need
to review the value basis of the YMCA was dealt by André Siegfried in his address to the Centennial Conferences in 1955. Siegfried argued that

It has therefore been necessary for the YMCAs to develop moral, ethnic and social doctrines corresponding to the conditions of the 20th century; this is all the more necessary for in contact with youth one cannot afford to be behind the times. Thus it is constantly necessary to revise our hierarchy of values with the spiritual remaining constant; stable, uncontested, but being constantly and inevitably adapted to the needs of the present world.¹

The World’s Alliance celebrated its Centennial in 1955, the founders of the movement had celebrated their respective anniversaries some years earlier, and younger national movements had it ahead of them. Liston Pope begun his address to the Centennial Conferences by pointing out that “birthdays… mark the stages, in temporal terms, of the providence of God in our lives.” He continues: “what has been received from the past must be transmitted on to the future, refashioned in terms of the peculiar needs of this age, enriched by the contribution of this generation, but true withal to the spirit and purpose of those whom we call the ‘founders.’”² This means that the YMCAs were in a period where they stopped looking back and reflect what they have done and why - and, at the same time, focus on the future. Thus, it is probable that like the previous anniversaries, the Centennial would intensify reflection on the identity, mission and ideology of the YMCA in 1955. Pope put it as follows: “The very life of your Movement may depend on your theological insight, in a world where clashing creeds struggle for the minds and loyalties of men.”³

In general, the social objects of the YMCA were expressions of the theological emphases of the YMCA - reminders of the basic values of the movement. Two of them had special importance - the Paris Basis and the Red Triangle. The triangle became the basic symbol of the movement and expressed both its anthropology and mission. The Paris Basis, in turn, had faced a slight change in its status. While the other YMCA bases (notably the replacement of the Portland Basis by the Cleveland Basis in North America) and other ecumenical bases (YWCA, WSCF) had been modified, the Paris Basis text was kept unchanged and the text itself became a symbol of unity. Instead of changing the text, the YMCA reinterpreted it when necessary.

5.5. Consequences of Organisational Changes on the Mission View

This chapter has given a glimpse how the shell of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs changed between 1855 and 1955. The change has been framed through changes in organisational structure, leadership, membership and social objects.

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¹ WConf 1955, 35.
² WConf 1955, 37f.
³ WConf 1955, 41.
This sub-chapter aims to draw these strings together to make a summary of this change. At the same time, it is time to discuss what potentials they created for the mission view of the World’s Alliance.

The composition of membership would lead to the following potentials concerning the mission view of the World’s Alliance. First, the fact that the majority of members were Americans naturally mean that their understanding of the YMCA mission has played a significant role. As we have seen, it has meant an emphasis on the Four-fold Programme. Second, the increase of the membership in the under-18 group would mean that the YMCA would emphasise problems of youth and modify its policy to satisfy the needs of this age group. On the other hand, youth participation in the World’s Conferences has been an ‘eternal question’ in the YMCA since 1926, when older boys (17-18) participated as full delegates\footnote{WConf 1926, 3.}. Fourth, the increasing proportion of young ladies in the membership required some decision because it was basically against the male mission of the YMCA. Moreover, it caused troubles with the YWCA, which guarded its female identity even more closely than the YMCA its male one. Fourth, the YMCA was mainly a middle-class urban movement. The needs and values of this class dominated the mission view of the YMCA. However, there were more and more signs, especially in India, that the needs of other classes were emerging in the YMCA agenda. Last, the YMCA was mainly a Protestant movement, but the proportion of Catholics, Orthodox and non-Christians was increasing. This created two possibilities, which could be seen in Latin America and the Near East on one hand, and in India on the other hand. In Latin America, the YMCA minimised its evangelisation projects and concentrated on the service of the ‘Creation of God’ - the whole man. In India, the YMCA emphasised its Christian character and made a clear distinction between active and passive members. Additionally, the work in Europe followed the traditional German model: the YMCAs in Orthodox and Roman Catholic countries also had a confessional flavour.

The structure of the organisation developed slowly, in pace with the expansion and institutionalisation of the movement and development of communication and transportation. Increasing membership forced the movement to enlarge its central bureaucracy, although it was purposefully kept small. When the movement in 1855 was a loose network of independent associations and merely an umbrella for international contacts, in 1955 it was a global actor that had a respected status among other global actors, like the UN and church organisations. There were some important steps in this process. The founding of the Central International Committee in 1878 started the trying and testing process, which developed organisational models for all INGOs. The adoption of the Plenary system in 1886 enabled the residents outside Geneva to take part in administrative decision-making. The adoption of the first Constitution in 1891 institutionalised the World’s YMCA from being a loose network to being an established organisation. The decisions in 1926 and 1955 transformed the World’s Alliance from a Geneva based

\footnote{WConf 1926, 3.}
international committee to a truly international federation\(^1\). When the YMCA favoured local and national autonomy, the organisational models reflected this basic principle. Neither the structure nor financial basis allowed the Geneva Executive to ‘lead’ the movement. This role was reserved for the collective of national leaders. In general, the structure of the World’s Alliance strengthened the principle of local independence. Of course, in the case of collective leadership, there are always some figures who are ‘first among equals.’

The structure favoured, in principle, European movements in the leadership of the World’s Alliance. When representation in the Central International Committee / World’s Committee was first linked to the amount of associations in each country, the larger number of associations in Europe gave European YMCA leaders the policy making role in the organisation. It was only when representation was linked to the number of members, that American influence increased although it never was equal to the American share of members. Moreover, when the organisational models were developed in Europe at the time when travel connections were not fast, European leadership stabilised its status in the organisation. Charles Fermaud, the first World’s Secretary, was the man who developed most of the organisational models and practices of the World’s Alliance. It was only after his resignation that leadership moved to the other side of the Atlantic, when John R. Mott became first the general secretary of the North American International Committee and, later, the president of the World’s Committee. This meant that the American emphases became dominant in the World’s Alliance, although local and national diversity was respected.

YMCA leadership was based on lay people. Although there were theologians in significant positions, there was basically no distinction between them and lay members. This emphasis on lay leadership required training of both professional secretaries and volunteers. The major impact of leadership training on mission was that it harmonised the leaders’ thinking in the YMCA. The models came primarily from North America and, thus, the YMCAs around the world adopted many American activities and, most important, the ideology of Four-fold Programme.

Social objects - symbols, saints, holy places and holy times, language, opponents - had a unifying function in the YMCA movement. They were not so much pushing the development in some direction as reflecting changes in the movement.

To sum up, the shell of the World’s Alliance changed significantly during its first hundred years. Membership expanded and the movement extended around the world. At the same time, the movement institutionalised into a respected INGO. In spite of all the changes, the mission of the World’s Alliance in 1955

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\(^1\) It is interesting that the Red Cross, the other organisation of Dunant’s vision, moved to another direction. Tracy Strong (1955a, 470f.) tells that after WW I, both organisations felt the pressure from national movements to modify their organisations. When the YMCA transformed itself towards the federal structure, the Red Cross was divided into two: The International Committee of the Red Cross remained as an IGO with a special diplomatic status and a new organisation, the League of Red Cross Societies (later International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), was founded as a FINGO in 1919.
would have been rather familiar to those who founded it in 1855. Certainly, working methods had changed and activities diversified but the mission was the same: collect young people, look at what talents they have, give them training and send them “for the extension of His Kingdom”, as the Paris Basis says.

Below, in the next chapter, I focus on the core of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. When the Paris Basis in 1855 was a model of the YMCA, it became after that a model for the YMCA.
6. Unity in Diversity

The previous two chapters have reviewed how changes in the context and shell of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs have created potentials for the change of the mission view of the World’s Alliance. This chapter deals with the elements of the core, ideology, identity and mission. I look first, at how the ideology of the YMCA developed and how it changed the mission view of the international body. Then I focus on the changes of identity and its impact on the mission. Finally, I look at how the mission of the YMCA changed during the hundred years, how it was expressed in the Paris Centennial Conference, and what the special mission of the World’s Alliance was.

6.1. The Paris Basis as the Bond of the Movement

As we have seen, the ideology of the YMCA was expressed in the Paris Basis. However, we have also seen that the Paris Basis has not been the only ideological expression in the YMCA. Along with it, there has been the Four-fold Programme with its triangle symbol and national bases. This sub-chapter focuses on these questions, and aims to clarify what the ideology of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs in 1955 was.

During its hundred years history, the Paris Basis has paradoxically, both changed and remained the same. The text of the basis has not changed but the interpretation of content has changed. On the formal level, there have been variances in what has been counted as part of the basis. In practice, this means whether there are references to local independence (Preamble) and omission of controversial political issues (Second Fundamental Principle) or not. These aspects will be focused on in chapter 6.1.1.

Another aspect of the change can be seen in the understanding of the basic concepts. In particular, the concept of Kingdom of God became a subject of debate during the first decades of the 20th century. Changes in the interpretation will be focused on in chapter 6.1.2.

6.1.1. The Paris Basis in the History of the World’s Alliance

THE ELEMENTS OF THE PARIS BASIS have originally been the Preamble, Fundamental Principle and Proposals. Frank Willis emphasises, in his manuscript on the explanation of the Paris Basis, that although the Paris Basis originally had three parts, the Basis has often been reduced to the Fundamental Principle. Only occasionally have other elements been quoted as part of the Basis. Willis notes that the Paris Basis has been reaffirmed six times during its first hun-
dred years. Table 28 explains the contents of the Paris Basis in these conferences and Plenaries:

Table 28: Elements of the Paris Basis in YMCA history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference/Plenary</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>PB =</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th World’s Conference, Amsterdam</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>After the Franco-Prussian war</td>
<td>FP + SP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th World’s Conference, Amsterdam</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>The first Constitution of the World’s Alliance was accepted</td>
<td>FP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th World’s Conference, Paris</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Jubilee Declaration after the storm on the ‘Church Associations’</td>
<td>P + FP²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th World’s Conference, Helsingfors (Helsinki)</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Printing of the Constitution</td>
<td>P + FP + SP³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th World’s Conference, Cleveland</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>no details</td>
<td>no details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary of the World’s Committee, Oxford</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>no details</td>
<td>no details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd World’s Conference, Centennial Conference, Paris</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>New Constitution</td>
<td>FP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd World’s Conference, Centennial Conference, Paris</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Centennial Declaration</td>
<td>P + FP + SP³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PB = Paris Basis, P = Preamble, FP = Fundamental Principle, SP = Second Fundamental Principle

Thus, although the original Paris Basis consisted of three parts, the Fundamental Principle has had a special status within the Basis. Rather often, it has been understood as The Basis. The Preamble and/or the Second Principle have sometimes been excluded, depending on the focus of the conference. Stevens’ two last articles have been omitted from all these re-affirmations of the Paris Basis.

The impact of the inclusion or exclusion of the Preamble and the Second Fundamental Principle is centred on two themes. First, the Preamble guaranteed the independence of associations. Second, of the Second Fundamental Principle emphasised tolerance between different policies. I will focus shortly on these two issues.

**THE INDEPENDENCE OF LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS** was guarded in the YMCA, perhaps more than any other principle. Fundamentally, national alliances and the World’s Alliance were federations without any legislative power over their member organisations. This principle emerged in Germany and was adopted by the North American YMCA. It was guaranteed in 1855 by the World’s Alliance and was frequently emphasised during the history of the movement. This principle was behind the emphasis of the American World Service when it aimed

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1 Willis 1971, 3ff.
2 Additionally, there were three other ‘Fundamental Principles’ in the Jubilee Declaration, which explain the Basis.
3 The Constitution was preceded by an introduction to the Paris Basis which contained the Preamble, both Fundamental and Second Principle, and three other ‘fundamental principles’ which were adopted in the Jubilee Declaration as interpretations of the Basis (Willis 1972, 5).
4 Additionally, there were seven resolutions in the Centennial Declaration which explain the Basis.
5 In the case of the Centennial Declaration, Willis (1972, 2) points out that they were “only of an organizational or administrative character and it was for this reason that they were omitted.”
to create “self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating” indigenous YMCAs in other parts of the world.

While the independence of associations was almost a doctrine in the YMCA, there was also a contradicting tradition, which started from the London YMCA. It was the model of branches. Before the founding of the World’s Alliance, the British associations had been branches of the London YMCA. After 1855, they became increasingly independent. However, the branch model remained in large cities where the associations expanded. In those cases, interpretation of ‘local’ became relative. ‘Local’ no longer meant only the grass-roots level but also the town or municipality level. Branches of metropolitan associations had only a semi-autonomous status, although they may have been larger than many independent associations. In practice, however, branches also acted like independent associations. Their branch status acted as a safety net and prevented them from organisational mortality in situations that independent associations would not have been able to bear.

As we can see in Table 22, the Preamble has been used only in the Jubilee and Centennial Declarations and in the 1926 Constitution. In spite of its omission in other versions of the Constitution, the principle has not been threatened: local YMCAs were to have full independence in their relations to their national alliances. National alliances, in turn, are independent from the World’s Alliance in their action and organisation. The only vehicle that the World’s Alliance has is the criteria of membership in the Alliance. An applicant must show that it has accepted the Paris Basis or equivalent and if it changes its constitution, it must show that the new constitution is according to the Paris Basis. If not, the applicant is not accepted as a member, or it can be expelled.

CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL ISSUES in the YMCA agenda were prohibited in the Second Fundamental Principle. However, the Jubilee Declaration does not mention it at all. In the Centennial Declaration, it is mentioned only in formal citation. Instead, from the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference on, these issues have been on the agenda of the World’s Alliance. I deal with this theme in detail below. For now, it is sufficient to say that the very issue that created Stevens’ First Additional Proposal - later the Second Fundamental Principle, was condemned in Helsingfors (Helsinki) in 1926. In that conference, racism was seen against God’s will. In Cleveland, five years later, war was similarly seen as violation against God. The Centennial Declaration also urges the YMCA “to strive for the removal of every form of social or economic injustice and racial discrimination.” Thus, the principle of righteousness has partly replaced the principle of neutrality.

On the other hand, in both World Wars, the World’s Alliance guarded its neutrality. For example, it did not condemn the Nazi state for its actions against the Jews even though the largest part of their constituency, those from allied Western countries, saw themselves as defenders of democracy and human rights. This is

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1 Chapter 6.3.5. focuses on neutrality issues. Along with the classical neutral philanthropic tradition, the World’s Alliance of YMCAs derived its neutral policy from experiences in Franco-Prussian War and from the First World War. Without neutrality, its work for prisoners of war would have
an old dilemma in the British tradition of philanthropy, which excluded political issues and concentrated on charitable work\(^1\): helping people is allowed but asking why they need help is forbidden.

**TO SUM UP**, the Paris Basis contains three elements, Preamble, Fundamental Principle and Second Fundamental Principle. During the history of the YMCA, the Basis has often been reduced to the Fundamental Principle only. This has affected how the movement stresses local independence of associations, and the prohibition in dealing with controversial political issues. Since the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926, the principle of righteousness has often replaced the principle of neutrality, and the YMCA has condemned racism and war as violations against the will of God.

### 6.1.2. Central Emphases of the Paris Basis

During its first century, the Paris Basis had become an institutionalised set of symbols of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs. Some of its elements remained untouched, some intensified and some were modified according to new needs. I will start from the Preamble and continue with the Fundamental Principle and, finally focus on the Second Principle.

**THE CHRISTOCENTRIST** view remained the same from 1855 to 1955. It has already been discussed how the formula, God and Saviour, in the Paris Basis emphasised the second chapter of the Creed. When the Badge was adopted in 1881 it was emphasised that Christian unity is not man-made but, “Christ is their Centre, their true bond of union, their supreme end, their strength, and their only ‘raison d’être’.” Seventy-four years later, the Centennial Declaration stated: “we proclaim our identity with all who are endeavouring to make the abundance of life, which we believe can ultimately be found only in Jesus Christ, available to the total youth of the whole world\(^3\).”

This emphasis on Christ as a centre of the movement, in the Centennial Conference documents, is rather controversial. On one hand, it was emphasised here and there that the YMCA is a Christian movement. On the other hand, there were only three addresses (out of 24), which focused on Christ and his personality. Moreover, all of them were made by fraternal representatives of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation\(^4\). Other addresses in various branches have been impossible.

The American YMCA had accepted Jews as full members in the beginning of the 1930s (see chapter 6.3.4.). In the case of Germany, there was no YMCA during the war because the Nazis had absorbed all youth organisations into the Hitler Jugend. I do not have any information on how many of the YMCA leaders were involved in the Confession Church and how many followed the mainline churches.

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\(^1\) Anita Randon and Perri 6 (1994) argue that the Elizabethan Statute of Charitable Uses from 1601 started a legal tradition in what they call charity law countries (almost the same as the Common Law countries), which constrains the political activity of philanthropic organisations.

\(^2\) WConf 1881, 32f.; WComR 1881, 14f.

\(^3\) WConf 1955, back page.

\(^4\) Liston Pope (WCC) and Hans Lilje (LWF) had a title: *We Believe in one Lord* (WConf 1955, 37-
conferences focused on Christian ethics, on the YMCA mission, on the context of the YMCA, or on the YMCA professional secretaryship. In the discussion reports, there is a similar tendency: the YMCA seems to be more interested in the applications of Christ’s ethical teachings than the teachings of his personality. In a World’s Conference, this might have been a practical choice: in doctrinal issues, all kinds of controversies easily emerge, but in the mission field, there was a basic agreement. Thus, although the centrality of Christ was self-evident to the participants, in the name of the Christian unity, they did not focus on doctrinal issues.

On one hand, this seems to be a distinction between evangelisation and dia-
konia. On the other hand, evangelisation in the Social Gospel movement came to mean social activity. It was proclaiming justice and peace as God’s will. In both cases, the focus of the YMCA was on its practical tasks, not on theological issues of the nature of Christ. In the Centennial Declaration, Christian unity is in Jesus Christ and “this fundamental unity of life and aim has been given to them by God for the purpose of extending His Kingdom among young men and boys.” Thus, the extension of the Kingdom is the main goal, and unity in Christ is only a tool of this mission.

CHRISTIAN UNITY can be seen as another constant in the Paris Basis. In 1855, the founders of the World’s Alliance wrote in the Preamble, “to recognise the unity existing among their Associations.” In the Fundamental Principle there was, in turn, the words “seek to unite those young men…” In the Badge and Jubilee Declaration this unity was emphasised with the Bible verse, John 17:21: “That they all may be one.” The Jubilee Declaration further emphasised “the supreme importance of the fundamental principles which have formed a bond of union between the Associations from the beginning.”

The Centennial Declaration mentioned unity two times in the introduction of the declaration. The first clause contained the words “The accredited representatives… desire first of all to record their thankfulness… for the innumerable evidences… during these unforgettable days… of their unity in Jesus Christ.” This wording seems to refer merely to the emotional conference euphoria, which is an

51). Robert S. Bilheimer (WCC) spoke in the Young Men’s Conference with the title We have a Master (WConf 1955, 100-103).
1 All five addresses to the Older Boys’ Conference focused on Christian ethics and dealt with the general theme Living Together (WConf 1955, 130-142).
2 All the other four addresses to the Centennial Conference, one address to the Young Men’s Conference, and all four addresses to the World Conference of Y’s Men focused on the mission of the YMCA (WConf 1955, 33-37, 51-67, 103-107, 193-107).
3 In the Young Men’s Conference there was one address on this theme (WConf 1955, 97-100).
4 All six addresses to the World Conference of YMCA Secretaries focused on the work of the YMCA secretary (WConf 1955, 166-179).
5 Paul Limbert mentions that WCC Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 “recognised on certain important matters a hard core of disagreement”, which were on the agenda of the 1952 Faith and Order Conference at Lund but were “by no means resolved.” (WComR 1955, 29)
6 WConf 1881, 32f.; 1905; WComR 1881, 14f.
7 See Appendix C: The Centennial Declaration.
important part of any movement. When emotions can be directed into the organisation and its ideology, individuals are ready to invest more into the movement than if there is no emotional relationship.

In the second verse, the representatives “recognise that this fundamental unity of life and aim has been given to them by God for the purpose of extending His Kingdom among young men and boys, and of bringing about an ever-increasing measure of unity of spirit and action between all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures.” In this verse, the claim is that the unity is given by God and it is not man-made. In this, the YMCA has maintained the same view that it had hundred years earlier. Although was John 17:21 not mentioned, its words were the theme of the Centennial Conference, and visible in the meeting hall where the Bible passage was written on the front wall.

Thus, Christian unity was seen as the central element in YMCA ideology.

The YMCA concept of unity, was what Alphons Koechlin, called in his memorandum after the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference, maximal ecumenism. Koechlin wrote:

Shall the interconfessional co-operation be built on a minimal ecumenism holding only what is really common to all confessions and leaving out all particular tenets of various churches, or on the maximal ecumenism in which every church brings in the full expression of its faith? We think that only the maximal ecumenism can avoid a religious poverty, which is in greatest opposition to God’s richness, and can guarantee the main condition of interconfessional work, that is, full loyalty to one’s own conviction.

Thus, the YMCA approach to Christian unity was broad as the Paris Basis states: all who confess Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour are already united. In this sense, the YMCA approach was different from the Faith and Order approach, which could be described as minimal ecumenism: unity can be achieved only when there is an agreement on fundamental doctrinal themes.

In the second verse of the Centennial Declaration introduction, there is also a strong connection between spiritual unity and missionary work. It seems that to be a Christian also means being a missionary. This emphasis is rather surprising when we remember that everywhere where the Four-fold Programme had taken root, the emphasis was not particularly on spiritual questions. On the other hand, the ideology of the World’s Alliance was not defined by the rank-and-file members but by the leaders of national movements, staff of the Alliance and some distinguished individual members. This group formed the intelligentsia of the YMCA, which produced the identity and mission of the movement. These people are those who produce study materials, give addresses to conferences and write articles and books on the movement issues. In this way, they produce the movement ideology. In the World’s Alliance, the status of movement intellectual often

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1 WConf 1955, 10, 12, photos between 88-89.
2 From this point of view, it is surprising that the new constitution contained only the Fundamental Principle while the Centennial Declaration had all three parts.
3 WComEx 1927b, 2 (underlining in original).
4 On movement intellectuals, see Eyerman & Jamison 1991, 94-119.
required a doctoral degree, but not necessarily in theology. In any case, movement intellectuals had supposedly more knowledge of the Christian basis of the YMCA than ordinary rank-and-file members did.

MISSION, then, is the third element in the Paris Basis that has remained untouched. The YMCA movement was both a child of the Missionary Movement and an ally of it. The Paris Basis emphasised the extension of His Kingdom among young men. This expression did not have any special global meaning yet. In the Badge, the global aspect was emphasised with the names of five continents. In the Jubilee Declaration in 1905, the mission was emphasised in the statement that the

Basis embodies, with other fundamental principles, the following, viz...
C. The activity and responsibility of the members in effort for the extension of the Kingdom of God among young men.

The Centennial Declaration is along the same lines. It ends with the words that make this missionary theme personal: “We offer ourselves and our Associations anew to him and to His Service.”

The interesting point in this missionary emphasis is that it is nowhere expressed what the Kingdom of God meant to the leaders. This silence might be purposeful, because there were opposing views on its transcendentality/immanency. The concept was familiar to all and everyone could fill it with their own connotation. A similar compromise was made at the 1905 Jubilee Conference with the expression of “spirit of Evangelical Alliance.” In that case, the controversy was on the interdenominational vs. church affiliated status of local associations.

OTHER THEMES IN THE PARIS BASIS, like young men as a target group, and the centrality of the Bible, were not emphasised in the same way as the ones mentioned above. As we have seen, the YMCA was not only a movement of men any more. Thus, this part of the Paris Basis was no longer relevant.

The YMCAs were founded as Evangelical Bible clubs. In Paris 1855, the debates on the Bible were behind the words, “Holy Scriptures.” However, after the adoption of the Preamble, where the Bible was visible in the centre of the emblem, the Bible has not been such a central issue of faith as it is to some revivalists. The Bible has been important in the YMCA, but it seems that it was not a target of faith any more. Neither the Jubilee Declaration nor Centennial Declaration mention it elsewhere other than in citing the Paris Basis.

TO SUM UP, the central emphases of the Paris Basis were, thus, in 1955, local independence, centrality of Christ, Christian unity and mission. The YMCA was fundamentally a Christian organisation and Christ was in the centre of the ideology of the movement as well. Because of this Christ-centred view, the high

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1 For example, of the 24 keynote speakers in all Centennial Conferences, at least 14 had a doctoral degree. Of these, 10 were theologians. Others were either pastors or national or international YMCA secretaries (WConf 1955).
2 WConf 1905.
3 See chapter 6.2.1.
priestly prayer of Jesus, “that they all may be one”, has had special significance, and unity has been seen as God-given, not as man-made. Thus, the ecumenical ideology (or theology) of YMCA was directly traced from these ‘doctrines’ of the YMCA. Although independent, the YMCAs formed a unity. This unity has had one purpose, it is meant to make possible the “extension of His Kingdom,” as the Paris Basis states.

6.1.3. Lay Theology of the YMCA

After the Paris Basis was accepted in the First World’s Conference, it soon received acceptance among the local associations and national movements as well. However, as we have seen, three different models for using the Basis emerged: personal confession, definition of association’s purpose and an international bond. In the last case, national movements and local associations developed their own statements of purpose, which should have been, at least in principle, in accordance with the Paris Basis. The new Constitution of the World Alliance urges new members to give evidence that they have accepted the Constitution of the World Alliance. Moreover, the applicant should give satisfactory evidence “that the work and witness of the Organization are in accord with the Paris Basis.”

The ideology of the YMCA is not uniform. There are huge differences in national bases. The introduction of the Paris Basis grants complete independence to the local (and later national) level. When the YMCA adapted itself to the local cultures, these cultures modified the YMCA as well. The German statement from 1906 and the North American Cleveland Basis from 1931 are two extremes of the national expressions of the YMCA mission. The first one defines in detail the doctrinal basis of the association, and the latter leaves doctrinal questions completely open. Both approaches can be justified by YMCA tradition and local contexts.

Thus, YMCA ideology and policy is a patchwork quilt, where the only common thing is the understanding of the unity that exists in spite of this diversity. The ideology of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs has been stated in the Paris Basis, in the Badge of the Alliance and in the Red Triangle. These basic principles have been measurements with which new formulations of policy have been reflected. In this diverse situation, the role of the Paris Basis as an international bond and symbol of unity has a special importance.

6.1.4. Changes in the Paris Basis Interpretation

Although the Paris Basis was ratified by the member movements after the First World’s Conference, it did not have undisputed status. There were three special questions that disturbed the movement for almost the whole first hundred years.

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1 WComPle 1953b, 3; Shedd 1955a, 142, 273-276.
2 WConf 1955, 220f.
First, there was the question of the status and use of the Basis. Was it a personal confession of faith, expression of the purpose of local and/or national organisations or just an international bond? There was not a single dominant trend to which direction the change of use was going. In Europe, the trend was towards the Paris Basis being an expression of local and national associations. In non-Protestant countries, the trend was towards its use as a personal confession because it also enabled non-Protestants to join the movement. Only in North America, did the YMCA kept firmly to its policy that it is a national bond, and national movements are free to modify their own bases.

Second, there was the problem of what the Paris Basis is. In some YMCA documents it might contain only the Fundamental Principle. In others, it might also have the Preamble and/or the Second Fundamental Principle. Their inclusion seems to have been linked to tendencies to emphasise local independence and political neutrality. Attached to these textual questions was the difference between the English and French texts. This problem was solved in the Centennial Conferences when the English text was harmonised according to the French original.

Third, when the world changed around the YMCA changed accordingly, the text of the Paris Basis remained untouched. As we have seen, this was because it had become more than just an expression of purpose - the text itself had become a social object for the YMCA. When the emphasis of YMCA work shifted from general evangelism to social work, the interpretation of the concept ‘Kingdom of God’ changed from merely a transcendent city of God to God’s immanent creation. The tendency to drop the Second Fundamental Principle seems to be linked to this immanent view, because it led the YMCA towards social programs and campaigns for world peace. In this work, political questions were unavoidable.

Although the emphasis in the interpretation of the Paris Basis changed during the 100 years, it cannot be said that the social aspect was not heavily present in 1855, or that evangelism disappeared from the YMCA before 1955. The change was more - in Wittgensteinian terms - change in the worldview than change of the view. The YMCA ideology remained within the limits of mainstream Christianity. Moreover, the Paris Basis enabled both transcendent and immanent interpretations and, thus, members of both wings of Christianity could accept it.

6.2. Diversity and Identity

In the previous chapter on ideology, we saw that the YMCA is a movement of people who interpreted Christianity as the Paris Basis stated. The ideology of the YMCA draws boundaries (although wide) between ‘we’ and ‘them’, but binds different wings of Christianity together as well. We have seen that the YMCA was formed by people who see Christ as the centre of the movement. This concern was also emphasised in the first statement of the Centennial Declaration. This was

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1 See the problem of doctrine/foi in chapter 3.5.2.
interpreted in an ecumenical way that left details of the Christ-relationship as a personal concern. The YMCA was not a sectarian movement which would have claimed to own the only and full truth of Christianity. Ecumenical openness was part of the YMCA identity. Thus, those who wanted to limit ‘true’ Christianity to some narrow interpretation would not have felt at home in the YMCA. The YMCAs identified itself to the universal Church of Christ, not to any particular confession. However, this was not always without problems. In this chapter, I focus on these problems.

6.2.1. Evangelical Identity of the YMCA

As YMCA tradition constantly repeats, the twelve founders of the London YMCA were from four different denominations. In the First World’s Conference, there were participants from all major Protestant churches of Europe. Evangelical identity was characteristic of the early London YMCA from the beginning. This identity has two aspects. The first is related to the interdenominational basis of the early movement. This meant that the YMCA did not see itself as undenominational but closely attached to Evangelical churches. The YMCA saw itself as a tool for churches - not something outside them. I focus on this aspect of interdenominationalism at the beginning of chapter 6.3.3.

The other aspect of interdenominationalism is related to the previous part of the word interdenominational. Although the YMCA saw itself as servant of Evangelical churches, it also guarded its autonomy. Especially the Anglo-Saxon model emphasised an association that was not attached to any church. German Jünglingsvereine, although they worked in close co-operation with State Churches (either Lutheran, Reformed or United), guarded their formal independence as well.

Interdenominationalism emerged as a problem when the Berlin CVJM was founded in 1883. The Berlin CVJM was an American-type city YMCA with an interdenominational basis and had no affiliations to churches. From this time on, Anglo-Saxons tended to regard the Berlin CVJM as the only ‘true YMCA’ in the country. The issue became serious from the Anglo-Saxon point of view when the German movement expanded and extended its influence. Anglo-Saxons feared that German type associations would outnumber others.

The interdenominational problem was alive, until the 50 Years Jubilee Conference in Paris in 1905. There had been growing misunderstandings between the Anglo-Saxon and German Movements since 1884. Anglo-Saxon Movements stressed the interdenominationalism and lay leadership, and they targeted the ‘Church Associations’ in Germany and Scandinavia. The American and British claim was that the German Jünglingsverein was not actually a true YMCA move-

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1 See also chapter 6.3.3, where I focus on the ecumenical mission of the YMCA.
2 It is good to remember that before 1871 there was no unified German state and thus the German YMCA had no national organisation but only regional Bunde before 1882 (The YMCA of the World 1958, 73; Shedd 1955a, 57; 1955b, 248).
ment, because it de facto limited its membership to the majority church\(^1\). According to Anglo-Saxons, the Paris Basis and its wording ‘Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour’ required interdenominationalism. However, this was only a partial truth. In Paris 1855 (during the discussions on the Paris Basis) the membership criterion was stated as follows:

> Whoever believes in Jesus Christ as his God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures, will be received into the kingdom of Heaven, and whoever will be received into Heaven ought not to be refused admission into our Association.\(^2\)

Thus, on one hand, the Anglo-Saxons were right. In principle, there should not be more requirements for membership than the Paris Basis says. Moreover, the spirit of the Paris Conference was totally ecumenical. It was clear that the aim of the Paris Basis was to serve as an inclusive criterion. On the other hand, Anglo-Saxons forgot that, as Shedd underlines, “the World’s Alliance was not an Anglo-Saxon creation”\(^3\) and thus Anglo-Saxon criteria for membership were not the only valid ones. Germans defended themselves with the ‘Independence Clause’ of the Preamble of the Paris Basis\(^4\). In addition, they noted that the Rheinisch-Westphälische Junglingsbund was a founding member of the World’s Alliance and, in 1855, their membership criteria had not been questioned. Moreover, as both British and Americans had strongly underlined several times, the Paris Basis was meant to be a bond between associations and national movements and not a basis for local or national organisations. Along with Germans, they had kept their own bases, and all these movements had interpreted the Paris Basis as an international, not national or local, basis\(^5\). Thus, from this point of view, the Basis could not be used to defend the thesis of interdenominationalism. In the Jubilee Conference of 1905, Alfred Klug explained the German point of view as follows:

> The statement of Paris 1855, reads: ‘The association’s duty is to enliven and protect the church in its progress and to subdue the world.’... This task will naturally be more difficult in the places were there may exist several different churches or communities of nearly the same kind. Where 8 or 10 such denominations exist, the association must be all the more independent, must work quite free from them and be able to expand itself. If a few communities exist, if one only is to be considered, then the association must stand on the same ground and serve its church in the best measure possible.\(^6\)

The Anglo-Saxon point of view was presented in the Jubilee Conference\(^7\) in the presentations of W.H. Mills, the secretary of the English National Council, and of Morse. Both defended their point of view with an analysis of the Paris

\(^1\) Richard C. Morse, secretary of the North American International Committee, Stated in 1885 that “None of the German Associations can strictly be called YMCAs in the sense in which the term is used in English-speaking countries. Their membership is chiefly - if not exclusively - confined to some one Church or denomination (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 392).”

\(^2\) WConf 1855a, 21.

\(^3\) Shedd 1955b, 402. Italics in original.

\(^4\) WConfPrep 1905b, 6.

\(^5\) Shedd 1955b, 273f.

\(^6\) WConfPrep 1905b, 14.

\(^7\) The pre-conference correspondence and meetings are fully reported in Shedd (1955b, 392-416).
Basis. Mills argued, first that in English-speaking countries the YMCA has been understood, “as a (1) Christian; (2) Interdenominational, and (3) Lay organization.” According to him, this was a summary of principles agreed in 1855. Second, Mills argues that “the Basis points to ...A COMMON LIFE in the SPIRIT; …A COMMON FELLOWSHIP, unbroken by social or ecclesiastical distinctions… A COMMON SERVICE FOR CHRIST”.

Morse, in turn, described how the American associations had accepted the Evangelical test and how it was maintained after the Paris 1855 Conference. He also pointed out that “the North American associations established firmly their loyalty to the churches from which their active members came.” Thus, the American claim for non-affiliation to churches did not mean hostility to them. On the contrary, Mills gives an explanation on the need of interdenominationalism as follows:

From decade to decade of their first half-century the North American associations have been more and more successful in dissipating the ecclesiastical and clerical apprehensions which existed at the beginning, and in demonstrating and cultivating an interdenominational comity which has not interfered with the rapid growth of the various churches, but has promoted among them a feeling of unity and fellowship. The controversy which used to prevail has been quieted and its disappearance has contributed to the better development of each denominational group of churches.

There seems to be several reasons why the storm broke. One reason seems to be the question of power in the World’s Alliance. When the German movement grew rapidly Anglo-Saxons were afraid that these ‘Church Societies’ would “at no distant date outnumber the representatives of YMCAs” and that the German model would become standard on the international level. However, there were also deeper reasons for the disagreement. International survey of the YMCAs and YWCAs by the North American YMCAs from 1932 explains this difference as follows:

The difference between the two is exceedingly subtle and lies perhaps in fundamental traits of national temper more than in notably diverging policies. Few peoples are more serious about ideas, more concerned about consistency and philosophical justification, or more in the habit of taking life profoundly and earnestly, than those of the Teutonic and Scandinavian group. The so-called Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, tend to place their emphasis and base their faith on actions, and have developed a cheerful ability to take things as they come without much interest in underlying theories, and often with impatience of them. This deep-running divergence in basic attitude towards life has been emphasized, in the Association world, by the fact that the leaders of one group have been trained theologians and those of the other, practical men of affairs.

Thus, in this issue, the YMCA faced the basic question of how to handle different cultural views and interpretations, different professional orientations, and
different practical models within one movement. The question was whether the YMCA was to be a heterogeneous movement tolerating different views, or whether its destiny was to split into different groups isolated from each other. Ecumenical tolerance is always more painful than isolation, because in ecumenical dialogue one has to admit that others can be right even when their views differ from one’s own.

Before the Jubilee Conference of 1905, the matter was discussed in depth and emotions settled. The conference reaffirmed the Paris Basis in the Jubilee Declaration in 1905. In it, the Basis was explained to embody the Fundamental Principles, the following.

A. Personal and vital Christianity on the part of the members.
B. The spirit of Evangelical Alliance according to John XVII: 21 “That they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.”
C. The activity and responsibility of the members in effort for the extension of the Kingdom of God among young men.  

The ‘Church Association’ problem was resolved with the wording “the spirit of the Evangelical Alliance” without mentioning interdenominationalism. The function of the Basis was confirmed to be the bond between the national movements and the World’s Alliance. The interpretation within the country was a national matter, but the Basis (or expression that was shown to be the equivalent of it) in the national rules was obligatory. However, the Christianisme au XXe siècle wrote afterwards about the agreement:

We were a little in the same state as a student in theology, who said to a friend on a point of doctrine: ‘You have just explained it to me, but now make me understand.’ ...Several listeners did not see very clearly what was the aim.  

The significance of this agreement became evident when the YMCA entered countries of Roman Catholic and Orthodox dominance. As the Americans and British were the most eager in their missionary work, their models diffused to the new YMCAs they founded. The American requirement for membership in an Evangelical church, in particular, became problematic in Catholic and Orthodox dominant countries.

However, by 1955 the YMCA had adopted an interconfessional policy to accept all Christians as full members. This ecumenism was, according to Paul Limbert, “not the result of a deliberate policy but the inevitable consequence of offer-

1 WConf 1905.
2 There is certain irony in the wording ‘the spirit of the Evangelical Alliance’ since the Evangelical Alliance had lost its credibility in a similar battle in the 1880s. When it protected the rights of the minority churches in Germany and Scandinavia, the Lutherans withdrew their support to it and the significance of Evangelical Alliance in the Lutheran territory became minimal. Shedd 1955b, 261f.; Rouse 1993a, 323.
3 WComPle 1953b, 8.
4 It was only in 1931 that the North American YMCAs changed their basis to the more ecumenical one (Willis 1955, 696).
ing service to young men regardless of creed. Thus, common practice modified the interpretation of the Paris Basis to shift from Evangelicalism to ecumenism.

**TO SUM UP**, the YMCA was founded as an interdenominational organisation of Protestants. The word interdenominational has two aspects. First, interdenominationalism meant that the YMCA was not undenominational but saw itself as a servant of the Christian Church. Second, interdenominationalism meant that the YMCA saw itself as being in between denominations, not inside or under them. In particular, Anglo-Saxon movements stressed independence from clerical authorities while Germans, although they emphasised formal independence, saw their associations as affiliates of their respective churches. This led to a controversy that almost broke the movement before the Jubilee Conference in 1905 was held.

As the two models emerged in different contexts, they have also been adopted in different contexts. The Anglo-Saxon model suited contexts where there have been many strong churches and no clear majority church. The German model, instead, has found its modifications especially in Lutheran and Orthodox contexts but also in some Catholic countries.

6.2.2. **Global Ecumenical Youth Identity of the YMCA**

In the theoretical part, I argued that the distinction between ideology, identity and mission is only analytical - especially in the case of committed Christians. Thus, the definitions ‘we are people who have this faith’ and ‘we are people who work for these goals’ are as much identity questions as ideology and mission questions. It is significant that in the Centennial Declaration, four out of seven statements have some variation of the formula “because we are like this, we should do this.” This chapter, 6.2., on identity is shorter than the chapters on ideology and mission because I have dealt with much of the overlaps between ideology and identity already, and mission will be dealt with in detail in chapter 6.3. Below, I will give a brief summary of the aspects of identity that are focused on in detail elsewhere.

The Paris Basis stated that the YMCA was a movement of “those young men who believe in Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour.” From this young male identity, the YMCA widened to a movement of all age groups and both sexes, although female membership was still a fragile question in 1955. However, although the leadership in the organisation was in the hands of adults, the collective identity of the YMCA was that of a youth movement. This aspect of identity can also be seen in the statistics: circa half of the members (whose age was registered) were under 18 years and three quarters were under 30. These questions were

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1 WComR 1955, 10.
2 I deal with the YMCA relationship to the Catholic Church in chapter 6.3.3. The difference to Lutheran, Reformed and Orthodox contexts has been that the Roman Catholic Church has not accepted the YMCA like the other churches.
3 YMCA statistics 1955. The statistics does not give details of the age of the class of “Other regular members” or “Other registered participants”, which formed slightly more than a third of total membership. Moreover, not all national movements have given separate figures of men of ages 18-30.
already dealt with in chapter 5.1, which focused on the membership of the movement. The youth identity will be dealt also in chapters 6.3.1 and 6.3.2, which focus on the YMCA mission among youth. The main emphasis is that the YMCA was a movement of youth for youth.

Another emphasis in the YMCA identity was that of ecumenism. Although the YMCA has had strong Protestant identity, the YMCA became interconfessional when it extended to Orthodox and Roman Catholic soil. It is important to note that the YMCA is not only interconfessional on the international level (like the WSCF, which has confessional national organisations as members) but also on the local level. Thus, the emphasis is that the World’s Alliance is not a bond between different denominations but local ecumenical associations. This was ensured by the requirement that the Paris Basis wording (or, expressions that was shown to be equivalent to it) is obligatory in the national rules.

A related theme to ecumenism is that of interfaith dialogue. While the YMCA saw itself as a missionary organisation, it did not limit its membership only to Christians but also accepted members from other faiths. However, in order to ensure both openness of the organisation and the Christian character of the YMCA, the movement accepted the principle of ‘open membership and Christian leadership.’ The interconfessional question will be dealt with more in chapter 6.3.3, and the interfaith question in 6.3.4.

The Centennial Declaration also had an aspect of identity that the Paris Basis did not mention, namely globalism. The YMCA saw itself as a global movement. Although the YMCA started as an Euro-American enterprise, already in 1955, it had national movements or affiliated organisations in 70 countries around the globe. In particular, the Mysore Conference in 1937 had emphasised this global aspect. The global identity of the YMCA is best expressed in the Badge of the World’s Alliance where five continents are mentioned. This aspect of identity was linked to the ideology of an immanent Kingdom of God. YMCA people (especially Americans) saw themselves as citizens of this kingdom and this also led them to see themselves as co-workers of God in extending His Kingdom. Because these aspects of identity are so closely linked to the YMCA mission for world peace, social justice and extension of this kingdom, I deal with them in chapters 6.3.5 - 7.

In short, when YMCA membership extended, it changed the YMCA identity as well. The YMCA saw itself as an ecumenical international youth movement with a mission to extend God’s Kingdom.

6.2.3. Ecumenical Identity of the YMCA

As we have seen in this sub-chapter, the YMCA was founded as an interdenominational organisation of Protestants. In Paris 1855, the emphasis was not on church affiliation, but “on vital relationship to Christ”. In this expression, there is

and over 30, and none in the case of women. Only figures of members under 18 years old were reported by all.
an echo of the old concept of an ‘invisible church’\(^1\), which is “originally a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in hearts.”\(^2\) Anglo-Saxon movements stressed the lay interconfessional character of the YMCA, while Germans saw their associations as affiliates of their respective parishes. The controversy became so tense that before the Jubilee Conference in 1905, it almost broke the movement. Later, the Anglo-Saxon model continued to flourish in surroundings where there was no clear majority church. The German model, on the other hand, was suitable for countries where one church dominates.

Along with its Evangelicalism, the YMCA identity had also other aspects. The movement saw itself primarily as a youth movement of all confessions and all nations. In this sense, ecumenism in the YMCA meant both Christian unity and, as the Greek word originally means, the inhabited world. The YMCA saw itself as a global movement.

To sum up, along with its Evangelical identity, the YMCA stressed its nature as a youth movement. Moreover, the inclusiveness of the YMCA led it to see itself as a global interconfessional organisation.

6.3. The Centennial Declaration as a Mission Statement of the YMCA

THE MISSION of the YMCA has been seen, as the Paris Basis states, “to extend His Kingdom amongst young men.” However, this task has been seen differently on local and international levels. Moreover, in the beginning of the movement, the mission view was different to what it became when the movement had institutionalised. First, in 1855 the role of the World’s Alliance was restricted to be a facilitator for the interaction of the local associations. The main mission was understood to be fulfilled on the local level. As time passed, the World’s Alliance was institutionalised and got a permanent structure and staff. During this process, the mission of the World’s Alliance was widened to activities that could not be done by national movements. The most important of these tasks were the war work during both World Wars, missionary enterprises to new territories, refugee work after the Second World War, and consultations with other religious and secular bodies. However, the main mission of the World’s Alliance has been that of being a bond between national movements.

As we have seen, the major expressions of the YMCA mission view have been the Paris Basis and the Four-fold Programme. These two stated the final goals of the movement, which, in turn, stated the strategic and, sometimes, tactical goals of the YMCA. Strategic goals express the aims of the mission in a more concrete way than the final goal. In 1955, these strategic goals were expressed in the YMCA Centennial Declaration\(^3\). The Centennial Declaration was, in a way, a

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1 The concept is originally from Augustine, from whom Luther borrowed it.
2 Melanchton 1921:2 - Articles Seven and Eight of the Augustana.
3 See Appendix C: The Centennial Declaration.
summary of the YMCA activity fields of the past. At the same time, it was a strategic statement that the YMCA should concentrate on the fields of action that the Declaration mentions.

One problem of a multi-purpose organisation is that its sub-divisions want to have some degree of autonomy. Thus, the mission of the entire organisation might not automatically be the same in these sub-divisions. In 1955, this diversity was manifested when the Centennial Declaration presented the goals of the YMCA in such diverse fields of action as mission work, youth work, interconfessional dialogue, interfaith dialogue, service for the victims of war, campaigning for social justice and extension of the YMCA itself. Although the YMCA goals in these fields of action can be justified by the Paris Basis, actual policies in these fields differ from each other. This means that in the analysis of the Centennial Declaration I have to evaluate developments in these special activities.

In the previous chapter, I analysed changes in the context, structure and ideology of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs in general. In this chapter, I am going to focus on applications of the YMCA mission in special fields of action. These fields form special niches, where working environments differ from each other. Thus, one can assume that the special missions differ accordingly. I focus on seven special tasks of the YMCA, which arise from the Centennial Declaration of 1955. The Declaration interprets the Paris Basis by seven statements of work. These statements dealt with special fields of action: youth work, ecumenism, interconfessional relations, international affairs, social justice, and missionary work.

In this chapter I will follow the outline of that Declaration, and analyse the development of these special fields of action before the Centennial Conferences in 1955.

6.3.1. Christian Nurture

...the supreme purpose of the YMCA by which all its policies and practices must be determined is to bear witness, in language which youth can understand, to the saving power of Jesus Christ in the lives of individuals and in every human relationship.

Centennial Declaration of the YMCA, 1955

The first statement in the Centennial Declaration, cited above, deal with the youth work of the YMCA. The YMCA emerged as a movement of youth. However, in time, it also affected other age groups, especially those of younger ages,

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1 According to YMCA language of that time, younger boys were those of 7 to 14, and older boys those of 15 to 18. From that age on, they were called young men. All these groups together were considered as youth.

2 In addition to the conference reports mentioned above, the source material of this chapter is composed of the material of three YMCA boys’ workers conferences (Oxford 1914, Pörtschach 1923 and Toronto 1931) and of the material of the Young Men’s Conference in Toronto 1931 (BWConf 1914; 1923; 1931a; YMWConf 1931).
and the work begun to differentiate between boys’ work, young men’s work and senior work. The World’s Committee Report to Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931 dealt with the mission of the YMCA among the two first age groups. The report stated “that the Christian message of the YMCA to boys and men was one and the same, but that the presentation of this message to boys called for considerable adaptation to their needs.” However, the YMCA developed a special mission among boys, with a special methodology.

The YMCA work with boys during its first century can be divided into four periods: First, from the beginning in 1844 to 1878. The second period is the pioneering period from 1878 to 1900. The high tide of the work was from 1900 to the beginning of the 1930’s. A crisis in this work occurred during the global regression of the 1930’s and during World War II. The last period then was from the end of WW II to the Centennial Conferences. Each of these periods had their special characteristics and the mission was stated differently during them.

A GROWING CONCERN AND A SEARCH FOR METHODS was the characteristic outlook of the first period of the boys’ work of the YMCA, from 1844 to 1878. I have already presented the opportunity structures of that time in chapter 3.2. Although there were several local boys’ groups and departments in Associations, the YMCA was still merely a movement of young men, and boys’ work had to campaign for acceptance.

As we have seen, this was a time when two distinct lines were developed in the YMCA. On one hand, ‘amusements’ were allowed in 1858, the ideology of the body, mind and spirit was developed in 1865, and Four-fold Programme launched in 1866. On the other hand, this was time of awakenings. The founders of the movement were influenced by the Evangelical Awakening and their work was based on Bible study and evangelism. Near the end of this period, 1875-1876, a student awakening begun in Philadelphia, which brought, among others, Dwight L. Moody into the ranks of the YMCA. Thus, this early period presented both the evangelism and wider Four-fold Programme into the YMCA.

Along with the spiritual trends, there was also a development towards specialised associations. Shedd describes this development as follows:

Gradually leaders were beginning to see that it was not undemocratic to have, on the one hand, YMCAs like Geneva or London or New York or Washington, in which young men of every trade or vocation would be at home, and on the other hand to encourage the formation of Christian Associations among special groups of young men - soldiers, railroad workers, commercial young men, and students, especially where their occupation or special interests made this the most natural way of working.

During this early stage, the work was largely concentrated on the Sunday Schools and other type of religious meetings, and it was “patterned largely after

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1 WComR 1931, 104.
2 Stettin in Germany 1844, Vevey in France 1858, Christiania (Oslo) in Norway 1867, Salem in the US 1865, etc. had already established boys’ groups (WComR 1931, 24; Senaud 1955, 14; Fraser 1958, 6; Shedd 1955b, 255, 332).
3 Rouse 1948, 27.
4 Shedd 1955b, 202.
the type of work which proved successful with young men.” The Aim of YMCA Boys’ Work, from 1931, presents the mission of the YMCA work with boys during this period as follows:

Boyhood is a special field for the sowing of the seed of the Spirit; that they – the boys – may give their hearts to Christ, become messengers of his service and thus aid in building up his Kingdom on earth.²

During this time, the Kingdom of God was understood as a transcendent realm towards which the citizens of this kingdom were wandering.³ The goal of the work was the conversion of individuals, although elements of nurture Christianity were already present. The work was seen as “sowing the seed”, and it was supposed that only later would the seed grow so that they “may give their hearts to Christ.” This was different from general evangelism, which usually required conversion here and now. In the expression, one can also see the attitude that the YMCA can lead an individual “to the gates of Heaven”, but he must enter himself.

One organisational phenomenon is worth mentioning because it contains two different philosophies of this work. In some countries, the work was specialised to serve certain groups like Secondary School pupils, street boys, Vocational School pupils, etc. The idea behind this was to adapt the YMCA into the different contexts. In some countries, the philosophy was totally the opposite. Any separation of youth membership was avoided.⁴ This was because of the fear of some kind of class division in the YMCA.⁵

This period ended when the issue of boys’ work was discussed in the Geneva World’s Conference in 1878. In the conference, two important presentations, from Matthew Hodder and Rodolphe Osterman, raised a significant new direction of development for the YMCA. In the discussion after the presentations, the need for special Boys’ Associations was generally accepted and the Central International Committee (CIC) was requested to encourage the work and communicate all relevant information to the national committees.⁶ There was also a significant statement that had influence on future policy: “Boys’ work, while dependent on the YMCA, should have its own independent life, a committee elected by its members, and making its own rules.”⁷ Thus, the ‘independence clause’ of the Paris Basis’ Preamble was applied to special departments, as well as to local associations.

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¹ WConfPrep 1931b, 4
² WConfPrep 1931b, 4.
³ In this statement, there is a contradiction in vocabulary. “Give their hearts” refer to the a Pietistic-Evangelical view of the transcendent Kingdom of God. “On earth”, instead refers to immanent kingdom. The reason for this might be that the text is from 1931, when the discourse of immanent kingdom was typical in the YMCA.
⁴ SSCons 1958, 1.
⁵ Shedd 1955a, 169.
⁶ Shedd 1955b, 220f.
A PERIOD OF SPONTANEOUS AND RAPID GROWTH of boy’s work started after the Geneva Conference, during the period 1878 to 1900. The rise of the boys’ work in North America was bound to the development of physical education. As noted earlier in this work, John H. Gladstone’s presentation in the World’s Conference in Geneva in 1858 gave legitimisation to ‘amusements’. From then on, the YMCA developed various leisure activities where physical education played a major role.

On the World’s Alliance level, French-speaking movements held the boys’ work as an item in international discussion. In 1898, in the Basle World’s Conference, Gustave Nicod proposed a special international boys’ work secretary. This was a radical move in those days and it took 24 years before this happened.

During this second period, the task of the work was, according to The Aim of YMCA Boys’ Work, “to lead boys to a personal decision for Christ as Saviour and to unite them with the Church.” However, especially in North America, the goals were widened when the Four-fold Programme was also applied to this work.

After the turn of the 20th century, the boys’ work established itself as a permanent part of YMCA work. It was helped by growing public interest in boys. There were new studies on adolescence and psychology. In education, the emphasis had turned to self-expression. All these phenomena gave rise to several new movements, like the Boys’ Brigades and the Boy Scouts. Along with these, the YMCA started to develop its work with boys.

During the period between 1913 and 1931, there were several international conferences on work among boys. The First World’s Conference of YMCA

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1 David I. Macleod has argued that the YMCA answered several needs of the middle class. First, as already mentioned, urbanisation had created a fear that middle-class youth was growing weak. In this context, the physical education of the YMCA provided a good way for physical training. Second, the YMCA had a function to serve middle-class parents in their anxieties about their offspring: the YMCA was an excellent tool for controlling and socialising the new generation. Third, manliness was also emphasised in religion. In particular, Muscular Christianity criticised religion for becoming too feminine (Macleod 1983, 15-18, 44-49). On Muscular Christianity, see chapter 4.2.2.

2 The Buffalo YMCA in the US gains the merit of having the first employed boys’ work secretary in 1881. This soon led to the development of this work throughout the US. In 1880’s and early 90’s such concepts as Boys’ Branches, Boys’ Conferences at YMCA Conventions and Boys’ Camps were launched. (Shedd 1955b, 323)

3 See chapter 4.2.2.

4 The first international grouping of European Associations concerned with boy’s work was held in 1893, when French-speaking leaders of work among boys gathered in Geneva. They founded the ‘Central Commission of French-speaking Boys’ Associations’, which was perhaps the first international body for boys’ work. (Shedd 1955b, 323f.)

5 Shedd 1955b, 374f.

6 WConfPrep 1931b, 5.

7 WConfPrep 1931b, 5; Macleod 1983, 97-116.

8 The First General Assembly of Association Workers with Boys of North America met at Culver, Indiana, US in 1913. The late General Secretary of the World’s Alliance, Henri Johannot, speculates that “for the first time in the history… a group of men caught a glimpse of the problems of world boyhood.” The Culver Assembly gave speed to the international boys’ work. Two pioneers
Workers with Boys took place in Oxford, England in 1914. In that conference, there was an agreement that the boys’ work should be an integral part of every Association. The conference made several resolutions, of which the two following general principles were perhaps the most important:

2. The supreme task of the Association is to enlist, train and equip leaders who in church, civic and social life will serve the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. To accomplish this task it is essential for YMCA work to begin when the life of the growing man can be most surely influenced; that is, during boyhood and adolescence. No Association is doing its duty by men adequately and effectively where this principle is not recognised in practice.¹

In these resolution there were two important points. First, the general mission of the YMCA was to serve church and society by training leaders for them². In particular, the idea that a man serves his Lord in both church and civil life, clearly separates the YMCA from those religious groups that locate the service of the Lord only in religious activities. Second, this mission cannot be done properly if the individual is not influenced during his youth. Thus, youth work should be an essential part of every association. This was further stressed with the 18th paragraph of the resolution:

18. The time has arrived when: (a) work with boys should be part of the programme of every normal Young Men’s Christian Association; (b) every National Council should organise a Junior Department, with staff necessary to deal with its field; (c) the World’s Committee should give an adequate place to Junior Work and develop means by which its interest may be best served.³

On the other hand, the Conference emphasised, in the 15th paragraph, that “the Association’s first responsibility is towards the boys of its membership, but it must be ready to co-operate with kindred organisations.”⁴ Thus, the mission at this stage was to raise boys of the YMCAs own constituency. This phenomenon also brought a lot criticism on the YMCA: it focused on middle-class boys and left working-class boys to other organisations⁵.

**THE HIGH TIDE OF THE YMCA BOYS’ WORK** started in the 1920’s. The period after the war⁶ was a time of “a burst of enthusiasm for physical cul-

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¹ BWConf 1914, 3.
² In this task one can hear (unintentional?) echoes of the Lutheran doctrine of two regiments, and the mission of the Pietistic Halle institutions that trained Evangelical civil servants both for Prussia and Denmark, in the 18th century. (Størensen 1998, 367-370; Troeltsch 1992, 719)
³ BWConf 1914, 4.
⁴ BWConf 1914, 4.
⁵ Macleod 1983, 63, 68. Club workers working among lower class boys regretted that the YMCA recruited the ‘best’ boys and in this way tended to “recruit all the ‘best’ boys and then skim the cream of their members as well” and that, “as soon as a boy gets so he will take off his hat and stop spitting on the floor the YMCA gets him (Idem. 68).”
⁶ The First World War severely hampered the YMCA work on the local level because leaders were recruited to the army, Association buildings were often requisitioned for military use, and economic resources were reduced. This was especially felt in the field of boys’ work, where the loss of
ture, sports, outdoor life and dancing” and “any organization with an attractive physical programme could get the attention of Youth.” In 1920, the International Committee of the North American YMCAs assigned Edgar M. Robinson for two years to help the World’s Committee to elaborate its boys’ work plans. Two years later, the Executive appointed the nucleus of the permanent Boys’ Work Committee and requested national committees to nominate men to serve on a Boys’ Work Council.

One of the most significant milestones in the history of boys’ work was The Second World’s Conference of YMCA Workers with Boys at Pörtschach-am-See in Austria in 1923. It began a high tide for the work that lasted till the Second World War. The new Boys’ Work Committee, appointed immediately after Pörtschach, directed the work of the staff to the following tasks, which also describe the mission of the World’s Alliance in the boys’ work:

1. **Youth research**. In this field the staff produced studies on boys’ and young men’s status and attitudes; on the mission and message of the YMCA; on the work in Secondary Schools; work among employed boys and several others.

2. **International camps.** “The camps especially have become experimental laboratories in the field of international relations amongst Youth” and they tried to find solutions on “the problem of the education of Youth for world understanding and peace.”

3. **International congresses.** Various congresses responded to the need of leadership training and problems in special fields of work (like, for example, work in secondary schools).

4. **Publications.** The major channel for expression and intercommunication between 1925 and 1942 was the monthly publication ‘World’s Youth’. Other publications were Week

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1. WComPle 1934, 3.
2. There were three major achievements of the Pörtschach Conference. First, it started the YMCA youth research with a questionnaire that mapped the life conditions of boys in different countries. Second, it ensured a financial basis for the World’s Alliance to appoint five secretaries altogether, for the Boys’ work. Third, it inspired national movements and local associations to establish boys’ branches and departments. Gradually, as Johannot says, “from then on Boys’ Work has been an integral part of the work of the World’s Committee of YMCAs.” (Johannot 1955, 618. See also WComR 1926, 29; 1931, 96f.; WComPle 1934, 1, 26)
3. After Helsingfors World’s Conference, a special committee on Research and Information was appointed. Its tasks were youth research, information service, technical service (library, records, exhibition material, etc.) and publications (WComR 1931, 81ff.).
4. The booklets *The Younger Boy* (WConfPrep 1926a) and *An Inquiry as to the Christian Way of Life in Social and International Relations* (WConfPrep 1926b), presented in Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926, gave a picture of what a boy in the world was like, drawn from the answers of an inquiry. WConf 1926, 2f.
5. Several study outline booklets for the Third World Conference of YMCA Workers with Boys and First Assembly of Young Men, Toronto 1931.
6. W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft (who later became the first General Secretary of the world Council of Churches) was a Secretary for Secondary School Boys. From 1930 to 1934, he shared his time between the YMCA and WSCF. In general, the work was done as co-operation between the YMCA, YWCA and WSCF (WComR 1931, 100; Strong 1955b, 621).
7. WComR 1931, 100f.; Strong 1955b, 622.
8. WComR 1931, 102.
9. Quarterly from 1931 and mimeographed newsletter from 1940 (Strong 1955b, 619).
of Prayer material for boys and six booklets on the World Study of Jesus Christ prepared for the leaders of boys.  

5. Committee member visits in the field. Along with other factors (conferences, national leaders' visits in Geneva, geographical representative nature of the staff) the staff and committee member visits in national movements and local associations strengthened the sense of unity and good working relationships in the whole movement.

The committee paid special attention to the mission and message of the YMCA. While the list above was on the mission of the World’s Alliance, there was a wider question of the mission and message of the whole movement. In the case of mission, there were two basic questions. “First, what was a boy?” The problem arose from the variety of national practices (8 to 15, 14 to 18, 10 to 18 years) and different meanings of the word ‘boy’ in various languages. Second, what group of boys were the target group of the YMCA? As seen above, the main emphasis was laid on secondary school and industry boys.

In the case of the message, there was a similar confusion as in the case of mission: “each nation seemed to be determining its own message with little relationship to other countries or confessions.” As Karl Fries had already pointed out in 1926, there was a distinction between different understanding of the Kingdom of God and the missionary program of Christ. Fries notes that when Jesus “says ‘go ye therefore and teach all nations’, some understand it to mean every individual in the world, others think of the nations as such with their institutions and habits.” It was a question whether the Kingdom of God was seen as immanent (as American Social Gospel proponents saw it) or transcendent (as German Barthians saw it). It can be said that, with the expansion of American led social work, the YMCA people increasingly started to see it as immanent.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Third World’s Assembly of YMCA Workers with Boys (Toronto 1931) defined the goals and methods of the work in a way that had influence on other organisations as well. The preparatory Boys’ Workers’

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1 WComR 1931, 105.
2 WComR 1931, 80.
3 WComR 1931, 99ff.; Strong 1955b, 621ff.
4 WComR 1926, 33.
5 Barth’s (1968) Epistle to the Romans had been published in 1922 as a critical statement against liberal theology. Although he was an active supporter of the working class, David Ford (1993, 33) argues that “he gives such radical priority to God’s activity that some critics find human activity and freedom devaluated.” It was this point that the debate culminated in: Barth followed the Paulinian view that “in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Rom 7:18).” God’s Kingdom was solemnly based on God’s action, not on man’s. From this point of view, all the world was in sin and all human enterprises were generated by sin. This was in sharp opposition to Social Gospel theology, which saw that individual Christians had an important role as co-workers of God in extension of God’s Kingdom. On Barth’s theology, see Balthasar 1972; Berkouwer 1956; Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth 2000; McCormack 1997; 2000; O’Grady 1968; Torrance 1962; Visser ’t Hooft 1980; Webster 1995.
6 Visser ’t Hooft 1973, 18. Although the main front of the debate was between Americans and Germans, there were naturally variations in both sides. There was much exaggeration on the views of others. Not all Social Gospel proponents saw the Kingdom of God as being totally immanent and Barthians did not preach total escape from the world.
Book, *Youth’s Adventure with God*, introduced several themes where the message, of the YMCA was presented. As we already saw, in the 1920s, there were no longer just one message, but a variety of them. Primarily, the task was to lead a boy to know God. Along with this, there came questions of Christian social ethics, like sexuality, work, political life, race, nation and internationalism. Thus, the YMCA aimed to respond to the challenge of secular philosophies and movements by strengthening the teaching of Christian ethics in various situations.

**THE METHODOLOGY OF THE WORK** both reflected and modified the YMCA mission among boys. The study outline, *The Technique and Methods of YMCA Work with Boys* from 1931, states, in turn, the basic principles underlying boys’ work methods. The starting point is the Paris Basis, and the preparatory international group saw “the principles here expressed of ‘uniting Christian youth in fellowship for the extension of His Kingdom’ permeating all YMCA methods.” From the Paris Basis arose other, more detailed, principles that are presented in Table 29.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspirational, or message, principle</th>
<th>This principle arises from the conviction that adults “know what boys need better than they do.” Although the principle is expressed in religious terms and justified by Jesus’ missionary commission “to preach the gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:15)”, it had also social roots.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional, or curriculum, principle</td>
<td>This refers mainly to the North American context where the YMCA had developed its famous Four-fold Programme (later: Christian Citizenship Programme). The principle was explained as follows: “A boy should be built on every side of his life; therefore he should be encouraged to engage in a balanced, fourfold, or allround programme.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality development</td>
<td>This means that YMCA boys’ workers believed “in helping a boy to educate himself instead of being instructed.” They said: “We help most when we help them to help themselves.” This principle was especially cultivated in different interest groups, camps, sports, etc. where the emphasis was on ‘learning by doing’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crusade for a cause principle</td>
<td>This means that boys were given ideals and purpose for life. It was expressed as follows: “Boys are best served as they become concerned about matters outside themselves which need their service and which call them to give themselves with abandon.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1 BWConf 1931a.
2 WConfPrep 1931c, 5f.
3 See note 1 on page 298.
4 However, there were already several doubts on the applicability of this type of thinking. The critics of the Four-fold plan have placed their “emphasis on the need for boy initiative and the central place of the boy’s interests and needs (WConfPrep 1931b, 9).”
5 This is what Communitarism speaks of as responsibilities and belonging in some society, or what is meant by altruism.
These four principles where then carried on three levels: work dealing with individual boys, work with small groups and work with large masses. They also had an important function in creating a spirit of unity in the movement. Ralph G. Cole presented the techniques of the YMCA in his presentation to the Toronto Boys’ Workers Assembly in 1931. First, he distinguished various levels in the work. Cole called Jesus as an example:

Surely in Him and in His way of working with people we can find a useful technique for modern YMCA work. We find Him repeatedly using the individual or personal work method. No finer illustration of group work is given us in history than that of Jesus and His disciples. His faith in mass or larger group work is illustrated by his frequent meetings and experiences with the crowds.

Thus, the YMCA aimed to focus on boys on the individual, small group and mass level. The methodology in these levels differed from each others and it was mainly the task of the large movements and the World’s Alliance to collect, develop and distribute adequate methodology for each level. Cole made a distinction in methodology among different ages as well.

A further study into the methods of our Lord shows a different technique with different ages. He called the little children to His arms and blessed them. He asked the boy with the fishes to help Him by the gift of them. He challenged the young man to ‘go and sell all and give it to the poor.’ He commissioned His disciples to ‘go into all the world and preach the Gospel.’

Although the focus was on methodology in different ages, the general task of the YMCA can be seen in his presentation. On every level, the YMCA aimed to teach boys and young men to take such responsibility as they can. Boys learn responsibility when they are asked to help. Young men can be challenged to take their faith seriously, and trained laymen can be given responsibility for the work.

**THE GREAT DEPRESSION** that started in 1929 reduced YMCA youth work as well as other activities. Along with the regression, other clouds appeared, to cast a shadow on the boys’ work. *The Flaming Milestone*, the report of the Mysore World’s Conference, notes three trends in the 1930s that hindered the work. First, the economic crisis drove nations back to a struggle for necessities, and “the needs of boys have been all too often thrown aside.” Second, growing international and inter-racial tensions “have forced nations to concentrate finance...”

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1 WConfPrep 1931c, 7-17.
2 BWConf 1931b, 22.
3 BWConf 1931b, 22.
4 Already in 1933, it was reported to the Executive of the World’s Committee: “The necessity for budget reductions has resulted in the dropping of many boys’ work secretaries from national alliances and local Association staffs.” (WComEx 1933b, 2). In a way, this was not a surprise because, in spite of attempts, boys’ work secretarship “was still a marginal profession”, as Macleod puts it (1983, 129). He notes also that the median tenure in 1931 was only 4.8 years in the US. Thus, when economic regression hit, it most hurt the fields that were not yet fully established: the boys’ workers did not have a strong enough voice in maintaining their jobs. The report to the Executive continues: “Present staff limitations [in international level] make it impossible to give consideration to requests for help in leaders’ training, programme planning, evangelistic work, etc.” On the international level, it meant a reduction in staff and, in 1937, Carl von Prosch was the only secretary of the World’s Alliance that had responsibility for boys’ work (WComR 1955, 75).
and brain on defence rather than on education.” Third, the state had entered the field of boys’ life “thrusting the Association back from areas in which it has been accustomed to play a potent part.” In some totalitarian countries, all Christian work was under a strict control. The report goes on and notes that, “simultaneously, in other areas, emotional mass movements have swung older boys feverishly into either revolutionary or nationalistic passion.” In spite of these difficulties, YMCA membership under 18 years gradually expanded. There was actually almost a 30 percent growth from 1928 to 1938 in all continents, although the majority of the growth (20%) came from North America.

During this period, there were two significant developments in the YMCA mission for boys. First, the Mysore World’s Conference presented the world of boyhood for the first time, from an Asian perspective. Until this, ‘international’ had meant mainly Western, although the YMCA had done missionary work in Asia for decades. Being for the first time in YMCA history on Asian soil, the conference was an effective reminder that there was a world outside the West as well. Second, the primary role of parents was clearly expressed. The conference report states:

When considering the central place of the family in a boy’s life the conference urged that all Association programmes, and especially those in Asiatic countries, should study carefully the situation existing in the home, should co-operate more closely with the parents and should wherever possible strengthen the constructive influence of the home upon the boy.

During the Second World War, the Boys’ Work Division did not work. The staff of the World’s Alliance concentrated on the work for prisoners of war, which was the main activity of the World’s Alliance during wartime. However, this does not mean that the work was totally abandoned. Von Prosch tried to keep contact with boys’ work leaders in various countries, whenever postal facilities were possible. Johannot reports that “Boys’ Work grew around the world during the war in spite of tremendous difficulties, including the almost total mobilization of leaders into armed forces.”

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR, boys’ work of the World’s Alliance started slowly again. The reconstituted Boys’ Work Committee only met in 1948.

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1 Henri Johannot (1955, 625) notes that “it was the time when in some countries the grip of the State was being extended to the total life of youth, particularly to its family, extra-curricular, and extra-professional life.”
2 WConf 1937, 54.
3 Unfortunately Johannot’s (1955, 647) statistics on 1949 do not differentiate between age groups.
4 WConf 1937, 50-55.
5 Although the decisions of the conference were important, it can be doubted if this ‘new wider internationalism’ became accepted among ordinary members. The conference was rather small – only 160 participants outside India (WConf 1937, 108-115). Thus, the influence of the conference was only through national key-persons and conference reports. However, it cannot be doubted that the conference had an impact on the World’s Alliance level.
6 WConf 1937, 56.
7 Johannot 1955, 634.
8 Johannot 1955, 627; WComR 1955, 75.
– four years after the war. The 1950 Plenary at Nyborg Strand stated that the functions of the committee was as follows:

1. To initiate and foster work among boys within the framework of the World’s Alliance.
2. To keep under constant review the needs and interests of boys and the ways of presenting the Christian message to them.
3. To maintain relationships with other youth-serving agencies at a world level and study significant developments in the field of youth work.
4. To foster international fellowship.
5. To assist and counsel National Movements in the development of Boys’ Work.
6. To make recommendations for action to the World’s Committee.

In this definition of the task, we can see that there were some old tasks, like research on youth problems (which started with the Pörschach study in 1923 and the Helsingfors Inquiry in 1926), international fellowship (which in practice meant conferences and camps) and help for national movements. A new task in the YMCA’s mission was cooperation with other world bodies, like WSCF, YWCA, Scouts, WCC, UN, etc.

In general, the YMCA mission among boys had enlarged from the 1930s, not to speak of its mission during the early days. The Four-fold Programme had been accepted worldwide, and the challenges of political movements had forced the YMCA to deal with ethical and political issues as well. This can be seen in the decisions of the 1950 World Consultation on Boys’ Work at Green Lake, USA. Although the ultimate goal, to “bring the boy closer to God” remained, the focus had changed from the association’s goals to the boy’s needs. Instead of knowing what would be good for the boy, the movement now asked, like Jesus “What do you want Me to do for you?” (Luke 18:41) Compared to the old approach when the preacher knew both the problems and the cure without asking the boy, this was a fundamental change. This new attitude led, according to the YMCA Work with Boys, “to a great development of work amongst handicapped and anti-social boys.” Along with the ongoing activities, the consultation listed several needs still to be met. The conference tabulated them as follows:

(b) The interpretation of the Christian Message in language and deed which is understandable to the boy, whether he be underprivileged or at high school…
(c) The revitalization of family life with all its implications of Christian love and affection…

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1 WComPle 1950a, 33.
2 Co-operation as a general task of the YMCA was stated in the Second Conference on Policies and Extension in 1953: “The Conference was convinced of the importance of maintaining close and sympathetic relationships between the World’s Committee… and other international bodies with similar or partly similar objectives.” Even in the case of non-Christian bodies and Movements, “the Conference recommends that the YMCA should maintain friendly relationships with such non-Christian organisations as seek our co-operation in the service of youth, as long as the aims of such organisations are not inherently contradictory to the aims and purposes of the YMCA.” (WComPle 1953c, 23, 25).
3 BWConf 1950, 16.
4 BWConf 1950, 17.
The development of education for international understanding and, with it, the desire to serve all mankind in the spirit of Christian Fellowship on a world-wide front irrespective of race, colour or creed.

The discovery of ways and means to keep the boy in the YMCA family as he enters upon manhood.¹

If we look closer at these notions, we can see that the idea of the general welfare of boys has replaced the task of evangelising them. This does not mean that the “C” was dropped from the message. On the contrary, the fundamental task was “to reach out a hand to the boy, accept him as he is with all his needs and problems” and, to “lead him to a full understanding of and loyalty to God and the Christian way of life².” In doctrinal terms, it can be said that the focus had shifted to the first paragraph of the Creed – the boy as a creation of God.

The theme of the Older Boys’ Conference in Paris 1955, Living Together, tells about the new YMCA mission among boys as well. In his address to the conference, Tracy Strong focused on seven aspects of the theme: family, city, nation, race, social-economic systems, world society and church³. John O. Nelson traced this focus on social ethics from 2 Cor 5.19: “God was in Christ reconciling the world.” He states that “such at-onement will make every one of us, if we are faithful to the reconciling work of God, instant and urgent in demanding justice for any to whom it is denied⁴.” Thus, although personal faith was a main goal of the work, it was accompanied by teaching of Christian ethics. As an international body, the YMCA especially emphasised the oneness of the world. The mission of the YMCA was well expressed in the closing words in John Karefa-Smart’s address:

…take the spirit of Christian unity with which you meet here in Paris back to your Associations and schools, and let it remain with you as you grow older, so that when you think of members of other nations you will think of them primarily, and above all, as members with you of one world.⁵

After the Second World War, the old concepts of boyhood also started to change. Older boys especially, were not seen as boys anymore but as youth. Along with this conceptual change young women entered the YMCA - slowly but definitely, so that women made up 10 per cent of the membership in 1955⁶.

THE MISSION OF YMCA WORK WITH BOYS can be summarised as follows. When the Boys’ work begun in the 1880’s, the aim was derived from the general revivalistic work of the movement. The stress was in “sowing of the seed” that would later lead to conversion, personal faith and to the missionary attitude in life. Slowly the mission changed: along with the relationship to God, the YMCA people started to emphasise the relationship to oneself and to one’s neighbour. As time passed, these latter aspects became dominant in the work of the World’s

¹ BWConf 1950, 18.
² BWConf 1950, 20.
³ WConf 1955, 130ff.
⁴ WConf 1955, 141.
⁵ WConf 1955, 139.
Alliance. In the Centennial Conferences in 1955, the focus was on the unity of the world: Christians are co-workers with God in building God’s Kingdom on earth. They were constantly taught to take such responsibility as their age permitted. It was expressed by E.M. Robinson, the first boys’ work secretary of the World’s Alliance, when he, in 1931, stated the mission of the YMCA work with boys as follows:

It is clear... that we are to think in terms of work with boys rather than work for boys or work by boys. Work with boys implies a co-operative effort, a common cause, a sense of partnership, joint responsibility, united effort, solidarity of interest. The happy combination of adult wisdom, experience, and effort with boyish energy, enthusiasm, and first-hand and intimate knowledge of a boy’s problems, is the area to which we wish to direct our thought.¹

6.3.2. Service for the Youth

...because the YMCA was in origin, and remains, essentially a Christian movement of youth, its government and activities should increasingly be in the hands of young members who have committed themselves to the Christian faith and life.

Centennial Declaration of the YMCA, 1955

The YMCA's young men's work was both an old field of work and a new one. The YMCA was, from the beginning, a movement of young men. Founders of the movement were young men and they targeted their work to the same age group. The development of the young men’s work was, thus, not an enlargement of the existing work like boys’ work. Instead, it had always been the self-evident core of YMCA work. In 1931, the World’s Committee report, Facing a World Crisis, mentions, in relation to students that:

The youthfulness of the delegates attending the first World’s Conference in Paris in 1855 has often been referred to, but the part played by students in that historic meeting has perhaps never been sufficiently emphasised. ...The realisation of the dream they shared with George Williams... probably received its most telling support from the student members of the Conference.²

When the boys’ work got a permanent status in the YMCA, a need to focus on the special needs of youth over 18 years also emerged. This need was accompanied by internal problems in the YMCA, namely that, “at most a third of the members of the Boys’ Departments became members of the Senior Departments³.” After the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926, a special Young Men’s Division was appointed under the World’s Committee⁴. The task of the division was seen in research of the problems of youth, study of youth concerns in the YMCA (like relationships to other divisions, problem of mixed asso-

¹ BWConf 1931b, 10
² WComR 1931, 27.
³ WComR 1931, 118.
⁴ WComR 1931, 115.
The First World YMCA Assembly of Young Men in Toronto, just before the Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931, laid down the mission of the YMCA among young men. The report of the conference refers to the changes in the cultural, economic, political and religious environment and their consequences for youth. These consequences were summarised as follows:

The present economic stress presses hard on young people and means for many that the problem of ‘getting a living’ leaves them little or no choice as to their career in life, resulting in a sense of maladjustment and dissatisfaction. Moreover, a large number on leaving school find the gates of industry closed against them. It is a bitter experience for youth to feel that it is ‘not wanted.’ The whole problem of the present economic order is a burning one with youth, and the YMCA must share it with it.²

While dealing with the task of the YMCA, the report states:

For the task of the Association far transcends that of providing for the many needs and interests of youth. It is to co-operate with youth in the quest for the satisfaction of these needs and to lead it through the pursuit of these interests to a sense of its need of God for the integration of its whole life and to the commitment of that life to Him…

In the pursuit of this supreme aim of all our work we must concern ourselves with the whole range of young men’s interests.³

Thus, the primary mission of the YMCA was to lead youth to God by serving their needs. This means that the YMCA was to be ready to offer Christian service wherever it was needed by young men. Below we will see in which way the YMCA implemented this task. Here it is important to realise that although the YMCA has carried out vast programs among students, soldiers, prisoners of war, refugees, etc., it is not primarily a student, military work, refugee aid or whatever organisation. It is a youth organisation. It has served YOUTH in these situations. Thus, the activities were carried out as long they were needed and then, either cancelled or transformed to other purposes. From this point of view, it is not surprising that the work diffused to many fields and activities that departed from each other. The YMCA served youth in armies, in railways, in schools and universities, in prison and refugee camps. The YMCA arranged programs of physi-

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1 WComR 1931, 116.
2 YMWC 1931, 35.
3 YMWC 1931, 37f.
4 The rise of the YMCA student work was closely affiliated with the names, Luther D. Wishard, John H. Gladstone, Dwight L. Moody, Ira D. Sankey and John R. Mott. Facing a World Crisis (WComR 1931, 28) reports that in Britain Gladstone was a leading figure in the work among secondary school and university students. Moody and Sankey were mainly responsible for the spiritual awakening at Cambridge and Oxford in 1875 and 1878. In America, Wishard was called in 1877 to be a full time secretary of the student work. In 1886, he, along with Moody, arranged the first student conference at Mount Hermon where the Student Volunteer Movement was born in 1888. That conference is one of the milestones, not only in the YMCA but also in the whole Ecumenical Movement (Rouse 1948, 34-37). The student work grew organisationally in two distinct directions. In North America, it remained inside the YMCA, and Student YMCAs only co-operated with Student YWCAs. In Europe, especially in Britain, the student associations separated themselves from the
cal education, vocational training, organised services for migrant youth\(^1\), helped the unemployed, offered accommodation\(^2\), published textbooks and manuals, etc. All because of its main task to serve young men, which led to these activities.

In 1951, the World Consultation on Young Men’s Work, based on national reports, stated that the general mission of the YMCA among young men is:

1. to lead young men to a faith in Jesus Christ or, to state it another way, to help develop Christian character and a Christian society;
2. to encourage young men to become and remain loyal and active members of their church;
3. to provide facilities and promote activities which make possible the integration of body, mind and spirit;
4. to develop leadership capable of assuming the responsibility of Christian citizenship;
5. to help young men in observing Christian standards in all aspects of life - family, sex, vocation, social;
6. to provide for youth opportunities of acquiring a sense of ‘belonging’ and enjoying ‘fellowship’ in groups.\(^3\)

Thus, the mission of the YMCA was largely based on the Four-fold Programme. The statement also confirmed the old YMCA view that its purpose was to serve all Christian churches, as well as the society in which it was established. The fifth statement had come up in the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference, where the international inquiry of youth attitudes and problems served as preparatory material for group discussions\(^4\). That survey presented the personal problems that young men face, and in which they need help.

In the work for youth, the YMCA co-operated mainly with the YWCA, the SCM and the World Christian Youth Commission (WCYC). On the international level, this meant joint training projects and joined conferences, of which the most remarkable were the World Conferences of Christian Youth in Amsterdam (1939), Oslo (1947) and Travangore (1952). The purpose of these conferences was presented in the preparatory study of Amsterdam Conference:

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YMCA and organised themselves under the WSCF. Thus, the WSCF constituency was half-YMCA, half-other.

\(^1\) See note 2 on page 125.

\(^2\) As we saw in the reports to the First World’s Conference in 1855, hostels in the YMCA were a German invention. They were meant as refuges for travelling apprentices and other young men (WConf 1855a, 16f., 52; Shedd 1955a, 125; 163). In general, the German YMCA was much more focused on young working-class men (Shedd 1955a, 169) than Anglo-Saxon YMCAs, which were much middle-class based. In the US, dormitories in YMCA buildings were first built in New York. By 1900, they had become a usual rule for new buildings (Zald 1970, 32; Hopkins 1951, 150-155, 456ff.). The primary goal of these hostels was to provide a safe residence to young men where “no leaven of evil may be permitted to poison the mass (WConf 1855, 52).” Later, hostels and hotels became such an efficient means of fundraising that economic determinants started to play a major role, although the early mission remained there somewhere. It is rather surprising that the mission of the YMCA in the case of hostels is not stated in any conference.

\(^3\) YMWConf 1951, 12f.

\(^4\) An Inquiry as to The Christian Way of Life in Social and International Relations (WConfPrep 1926b).
The Conference will gather representative young members and leaders of youth work of the Churches and of all national and international Christian youth movements. It aims at confronting Youth with the results of the world gatherings of the Christian Churches and the Christian youth movements in the years 1937 and 1938. Its purpose is to mobilize Youth to witness to the reality of the Christian Community as the God-given supranational body to which has been entrusted the message of the victory of Jesus Christ over the world’s spiritual, political, and social confusion.¹

The issues on which conferences focused were largely the same as what is presented in the Centennial Declaration, and in discussions of the Young Men’s Conference in 1955, which was one of the Centennial Conferences. They were the issues that concerned youth, namely living as a Christian, the relationship to the state, family and social life, social order, internationalism, science and its implications (the atomic bomb), poverty, ecumenism and Christian relation to other faiths². Thus, the aim was to seek answers to world problems from a point of view of Christian ethics.

In the Young Men’s Conference in 1955, Commission I recommended that “the YMCA should give more help to its members on social and political subjects than is now being done.” Commission II, in turn, urged that “the YMCA should do more toward increasing employment opportunities and vocational guidance.” Other recommendations focused on similar international issues as in World Youth Conferences.³

**GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN** were not a target group of the YMCA at the beginning. On the contrary, the YMCA aimed to limit its mission to boys and young men only. However, there were several reasons why, on one hand, girls and young women wanted to join the YMCA, and, on the other hand, why the YMCA adopted them.

Helen F. Sweet explains the American context in the 1850’s and says that “when the YMCA came into being, mothers, wives and feminine friends were on periphery, ready to help where needed.” It was a time of emancipation for women, and the YMCA, as well as other social movements, “for the most part welcomed the advent of women into social movements as ‘helpers’ only.” In spite of later decisions, “the practice of including women and girls obtained fairly firm foothold in many localities” and because of local autonomy, local associations were free to adopt female members if they wanted.⁴

In Europe, Nordic associations in particular, stressed the united work for boys and girls. Shedd quotes Volrath Bugge’s unpublished manuscript, where he defends the Norwegian mixed associations as follows: “During childhood they [boys and girls] had sat together in the classroom and gone ski-ing and tobogganing together. Why should they, therefore, not join the Christian Youth Association together?”⁵ As we have seen, in the World’s Alliance a similar decision was made

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¹ WCCY 1939, 7f.
² WCCY 1939, 1947a, b; 1952a, b.
³ WConf 1955, 110, 114.
⁴ Sweet 1953, 4f. See also Hopkins 1951, 39, 115, 240ff.
⁵ Bugge Volrath: *The Norwegian YMCA in relation to the History of the Norwegian Church*. Quoted
as in the NAIC - ladies were accepted on the local level, but not as representatives on the world level\(^1\).

During the 19\(^{th}\) century, the official doctrine of the YMCA was to encourage women to establish YWCAs and only when this was not possible, to become members of the YMCA. This exclusion of women may have been one major reason for the founding of the WSCF\(^2\). In student work, division into men’s and women’s associations was not practicable. After the First World War, when the YMCA “rediscovered the young man” as Hopkins puts it, the work with young women emerged as well. Especially in High School work in North America, the work was more and more for both sexes. Moreover, since the YWCA had some features of a social movement that focused on women’s issues, some women preferred to join the non-political YMCA. This led to the official acceptance of women membership in the NAIC in the 1930s.\(^3\)

Although the YMCA accepted women as members, the organisation did not focus on their special problems in the same way it focused on those of boys and young men - or as the YWCA focused on women’s issues. The work was merely to offer similar activities to women as was offered to men.

**TO SUM UP**, the YMCA mission in the work for youth was based on the Four-fold Programme, which enlarged the original focus on questions of salvation. In the beginning, there was no special mission among youth; the whole movement focused on young men. In time, the age-span differentiated and the special goals of boy’s work and young men’s work emerged. This in turn led the YMCA to study the problems that they face, like ideologies, sex and family, social order, world peace, a Christian way of living, etc, which were topics in the Young Men’s Conference in the Centennial Conferences.

In youth work, the YMCA differentiated its organisation in order to meet the needs of youth in special circumstances: army, railways, universities, etc. The focus turned from evangelism to the needs of youth. In this task, the YMCA cooperated with its major allies, the YWCA and the Student Christian Movement. Although the YMCA preferred a distinct organisations for men and women, female membership grew to be a significant proportion in the YMCA. Contrary to the official policy, youth preferred mixed groups.

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\(^1\) Shedd 1955b, 256.

\(^2\) Shedd 1955b, 447.

\(^3\) Another major reason was the YMCA policy to exclude officially confessional associations. The vision of Mott and Fries was to associate all Christian students for the same mission.

\(^3\) Hopkins 1951, 562-566.
6.3.3. Lay, Ecumenical Movement

...as an interdenominational and interconfessional fellowship within the Church Universal, the YMCA should constantly seek to encourage its members to accept the responsibilities of church membership, and to participate actively in the life and work of their particular churches; should continue to serve in every possible way the cause of unity among Christians of whatever Confession they may be - Protestant, Orthodox, or Roman Catholic; and to witness for Christ on and across the frontiers by which Christendom is still so tragically divided.

Centennial Declaration of the YMCA, 1955

The third paragraph of the Centennial Declaration focuses on the ecumenical mission of the YMCA. In this paragraph, there are two distinct tasks. The first one arose from the emphasis that the YMCA is not a church but a lay organisation, which aimed to serve, not only one church, but all of them. This led to the emphasis that YMCA members should be active in their respective churches. In a way, the task of the YMCA was to train young people for the service of their churches. The other task arose from the understanding that Christian unity was God’s will - the unity was given, and Christians should implement it.

In the course of time, these goals led the YMCA to dialogue with churches. In the case of the Protestant churches, this dialogue emerged in the very beginning of the movement. In the case of the Orthodox churches and the Catholic Church, the discussions began when the YMCA diffused to their territory. Below, I will focus on these discussions and look at what way the YMCA framed its mission among these three blocks in Christianity. Then, I give a short description of how the YMCA fostered the work of other ecumenical organisations.

PROTESTANTISM was the cradle of the YMCA. As we have seen, the YMCA emerged as Protestant laymen’s enterprise to share their mutual belief in Jesus Christ and, as their attempt to serve their Lord where churches did not work. In chapter 3.2.3, it was told that most dormitories in London had prohibited preachers from entering their buildings. In this situation, lay activity was the only possibility. The aim was not to compete with churches but to complement their work.

This complementary nature is evident when we remember that in both interdenominational contexts, in London and in Boston, the YMCA ensured ties to churches. In London, the YMCA invited a pastor from each denomination to be a vice-president of the association. In Boston, where the religious situation was rather similar, the clergy was consulted before the association was founded and their wishes were taken into account. This created, first the Evangelical test of

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1 WConf 1855a, 60.
2 WConfPrep 1905a, 5f.; Hopkins 1951, 18f.; Morse 1913, 16ff. The Boston YMCA, when founded officially, also appointed a standing committee that had two members from every Evangelical church of the city (Idem.).
the Boston YMCA and, later, the Portland Basis of the North American YMCA\(^1\). This laid the interdenominational tradition of the YMCA in Anglo-Saxon countries. In this tradition, the YMCA was seen as an inter-denominational tool for the churches in projects that required a crossing of denominational borders.

In Germany, Scandinavia and in other countries of German influence, the YMCA were closely attached to local parishes, although they were officially independent. \textit{Jünglingsvereine} were \textit{de facto} youth divisions of local Lutheran, Reformed or United parishes. Thus, in all large YMCA countries, the YMCA identified closely with the churches. If there was only one majority church, the attachment was to it, if there were many, the attachment was to Evangelical churches. As we have seen, one problem was with the definition of Evangelical. In North America, the NAIC refused to define it, leaving the interpretation to local associations\(^2\). In Europe, there was not a similar problem, because Europeans mainly used the Paris Basis instead of the Evangelical Test or Portland Basis.

The YMCA relation to Protestant - or Evangelical - churches was discussed widely in the Jubilee Conference in 1905. The general secretary of the NAIC, Richard C. Morse, explained the American attitude. He stated that the Portland Basis restricted the membership to Evangelical churches, and continued that along with the Portland Basis the same convention

\begin{quote}
adopted a kindred declaration that ‘members of associations should hold their obligations to their churches as having a prior claim upon their sympathy and efforts.’ By this act the attitude of association members to their associations was defined as one subordinate to the superior claim of their churches upon them.\(^3\)
\end{quote}

Thus, the associations in North America saw themselves as servants of the Evangelical churches. This doctrine was implemented especially in the foreign work of the NAIC: the YMCA did not start work in a new field unless requested by a majority of missionaries in the same field\(^4\). In Europe, the view was rather similar. Alfred Klug, in his address to the same Jubilee Conference, stated “that to enter our Associations the new member must have been confirmed, must have declared his own church his profession of faith, and have bound himself to the observance of the association’s statutes”\(^5\). He also referred to the American situation and agreed with the American opinion that in a situation where there are many churches, the association “must work quite free from them.” In the German situation, where there is only one church in each locality, “the association must stand in the same ground and serve its church in the best measure possible”\(^6\)."

Although the YMCA identified itself with the Protestant churches, the relationship was not always unproblematic. Partly, this resulted from the churches diversified expectations of the YMCA work. On one hand, when the YMCA con-

\begin{footnotes}
1. See chapter 4.2.4.
3. WConf Prep 1905a, 9.
4. WConf 1902, 10; WConf Prep 1913a, 19f.; Latourette 1957, 50ff.; Hopkins 1951, 316, 319; Shedd 1955b, 310, 390, 452.
5. WConf Prep 1905b, 8f.
6. WConf Prep 1905b, 14.
\end{footnotes}
centrated on the Four-fold Programme instead of general evangelism, “the organization could maintain less competitive relationship with the denominations”, as Zald interprets it. On the other hand, as Owen E. Pence (following S. Wirt Wiley) puts it, focus on the Four-fold Programme and ‘secular activities’ at the beginning of the 20th century, “represented such a rapid metamorphosis that readjustments in relations with old friends were inevitable.” There were also other factors that caused tension in YMCA - church relations. Churches started to build their own co-ordinating mechanisms and activities, which diminished the need for YMCA services in these fields. In foreign work, the YMCA paid better salaries than churches, which gave rise to accusations of unfair competition for the labour force. Finally, there were theological tensions within churches and between them that had an effect on YMCA - church relationships as well.

In the second decade of the 20th century, the YMCA relationship with the Protestant churches in the US improved, and were established on a co-operative basis. In general, the relationship remained good. Pence (following Wiley) notes that none of the problems mentioned above “has necessarily been the occasion or friction of conflict, but rather that all of them have contributed to the possibility and obligation of the YMCA’s supplementing and serving the local churches, communions, and confessions.” Most importantly, in both World Wars, the American Protestant churches were important donors to both the NAIC and the World’s Alliance. After WW II, in 1954, the proportion of the North American church donations in World’s Alliance Refugee Work income was 16 percent, which was 70 percent of foreign donations outside the fields.

Interconfessionalism brought a special problem into the YMCA - Protestant church relationships. As stated in chapter 5.1.2, the YMCA first served mainly Protestant young men. This service transformed the YMCA from an evangelising movement to a communal service agency in North America, as Zald has argued. Both Zald and Pence argue that one reason for this transformation was that the Protestant constituency basis did not ensure enough stability in organisation’s income. Both emphasise that the YMCA became increasingly depended on Community Chests and the community in general. This led to the situation that the community’s values became values of the local YMCA as well. Especially wealthy businessmen created pressure to adopt their Catholic and Jewish colleagues in the YMCA on equality basis.

2 Wiley 1944, 38 (quoted in Pence 1948, 6.). Wiley’s and Pence’s works are the major works in the YMCA - Protestant church relationships in North America.
4 Latourette 1957, 50f. In this criticism, churches and missions did not recognise that, along with the salary, the YMCA offered something more important, which the missions did not: equality between missionaries and local staff (Neill 1964, 366, 515f.)
5 Wiley 1944, 38 (quoted in Pence 1948, 6.).
6 Wiley 1944, 209 (quoted in Pence 1948, 14).
7 See Table 7 on page 122.
Other factors that pushed local American YMCAs to interconfessional direction were experiences from foreign work, the World’s Alliance, and war work. In foreign work, it was soon discovered that if the YMCA wanted to expand to non-Protestant countries, it had to open its membership to non-Protestants. As we have seen, in Latin America, the question was whether to adopt Catholics as full members or not. In Eastern Europe, the Near East and India, the same question was with the Orthodox. As we have seen, in many cases, the Paris Basis served as a more adequate criterion of membership than the Portland Basis. Finally, the war work may have had a similar effect on interconfessionalism that missionary work had on interdenominationalism: it brought clergy and laity from different confessions to work side by side for a common goal. Among other things, this created a trend among American churches, which supported the ecumenical development in the YMCA.

Although the YMCA aimed to serve all young men in the same way, special goals emerged in the case of Catholic and Orthodox youth. These goals were more strategic in nature because of the teaching of both confessions. In Protestant churches, the freedom of the laity was larger than in Catholic and Orthodox churches, because of the doctrine that everyone has the right to read and interpret the Bible by themselves. In Catholic and Orthodox territory, the clergy guarded their parishioners more eagerly. This had an effect on the ways that the YMCA could operate in countries where these churches were majority religion. One major task was an attempt to win the trust of the clergy. Below, I make a short review of what goals the YMCA had in Catholic and Orthodox contexts.

**YMCA RELATIONS**

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1. Pence 1948.
2. The relationship of the YMCA with the Orthodox churches before 1955, are dealt with in two documents mainly. The booklet *Objectives, Principles, and Programme of YMCA’s in Orthodox Countries* is a conclusion of unofficial consultations with World YMCA and Orthodox church leaders in Sofia 1928, Kephissia (Athens) 1930 and Bucharest 1933. Paul B. Anderson’s *A Study of Orthodoxy and the YMCA* from 1963 is a small internal study on the relationship.
3. Anderson (1963, 9) emphases that there is not one Orthodox Church or even a group of similar Churches but three groups. The largest is the group that is in Communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and accepts the first seven Ecumenical Councils. This group includes the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople (Istanbul), Jerusalem, Russia, Rumania Serbia, Bulgaria, the Church of Greece, the autocephalous churches of Georgia in USSR, Cyprus, Finland, Poland and Chechoslovakia - a total of fourteen. The second group is those who rejected the decision of the Fourth Council, maintaining the monophysite view, and do not have organised unity. This group includes the Coptic Church of Egypt, the Church of Ethiopia, the Armenian Church, and the Syrian Jacobite Church. Into the last church are affiliated the ancient Orthodox Church of South India and the remnant of the Nestorians, now known as the Church of the Assyrians. The third group is then formed by the Uniates who use the Eastern rite, but who acknowledge the Pope of Rome as final authority.
Paul B. Anderson explains the Orthodox motives for co-operation. He points out that the Orthodox churches in the Balkans and Near East had been isolated by the Turkish Ottoman empire, until the break of the 20th Century. When the contacts became possible, there was a need to build bridges to other Christians. According to Anderson, the Orthodox “cling to the idea that God’s Church is One, and that the efforts of the Ecumenic Movement represent honest striving on the part of all participants to enlarge and enrich their grasp of the Truth that makes it One.” Along with this, the Orthodox had a tradition of lay enterprise - in this sense, the YMCA did not bring any ‘Protestant’ novelty. On the other hand, there were also negative factors, which hindered the eagerness for co-operation with Protestants and with Western Christianity in general. On one hand, there were bitter experiences of Western approaches both in the ravaging form of the Crusades and modern proselytising Missionaries and, on the other hand, the old attitude towards Protestants as sectarians.

When the YMCA, along with the SCM and the YWCA, entered the Orthodox soil, they were the first ecumenical organisations that offered these contacts to Orthodox clergy and laity. In spite of the basic positive attitude towards co-operation, *vestigia terrent* and these organisations had to win the trust of Orthodox church leaders. This building of trust and offering of services and networks, has been one principal policy of the YMCA work among Orthodox youth. In building of trust, the personal relationships of John R. Mott and Paul B. Anderson to Orthodox leaders have been extremely important.

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1 Anderson (1963, 10) writes: “It was difficult for the Orthodox churches in the Turkish Empire to co-ordinate their efforts, whether by theological development or by meeting in synod or council. Yet, this was exactly the period of the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church, thanks to the explorations and settlements of Portugal, Spain and the Dutch. By the same token, the Orthodox were kept at home during the 19th century spread of Protestants missions.”
2 Anderson 1963, 12.
3 Anderson 1963, 14f. He (1937, 10) writes that “the Orthodox have a specific conception of the layman and of lay ‘brotherhoods’ which may point the way to the discovery of the true place of the Association in the sacramental life of the Church.”
4 “The Crusades first ignored, then sought to supplant the Orthodox; the Knights of the Sword sought to bring the Catholic faith by force to the people of Russia; the Unia of Florence, 1439, was enforced by the Polish-Lithuanian conquerors of the western Ukraine. In modern times, Protestant missionaries have at first tried to reform or modernize the Orthodox or Copts, and then, growing impatient, have turned to ‘evangelizing’ (proselytizing) them to form separate churches, such as are now to be seen in the Near East Protestant and in the Mar Thoma bodies.” (Anderson 1963, 14)
5 Anderson (1963, 11) explains the Orthodox attitude: “…for many generations, the Protestants were simply looked upon as rebels against a schism. This was not a double negative, to make a positive, but a double removal, further displaced by the Reformation breaking up into sects. When a sect appears (even a ‘denomination’) it seems to represent an accentuation of human mind and will in a limited expression of Christian faith.”
6 Anderson (1985, 148) writes: “It was partly because of the personal and sincere friendships I made with the Patriarch [Aleksii of Moscow] and with many others at the Patriarchate and its Foreign Office that I could feel free to broach ticklish questions and to express critical opinion in their circles, which most foreigners would have left unsaid. The Russians, in turn, even the Patriarch, rewarded me with comments and suggestions of great importance in the formation of policy, whether for my own work or that of the churches and YMCA.” Something about the deepness of their
The positive attitude of the YMCA towards the Orthodox churches also had its downside. Strong mentions that “the question was how the Association could be Christian without being wholly Protestant or wholly Orthodox.” How could the associations appeal to those young men who had a certain allergy to ecclesiastical organisations? Another problem was the question of national identity. National minorities were often members of another denomination and, for them, the national Orthodox Church often represented the oppressing majority.

The YMCA work among Orthodox youth started in Madras YMCA in India, which was opened in 1890 and was open to all Indians. In Russia, the first Orthodox YMCA, Mayak, was founded in 1900 in St. Petersburg. Before these associations, YMCAs in East Europe, Near East and India served small Protestant groups residing there. From then on, the idea of interconfessional YMCAs grew slowly but firmly. Actually, there is not a definite decision which opened the membership for Orthodox. This was for two reasons. First, the membership criteria were questions of local autonomy. In this sense, the foundation of the Madras YMCA and Mayak were important: these associations were accepted into the YMCA community, as long as they stood by the Paris Basis or its equivalent. Second, the Paris Basis does not say anything of church membership but of personal belief. Americans faced this in their foreign work when associations, both in Asia and in Latin America turned from the Portland Basis to the Paris Basis.

After the early experimental contacts, YMCA work in Orthodox Countries started full scale during World War I, by work with armed forces. This got such a good reputation that many monarchs and Church hierarchies asked the YMCA to also start civilian work in their countries.

Work with youth, students and especially among Russian emigrants had a positive influence on mutual relations. The work with emigrants led to the formation of the YMCA Press and the Orthodox Theological Academy of St. Sergius in Paris in the early 1920’s, which became centres of Orthodoxy in the West. Although the YMCA was in favour in Orthodox countries, it also provoked opposition and accusations. The opposition was led by the refugee Russian Archbishop

friendship can be seen when the Patriarch gave Anderson his personal icon, which he had got when he was tonsured as a monk (Idem 137f.).

1 Strong 1955a, 466.
2 Such were, e.g., Hungarians in Transylvania, Rumania (Strong. 1955a, 483f.) Finns also had similar problems before their independence, when the World’s Committee advised them, in 1894 and 1902, to organise themselves through the Russian Movement (Shedd 1955, 365).
3 David 1992, 24. Anderson (1963, 17) mentions that in city associations of Malabar Coast half of Christians were Orthodox.
4 Shedd 1955b, 364; Anderson 1963, 18; Latourette 1957, 369f.
5 E.g. Anderson 1963, 24f. The support of monarchs was remarkable especially in Yugoslavia, where Crown Prince Paul was national president. (Larger values of International Collaboration of the Young Men’s Christian Associations 1938, 26).
6 Archbishops in Saloniki and Athens were leaders of local YMCA (Anderson 1963, 22). In Korfu, the founder of the association was no less than bishop (later Ecumenical Patriarch) Athenagoras (Letter from Athenagoras to Anderson. April 24, 1967. Published in World Communique September-October 1967, 10f.)
Seraphim, who lived in Sofia and led the Karlovsky, the Synod of Bishops Abroad. He represented the YMCA as being anti-Orthodox, “Judeo-Masonic”, and in general a movement dangerous to the Church.¹

To clear up misunderstandings and clarify the YMCA policy in Orthodox countries, Mott organised three unofficial Consultations between YMCA and Orthodox leaders. The first Consultation was held in Sofia in 1928 and there the principles of the YMCA work in Orthodox countries were agreed upon:

1. While recognizing the independence and autonomy of the YMCA, it is understood that in predominantly Orthodox countries the work of the YMCA should be conducted in harmony with the principles of the Orthodox Church and in consultation with its leaders.
2. To ensure this... there should be... qualified men, nominated and elected by the members of the Association, known to be acceptable to the leaders of the Orthodox Church. In connection with the choice of the secretaries of the YMCA, the leaders of the Church should be consulted.
3. ... special methods should be devised, calculated to influence members of the groups to become loyal and active members of the Church.
4. Orthodox groups are open to non-Orthodox young men who are interested in Orthodoxy; likewise non-Orthodox groups are open to Orthodox young men who are interested in the subjects with which they deal.
5. All proselytizing... should be discouraged and condemned.
6. In Orthodox groups, the interpretation of the Bible should be carried on in full harmony with Orthodox doctrine...
7. The general activities of the YMCA... are open to... all, without confessional discrimination.
8. ... problems which may arise in the future should be adjusted in the spirit of confidence and goodwill characterizing the present meeting.²

In this agreement, the YMCA chose the model it had in Germany and the Nordic countries: the work was attached to the local majority church, although there was an option to link up with ecumenical groups as well. The important point was that both Orthodox and ecumenical groups were open to everyone. In this way, the YMCA wanted to maintain its ecumenical character. Another important point in the agreement was that the YMCA wanted to diminish the Orthodox clergy’s fears that the YMCA would be a ‘fifth colony’ of Protestantism. In the US, no local YMCA would have given up the principle of independent nomination of its board and staff members. Here, in a context where the YMCA aimed to expand, it was the only reasonable choice if the movement wanted to gain the trust of church leaders. Thus, the Orthodox churches formally got more control on YMCAs in their territory than the Protestant churches in their own. In practice, there was actually not much difference: especially in Germany and Nordic countries, the Lutheran church controlled the YMCA rather well.

If the Sofia Consultation was in quite a hostile environment and situation, the second Consultation in Kephissia, near Athens, in 1930 was almost like a club

¹ Anderson 1963, 20f.; 1985, 57f. The attitude was still very alive in 1992 when I visited Sofia Theological Faculty with the European YMCA delegation - we were welcomed with a banner: “The YMCA is a Freemason organisation.”
² Objectives, Principles, and Programme of YMCA’s in Orthodox Countries 1933, 16f.
In this conference, the results of Sofia were revived. The results and policy of both Sofia and Kephissia were accepted in the 1931 Cleveland World’s Conference.

In the series of YMCA-Orthodox Conferences, the next was in 1933 in Bucharest. The preparations of the Consultation were larger this time than before. Preparatory national conferences were held in all Balkan countries. Mott had visited and conferred personally with practically all those Patriarchs and leaders of the Orthodox churches that was possible, about the agenda and related plans.

The major theme of this meeting was youth. It may have been the first Orthodox Conference that concentrated on youth problems. The paper produced was much longer than from the previous meetings. It starts with the analysis of the problems of youth in the area (I), lists the objectives of the YMCA in Orthodox countries (II), draws up the Governing Principles (III) and finally goes through the program (IV). There is an interesting detail on the role of YMCA in youth work:

19. The Consultation recognizes with gratitude that the YMCA affords an opportunity for Orthodox Youth and its spiritual leaders to experience fellowship with Christians of the Western Churches for deeper mutual understanding and enrichment.

It seems that the YMCA was a useful tool to Orthodox leaders in two ways: it supplied methods to reach young people on a local level and channels for ecumenical contacts for the leaders. After that, YMCA relations with the Orthodox churches have remained good. In the process, there were, of course, fears and zealotry on both sides, but the Consultations showed their fruitfulness and, at least on the top level there was mutual understanding of the role of the YMCA. Along with the support of other Orthodox leaders, the role of Athenagoras was evidently significant. Athenagoras, who had served the YMCA in various posts, had be-

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1 Anderson (1963, 21f.) describes the meeting as follows: “... as compared with the hostile setting of the Conference of 1928, the Kephissia (Athens) meeting of 1933 [should be 1930, 1933 was in Bucharest] was a scene of friendliness and concord. About fifty persons participated, including the Archbishops of Athens and Salonika, Metropolitan Eulogius and Professor (later Archpriest) Zenkowsky, Bishop Cyril, now patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and other Orthodox hierarchs and theologians, the most prominent being Professor Hamilkar Alivisatos For the YMCA there was Dr. Mott, Dr. Alphons Koechlin, Dr. Erich Stange together with lay leaders and secretaries from Greece and the Balkan countries. Dr. Visser ’t Hooft attended for the W.S.C.F.”

2 WConf 1931, 7.

3 Objectives, Principles, and Programme of YMCA’s in Orthodox Countries 1933, 3.

4 Objectives, Principles, and Programme of YMCA’s in Orthodox Countries 1933, 12.

5 Athenagoras was, for example, a founder and president of the Korfu YMCA. In this role, he attended the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926, where he made a noteworthy ecumenical act. In the final Ecumenical Communion service, three Nordic Lutheran and one British Anglican pastor distributed the elements (Sic! Almost a century before the Porvoo Declaration) and Athenagoras pronounced the Benedictus at the end of the service (WConf 1926, 142, 151). Forty years later Athenagoras wrote to Anderson:

However, that which aroused a striking impression within me was the spirit of ecumenicity during the plenary sessions of the Conference, and the spirit of Christian unity during the services of common prayer, in the beautiful Cathedral of the Lutheran Church of this city. These experiences contributed greatly to the formation of my thoughts and to a desire for the cultivation of unity among the various Churches of Christ, with their cooperation in a spirit
come the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1949. When the Executive Committee of the World’s Alliance held its meeting in Athens 1952, he sent his greetings and blessings to it. When he visited the World Alliance headquarters in Geneva in 1967, he said about the title of his published letter:

I see here in World Communiqué a mistake: ‘Friend of the YMCA.’ I am not a friend, I am a member, and possibly one of the oldest members of the YMCA - from 1919, about 50 years now, and all these years, I have been united to the YMCA. I came here just to feel at home and I do, with my thanks and gratitude for this opportunity to say to you a few words. I may say that part of what I am now, I owe to our organisation. I do not call it your organisation but our organisation.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH was not as friendly towards the YMCA as the Orthodox churches. It was only after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) that the Catholic Church officially permitted its members to join the YMCA. It can be seen that there were three periods in the Catholic-YMCA relationship. The first one was a latent period, which lasted up to the 1880’s. The second period was the time when the YMCA started to expand to Catholic territory, and the last one was the time when the Catholic Church responded to the YMCA extension from the First World War on. The content of these periods has been as much a result of the internal development of both sides as interaction between them.

During the first period, the YMCA was definitely a Protestant organisation, a manifestation of the Evangelical Alliance, as participants in the First World’s Conference expressed it. The YMCA worked mainly in Protestant countries, but some attitudes and experiments can be traced to this period. Willis argues that “a close study of reports, of correspondence, and of speeches reveals little desire to criticize the Roman Catholic church and almost none to attack it.” This is rather surprising when we remember that the Evangelical Alliance emerged partly as a reaction to Anglo-Catholicism, and when the Pope was frequently seen as Anti-Christ or Harlot of Babylon among Evangelicals. However, this does not mean that the YMCA was free from anti-Catholic tendencies. It was during this period when the North American YMCA accepted its Portland Basis, which excluded Catholics from full membership. In Europe, the Central International Committee of brotherhood, of forgetting the past, of abandonment of proselytizing and propaganda, and of the journey toward complete restoration of their relations. (Athenagoras letter to Paul B. Anderson 24.4.1967. Published in World Communiqué 1967, September-October, 10f.).

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1 Clement 1991, 63.
2 Willis 1955, 713
3 World Communiqué 1968, January-February, 14 (italics in original).
4 Willis 1955, 688. The few critical (if not hostile) voices towards the Roman Catholic Church came from France and Switzerland. The French YMCA accepted Roman Catholics only if they departed from the authority of the Church (WConf 1855, 28) and members of Geneva association were openly anti-Catholic (WConf 1855, 46).
5 As seen above, there was local variance, because the NAIC refused to determine which churches were Evangelical. Moreover, even when the membership of Catholics was denied, as in Chicago, the relationships could have been cordial. For example, Dwight L. Moody, a secretary of the Chicago YMCA, donated organs to the local Catholic Church. When he was criticised on this, he said: “Why, if they are Roman Catholics, it is better that they should be good Roman Catholics than bad.
started its work among Protestant minorities in Catholic countries and identified with them. The CIC reports to the World’s Conferences include such expressions as “Italy has been freed from the yoke of Rome," “the yoke of Rome still weights so heavily that all open dissent is the object of a series of persecutions” and “Romish fanatism” and. Fermaud’s work was that of general evangelisation. This, surely, was not good PR among Catholic clergy: for them, the YMCA emerged as a Protestant missionary organisation, which aimed to proselytise Catholics to Protestantism. When the policy of the YMCA changed and it started to accept Catholics as full members, the damage had already been done.

When the North American YMCA started to extend to Catholic Latin America, it started the second period of their mutual relationship. When the Catholic Church regarded the YMCA as a Protestant organisation, the YMCA reduced its religious work to a minimum in Latin America and concentrated on social and recreational work. This was partly because the YMCA tried to avoid controversies and partly because of the internal development of the YMCA ideology in North America. The extension took place only after the Four-fold ideology had overcome the view of the YMCA as a general evangelisation agency. Both factors influenced the YMCA attempts to convince both Catholic clergy and laity of its usefulness and non-sectarian character. In particular, Mott emphasised the need to understand Catholic spirituality. In general, Mott’s international contacts and ecumenical view paved the way to the acceptance of Catholics and Orthodox in the YMCA as full members.

As we have seen, the First World War was a time of rapid extension of the YMCA through its war work. It was this period that the YMCA entered Poland. The Polish YMCA, although never an official member of the World’s Alliance, became the centre of YMCA - Catholic Church negotiations. The YMCA had served Polish troops in the war and started its civil work there after the war. As in Latin America, the YMCA avoided religious work and concentrated on education, social work and recreation. However, as Piotr T. Zebrowski notes, “the

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1 In Italy, the YMCAs were indigenous products of Waldesians, but in Spain, the CIC had started its missionary work and worked with small Protestant groups in the country.
2 WComR 1888, 5.
3 WComR 1888, 6.
4 WComR 1891, 7.
5 WComR 1888, 5ff.; 1891, 8ff.
6 See chapter 4.4.1.
7 This is what also Zebrowski (1991, 97) assumes in the case of the Polish YMCA: “The secretaries heading particular departments were specialists in their fields. Consequently, they left the religious work also to specialists, that is to clergymen.”
8 Willis 1955, 695.
9 Shedd 1955, 437s.
10 On the YMCA in Poland, see WComEx 1927c; Zebrowski 1991; Latourette 1957, 398-404; Super 1947.
YMCA still remained psychologically far closer to Protestantism than to Catholicism. This led to attacks against the YMCA from the Church. These attacks were reduced only after the Foreign Minister of Poland made clear to the Vatican that the Polish government wanted the YMCA to stay in Poland. The YMCA policy in Poland was to “follow only those practices which are acceptable to Roman Catholics, and shall carefully refrain from all proselytizing.”

This policy was not enough for the Catholic Church. In November 1920, the Vatican made its strongest attack against the YMCA: the Holy Office sent a letter to local ordinaries in which it warned about dangerous organisations, especially the YMCA. Although the Vatican did not see any harm in the social and physical education work of the YMCA, it attacked the YMCA as a Protestant organisation. The YMCA was accused of letting youth “forsake the Sacraments, give up the practice of piety, grow accustomed to pass judgement with absolute freedom upon all things even the most sacred, and finally sink into religious indifferentism so-called which, repeatedly condemned by the Church, involves denial of all religion.” It was the duty of bishops to exert their “utmost zeal in preserving Catholic young men from the contagion spread aboard by these organizations whose very benefactions, extended in Christ’s name, endanger the Christian’s most priceless possession, the grace of Christ.”

Many YMCA leaders shared the thoughts of the president of the World’s Alliance, Paul Des Gouttes, who expressed them in his opening address in the 1922 Copenhagen Plenary:

We must never lose sight of our chief purpose. While broadly interconfessional and interdenominational in principle, our Associations must closely distinguish, at the risk of falling into error and final collapse, between the young Catholic who is sincerely seeking Christ and the institution which places the priest between him and his God. The aims being different, the roads lie parallel and the one will never meet the other. We must no longer lull ourselves with dangerous and fatally deceptive illusions: there is no understanding possible with an institution with which agreement means absorption, and which proclaims as its dogma: ‘No salvation outside the Church’.

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1 Zebrowski 1991, 105. The Protestantism of the YMCA was seen in its stress of “the priesthood of all believers” and, in general, encouragement of people to think for themselves about religious and ethical questions, without asking advice from priests (Idem.).
2 Super 1947, 90.
3 WComEx 1927c, 2.
4 Letter to local ordinaries in which their attention is invited to certain recent attempts of non-Catholics against the Faith (quoted in Fallon 1922).
5 WComPle 1922b, 2 (English text quoted in Willis 1955, 699). This same attitude was seen still in 1955, although in a moderated form, in Father C.J. Dumont’s article on Roman Catholic youth movements and the Paris Basis in the World Communiqué May-June 1955. Dumont (1955, 12) writes:

As all the movements of Catholic Action, they are essentially lay movements. But they also are and must be, through the intermediary of their chaplains in permanent liaison with the hierarchy, which is above all responsible before God for the rectitude of the Faith. Of this rectitude, as is well known, the Roman Church shows herself to be the jealous guardian. If, for the Church, to know and accept Jesus Christ as God and Saviour is an essential part of the Christian Faith, it should be added that there is no true faithfulness to Jesus Christ where, no
In the Second World War, YMCA work for prisoners of war had won many friends among Catholic clergy. This encouraged the World’s Alliance to approach the Vatican directly and the consultation was held in 1953. Although the Catholic Church admitted, after the Second World War, that it can “co-operate in matters concerning social and economic justice,” as Limbert reported to the Centennial Conference, it was firm on spiritual issues. In 1954, the Vatican replied that the 1920 instruction was still valid. Thus, the YMCA could not rely on the goodwill of the Catholic clergy as it relied on the support of the Orthodox churches. This meant that the YMCA focused on individual contacts instead of institutional ones among Catholics.

**ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS** were an important field of action for the YMCA. We have seen that there were special relationships with the YWCA, WSCF and the WCC. All these organisations had a basis similar to the Paris Basis. Additionally, the YMCA has tried to maintain friendly and co-operative relations with the Scout movement, IMC and Sunday School Associations. In these relationships, the YMCA has adopted policies that arose from the various tasks. Thus, in the Christian youth work, the main emphasis has been put on the needs of youth, not on organisational boundaries. This policy was expressed already in the First World’s Conference when Shipton stated that “the field is wide enough for all, and there is room yet for any who may be willing to devote their energies to the great work.” Additionally, the Paris Basis stated that the YMCA aims to unite those young men who believe in Jesus Christ. This task led the YMCA to co-operate with all organisations that were willing to foster the goals of the YMCA.

In the course of history, the YMCA has promoted this policy in two ways. First, it has been ready to co-operate with other Christian bodies to fulfil its mission. Thus, for example, in WW II, the American work for soldiers was carried by the USO, which was a co-operative project of six agencies: YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Service, Jewish Welfare Board, Salvation Army and Travellers’ Aid Association. Similarly, in Geneva, the YMCA, the YWCA, the WSCF and WCC formed the Emergency Committee of Christian Organisations (ECCO) for the work among POWs, and World Christian Youth Commission.  

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matter how correct the intentions are, His message is not confessed in its totality. Nor is there any true faithfulness if in her eyes it seems that certain elements essential to the nature of His Church have been sacrificed or neglected, even to the visible elements: the episcopate and its historic continuity with the Apostles under the primacy of the successor of Peter. This is why, although paying respect to the efforts of non-Roman Christianity to rediscover the unity it has lost, She cannot look favourably upon the participation of her members in organisations which limit their doctrinal requirements to the recognition of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. This is precisely the case with the YMCA as with the World Council of Churches.

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1 Strong 1955b, 563.
2 WComR 1955, 30.
3 Willis 1955, 712-715.
4 WConf 1855, 70.
5 Hopkins 1951, 712.
6 Strong 1955b, 557.
(WCYC) for the youth work. Other examples are from the World Conferences of Christian Youth, which were organised by these and several other Christian bodies. In the work with refugees, the YMCA served as an umbrella organisation for churches before they could establish their own special agencies.

Along with religious bodies, the YMCA co-operated with several secular agencies as well. As we have seen, Henri Dunant was a founder of two great world organisations, the World’s Alliance of YMCAs and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Through the years, these organisations maintained friendly relationships. When the UN was founded, the YMCA worked with its special agencies.

In his report to the Centennial Conferences, Paul Limbert mentions the special relationships of the YMCA with the YWCA, the WSCF, the WCC, the WCYC and the IMC. Although these relationships were the most important, Limbert underlines that “the consultative relationship of the World’s Alliance to the World Council of Churches is not meant to hinder cordial relationships, wherever possible, with Christian bodies outside the World Council, including the Roman Catholic Church.” In spite of this statement, the YMCA did not co-operate with all possible Christian organisations. If we look at the list of fraternal delegates and observers to the Centennial Conferences, we can see that the organisations with which the YMCA had cordial relationships were mainly established, non-sectarian bodies. There is a significant lack of references to neo-Evangelical, Fundamentalist, revivalistic and sectarian organisations. On the other hand, there were Catholic organisations either. However, it can be supposed that the YMCA focused more towards the direction of old churches than to sects, although there was definitely varieties on the local level.

\[^{1}\] WComR 1955, 103.

\[^{2}\] Along with the aforementioned four WCYC bodies, the IMC, the F&O, the L&W and the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches were among the organisers of the first conference before WW II (WCCY 1939, 6). In 1947, the new organising bodies were the World Sunday School Association, the World Christian Endeavour Union, while the F&O and L&W were among the organisers any more (WCCY 1947a, 5). The 1952 conference was organised by the WCYC organisations, into which the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Associations had also joined in 1948 (WCCY 1952a, Introduction; 1952b, ii, WComR 1955, 103).

\[^{3}\] Strong (memorandum) 1951, 1.

\[^{4}\] WComR 1955, 209.

\[^{5}\] WComR 1955, 207.


\[^{7}\] The only exception is the World Baptist Alliance but in 1955, it was already more a denomination than a sect.
THE YMCA MISSION TO CHURCHES was expressed in the report of Section III of the Centennial Conferences. In this report, there were two interrelated fields where the YMCA had a special interest: church unity and the role of the layman. In the case of the first task, the report acknowledges the problems between churches, but states that in spite of them, the YMCA mission is in bringing individual Christians together. The report states: “The YMCAs primary contribution to Christian unity lies in providing a common meeting place for those of different Christian confessions, and even those of other beliefs, in a Christian atmosphere.”

This individual and indirect strategy of the YMCA is seen a bit later in the report:

In its first century, the YMCA has furthered Christian unity not by promoting unity movements, but indirectly, through strengthening fellowship among all Christians. Now, in the new century the YMCA is called upon to undertake the more difficult task of working for and in the name of Christ across the main confessional frontiers and across those frontiers separating Christians and non-Christians.

The other mission of the YMCA among churches was related to the role of a layman. The same Section III report defines the YMCA mission in this respect as follows:

The YMCA has a responsibility which differs for men in different stages of relationship to a church: (a) lead Christian youth into a better interconfessional understanding, responsibility in the Christian community, and work in society; (b) help non-active church youth into full participation in church life; (c) lead non-church youth into membership of the churches to which they may feel themselves to be called and (d) extend to youth of other faiths the fullest possible Christian fellowship and to lead them to Christ. Even if the churches do all that they should do, the YMCA still has a task because youth should carry its share of the responsibility for witnessing to the Christian gospel among youth and youth should not be kept sheltered, but sent out to witness to the love of Christ.

In this statement, three important aspects reveal the YMCA mission to laymen. First, the task of the YMCA lies primarily among youth. It is through leading youth that church unity is fostered. As we have seen, this strategy has proven its validity in the past and there was no reason to change it. Although it was not said, there was a belief that interconfessional experiences as generational experiences would produce the hoped-for results in promoting church unity. Second, the YMCA has a mission to lead youth to be active members of their respective churches. This was because the YMCA has constantly emphasised that it is not a church and it does not want to become one. It is because of this policy that it is not sufficient for young people to be just YMCA members. Churches have sacraments and they are places where one’s faith should grow. Third, the YMCA has a missionary task as well. It is both among non-active, or nominal Christians, and among non-Christian youth. In both fields, youth forms a strategic weapon of

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1 WConf 1955, 76.
2 WConf 1955, 77.
3 WConf 1955, 76f.
4 See chapter 2.3.1.
Christianity, and mobilising youth to lead youth to Christ was seen as the primary mission of the YMCA.

**TO SUM UP**, although the YMCA mission to churches had similar elements, there were also different strategies in Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic areas. It can be said that the YMCA aimed to foster ecumenical thinking everywhere, as the Paris Basis required it to do. The YMCA did not want to become a church but saw itself as a servant of all churches. In Protestant areas, there were two modifications of this principle. In areas where one church dominated, the YMCA co-operated with it, although kept its doors open to members of other confessions as well. Where no church dominated, the YMCA aimed to serve all churches on equal basis. In Orthodox countries, the YMCA co-operated with the Orthodox church in the same way as in Protestant church areas. In Catholic countries, the YMCA tried to avoid the stigma of being a sect and reduced its religious activities, or asked Catholic priests to supply religious services in its activities. In spite of these attempts, the Catholic church did not give up its hostile attitude towards the YMCA. Along with churches, the YMCA co-operated with several ecumenical organisations. The most important of them were the YWCA, the WSCF and the WCC.

### 6.3.4. Pioneer in Interfaith Dialogue

...as a Christian Association seeking to serve youth irrespective of their religious belief, the YMCA should witness for Christ on and across those frontiers which separate Christian and non-Christian Faiths.

*Centennial Declaration of the YMCA, 1955*

Above, it was seen that the YMCA had a vision to unify Christian individuals and churches. This sub-chapter focuses on a wider perspective: the YMCA vision in interfaith dialogue, which was an enlargement of the interconfessional dialogue. Although this was formally an enlargement of the Paris Basis idea of Christian unity, it was preceded already in the Paris 1855 Conference when Germans stated that they accepted into their associations “all who will conform to our rules.”

When the YMCA entered non-Christian countries, it got a significant proportion of non-Christian members. Mostly, they were associated members with no right to vote, but there were also those who had signed the Paris Basis and thus became full members. It was primarily the non-Christian members who led the YMCA into interfaith dialogue.

As we have seen, there were four significant contexts where the YMCA faced the problem of interfaith dialogue. In India, the Christian background of the YMCA was twofold. On one hand, there were the ancient churches that trace their origin to St. Thomas and, on the other hand, there was the Western Protestant

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1 WConf 1855, 52.
English-speaking community. As we have seen, interfaith dialogue in the Indian peninsula was accompanied by the indigenisation process of the YMCA in the country. In the Near East, the movement worked in Moslem territory where ancient Christian churches had lived for centuries. In this area, the dialogue was coloured by their experience. It can even be said that the YMCA - Moslem dialogue can be seen as one part of Orthodox - Moslem dialogue. In the Far East there was the Buddhist context. Finally, in North America, the interfaith question was largely centred on the status of Jews in American society and their role in American communities. On the World’s Alliance level, the problem was seen from the perspective of one fundamental problem: how to adopt non-Christians into the YMCA on an equal basis without losing its Christian character.

Until the Cleveland World’s Conference in 1931, there were no mentions of interfaith dialogue in either World’s Committee or World’s Conference documents. Although ‘non-Christian lands’ had already been mentioned in the Edinburgh World’s Conference in 1913, they were referred to as a missionary field.

In Cleveland 1931, the existence of people of other faiths was recognised, and the conference resolution mentions special problems that have grown out of a steadily increasing feeling that the Association and indeed Christian organisations generally have not given sufficient consideration to the spiritual values of certain non-Christian religions and of the failure to think adequate methods of proclaiming the Christian message in such lands. For while the message is everywhere identical in essence, its commendation must necessarily be related to the religious values and experience of those whose allegiance to Christ we seek to claim.

Although the emphasis was on the needs of missionary work, “spiritual values of certain non-Christian religions” were mentioned for the first time on the World’s Conference level. It was six years later, in the Mysore World’s Conference in 1937, when the issue was faced. It was also the first time when the World’s Conference was held outside western countries. The Indian context definitely gave its flavour to the conference. Another important conference was the Kandy Consultation, with the title ‘Presenting the Christian Message in Buddhist Lands’, in 1953. The documents of these conferences present the YMCA purpose

1 WConfPrep 1913a, 19-23. In Helsinki, Mott referred to “multiplied contacts with members of non-Christian religions and cults” and to the impact of secularisation in both the Christian and non-Christian world (WConf 1926, 158f.). Although he did not go further, this was a hint of what would follow two years later in the IMF conference in Jerusalem in 1928, which called all religions to fight against secularism. In the IMC Conference at Jerusalem in 1928, secularism was seen as one of the new religions (West 1991, 916). It might well be that ‘secularism’ was a suitable and acceptable term for all, as was ‘the spirit of Evangelical Alliance’ in the YMCA Jubilee Conference in 1905. In the YMCA, secularism was just one of those ‘man-made’ faiths that the movement opposed. Others were Nationalism, Communism and Fascism. On the Jerusalem Conference, see Cox 1981; Gill 1968; Shivute 1980, 42-65 (includes a comprehensive bibliography on primary and secondary sources on Jerusalem Conference). On secularism, see, e.g., Casanova 2001; Gorski 2000; Heinonen 1970; Martin 1978. See also note 1 on page 16.

2 WConf 1931, 11.

3 The Kandy Consultation was third in a series of Consultations. The first was held preceding the 1950 Plenary meeting in Nyborg Strand, Denmark with the title World Consultation on the Presen-
in interfaith dialogue\(^1\).

In its interfaith dialogue, the YMCA was not so much interested in official dialogue, although academic study-programs necessarily fostered it as well. The primary interest of the YMCA was on individual young men and their needs\(^2\). It was in the context of character building that interfaith dialogue emerged. Thus, the arguments for the necessity of dialogue arose from the situations which a young man faced in his environment. The report of the Mysore Conference described the problem as follows: “In teaching the New Testament to youth, that teaching, if successful, may well shatter the boy’s or young man’s relation to the family in which his whole being is rooted\(^3\).” Paul D. Devanandan, in his address to Kandy Consultation in 1953, expressed the same problem in a larger context. He said that when Asia was going through political, social and cultural revolution, “the consequence is that a great number of our non-Christian members are in a state of spiritual disintegration, never really facing up to the emotional unbalance created by this divided loyalty, on the one hand, to traditional mores of ritual orthodoxy and, on the other, to the new standards of liberal humanism\(^4\).”

In the same address, Devanandan raised the question as to what responsibility the YMCA had to this non-Christian constituency. He notes that the problem has not been acknowledged on the world level, because non-Christians were not present in YMCA World gatherings\(^5\). Devanandan argues that in Asian YMCAs, “these ‘associate members’ are largely a part of our fellowship: they enter fully into the common life of the Association; they actively participate in the many aspects of our programme - to a limited extent, even in our definitely Christian acts of worship and Bible study - with keen enthusiasm and conscious responsibil-

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1 There were surprisingly few mentions on the issue in the Centennial Conferences in 1955. The theme only emerged in Paul. D. Devanandan’s address (WConf 1955, 53f.). In section reports, there were short references to membership and leadership requirements (see chapters 5.1.3. and 5.3.1.), evangelisation and easing of international tension (WConf 1955, 70, 73f., 80). The Report of the First West African Area Conference in 1953 (AfAConf 1953) has one address on Christian-Moslem-Animist relations, but though it analysed the context, it focused primarily on how to win Africans to Christianity.

2 WConfPrep 1937a, 25; 1937g, 1.

3 WConf 1937, 45; WConfPrep 1937a, 28.

4 Kandy Consultation 1953b, 7.

5 Wilbert B. Smith (WConfPrep 1937c, 1) presented similar criticism in the Mysore World’s Conference collateral material. He reminded that the YMCA was born in a Christian context, where even non-Christians were “animated in no small measure by Christian ideals and purposes.” He continues by saying that when the official statements have been laid in this context and with Christian language, they have often been misinterpreted and misunderstood by people who live under the dominance of other religious systems.
ity.” He also mentions that many local associations are economically dependant on this segment of their constituency.¹

Thus, it is not a surprise that interfaith dialogue in the YMCA began in India. Indian Christians had a long experience of living with Hindus, and when the YMCA was Indianised, they brought this experience with them. As we have seen in chapter 4.4.2, the change towards dialogue and co-operation took place because of several reasons. First were the practical needs of missionary work to reach people with their own cultural concepts. Second, because of the Four-fold ideology, the YMCA had a large non-Christian membership. Third, rising Nationalism required indigenization of the movement which, in turn, required co-operation of religions in nation building. Fourth, the YMCA focus on the needs of young men required co-operation in the social service sector. Fifth, individual interaction of people across the faith boundaries created a need for understanding non-Christian religions.

THE FOUR-FOLD PROGRAMME, that had replaced general evangelism, emphasised the well being of the whole human. In practice, this had meant a focus on physical education and education in general. As George J. Fisher’s address to Edinburgh 1913 World’s Conference stressed², there was a belief that training muscles also meant training spiritual virtues. Although this popular psychology idea later faded, it had legitimised the domination of physical education. It became a necessary element in the task to “extend His Kingdom”. The YMCA program had also attracted non-Christian youth and, consequently, YMCAs in different Asian countries had significant non-Christian constituencies.

As seen above, the Indian YMCA focused primarily on recreational activities although religious activities were not totally absent. From this point of view, the goals of the YMCA, presented below in this chapter, could be seen more as ideals than reflection of actual practice. Devanandan lists the reasons why the YMCA attracted non-Christians:

Primarily, of course, (and initially, certainly), because of the facilities, the reasonably cheap living accommodation we provide, the amenities for physical and social recreation that figure large on our programme, the opportunities for free self-expression, unhindered by traditional religious tabus, afforded in the democratic give-and-take of YMCA club-life, and the possibility of widening one’s mental grasp of contemporary problems of civic, national and international life in YMCA forums and study groups. Other reasons are secondary, and they concern a minority.³

Thus, the mission of the YMCA in non-Christian countries may well be more the mission of the general secretary than the mission of leaders of activities, as Latourette was worried as being the case in the US⁴. This, however, does not water down the impact of the YMCA in interfaith dialogue. India and, to a lesser degree, other Asian countries were a laboratory for interfaith dialogue of the whole YMCA movement and for the entire Ecumenical Movement as well. The

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¹ Kandy Consultation 1953b, 2.
² See chapter 4.2.2.
³ Kandy Consultation 1953b, 3.
⁴ Latourette 1957, 28 (see note 5 on page 154).
issues that the leaders mention were real, although not always recognised in the everyday life of local associations. In conferences where the issue was dealt with, YMCA leaders had to explain to themselves and others why the YMCA, as a Christian organisation, accepted non-Christians in its membership.

**THE MISSIONARY NEEDS** of the YMCA were the fundamental causes that led to the study of non-Christian religions in the Indian YMCA. The remark of Sherwood Eddy at the end of the 19th century was significant: attacking the faith of Indian students only aroused their patriotism. Respect for their cultural heritage was a more fruitful way to approach students.

In this missionary approach, there was certain feeling of superiority from the Christian side because, as the study material of the Mysore World’s Conference put it: “the true light of the World is our Lord Jesus Christ.” Moreover, as A.J. Appasamy stated in his study material for the same Conference:

The Christian Religion is a Missionary religion. It is our duty to spread our religion everywhere. Our Lord’s command, ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost’ (Matthew xviii, 19) holds true now as of old.

In the report of the Mysore World’s Conference, the relationship between other faiths and Christianity was stated as follows:

Unquestionably, again, at all times and in, all places God has contributed to His children some authentic light from Himself. Lastly, however, the matter is not a question whether the teaching of Jesus is overwhelmingly superior to that of any other who ever lived, nor whether those following the teaching of any religious leader have been of superior saintliness. To the Christian there is the central fact that at a certain moment in history God actually did break through the veil and come to man upon earth in a living Person and that He, our Lord Jesus Christ, did, by His life and death and resurrection, open a way that is true and living and that leads into an absolutely authentic relationship with Almighty God.

In the Kandy Consultation, Devanandan saw the cultural and political situation of the 1950’s as an opportunity and a challenge for the YMCA. Therefore, he urged the YMCA to plan how to act with its non-Christian constituency. For him, interfaith dialogue was one way of evangelisation. “We begin with ultimate goals within the area of their own understanding of the religious good, but we must lead up to the point where Christ Himself confronts them with His imperious ‘Follow Me.’” Devanandan argues that non-Christians “appreciate not only what the YMCA does but also how the YMCA does it all.” In this, Devanandan was on the

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1. Latourette 1957, 112.
2. WConfPrep 1937a, 27.
3. WConfPrep 1937f, 9.
4. WConf 1937, 44.
5. In the report of the Mysore World’s Conference (WConf 1937, 42) there is a distinction between evangelism and proselytism. Evangelism was seen as a “really genuine concern for them [people from other religions] as persons.” Proselytism, in turn, was “hanging up another scalp in our ecclesiastical wigwam.”
same lines as many other Christian leaders in Asia: interfaith dialogue was part of the missionary task of the YMCA.¹

Thus, the dialogue in which the YMCA was ready to participate, aimed to get to that point where any man is challenged by Christ. To deny this was seen as denial of the missionary task of the Church. The real task of the Christians was to contextualise the Christian message in the way that non-Christians could understand it in their own concepts and language. However, the YMCA opposed aggressive proselytism, which was seen as spiritual imperialism. Evangelism, in YMCA language in Asia, was self-sacrifying love to one’s neighbour².

NATIONALISM was a third reason for interfaith dialogue. Wilbert B. Smith from Egypt presented, in the collateral material of the Mysore World’s Conference, a view that revealed the difficult minority situation of Christians and explained why they did not have the same missionary zeal as western Protestants. Smith wrote:

The Christian community has lived so long as a weak minority that it has very little desire to open its doors to the non-Christians whom it distrusts and fears. There is an annual migration from the Christian to the Moslem community in Egypt many times larger than the current running in the other direction. (It is reported that in 1935, for instance, 1500 Egyptian Christians accepted Islam, while not a score of Moslems were baptized into the Christian Church). The pressure of the majority upon the minority combines economic, social and political factors along with some positive religious values. It is not surprising that many Christians have no desire to share their most sacred religious values with those whom they thus fear and distrust.³

Because rising Nationalism often associated patriotism with traditional religions, Christianity was seen as a foreign implant and the religion of oppressors. A convert to Christianity was seen as a traitor among ultra-nationalists⁴. To ensure its working possibilities, the YMCA had to prove that it was an indigenous movement and willing to be an active part in nation building. This, among other factors, led the Indian YMCA to a process of Indianisation. One part of this process was the study Indian religions in order to see how the indigenization would be possible. The YMCA leaders adopted some elements, like Ashram, from Indian religions and Christianised them⁵. Along this, YMCA leaders stressed that Christianity had been in India already 1700 years. Thus, it was already part of the Indian culture and not a foreign implant.

This Christian apology was also a significant reason for interfaith dialogue. Smith describes the attitude of a non-Christian towards Christianity as follows:

In the Near East, the non-Christian has attained pre-eminence through conquest and political power. His nation faces Christian Europe with memories or the Crusades vividly in mind, and with all the denials of Christianity in Western life brought before his eyes by his own

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¹ Kandy Consultation 1953b, 3.
² WConf 1937, 42f.
³ WConfPrep 1937e, 2.
⁴ WConfPrep 1937e, 2; Kandy Consultation 1953a, 7, 11; ALConf 1953, 3.
⁵ A.J. Appasamy’s anthology Temple Bells was an attempt to use Hindu devotional material in Christian service (WConfPrep 1937g, 4).
travels, his daily paper, the cinema, the radio, the Western visitor. He fears Western political and economic aggression; he tends to despise the pretentions of the West that it is ‘Christian’ he judges it by its own standards and finds it wanting. Alongside its verbal preaching and written teaching he places its daily living where it has no organized religious competition, and there is such a contrast that he is at least perplexed if not disillusioned. Can he be blamed if he is sceptical?1

From this point of view, the need to be correctly understood by other religions was more important for Christian minorities than for majority religions. It was one strategy to calm down ultra-nationalist criticism. For the same reason, it was important to know the fundamentals of other religions. Information on other religions should be based on facts, not on misinterpreted prejudices.

In nation building, the primary goal arose from the Four-fold ideology and its emphasis on the well being of individuals. The other proponent of nation building was the impact of Social Gospel. For example, Sherwood Eddy, the leading secretary in India, converted to Social Gospel in the 1920’s2. In Asia, this meant both educational, social and leadership programs along with recreation3. In particular, social service in countries of vast poverty required the co-operation of all possible groups4. In relation to the suffering of one’s neighbour, Christians had a task both to serve and spread the Christian ideals of serving others5. According to Social

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1 WConfPrep 1937e, 2. Appasamy (WConfPrep 1937f., 3) is on the same lines when he reminds that “often strange social customs are mixed up with religious practices. A non-Christian holds Christianity responsible for drinking and dancing - two social customs which have no connection with Christianity.”

2 Hopkins 1951, 644; Latourette 1957, 63.

3 There are three dissertations focusing on Social Gospel and the YMCA in China. Xing Jun (1993) argues that “(1) In contrast to the evangelists, the YMCA secretaries... sought to interpret the Christian message in terms of China’s cultural heritage... (2). With a new sense of cosmopolitanism, the Association intellectuals developed a social reform ideology embodied in the concept of Kingdom of God... (3) Christian pacifist ideals formed another important part of the Social Gospel... The Sino-Japanese conflict created an excruciating moral dilemma for the Association men between Christian pacifism and good citizenship. As a result, the YMCA was split into three ideological camps in the mid-1930s.” Xing Wenjun (1992), in turn focuses on the work of Sidney D. Gamble in Peking and argues: “For the first time in the history of Christianity in China, Association work in Beijing demonstrated to the officialdom and the upper classes of the new Republic, that Christianity and the Chinese culture might not be incompatible. The motto of the May Fourth Movement, ‘To save China through science and democracy,’ and the missionary ideal of ‘Saving China through Christianity’ for a time seemed to be united under the common goal of social uplift and reconstruction for the new Republic.”

Charles Keller (1996) is in the same lines when he argues that “The Y was a model of harmonious intercultural relations that helped to instill an ethic of community, ideals of citizenship, and a mission of social service among a vanguard of Chinese leaders. This success resulted from the valiant efforts of the Y’s secretaries both Chinese and Americans in defending their organization and its fourfold program of moral uplift and spirituality against the challenges of rising Nationalism and anti-imperialism, and in creating a truly indigenous social service institution.”

4 WConfPrep 1937e, 6f.; 1937f., 7f.; 1937g, 3; Kandy Consultation 1953a, 18.

5 A.J. Appasamy (WConfPrep 1937f., 8) notes that in both Buddhism and Christianity “there has been a very close connection established between the religious instinct and the instinct of love.” Moreover, although this had not been prevalent in Hinduism, Appasamy argues, that even in it, “the attempt to show that religion must be expressed as active philanthropy as well as in devout
Gospel, the idea to teach ‘a Moslem to be a better Moslem’ or ‘a Hindu to be a better Hindu’ by the YMCA, made sense because the world was seen as Kingdom of God and the task of Christians was to teach people to obey the divine law of justice and peace. In this sense, conversion to Christianity was not a primary goal. Members of all faiths were in the same position: they had to obey God’s will.

Along with the struggle against poverty, there was a call for a common struggle against war and for international understanding as the Fellowship of Faiths Conference in Chicago stated. In general, the YMCA tried to show that its international contacts were not threats to new countries, but possibilities.

SPIRITUALITY was also a field where interfaith dialogue was practised. First, there was a need for common struggle against secularism, as the Jerusalem Missionary Council in 1928 had called for. Along with secularism, the common enemy was Communism, which attracted Asian youth.

Another issue in spirituality was that all religions claimed that they sought truth. Appasamy, Smith and Devanandan emphasise that the new focus in non-Christian context was whether the religion made a man better or worse. This led the YMCA to encourage both its non-Christian and Christian members to study both Christianity and non-Christian religions. The Kandy Consultation formulated it as follows:

This does not mean that the YMCA is interested in making Buddhist youth merely better Buddhists, but enquiring seekers after religious verities willing to go further in their quest to confront the claims of Christ. It might well be that our efforts in such a venture would lead to no appreciable results. But such calculated risk in encouraging Buddhist youth to study the claims of their own religion, of other religions and of Christianity, is a risk well worth taking to-day... Besides, there are questions which youth are asking concerning the meaning and purpose of life, the necessity for religion, the problem of suffering and the like for which they seek answers. It may well be that through special meetings, group study, provision of literature, the YMCA can meet this need.

Along with this mutual study, some writers also present mutual devotion. Collateral material from India for the Mysore Conference mentions that, “there may be Christians with whom you cannot worship... because they do not seek fellowship with God; on the other hand there may be non-Catholics with whom you can worship, because they actually seek this fellowship.” Appasamy legitimised this
attitude with the story of the centurion in the New Testament. The Centurion was not a Jew but an earnest seeker after truth and Jesus applauded and said that he never had faced such faith in Israel.¹

**IN THE US**, the adoption of Jews onto local boards was due to a different process. It was mainly a question of the identity of the YMCA as a community organisation². Additionally, it was a time when women were also accepted as full members. The main reason was not in the need for interfaith dialogue³ as in Asia, but enlarging the clientele of the YMCA. Moreover, in North America, there was not a similar fear of losing organisation’s Christian identity as in non-Christian contexts. Local associations had started to adopt non-Protestants (Catholics, Jews and unchurched) into their membership from the beginning of the 20th century⁴.

Finally, in 1931 the National Convention accepted the pressure from the field and replaced the Portland Basis with a wider basis, which did not say a word about faith or doctrines⁵. Instead, it stressed “common loyalty to Jesus Christ for the purpose of building Christian personality and Christian society.” In 1939, it was adopted in the National Council Constitution. Already in 1933, the National Council had voted that each association could determine its membership qualifications as long as they “be in accord with the purposes, ideals and spirit of the YMCA.”⁶

As we can see, the resolution echoed again, along with the Four-fold Programme, the (Reinhold Niebuhr’s version of) Social Gospel ideology. Loyalty refers to the Divine Law that urges a human to work accordingly. Christian society was the ideal manifestation of God’s will on earth and its elements were justice and peace.

These resolutions opened the boards to both Roman Catholics and Jews, among whom there were influential businessmen. One cannot avoid a feeling that from the perspective of American Protestantism, there was not much difference between a Catholic and a Jew⁷, once the threshold of being non-Protestant was

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¹ WConfPrep 1937f., 5.
² Hopkins (1951, 522) refers to the letter of James Lee Ellenwood who criticised the YMCA for trying to be everything to everybody: it tries to be a community agency, institutional organisation and religious movement. He summarises Ellenwood’s theses as follows:

Social service, he pointed out, was a strictly nonsectarian enterprise that ought to become the responsibility of all citizens. But if it were controlled by a strictly Protestant board dominated largely by Protestant control, could not win ‘the full support of the community.’ An Association honestly trying to meet this first purpose should have Jews and Roman Catholics on its staff, ‘and there should be no restrictions as to membership and privileges.’ It ought to liberalize its paid personnel until it became a community project like the Boy Scouts with no religious distinction.

Although Ellenwood opposed this kind of development, he described the problem exactly.

³ Actually, I have not found any similar serious study on YMCA - Jewish relations as those in the case of Asian religions.
⁴ Zald 1970, 56.
⁵ Zald (1970, 56) argues that “the repeal of the Evangelical Test and adoption of the Paris basis were just a symbolic transformation rather than a change in operating procedure.”
⁶ Hopkins 1951, 521.
⁷ In Hopkins’ (1951, 368, 522, 733, 736) history, there are frequently formulas like ‘Roman Catho-
overcome. If the former was accepted, the latter could be accepted as well. Thus, it seems that there was not the same threshold between Christians and Jews in the US as between Christians and other religions in other countries. Perhaps because of this special relationship, the status of Jews in the YMCA has not been of similar concern as those of other religions. We have to remember that for many Protestant groups, Jews are still God’s chosen people. This means that although they are not Christians, they have a special status among non-Christians. In this sense, they were easier to accept into the YMCA than members of other religious groups were.

TO SUM UP, interfaith dialogue arose from the missionary situation of minority churches. There were threats that forced both the YMCA and churches to indigenise themselves in order to ensure their possibilities of working. This required the translation of the Christian message into the language of the local culture. Because the local culture was based on traditional religions, this led to a study of them. Along with its missionary goals, the YMCA aimed to protect itself against attacks based on misinterpretations of Christianity. On the other hand, it could not give false information on other religions to its non-Christian members.

The primary goal of the YMCA was to serve youth in a Christian spirit. In this social service and nation building, it welcomed all allies who were willing to build a better future for youth.

6.3.5. Ministry to the Peace of God

...as a world-wide Christian fellowship, the YMCA should concern itself fully and without reserve with the promotion of international understanding; the easing of tension; the abolition of war; and the establishment of world peace.

Centennial Declaration of the YMCA, 1955

The words in the fifth statement in the Centennial Declaration had a long history behind them. It was nothing new but merely an articulation of the ongoing activities. As we have seen, the YMCA had been strongly involved in the work for victims of war. The work started with attempts to keep unity and reconcile opposite views inside the movement. While this was not always possible, the YMCA offered its services to the young men in armies. Further, when some soldiers had to surrender and became prisoners of war, it was natural for the YMCA to serve them as well. Finally, wars often create huge refugee problems, as in Europe after both World Wars. Many ex-prisoners of war became refugees, and the YMCA just continued to serve these same groups in the same camps.

RECONCILIATION is the first aspect in the YMCA “ministry to the peace of God.” The World YMCA was built on the vision of unity as the Paris Basis stated. The founders did not actually search for Christian unity but recognised it

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1 Expression from Tracy Strong (WComPle 1953a, 28).
because of the belief in one Master and Lord. However, they felt that there were forces that could weaken this unity. This is why the Second Fundamental Principle became so important for the YMCA, as stated in chapter 4.1.3. It pointed out that Nationalism, political opinions, etc. are less important than Christian unity. This is also why Nationalism, Fascism and Communism were seen as opponents of the YMCA: they weakened international Christian unity as they required obedience to their cause.

Although reconciliation was a task of all YMCAs, it had special consequences for the World’s Alliance. When the First World War broke out, the Executive Committee in Geneva was afraid that the division of the world would break up the YMCA as well. The Executive chose two principles as the cornerstones of their policy: the Paris Basis and absolute political neutrality. This task was not easy. Both belligerent sides felt that the World’s Alliance was too friendly to the other side.\footnote{Strong 1955b, 469. It is interesting that social work for soldiers seems not to have been regarded against the policy of neutrality. Perhaps it was categorised as being the same class as distributing the Bibles to soldiers.}

After World War I, the wounds of war were bitter. The question of war guilt kept churches, which had been loyal to their countries, suspicious of each other\footnote{Sinnemäki 1986, 99. Karlström 1993, 531.}. Similarly, relations between the German YMCA and the movements in Allied Countries were bad. In particular, relations between the French and the Germans were almost totally broken. It took almost ten years to build bridges between these two movements. This reconciliation was one of the major tasks of the World’s Alliance.\footnote{Strong 1955a, 478ff.}

It was not until the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World Conference in 1926 that the wounds of the war were healed. The discussion was not anymore on past division but the focus was laid more towards the future and to mechanisms of how to strengthen unity. The YMCA tried to foster this unity in all its activities. The resolutions pointed out the importance of education and grass-roots contacts (camps, conferences, etc.) in promoting international understanding, which was seen as serving Christ as the Prince of Peace\footnote{WConf 1926, 236f.}.

The World Consultation on Boys’ work at Green Lake in 1950 listed the means as to how the YMCA could foster this task. On the local level, the YMCAs could foster correspondence and exchange of materials between YMCAs of various countries, teaching about other countries, establish ‘international corners’ in associations and use of foreign visitors, etc. On the international level, the World’s Alliance and national movements could arrange international camps, conferences, Youth Forums and exchange programs for YMCA groups, produce and distribute study materials on international affairs and other countries, etc.\footnote{BWConf 1950, 31f.}
In particular, international camps were seen as important tools in promoting international understanding. The YMCA mission for Christian unity was vividly described in the Mysore report.

A striking example, both of the tense attitudes and of the Association’s opportunity, comes to us from the record of an international camp to which Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Javanese, and other Far Eastern boys came. Before the camp began both the Japanese and the Chinese boys expressed the wish not to be compelled to live in tents with each other. Regardless of this the organizers of the camp carefully mingled them. In each small tent group Chinese and Japanese boys found themselves sleeping and living, eating and playing in company with one another. Within twenty-four hours every trace of tension had disappeared. Within forty-eight hours they were sworn comrades.1

Tracy Strong called these kinds of camps “laboratories of international understanding and goodwill” and “training centres for many of the future leaders of the Movement.”2 Strong was a pacifist and internationalist, and these themes were present in the mission of the World’s Alliance as well. Youth work was a strategic means in planting international understanding among nations.

The conferences of the 1930’s, Cleveland in 1931 and Mysore in 1937, saw the promotion of international understanding as one main missions of the YMCA3. Both conferences recognised the dilemma between service to the state and service to God. While Christians should serve their nations, both conferences emphasised the primary loyalty to God. The Mysore Conference had a clear stand:

The supreme guide for the Christian must lie in obedience to the will of God, which he will constantly seek to know. In the sphere of citizenship he recognises that he is first of all a subject of the Heavenly King, and a member of the community of the children of God. To that community and its law of love he owes a supreme allegiance which transcends all other claims upon his loyalty and service.4

It is from this loyalty-to-God-perspective, that a Christian should serve the state and nation. The conference further recognised that there were not only tensions between nations but within them. In the same way, the YMCA should act “as a reconciling agency between various groups leading to mutual understanding, and possible co-operation between them on behalf of youth.”5

The World’s Committee report to the Cleveland Conference in 1931 argued that, although there were controversial views on international relations, there were also some cardinal points of agreement between various streams of thought. The

1 WConf 1937, 53.
2 WComPle 1953a, 8f.
3 There were great expectations on the upcoming Disarmament Conference in 1932. This was referred to in the World’s Committee Report to the Cleveland World’s Conference, Facing a World Crisis (WComR 1931, 180ff.). The report also quotes Article VIII of the League of Nations Covenant, Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, official correspondence between Allied and Associated Powers and German delegation, and the Briand-Kellogg Renunciation of War Pact (this form in the text, normally better known as Kellog-Briand Pact) from 1928. All quotations deal with disarmament.
4 WConf 1937, 24.
5 WConf 1937, 25.
report gave the following statement, which was approved in the Conference as Resolution No V on International relations:

(a) Faith in God, the Creator and Ruler of the earth, is recognised as the basis of all Christian thought and action in the realm of international relations: faith in a God, moreover, who manifests His will and establishes His Kingdom not only in the hearts of individuals but also in the lives of nations; who through Christ the Elder Brother calls all mankind to be His children.

(b) The Christian Community, also, it is felt, must serve, not only individuals but nations; and by obedience to the Master rather than to man will it inevitably promote mutual fellowship and understanding amongst the peoples, more effectively than through loyalty to any mere human institution.

(c) It is believed that peace and justice are in harmony with God’s purposes for man: that only through the attainment of justice as well as peace can God’s Love as Father be made manifest in the life of nations, today so distraught by hatred and fear. Peace and justice being themselves the fruit of love, it thus follows that the Christian Community, knit together in the life of the Holy Spirit, must ever strive to express this love-relationship within itself, in order that its unique mission as reconciler and upholder of justice may be fulfilled in the world of men and of nations.

(d) It is also widely held that, despite the inherent difficulties and complexities of the international questions that confront the world today, God nevertheless calls Christian youth to understand and then to testify, in the spirit of bold adventure, to the saving power of His laws in this domain. Indeed, it is felt that such a corporate effort on the part of professing Christians is long overdue, and that conscience has been slow to respond in this domain to the constraining love of Christ.\(^1\)

If we look the statement in conjunction with Richard H. Niebuhr’s analysis of the Social Gospel\(^2\), we can see that in the part (a), the expression ‘Christ, the Elder Brother’ is a typical Social Gospel expression, which equalises the concept of ‘Kingdom of God’ to ‘family of God’. In (b), the reference to serve nations can also be interpreted from a Social Gospel perspective: the YMCA planted democracy and promoted mutual understanding, which were seen elements of God’s righteous kingdom. In (c), can be found one of the most used formulas of the Social Gospel: ‘peace and justice.’ They were words that became part of the YMCA vocabulary. In (d), we can see more Reinhold Niebuhr’s\(^3\) than Rauschenbusch’s version of the Social Gospel. Although both emphasised the duty of Christians to foster New Testament ideals, Niebuhr underlined more the transcendent will of God: ideals were not just Jesus’ examples to us - they were the Divine Law that His followers should implement.

In spite of this, the Social Gospel view of the Kingdom of God was not the only theology in the YMCA. Although the influence of Americans continuously increased, the World’s Alliance was not an American organisation. On a world level, the other extreme to the Social Gospel theology was that of traditional pietism, which saw the kingdom as transcendent and apolitical. Additionally, there

\(^{1}\) WComR 1931, 177f. Slightly different wording in WConf 1931, 3.

\(^{2}\) Niebuhr 1988, 117.

\(^{3}\) Reinhold Niebuhr was one of the addressees in the Cleveland World’s Conference (Strong 1955a, 503).
were those who wanted to mediate between these two poles\(^1\), or who represented some other version of interpretation that had popped up during church history. However, in Cleveland, the Social Gospel proponents were the vast majority\(^2\). In the conference, the war condemned as a sin when the delegates

affirm their conviction that war is an expression of the sin of men and that all international conflicts should be settled by pacific means. They solemnly pledge themselves to workdevotedly for the removal of all causes of hatred and antagonism between nations, and to create amongst the youth of the world a spirit of justice, peace, and love.\(^3\)

By declaring war as consequence of sin, the conference legitimised YMCA work for international understanding and peace. The Mysore World’s Conference in 1937 brought up the dilemma that a Christian must face in this issue: that of contradictions in the Biblical teachings on war. The report of the Mysore Conference presented the idea that there are two contradicting theologies on war among Christians. One is that wars are inevitably marks of Christ’s second coming. In this situation, the adherents of this view saw that “our task is not to try to build an order conformed to the teachings of Christ but simply as persons try to reach a right relationship between ourselves and God\(^4\).” The other theology was in a sharp contradiction to this view. According to this other view, “a Christian should strive to build the best society he can. The Lord’s Prayer, at the centre of it says, Thy kingdom come on earth\(^5\).” The report noted that “the one common ground shared by all was the conviction that a change in the central drive of man’s life, his disposition, his ‘heart,’ is fundamental. If that is so, the problem is at its centre religious. The political and economic changes become expressions of a deeper transformation.” In general, the conference presented a rather individualistic view on the problems of war. The Conference approved the report of a commission, which stated that “the most fundamental cause of war we reiterate is war in the hearts of men however it may express itself in other forms.\(^6\)

The Centennial Conference was again on the same lines with Cleveland, when Section VII made the following recommendations:

We declare that war is against the will of God; we therefore rejoice in the efforts now under way to secure a progressive reduction of armaments. We urge our member Movements to

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\(^1\) Visser ‘t Hooft (1973, 18).
\(^2\) The resolution on International Relations was adopted “by 203 votes to 2, the German delegation and 4 other delegates abstaining (WConf 1931, 4).”
\(^3\) WConf 1931, 4.
\(^4\) With this description, the report referred mainly to German Lutherans, who were in constant opposition to American aggressive extension. Visser ‘t Hooft (1973, 18) tells how he “tried to convince the Germans that faith in the Kingdom as God’s gift should not lead to a passive attitude with regard to the great issues of social justice and world peace and I tried to convince the adherents of Social Gospel that the Kingdom of God was something more and different from a world without war and exploitation.”
\(^5\) With this, the report points to the proponents of the Social Gospel.
\(^6\) WConf 1937, 27f.,. Quotation idem. 30.
give all possible support to the achievement of this end, and to give thorough consideration
to all questions of war and peace.¹

Thus, the YMCA saw reconciliation as an essential part of its mission. Promotion
of international understanding was legitimised, on one hand, by seeing Christ
as Prince of Peace whose kingdom the YMCA is extending. On the other hand,
the work was seen as one aspect in promoting Christian unity. This did not mean
that the YMCA was involved in political actions. On the contrary, the mission
was aimed to be fulfilled on the individual level: when individuals change, struc-
tures change as well.

**THE WORK FOR VICTIMS OF WAR** was another aspect in the mission of
the YMCA in the ‘ministry to the Peace of God.’ As said before, in chapter 4.1.3,
the work for victims of war began within the work with armed forces. From this
work, the work for prisoners of war emerged and, later, work for refugees and
displaced persons. These three fields of the work had the same basic mission and
their methodology was mostly the same.

As we have seen, military work began in the North American Civil War. In
London 1862, North Americans reported of their experiences. In Stephen H.
Tyng’s report some elements that became essential parts of the YMCA work
among soldiers, prisoners and refugees were already seen:

First of all, in May 1861, we sent out brethren to the different recruiting stations to preach on
the Sabbath the Word of God, and to hold prayer meetings during the week; then we sent out
Young Men to look after the wounded, and to report to those at home particulars of the per-
sons recommended to their care.²

Thus, the main emphasis was on spiritual service but there were also social ac-
tivities like caring for the wounded and organising the camp-mail system between
home and the front. In Hamburg 1875, other countries also reported of similar
work among soldiers. In Germany, the aim was “to open homes or hostels for
soldiers near military barracks - like the casinos for officers.” In Holland, the
work was largely based on distribution of pamphlets and New Testaments.³

Later, in the same year, when such work got a permanent status in North
America due to the Spanish-American War⁴, the NAIC reported to the Basle
World’s Conference in 1898, that in military camps

a large tent has been pitched in each camp and furnished with periodical literature, tables for
writing letters, games, song and hymn books, Bibles and such other association equipment as
can be used in camp. A secretary selected with unusual care has been placed in charge. Reli-
gious and social meetings have been held and a centre of good fellowship established.⁵

¹ WConf 1955, 80.
² Quoted in Shedd 1955a, 164.
³ Shedd 1955a, 194.
⁴ On the establishment of the work for the armed forces in the US, see Morse 1913, 219.222; Hop-
kins 1951, 453ff.
⁵ WConfPrep 1898b, 10. See also Hopkins 1951, 454. Similar reports were heard from Germany and
Britain. Shedd 1955b, 373.
This list shows that the activities were rather similar to those of the early London Association. The aim was to keep "multitudes from the demoralizing temptations\(^1\) of camp life and in leading many soldiers to a blessed faith in Jesus Christ\(^2\)." The mission of the North American YMCA among soldiers followed in line with the work for other young men: it aimed to build Christian character\(^3\). As, in the cases of wandering apprentices and young men moving into towns, the YMCA tried to create ‘homes away from homes’ for soldiers.

The real trail-blazing event for the YMCA work with armed forces was the First World War. As already mentioned in chapter 4.1.3, the World’s Alliance gave services only in those countries where there was no YMCA. The main emphasis of the Alliance became the work for prisoners of war. In the Second World War, the World’s Alliance restricted itself to the service of POWs, leaving the regular army work to national movements. After both wars, the YMCA POW organisation was turned towards serving refugees.

In these works, normal YMCA programs were carried out as much as possible. Tracy Strong writes that “in all countries War Prisoners Aid served the prisoners of war through recreational, educational, cultural, and religious activities\(^4\) irrespective of prisoners’ nationality, race\(^5\), or creed\(^6\).” In this note, there are several connotations to the mission of the YMCA among soldiers, prisoners of war and refugees.

First, the recreational services of the YMCA were similar to those in normal life. The task of the YMCA was to make recreational activities possible. The meaning of these activities was to create such niches where camp dwellers especially, could forget their situation. They were weapons to keep apathy away and keep hope alive. Often this meant the supply of sports, music and drama equipment, and books for the library. Tracy Strong quotes the words of an unknown prisoner, which are also valid in the case of refugees: "The Red Cross saved our bodies… and the YMCA saved our minds\(^7\).” The following anecdote from a German prison camp during WW II by the Swede, Hugo Cedergren, who

\(^1\) Hopkins (1951, 209) mentions that “at certain points the YMCA joined with temperance organizations in an effort to keep the camps dry.”
\(^2\) WConfPrep 1898, 10.
\(^3\) Morse (1913, 219ff.) and Hopkins (1951, 208ff.) tell, that the work, after the Civil War episode, started among the volunteer training camps of the National Guard. Thus, it might be that in some cases, the YMCA just followed its members to these camps. On the other hand, the YMCA had already focused on special groups of young men.
\(^4\) According to Limbert’s report to the Centennial Conference the percentages of different activities in the work for prisoners of war were: Religious 6%, Educational 23%, Physical 14%, Social 40%, Fine Arts and Music 16% and Miscellaneous 1% (WCom 1955,48).
\(^5\) However, as Mjagkij’s (1994, 86-100) study shows, reality was not always according to the principles in the case of African-Americans. The American Jim Crow policy (American version of apartheid) restricted services for African-Americans, although black YMCA secretaries did a beautiful job with their limited resources.
\(^6\) Strong 1955b, 548.
\(^7\) Strong 1955b, 580. Hopkins (1951, 496) also mention the significance of recreational activities. He also quotes some unknown prisoner: “Now we can keep our courage, and hold on until the day of peace.”
was in charge of work in Germany, will tell something of the basic idea of these activities:

In one of the assembly rooms, quite a big orchestra was sitting on a podium, ready to play. They entertained us with Tchaikowsky and played excellently. The faces of the emaciated artists shone with joy. The conductor, who was the vice-conductor of the radio-orchestra in Moscow, turned and we applauded. He thanked YMCA for the supply of instruments, which was the greatest joy that has happened to him and his friends.  

Second, the YMCA arranged educational activities that included almost everything, from elementary teaching of illiterate soldiers to university courses. The purpose of the different courses was twofold. On one hand, they were recreational - something different from the daily routine. On the other hand, the YMCA has carried on various kinds of educational programs from the beginning of the movement. Education of soldiers, prisoners of war and refugees was just one application of this old goal.

Third, in its religious work, the YMCA tried to avoid all sectarian tendencies, and in fact, the North American YMCA claimed to represent all Protestant Churches of America. Although recreational activities were important, the YMCA was a Christian organisation and its mission was to extend God’s Kingdom among young men - whether they were civilians, soldiers or refugees. Thus, the work included Bible and tract distribution, services and prayer meetings, discussion groups, etc.

According to Walter Kilpatrick, the YMCA adopted the following principles in its work with refugees that grew from experiences in the preceding service for soldiers and POWs:

1. Services were available to all without discrimination.
2. The work was concentrated on those fields where YMCA had some special experience.
3. Refugees should be helped to solve their problems by themselves.
4. Refugee and non-refugee staff members were regarded equals.

The first principle, as Tracy Strong puts it has become a YMCA maxim. It is revolutionary. Why should such supreme loyalties as nation, race, confession, political parties, financial support become secondary in a service of a Christian organisation? Is not the answer found in the Christian conception of man as a child

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1 Cedergren 1969, 73 (my translation from the original Swedish text). There are numerous stories that are part of modern YMCA folklore. One moving story that I heard years ago was from Traiskirchen Refugee Camp in Austria. The camp was run by volunteers from various European countries. Once, one Scottish teacher decided to spend his Sabbath-year in the camp serving the refugees. He was placed as a recreational leader in the YMCA hut in the middle of the camp. He was a bit disappointed with the simple duty and thought that if he had wanted to play ping-pong, he could have done it in Scotland as well. Then, one day, one mother came to him and thanked him with tears in her eyes and said: “The surrounding of that table tennis board has been the only place in this camp where I have seen my boy smiling.”


3 Pence 1948, 9f.

4 Kilpatrick 1955, 594f.
of God and God’s test to the nations and his disciples of ‘feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked and caring for the sick and visiting the imprisoned’?1

The second principle limited the YMCA work to such services where it had competence. Often this meant that the work was carried on in partnership with other agencies. For example, the work with armed forces was in co-operation with churches because the YMCA is not a church and does not have the authority to minister sacraments. The work for prisoners of war was carried along with other Christian bodies - YWCA, WSCF, (in the Second World War) the Provisional Committee of the WCC and with the Red Cross. Although there was no formal agreement, the Red Cross focused on material supply, organising an information agency and camp inspection while the YMCA focused on mental and spiritual help.2

The third principle arose from basic YMCA ideology. As we have seen, in all its activities, the YMCA had emphasised local leadership. Even in its extension work, the goal was to implement ‘self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating’ indigenous YMCA3. The work in camps was no exception from this general policy. This policy was facilitated when there were trained YMCA leaders as soldiers, prisoners and refugees in camps where the work was done.4

The fourth principle sounds self-evident today but as we have seen in the case of India and in the case of African-Americans, the principle of equality in the 1940’s was not always clear. Moreover, Walter Kilpatrick tells that, after the Second World War, “for years international staff members could enter the major refugee countries only in the uniforms and with the status of Occupation personnel.” In those cases, they were under military law regulations, which stated even who could eat with whom.5

During both World Wars, the normal activities of the World’s Alliance were reduced to a minimal level and the World’s Committee focused on its war service. After the Second World War, the refugee work grew to be its largest project, as Table 7 on page 122 shows. The work for refugees and migrants covered more than 70 percent of the budget of the World’s Alliance. In spite of this, the World’s Alliance was not primarily a relief agency, but an international organ of a worldwide movement.

While reading documents and histories of the YMCA war-work and refugee work, one cannot avoid the impression that this mission for the victims of war was not intentional. The YMCA did not seek to serve these groups on purpose. They were served because there were young men in special life situations and the

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1 WComPle 1953a, 29.
2 Strong 1955b, 557f.; Cedergren 1969, 70. Reasons for the close co-operation between the YMCA and the ICRC were both in their common roots (Dunant) and in their ‘personal-union’ relationship. During the war years of 1914-1918, Paul Des Gouttes was both president of the World’s Alliance and secretary of the ICRC (WComPle 1953a, 28).
3 Latourette 1957, 50, 97; Shedd 1955b, 306ff., 310f.
4 One example of this policy was that in the 1940s, the YMCA was the only organisation in Palestine with Palestinian staff (WComR 1955, 56).
5 Kilpatrick 1955, 595.
YMCA wanted to serve them. Then, one thing led to another and, as Kilpatrick puts it “with no clear understanding what might develop, but a decidedly clear vision of what might be undertaken,” the YMCA answered to the needs of suffering neighbours on the global level, as it has done on the local from the beginning of the movement.

**TO SUM UP**, the work for victims of war started in the American Civil War, when the YMCA aimed to reach young men who recruited themselves in armies away from their local YMCAs and congregations. In the Franco-Prussian War, the task of the YMCA family was to reconcile the relationships between German and French YMCA movements and to maintain the unity expressed in the Paris Basis. From the American-Spanish War onwards, the work for men in military forces has been part of YMCA work. In the First World War, the work expanded and extended to service for prisoners of war. In WW II, the World’s Alliance concentrated on this work, leaving military work to national alliances. When the war ended, many prisoners found themselves as refugees and the YMCA continued to serve them.

### 6.3.6. Preacher of Social and Economic Justice

...the YMCA should continue to strive for the removal of every form of social or economic injustice and racial discrimination, and first of all within its own fellowship; and for the protection and enrichment of individual freedom.

Centennial Declaration of the YMCA, 1955

Although YMCA leaders were active in social issues from the beginning of the movement, political activity was more their private concern than a mission of the YMCA. As we have seen, both the First North American YMCA Convention in 1854 and the Paris Conference in 1855 sacrificed righteousness in the slave-question on the altar of unity. From that time on, neutrality in political issues was the prevalent policy in the YMCA. The YMCA action followed the traditional path of philanthropy, in which political issues were avoided. This policy was confirmed in the Amsterdam World’s Conference in 1872 when the Second Fundamental Principle was accepted, although later the YMCA condemned both racism and war as violations of God’s will.

The first time that social justice was discussed in the World’s Alliance was in the Amsterdam 1891 World’s Conference. In that conference, there were two prophetic addresses which planted the seed of social responsibility in the YMCA. As in his paper on recreation 33 years earlier, John H. Gladstone paved the way for future policy:

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1 Kilpatrick 1955, 589.
2 In 1867, the Temperance Movement challenged the Paris World’s Conference to discuss “tobacco, drinks, games and political papers”, but there were controversial opinions on the attitude towards these issues. No resolutions were made. (Shedd 1955a, 176f.)
The divine law of philanthropy can only be properly fulfilled by Christian men and women or a State thoroughly imbued with Christian sentiment. It may be expected that the Christian youth of the country should be in sympathy with whatever will curb luxury, destroy war and oppression, mitigate suffering, and remove the main causes of poverty. The YMCAs, therefore, can scarcely ignore the great questions of social reform which mark the present era. It may not be their task as a body to further any particular scheme, but rather to help in raising the standard of public opinion on social questions... We can scarcely fail to sympathize with many of the objects of socialism however much we may distrust its methods. A complete reform such as desired by the most thoughtful socialists can only be by the regeneration of each individual.¹

In this address, there were three important remarks. First, philanthropy is not enough if root causes are not touched. Second, the task of a Christian movement is to raise its prophetic voice by stating standards according to the Gospel. Third, the task of the YMCA was not to fight campaigns in the political arena but on the individual. The last remark both reflected Evangelical ideals and laid the model for the YMCA action: society can be transformed through transforming individuals. As we have seen in the cases of YMCA youth work and work for international understanding, the YMCA used this strategy for decades.

Another address was from Raoul Allier. He also felt that it was not the task of Christian associations to take a stand on and solve social problems, because they were not philanthropical but legal problems. Instead, associations should become centres of study, where young men were given the possibility to examine the issues and be prepared to work as individuals. Shedd writes that there was the statement of a new and advanced position to controversial issues, not one of complete indifference or neutrality on the issues ‘secondary’ to our fundamental aim of which the Paris Basis spoke.¹ It was to take most national movements a full generation before, in the ‘flaming 1920’s’, they could make this position their own.²

Both addresses, thus, pointed out that the YMCA has a responsibility on social issues. Both also agreed that the strategy of the YMCA was not that of direct action but through individuals and through serious studies of problems. Although Shedd was rather pessimistic on how the message was received, the seed was evidently planted. It was, after all, the Amsterdam World’s Conference where such young future leaders of Ecumenical Movement as John R. Mott, Karl Fries and Nathan Söderblom met each other³. Thus, the vision of Gladstone and Allier functioned at least in their cases.

It took almost twenty years before social problems were again on the agenda of the World’s Conference. At the time of Barmen-Elberfeld in 1909, Socialism had increased its influence in Europe and the Social Gospel was at its high tide in the US⁴. Moreover, the YMCAs in North America and Europe had been involved in

¹ Quoted in Shedd 1955b, 314f.
² Shedd 1955b, 315f.
³ Shedd 1955b, 316f.
⁴ Shedd 1955b, 451. Just a year earlier, the new Federal Churches of Christ in America endorsed Social Gospel (Gorrell 1991, 928). However, there were other movements as well, which probably had a longer influence on the YMCA but these links have not been shown. Thus, the Christian Social Union, which Christian Socialists had tried to form in the 1840’s, was founded in 1889 in Eng-
migration work\textsuperscript{1} and, thus, social problems were actual issues in the movement. However, in spite of two addresses on the theme, ‘Young Men in Business and Industry’\textsuperscript{2}, no resolutions were made on this theme. The only resolutions passed were tangential to those of promoting migration work and White Cross Work\textsuperscript{3}.

It was only after the First World War that the YMCA had to take a stand on social questions. The Work for men in armed forces had brought the YMCA in the midst of young men and their problems. The years after the war were those of huge social problems. The Report of the World’s Committee to the Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference was the first of this kind of report, where economic, physical, moral and spiritual, intellectual, and social conditions were analysed. The challenge was, according to the report, that because of the war people had started to wonder “Can there be a loving and almighty God, when such atrocities and such useless waste of men and means can be permitted to take place?” Moreover, when churches were felt to be willing tools of their governments in fostering the war spirit, there was a rather general feeling that churches lost confidence\textsuperscript{4}. This disappointment led, on one hand, to materialism, and, on the other hand, on a need “towards applying Christian principles and moral standards to international relations.”\textsuperscript{5}

There were two other special phenomena, which, according to the report, pushed the YMCA to focus more on social issues. First, the Labour Movement had expanded and become a significant force in many countries, and its concerns had become general concerns of societies\textsuperscript{6}. Second, the war and the following depreciation of currency had ruined the traditional moral codes in these societies\textsuperscript{7}. These factors led the YMCA to continue the social work that had expanded during the war.

One of the first ‘political’ statements of the YMCA was from the Copenhagen Plenary in 1922, which made the following declaration:

Recognizing that many of the conditions obtaining in social and industrial life and the relationship which exist between some nations and races are contrary to the principles of the Kingdom of God, we believe:

(1) That it is the duty of the Associations throughout the world to endeavor to apply the principles of the teachings of Jesus in both personal and community life and to educate

\textsuperscript{1} Christian Phildius reported on the work to the 1908 Plenary (WComPle 1908d). This work was seen as a task of the whole movement (WComPle 1908a, 7ff.; WComR 1909, 9f.; WConf 1909, 5).

\textsuperscript{2} Shedd 1955b, 451.

\textsuperscript{3} WConf 1909, 5f.

\textsuperscript{4} This same argument was expressed in Herman Liu’s address to the Helsingfors Conference on Chinese Christianity (WConf 1926, 206).

\textsuperscript{5} WComR 1926, 1-13 (quotations from page 8).

\textsuperscript{6} WComR 1926, 13.

\textsuperscript{7} WComR 1926, 7ff.
its members in the application of these principles to social, industrial, international and interracial problems.

(2) That these problems can only be solved and can be solved by the application of the principle that men in groups and as nations should deal with other groups and nations as they would wish to be dealt with by others.\(^1\)

As can be seen in the declaration, the YMCA derived its social program from teachings of Jesus. It was a question of applying the Great Commandment to both individual and international relations. The task of the YMCA was to endeavour to apply Christian principles in its own work and teach its members to apply them when they faced social problems. Again, we see that the YMCA does not advocate barricades, but believes that the world can be changed by changing individuals.

The Second World Conference of YMCA Workers Among Boys in Pörtschach, Austria, in 1923, was a notable occasion in the promotion of a new vision. In the conference resolutions, issues like employment, possibilities for education, child labour, night work of pregnant mothers, war, internationalism, etc. were dealt.\(^2\) Visser ‘t Hooft describes the conference as follows:

The conference had mainly been organized by a group of Americans and British who wanted the YMCA to make a new beginning in youth work, and who were inspired by the tremendous confidence in the new possibilities which the post-war situation offered to men who would seize the opportunities for action. It was a great festival of unbroken idealism and since Germans did not participate and there were few speakers from Continental Europe the note of post-war disillusionment was not clearly heard.\(^3\)

On the purpose of the business world, the Pörtschach conference stated: “...the main purpose of trade and industry, whether of employer or employed, should be to serve the community, and not merely to secure financial gain.”\(^4\) This statement reflected both American optimism and the teachings of Welfare Capitalism, which was the prevalent policy in the US during that period. In general, the questions that the Pörtschach conference dealt with were mainly those of the Social Gospel, which had faded after WW I. In the YMCA, the ideas of the Social Gospel continued to live.\(^5\)

However, the YMCA did not see its mission in direct political action. Instead, the policy of the YMCA was expressed in the declaration of the South American Federation of YMCAs in 1925. “The Young Men’s Christian Association does not wish to take part in the political and social struggles, but it is of opinion that

\(^1\) WComPle 1922c, 1; WConfPrep 1926b, 45.
\(^2\) BWConf 1923; WConfPrep 1926, 42ff.
\(^3\) Visser ‘t Hooft 1973, 14f.
\(^4\) BWConf 1923, 10.
\(^5\) On Welfare Capitalism and voluntary organisations, see Hall 1987, 10-15.
\(^6\) Visser ‘t Hooft (1973, 17f.) writes in his memoirs (on the situation a year after the conference) rather critically: “I could not share their tremendous optimism and idealism... And the YMCA itself seemed to be in danger of identifying itself with a Social Gospel theology which was far removed from the biblical message which Karl Barth was re-interpreting in such a powerful manner.”
its mission and its duty is to offer its contribution towards the solution of these problems through the ethical and religious education of youth."

In spite of the influence of the Pörtschach conference, the resolutions of the 1926 Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference were modest. The only social questions that were dealt with were the sex question, race relations and international questions. Even in the race question, the condemnation was indirect: “...Christ, in whom there is no racial division.” The emphasis was on research and education. In next year, the World’s Committee appointed a departmental Research and Information Committee, which had sub-committees on industrial problems, international questions, race relations and training, and a commission on sex education was to be created.

The years between Helsingfors (Helsinki) 1926 and Cleveland 1931 were significant for the development of the YMCA mission regarding social issues. Visser ‘t Hooft says in his memoirs that the American leaders in the World’s Alliance were inspired by Social Gospel ideology. The significant point in this ideology was that although it did not fully deny the transcendent world, it saw the Kingdom of God as immanent: God’s Kingdom could be built on earth. It would emerge when democracy, justice and peace are established. In this question Anglo-Saxon and German views differed. Visser ‘t Hooft writes that “almost every meeting at which Americans and Germans were present led to a rather sharp debate between the advocates of the eschatological, otherworldly and those of an evolutionary, thisworldly conception of the Kingdom of God.”

Thus, again we see the difference between German and American thinking. The Social Gospel was an American product, which was sharply criticised by Germans. As we have seen, the American influence in the World’s Alliance increased from the First World War on and, when Germans did not participate in international YMCA meetings before Helsingfors (Helsinki) 1926, the Social Gospel ideology swept into the World’s Alliance.

Before the Cleveland World’s Conference and its attached youth conferences in Toronto in 1931, the World’s Alliance had developed its policy on social issues. Resolution No VII on Industrial Relations had rather traditional emphases:

(a) Work for individuals is an essential Christian duty; to unite Christian young men is, undoubtedly, one of the Association’s purposes. Whatever external conditions may be in which boys and young men live, one of their outstanding needs is Christian fellowship. The Association is primarily concerned with the development of individual Christian character and faith,

(b) Society will be transformed by, individuals living a Christian life; in “associating their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom among young men” members will surely show a quality of life which will act as a leaven to transform the surroundings

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1 WComR 1926, 25.
2 WConf 1926, 233-237.
3 WComEx 1927a, 6; WComPle 1927, 5; WComR 1931, 83-86
in which they live and work. Through individual Christians the light will be carried into the darkness of the world.\(^1\)

In this resolution, we find the old YMCA emphasis on the individual. The primary task of the movement “is primarily concerned with the development of individual Christian character and faith.” The resolution confirms the old principle that the world will be transformed only through individuals that are united in Christ as the Paris Basis stated. This ideology was also emphasised in the study material\(^2\) of the Amsterdam World Conference of Christian Youth eight years later:

One of the most important facts to be kept in mind in all efforts at social reconstruction is that man, left to his own resources, expresses himself in the same manner in whatever organizational arrangement he may be placed. In other words, the acquisitiveness and self-interest of man has never yet been overcome by environmental or organizational change.\(^3\)

This underlines the view that task of the YMCA was not in creating new social structures - either peacefully or through a revolution or demonstrations. The YMCA leaders had a strong belief that without individual change, there would not be any change in the world. However, as said before, the YMCA was not unanimous on this issue. In the Mysore World’s Conference in 1937, the idea of a new social order was much alive. The first chapter of the report of the conference starts with the following paragraph:

To go down into the chawls of Bombay, some of the most revolting slums in the whole world, appals one with the realization of the hideous wreckage of human life that can result through simply letting things drift. The massacre of the innocents that gave Herod the Great immortality pales into insignificance beside the continuous holocaust of baby-life in those chawls. More than one-half of the babies born there die within the first twelve months.\(^4\)

The reality of India was more than Western delegates had expected. The names of Commissions were ominous: they all started with words “The Will of God for Youth...” Again Social Gospel language! Half of the Commissions focused on social issues like the new social order, state and nation, international relations, inter-racial relations - and the tone was similar to Cleveland. The difference was that in India, social problems were more visible than in America.\(^5\)

In the Centennial Conferences, issues related to social problems emerged in two (out of eight) sections of the main conference and in three (out of four) commissions of the Young Men’s Conference. In both conferences, one of these focused on international questions\(^6\). In the groups, the old YMCA principles that

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\(^1\) WConf 1931, 5.
\(^2\) Walter W. Gethman, the general secretary of the World’s Alliance 1927-1937, was the other writer of the study document.
\(^3\) WCCY 1939, 72.
\(^4\) WConf 1937, 9.
\(^5\) WConf 1937, 9-41.
\(^6\) Section VI focused on human rights and race relations, refugees, homeless people and migrants, employee relationships and labour problems, family relationships, welfare state, poverty and ideological totalitarianism (WConf 1955, 77f.). Section VII focused on international affairs like Christian community requirements, international misunderstanding and war (WConf 1955, 79f.). Com-
were stated in previous conferences were repeated. The delegates had a clear vision that racism and war were against the will of God, the human person is sacred and humanity is one family. The attitude of the YMCA towards social problems was seen in the young men’s statement on disarmament: “The human mind and spirit are the real hindrance to peace, not guns and manpower. Disarmament without faith and love is useless.” Thus, the task of the YMCA was to change the individual. This was the task of normal association work.

Along with association work, the YMCA had to respond to the urgent needs of special groups. For the World’s Alliance, these groups were victims of war, refugees and migrants. The YMCA had to work among these groups “with a view to improving living conditions and the process of integration into the communities of the respective countries in which such people are resident, and to facilitating their voluntary repatriation or re-location.”

**TO SUM UP**, the YMCA adopted a principle of neutrality regarding political issues in 1872, when the Second Fundamental Principle was added to the Paris Basis. However, after WW I, the issue of racism arose in the agenda and the YMCA condemned it as a sin. In a similar way, war was declared as being a violation of God’s will. Thus, the YMCA partly gave up its neutrality when it saw some political issues as issues of faith. However, in general, the YMCA favoured the traditional non-political philanthropic action. Along with its direct action, the YMCA strategy was to offer young people the possibility to study social problems so that they could carry out their responsibility as citizens.

mission I of the Young Men’s Conference dealt various ‘isms’, like Humanism, Communism, ‘comfortism’ and Nationalism and their answers to the world’s problems (WConf 1955, 108ff.). Commission II focused on society and dealt with, among other things, themes like family, discrimination and political and economic conditions (WConf 1955, 113f.). Finally, Commission III focused on international affairs, like peace, pacifism, military service, internationalism, colonialism, co-existence, disarmament, United Nations and world government (WConf 1955, 115-118).

1 WConf 1955, 78.
2 WConf 1955, 117.
3 WConf 1955, 78.
6.3.7. Missionaries of God’s Kingdom

...the call should go out to the YMCAs of the world to adopt a bold policy for the expansion and extension of the work of the Association, particularly in those areas in which its service is at present all too limited; to undertake greatly increased efforts for multiplying its leadership, both voluntary and professional, and to give these leaders the necessary equipment to enable them to bear effective Christian witness to their fellows in the world of today; and to provide the financial resources required for these urgently needed developments in the local, national, and world service of the Association.

Centennial Declaration of the YMCA, 1955

The YMCA was a child of the Missionary Movement, its partner and ardent supporter. Moreover, the Paris Basis stated that the raison d’être of the YMCA was in the extension of the Kingdom of God. In this general framework, the YMCA saw its special task as working among young men as a lay movement. Thus, the work of the YMCA differed from the missionary work of churches in its goals. In the seventh statement of the Centennial Declaration, both expansion and extension are underlined. Below, I will focus mainly on the policy of the extension work. The statistical expansion and extension\(^1\) has already been referred to in chapters 4.2. - 4.4.

**IN THE EARLY STAGE**, the YMCA idea spread primarily by the members’ personal contacts. In particular, George Williams’ business travels were an important means in extending the idea. Along with the travels of YMCA members, the other significant factor in extension were visits of foreigners to the London YMCA rooms, especially during the World Exhibition in 1851. They then brought the idea back to their countries. German Jünglingsvereine, in turn, spread through the network of German emigrants.

The extension work of the World’s Alliance begun with the employment of Charles Fermaud as the first secretary in 1878. His travels were actually missionary tours and he planted new associations in Protestant Europe mainly. However, he was also eager to spread the movement to Portugal and Spain, but there the work was not successful and was terminated. However, the main contribution of local YMCAs to missionary work during these early decades was through denominational missionary societies. The YMCA did not have its own full time missionaries until the last decade of the 19th century.

**THE AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION** of the YMCA traces its origins to Northfield summer school at Mt. Hermon in 1886, and the world tours of American Luther Wishard (1888-1892) and British Hind Smith (1890-1891). The policy of the new enterprise was discussed in the 1888 Stockholm World’s Conference.

In 1886, Dwight L. Moody, along with Luther Wishard, organised a summer school in Mt. Hermon. In that conference, hundreds of young men promised to devout themselves to missionary work. This was the beginning of the Student

\(^1\) On the difference of the concepts, see note 6 on page 151.
Volunteer Movement, which supplied men both to the YMCA and missionary societies. However, it was only the following year that John T. Swift, as the first North American foreign secretary, was sent to Japan by the request of the Japanese government to teach English in governmental colleges. This marked the beginning of the foreign work of the North American movement. Thus, the extension of the North American YMCA was a direct consequence of the Mt. Hermon student revival.1

Wishard’s tour was his own idea and, because the NAIC was not willing to fund it, he raised support from the American business world. The NAIC offered Wishard’s services to the CIC, which accepted the offer and appointed him “to be without any expense our special [extraordinaire] representative during a journey of five years that he is undertaking in various missionary fields.” He recognised that missionaries had founded YMCAs in various Asian cities, strengthened them and founded new ones. Along with this direct work, he also collected facts for further work.2

The Stockholm World’s Conference in 1888 is a hallmark of YMCA extension work because in that conference, the YMCA defined the policy for its extension work. The British delegation criticised the CIC because of the appointment of Wishard. However, the appointment was approved and this laid one basis for the extension policy of the World’s Alliance: the Alliance worked through its members and authorised them to be its representatives. As we have seen, this was largely due to the organisational policy in the YMCA. The movement favoured local independence and, in order to maintain it, national movements offered manpower instead of funding the staff appointed by the World’s Alliance. As we have seen in chapter 4.4, this principle meant that YMCAs of colonial powers in particular extended their types of associations in their colonies. As result of this, the YMCA did not have any unified extension strategy. When Americans tried to plant their idea before Jubilee Conference in 1905, it was rejected because the movement could not agree which kind of model associations should be planted.3

Another principle was also laid in Stockholm. Because of fears of confusions between the YMCA and missionary societies, Richard C. Morse, the general secretary of the NAIC, “guaranteed that they had not made, and would not make, a

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1 Hopkins 1951, 316-321; Latourette 1957, 37-44, 165ff.
2 Shedd 1955b, 280 (word in brackets by Shedd).
4 The technical reason for criticism was that the action of the CIC was unconstitutional because the issue had not been on the agenda of the Conference. Shedd notes that it was not the case - the Geneva Executive had informed member movements on the plan and Wishard, himself, had visited Britain where he told about his plans. Shedd (1955b, 292) argues that the real reason was the fear of British that the extension work of the YMCA “might cause embarrassment in the relation of British YMCAs to missionary societies in colonial possessions and to the YMCAs that were beginning to take root in these countries.” Moreover, British did not like it that their influence in the World’s Alliance was being reduced and the power centre was moving from Europe to North America. (Shedd 1955b, 290ff., 298f.)
5 On model associations, see Shedd 1955b, 394-417.
single forward step, excepting in agreement with the Churches. This laid the policy that the YMCA would not start a new project in any country without request from either existing Evangelical churches or Protestant missionaries. With this policy, the YMCA wanted to underline that it was not a church, but a servant of churches in missionary work.

When Wishard was appointed, the policy had been defined and when Hind Smith was planning a personal tour to British colonies, British movement offered his services to the CIC. Although his tour was shorter and not only for YMCA purposes, he managed to establish 11 new associations during his five-month travel. Perhaps the most significant ones were the two associations in Jerusalem: one for Arabs and one for converts from Judaism. He also laid foundations for the work of the first British foreign secretary, Robert McCann who went to India in 1892.

When Wishard and McCann founded the Madras association in 1890, the work grew so quickly that the first National Convention of the YMCAs in India could be held in 1891. In this meeting, one possible conflict between American and European movements emerged. Morse had written to Fermaud in 1890: “That the Paris Basis will be the basis of the work in the foreign mission field as it is on the home field is certainly self-evident and axiomatic.” However, American influence was seen in the amendment that restricted the active membership to Protestant Christian Churches. This was evidently due to the American Portland Basis and the tension between these two bases remained until North Americans changed their basis in 1931. The issue was whether YMCA members should be members of Evangelical Churches, or was it enough that they sign the Paris Basis as a personal confession. As seen in chapter four, the issue was important in Catholic, Orthodox and non-Christian areas, where the majority of members were non-Protestants.

The first foreign secretaries Wishard, Swift and McConaughy were university graduates (McConaughy in law and the other two in theology). Their careers, in fact, laid the requirements for the upcoming new secretaries. Wishard wrote in his report to the CIC in 1891:

I cannot too strongly emphasize the importance of every foreign general secretary being, first, a man of experience in the general secretaryship, and second, a man of university education... He must have served as a general secretary, in order to be prepared for the difficult problems which daily present themselves...

The secretary must be a man of thorough university education, not only in order that he may maintain his standing among the leading missionaries... but also in order that he may command the respect of the better class of young men.

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1 Fermaud’s notes on the Conference (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 292).
2 Shedd 1955b, 308.
3 Morse to Fermaud on April 23, 1890 (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 310).
4 Shedd 1955b, 304, 310.
I am fully aware that this standard of qualifications is very high, but I cannot, in justice to the work in the East and my associates in the West, lower the standard. We shall not require many men in the East for many years and they must be leaders.1

Thus, the pioneering stage of expansion work laid four basic principles for YMCA missionary activities. First, the work was done by member movements, not merely by the World’s Committee2. Second, entering a new field required a call from the Protestant missionaries in the country or from existing Evangelical churches. Third, the work was to be based on the Paris Basis, although the new associations were free to modify their bases as long they were in accord with the Paris Basis. Fourth, the work required trained and experienced staff.

One basic question that the world movement could not solve was the leadership in the expansion work. The British movement kept the question alive from 1888 to 1894 and required that the World’s Alliance should be in the lead of the extension work. This, however, would have required both money and effective leadership. As we have seen, national movements were not willing to increase the payments to the World’s Alliance and, thus the right idea remained only theory. Moreover, as noted in chapter 5.3.3, Charles Fermaud was not able to take a lead in this new enterprise. The extension of the YMCA had two poles for the next half century: one in Europe and one in North America.

In Europe, the British movement took the lead in sending foreign secretaries to missionary lands, but it suffered from a lack of funds and, thus, its work was not as effective as that of Americans3. This led to an American dominance in this work and American-type city-associations emerged in Asia and Latin America. Africa, in turn, where Europeans did their work, was largely neglected. One reason for this might be that European national YMCAs were much smaller than American ones and directed their missionary funds through missionary societies4. Another reason might be that European YMCAs and the World’s Alliance directed its work to unoccupied countries in Europe. Travels were a significant part of the work of CIC secretaries5.

In London 1894 Conference, there were also some far-reaching principles laid down. Luther Wishard had emphasised the work among students in Asia. In London he said: “If we can transmit to the educated young men in non-Christian lands the spirit and agencies of the College YMCA they will accomplish a work of evangelization which foreigners alone can never accomplish.” In this statement,

1 Wishard L.D.: Report to CIC on the YMCAs in Asia, May 1891, pp 6ff. (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 310f.).
2 Later, at the Christiania (Oslo) World’s Conference in 1902, this principle was expressed as follows: “The duty of the World’s Committee will lie rather in stimulating and fostering the interest of state, national, international, and inter-colonial committees in the work to be done than in itself undertaking that work. . . . Any action of the World’s Committee must tend to promote, to supplement, but not to supersede the work of others.” (Association News August-September 1902. Quoted in Shedd 1955b, 389)
3 Shedd 1955b, 326.
4 Cedergren 1955, 665.
5 WComR 1894, 10; 1898, 13-17; 1902, 11; Shedd 1955b, 351, 366.
6 Shedd 1955b, 341.
two important aspects directed future YMCA work. First, college students were the strategic target group on which the YMCA focused. This target group needed their own associations and, later, this led to the formation of the WSCF although Wishard had hoped to keep them under the YMCA. Second, the task of foreign secretaries was to be a stimulus for locals, who did the main work. Thus, instead of sending increasingly foreign secretaries, the YMCA aimed to build national movements ‘self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating’ as soon as possible. Along with the indigenization of the movements in the third world, the aspect of co-operation and partnership increased. However, this process was not always free of difficulties.

Another principle that was discussed in London, was the relationship to young men from other faiths. In 1892, the Second Indian National Convention at Bombay had discussed the issue and made a resolution “that Associations be exhorted to do everything in their power towards extending the privileges of their work to the non-Christian communities around them.” This led to a reduction of tensions between Christians, Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists and Parsees in places where youth from these groups, lived, played and worked together.¹ As we have seen in the chapter on interfaith dialogue, friendly relations with majority faiths were crucial to Christians in India. YMCA interfaith dialogue was in this sense prevalent, even before the emergence of the Social Gospel, which legitimated interfaith dialogue from another perspective.

CO-OPERATION, instead of one-way support, could be seen in the third principle that emerged in London in 1894. It was expressed prophetically by David McConaughy: “there is no such thing as a foreign field and home field... When you stand at the foot of the Cross of Christ there is no near or distant point, no home or foreign missions².” For the YMCA, as well as for churches, the gospel was to be preached in the same way in all contexts.

From the Versailles Plenary 1900 on, the relationships between the NAIC and the Central International Committee (from 1902: World’s Committee) slowly started to change. One reason was that Mott had become a member of the Central International Committee and both his influence in and responsibility on the World’s Alliance grew continuously. From Christiania (Oslo) World’s Conference in 1902, the understanding of the World’s Committee as a co-ordinator and as a clearing-house of extension work grew constantly³. However, there were tensions and the Executive arranged a special meeting with Mott on April 1912. Mott clarified the relations when he stated: “The International Committee of North America cannot be, and has no ambition to be, a World’s Committee... This

¹ Shedd 1955b, 362.
² Shedd 1955b, 342, 436.
³ The English National Council stated in Christiania (Oslo): “The Committee should be the medium through which the labours of the workers of different countries should be co-ordinated, so as to avoid anything in the nature of clashing or overlapping.” (Shedd 1955b, 389). This mediatory function of the World’s Committee was repeated in Resolution V of the Barmen-Elberfeld World’s Conference in 1909 (Idem. 452).
World’s Committee should be the World’s Committee.” One reason for this turn-around in American thinking might be that, for the first time, they needed foreign help. They could not take care of migration work alone but needed help in European ports. On the other hand, Mott criticised the World’s Committee and stated that he felt that the Committee had not used all possible European resources. Summarising Mott’s opinion, Cedergren says: “The distinctive work of the World’s Committee should be in leading the national movements to realize their responsibilities.” This far, the extension work had been mainly on behalf of American and British movements.

Mott’s criticism was heard. In its report to Edinburgh World’s Conference, the World’s Committee emphasised that the task of the Committee is to stimulate interest in missionary efforts in national movements. Another task of the Committee is to provoke to the establishment of missionary committees in all countries. Along these tasks, the World’s Committee could be engaged in direct action, like in Europe and Asia Minor. However, the report underlined the opinion that it would be a pity if the task remained the work of the World’s Alliance. Instead, national movements were urged to take responsibility for the work so that they could continue such work that had been started by the World’s Committee. In such cases, the task of the Alliance would be to act as a mediator between movements.

The role of the World’s Alliance was clarified during the 1920’s. There were several reasons for this. First, the war work during WW I had brought British and American secretaries into close co-operation. After the war, when the war work in Eastern European countries was transformed into permanent association work, they reached a mutual understanding how to divide responsibilities. Second, European movements aroused themselves to carry out their responsibility for the extension work as Mott has urged. Third, from 1921 to 1926, Karl Fries, a close friend of Mott from the WSCF, was the general secretary of the World’s Alliance. Moreover, after Fries, all general secretaries (Walter W. Gethman, Tracy Strong and Paul M. Limbert) were from the US. Mott’s personal relationship with these men, especially to Fries, evidently helped to build mutual understanding. This cooperation was naturally intensified when Mott was elected as the President of the World’s Alliance in 1926. Fourth, the World’s Alliance managed to define the role and policy of the World’s Committee in extension work in the 1921 Utrecht plenary and appointed a special committee for extension in 1929. Finally, Cedergren 1955, 665.

1 Shedd 1955b, 439.
2 The World’s Committee report to the Barmen-Elberfeld World’s Conference in 1909 (WComR 1909, 9) says: “But the North American Associations have found that in order to effectually carry out their plan they needed help also in the emigration countries and ports.” On the work for American migrants, see WComPle 1908d; Shedd 1955b, 440-443.
3 Cedergren 1955, 665.
4 WComR 1913, 20f.
5 The principles were attached to a list of foreign secretaries in various lands that the World’s Alliance published from 1920 on. The main points were as follows: First, the objective of the Extension work is to develop autonomous and self-supporting indigenous national and local committees. Second, the indigenous national committee should be in lead of the work in the country. Third,
gren underlines the significance of the NAIC foreign work conference at Lake Placid in 1924. Mott had invited representatives from the World’s Alliance and Scottish and English national committees to that conference. He points out that several of the recommendations of the Joint Conference on National Policies at Ithaca in 1931 on extension work were built at Lake Placid.

The Ithaca Conference on National Policies in 1931 was a hallmark in the extension work of the YMCA. The principles were laid in Edinburgh and Lake Placid, but now they were drawn together and the tasks were defined. Cedergren calls the Ithaca findings “the Magna Charta of Extension for over twenty years.” Thus, there is reason to quote the section entitled Responsibilities of the World’s Committee in full. The tasks of the Committee were:

To initiate surveys of unoccupied fields, wherever possible and advisable in collaboration with the World’s Young Women’s Christian Association and the World’s Student Christian Federation.

To determine the order of priority in the light of the foregoing principles.

To stimulate in all national movements an interest in and a responsibility for the extension of work into new fields.

To guide in determining which national movement or movements because of proximity, similar cultural and religious backgrounds, and Association experience, or other factors, should be called upon to enter a given field.

To stimulate co-operative undertakings where a single movement cannot assume full responsibility for entering a field, or where it is desirable, in view of the needs of the field, that more than one national alliance should accept responsibility.

To act as a clearing-house for the initiative and intentions of the national alliances, which to that end should keep the World’s Committee informed of planned actions in this realm.

To encourage experiments with new methods of beginning work in new countries such as sending for training representatives of countries to be entered to a country with a well-established Association movement, choosing such men as have had previous contact with the YMCA.

To study immediately the advisability and practicability of relating a secretary to its staff, who would devote himself wholly to the carrying out of the above proposals.

Contrary to previous definitions of YMCA extension policy, the Ithaca conference placed the World’s Alliance in a central place in extension, although the main burden of the extension was still on national movements. The World’s Alliance was now seen as a co-ordinator of the whole work. The planning of the work and formulation of priorities were now clearly tasks of the World’s Alliance and only the execution of the policy was on a bilateral basis. In the Centennial Con-
ference, Section VIII expressed the tasks of the World Alliance and national movements as follows:

In order to further the extension programme of the World Alliance, all YMCAs, large and small, national and local, be invited to create working World Service Committees, with the following functions:
- to educate their members in sharing in the whole World Service mission, and developing individual voluntary and sacrificial support for it according to the utmost capacity of each;
- to inform the World Alliance of their resources, both in leadership and funds, available for World Service; and,
- to acquaint the National Movements and local Associations with information received from the World Alliance on needs and opportunities in other Movements.¹

Thus, the task of the World’s Alliance was to be a clearinghouse of the flow of resources. An interesting point was that the Section also emphasised the responsibility of the younger movements to become self extending:

Younger National Movements which heretofore have been receiving Movements, but which have now come of age, be urged to examine their resources in funds and leadership with the end in view of their becoming contributing Movements, if not sending Movements in World Service enterprise.²

TO SUM UP, the London YMCA was founded as a missionary agency for work among young men. This mission was expressed in the Paris Basis. The YMCA was a revivalistic movement, and evangelistic campaigns coloured the YMCA work for several decades. With the rise of the Four-fold Programme, the YMCA focused more on nurture than revivalism Christianity. When YMCAs in the 19th century only supported missionary societies, they started their own extension work after the Mt. Hermon Student Conference in the last decade of the century. In particular, the American YMCA planted new YMCAs in Latin America and Asia. The work focused primarily on recreation, physical education and leadership training and its basis intention was to be an outreach arm of the Christian Church.

The role of the World’s Alliance was first minimal in extension and focused mainly on Europe. Along with migration to the US, Americans started to direct funds to the Alliance. Its role began to shape the co-ordination of bilateral work done by the member movements. To a great extent, the YMCA work is a work from grassroots to grassroots, as the emphasis on local work indicates.

¹ WConf 1955, 82.
² WConf 1955, 82.
6.3.8. Diversified Mission of the YMCA

In this sub-chapter, I have focused on the Centennial Declaration, which interpreted the YMCA mission stated in the Paris Basis. To a large extent, it was a legitimisation of existing activities. In the declaration, it can be seen that the mission of the YMCA has diversified during its hundred years. When the YMCA has expanded and extended, it has faced new challenges in new environments. Formally, the task has been the same: “extending His Kingdom among young men,” as the Paris basis states the mission of the YMCA to be. However, the content of this statement, and especially of understanding the Kingdom of God, changed through the years. When the movement expanded and extended, its strategic and tactical goals diversified. Moreover, when the methodology of work required professional experts, these methods tended to become ends themselves.

The mission of the YMCA can be understood from its identity as a youth movement. The YMCA understood itself as a movement of youth for youth. In this sense, the original idea of a peer group has not changed. During its history, the YMCA widened its mission from young men only to other age groups. In particular, boys’ work became important. Along with a focus on boys, the YMCA diversified its work among young men and created special organisations to serve youth in armed forces, in universities, in rural areas, etc. The aim was to train young men to serve their societies and churches. In this work, the Four-fold Programme had a central place.

As Christians, the founders of the World’s Alliance recognised the unity existing among them. This existing unity is the key to understanding the YMCA mission in ecumenism. In the YMCA, Christian unity is not something to come some day but existing reality. It is from this idea in the Paris Basis that the YMCA has fostered the visible unity of churches. The YMCA view of Christian unity is more maximal than minimal, i.e. it has focused more on practical co-operation of Christians than doctrinal discussions. In a way, the aim of the YMCA has been to show young people that they are united in one Lord in spite of their doctrinal differences.

Extension and service of young men brought many non-Christians to affiliated membership of the YMCA. Responsibility for them led the YMCA to interfaith dialogue. In particular, the Indian YMCA and other Asian YMCAs have emphasised the need to understand other religions. For some of them, it was a strategy to indigenize themselves when their nations struggled for independence. They tried to interpret gospel in the language of their own culture.

Promoting world peace as one aspect of the YMCA mission arose from experiences in the work with armed forces, work for prisoners of war and work for refugees and displaced persons. This practical knowledge was attached to the Social Gospel view of God’s Kingdom as His Creation. These factors led the YMCA to campaign for world peace and the abolition of war. War condemned as a consequence of sin. Along with its philanthropic activities, the YMCAs had been active in fostering international understanding among youth in its various activities.
Social and economic justice as a goal of the YMCA arose from the movement’s focus on youth. These were questions that young people were dealing with and the YMCA had to carry out its educational responsibility in this field as well. The theoretical frame came from the Social Gospel’s emphasis on social justice. Racism was especially condemned as sin because it broke the unity among God’s children. The special mission of the YMCA in this field was not to take a position on the barricades, but to change individuals through education. Thus, the YMCA fostered studies and discussions of social issues, but left political actions to individuals. Along with education, the YMCA continued its philanthropic activities.

The YMCA was a missionary movement and it aimed to work “for the extension of His Kingdom among young men.” In this extension work, a shift from general evangelism to nurture of the whole man, body mind and spirit had happened. In its extension work, the YMCA mission was to reach youth and through its activities raise interest in Christianity. It was indirect evangelisation through recreational activities, physical education and leadership training. The main point was not what services were given but how they were given.

TO SUM UP, the mission of the YMCA was diversified during its first hundred years although it remained in the framework of the Paris Basis. This diversification was not always intentional but emerged as reactions to the new needs of youth. Some aspects of the mission arose from the main goal to serve youth and some from the YMCA Christian identity. Thus, work for world peace has its roots in the needs of young soldiers away from home. The work for justice arose from the understanding of basic unity among God’s children. It is from the same root that the ecumenism and interfaith dialogue of the YMCA arose: the unity already existed - it has only to be manifested. In general, the YMCA aimed to serve whole man: body, mind and spirit.

6.4. The Change in the Mission View of the YMCA, 1855-1955

In this chapter, I have focused on the core elements of the YMCA. Now it is time to draw some conclusions as to how the YMCA changed and what impact this change had on the mission of the World’s Alliance. In chapter 2.3.1, it was stated that the mission view contains an explanation of the world, a vision of the future, vocatio of the organisation, knowledge of means, and ideology.

During the hundred years of its existence, the World’s Alliance faced a world that was radically changing. One task of the World’s Committee was to study and interpret this change to its member movements. This interpretation was not presented to World’s Conferences between the First World’s Conference in 1855 and the 19th World’s Conference in 1926. In his general secretary’s report, Karl Fries presented the context of the YMCA with five aspects: economic, physical, moral and spiritual, intellectual, and moral. It was a time when the Social Gospel had started to influence the YMCA and social concerns had become spiritual matters. From then on, World’s Committee reports analysed the mentioned aspects of the
world. If one could make some conclusions about all these reports, the summary would stress that, in spite of all economic progress, the problems of youth were basically same as presented to the Paris 1855 Conference. There were social evils that threatened the life of young men, and churches were not able to respond to the material and spiritual needs of youth. The new aspect in these reports was the rise of ideological secularism with its allies: Communism, Fascism and Nationalism. Alongside them, the revitalisation of ancient eastern faiths had brought new actors in the field of youth work.

When the movement expanded, it faced different cultures and different religions. Explanations that had been self-evident to the early fathers did not work everywhere. Adaptation to new contexts enlarged the vision of the World’s Alliance. The Christian contexts of Europe and America were no longer the only environments where its members lived. The Alliance had to look at its environment from a global perspective, while the work had to be implemented on the local level.

Along with these external factors, the understanding of the target, young man, changed. When the YMCA had focused on the work for him, the movement realised that he had manifold problems that had to be faced, in order to serve him. Moreover, these needs were different in various phases of life. Accordingly, the YMCA had to focus on the new sciences of sociology, psychology and education science in order to understand the world and young man.

The vision of the hoped-for future changed as well. In 1855, the Kingdom of God had been seen as a heavenly city towards which Christians pilgrimage, as John Bunyan’s famous novel described it. The kingdom of that time was transcendental, although its citizens lived in this immanent world. The Four-fold Programme first changed the focus of the YMCA to the immanent themes. The body of man was seen as “a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19)” and this temple was to be kept in good condition. Later, the emergence of the Social Gospel widened this idea from the individual body to the whole world: as the body was God’s creation, so was the entire world. The Kingdom of God extended to the immanent realm.

The shift in view on the Kingdom of God was central in understanding the hoped-for future that stated the final goal. The world was no longer seen as a kingdom of evil from which true Christians should separate themselves. Instead, the world was seen as God’s world and His dominion. From this perspective, the task of Christians was to make sure that God’s eternal “will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10).” However, on this point, there was a wide disagreement in the YMCA. The line was drawn between Germans and Americans. Germans underlined God’s sovereignty to the extent that man had no role in extending God’s Kingdom. Americans, in turn, saw the duty of every Christian to extend

1 Here one can hear an echo from Luther (1994), who, in his Small Catechism, wrote as an explanation to the Lord’s Prayer: “Truly God’s Kingdom comes by itself., without our prayer. But we pray in this request that it come to us as well.” This, however, did not mean fatalism. It was Lutheran social ethics that created the first welfare states in Denmark and Prussia. Discussion on this, see Muukkonen 2000, 30-33.
this kingdom. On both sides, the other point of view was frequently misunderstood. Germans did not see the task of a Christian to wait passively and Americans did not reduce the Kingdom of God to social world. Anyway, Americans were active in spreading both the view of an immanent kingdom and the view of a transcendent heavenly city. For Americans, spreading the gospel and spreading the (idealised) American way of life was almost the same thing because their view was that the US Constitution was modeled according to Christian principles. Although heavenly aspects remained, in practical actions the task of the YMCA became to build an immanent better world. Consequently, the world that the YMCA aimed to build was a world of democracy, justice and peace.

Along with the shift in the final goal, the YMCA vocation changed. Although it was still mainly an organisation of young, middle-class, white, Protestant men, it widened its membership basis. It became a movement of youth, which aimed to serve the body, mind and spirit of youth. Often this meant the dominance of physical education but, for YMCA leaders, it was a legitimate part of their vocation. Along with age, sex, class and race differentiation, the YMCA widened its vocation of promoting Christian unity. Instead of focusing on Protestants only, the YMCA saw that it should foster the unity of all Christians, even the unity of all mankind. This latter aspect was again a consequence of the Social Gospel. If the kingdom of the Messiah was a kingdom of peace and justice, it required that Christians should strive for the abolition of war and social evils. In this vocation, it was no longer so important to convert people, but to teach them to follow the laws of this kingdom. Thus, if the YMCA could “help the Moslems and the Hindus to be Christians toward one another”, it was enough: they followed the laws of the kingdom. However, it must be stressed that there was a huge variation in the vocation on local and national levels. Some insisted on traditional evangelism while others focused on immanent goals. The commonly agreed view was that in both cases the task starts from individual, not from social structures.

In the beginning, the YMCA had used existing models of philanthropy and revivalism in its work. In the same way, it built its organisation according to the models of the business world (and the Swiss army). Methods, which did not exist, were invented in both action and organisation. The YMCA was a laboratory of new organisational inventions. When some model proved to be effective, it diffused through the YMCA international network. In fact, it could be said that the process of method developing was seen as central. The YMCA used modern human sciences (education, psychology and sociology) to keep its youth work methodology in pace with scientific developments. At the same time, the movement trimmed its organisation to meet the challenges of the work. In this sense, methods and organisational structures were essential parts of the YMCA mission.

Finally, YMCA values were sacralized in the symbols of the YMCA. The Paris Basis, that was a model of the YMCA in 1855, became a model for the YMCA since then. This Basis was visualised in the Badge of the World’s Alliance. They both saw Christ as the centre of the movement and that the unity of Christians was God-given, not negotiated by humans. This led the YMCA to emphasise what it called ‘maximal ecumenism’ - ecumenism that was as inclusive as possible.
Along with the Paris Basis and the Badge, YMCA ideology was manifested in the symbol of red triangle: a man is a unity of body, mind and soul. This idea led the YMCA to focus on the wellbeing of the whole man - not only of his soul.

The role of the Bible in the YMCA was also central. One can only theorise what would have happened to the Social Gospel idea if people had not known their Bibles so well. The arguments of the Social Gospel were those that everyone could read from the prophets and from the Sermon on the Mount.

The transformation of the YMCA mission during its first hundred years was manifold. Some can claim that during the process, the YMCA was secularised. From the Evangelical perspective, this claim is justified. The YMCA gave up on large revival campaigns and Bible classes. On the other hand, socially minded Christians can claim that only when the YMCA found its social responsibility, it became a true servant of the Kingdom of God. The significance of this process is that the laymen in the YMCA developed models for the whole Ecumenical Movement, which today emphasise these same issues as essential aspects of Christianity. In general, it could be summarised - using Wittgenstein’s parable of the river - that although there were changes in the channel and sandbanks, it did not break its banks. The YMCA mission remained within the limits of the Great Commandment. Loving God and loving one’s neighbour are different sides of the same coin. However, there was a huge change in interpretation of the balance of these two commands and in understanding what it requires.
Part IV: Discussion
7. The YMCA from a Theoretical Perspective

At the beginning, I briefly presented the research model, which had been developed based on movement and nonprofit organisation theories. After that, I have focused mainly on YMCA documents and explained what kinds of inputs emerged during the first century of the YMCA. In this chapter, I will return to theories, and try to link these empirical findings to theoretical knowledge. I am well aware that this is only one possible view, because the theoretical basis is from only three scholarly traditions, namely, social movements, religious movements and third sector research\footnote{Along with change theories in social movement and organisation studies, there are also theories of general social change. Richard P. Appelbaum (1970) has given an array of these theories, including conflict, economic, cyclical, evolutionary, ecological, social psychology and equilibrium theories. James T. Duke and Barry L. Johnson (1989, 209) add processes like “invention, diffusion, differentiation, social strain, social movements and innovation” to this array. Moreover, they note that specifically religious processes are “profanation, politization, reform or renewal, repression of competing religions, and obsolesce of a particular religion.” After that, post-modernism, constructivism and game theories have given their explanations of social change.}. Moreover, it is only my view that has been developed on the basis of these theories. In spite of these remarks, I believe that both members of the YMCA and outsiders can identify the movement from this analysis.

In chapter 6.5, I focused on the change occurring from the YMCA perspective. Below, I look at how my findings on these changes can be interpreted in different theory traditions. Then, I focus on the theories and look at how YMCA research enriches or challenges theological and sociological disciplines.

7.1. What Changed in the YMCA?

7.1.1. Emergence of the YMCA

As all organisations and movements reflect the time of their emergence, it is necessary first to focus on the different theories of emergence. The elements that have been present from the beginning, are, according to Hannan and Freeman, elements that resist changing inputs. Below, I look how different theories explain the movement/organisation emergence and what implications the adoption of these theories have on interpretations of the YMCA.

In third sector theories, there are three competing theories concerning the emergence of a third sector organisations. Burton Weisbrod\footnote{Weisbrod 1975, 1977, 1988.} has argued that nonprofit organisations emerge because of the state-failure effect. State services are designed to meet the needs of an average citizen. In this situation, NPOs supply those services that the state is not willing/able to organise. This theory requires...
that the state, in general, is willing to organise something. In 19th century Britain, the state favoured local and private solutions for social problems. It was hesitant to intervene the realms of social service and education, which were traditionally seen as territories belonging to the church. In the case of the YMCA, it would be more accurate to speak about church failure than state failure. The inability of the church to meet new needs was one factor behind the emergence of the YMCA.

Another emergence theory is given by Henry Hansmann¹, who sees the source of NPOs in a market failure mechanism. When the market cannot provide necessary services, they are organised by NPOs. Especially in cases when the quality of the service cannot be valued, the nonprofit constraint ensures that the money goes to where it is intended. However, this also presupposes that the market is interested in activities that NPOs give. It can be doubted whether the mid-1800s British market was interested in doing business with public libraries or religious meetings².

The triadic transaction model of Michael Krashinsky³ explains that NPOs emerge because they function as stock markets between donors and beneficiaries. Applied to donations of time, the YMCA was this kind of clearinghouse: it united those young men who were willing to serve their fellow men and associated their efforts for this purpose.

Social movement theories have more detailed explanations for the emergence of movements. According to Turner and Killian, social movements emerge in unstructured situations where they give an interpretation of the situation and create new norms. The process, in which these norms emerge, is called milling. On the level of society, this milling process happens in the public realm. Processes emerge that Blumer calls general social movements. They are movements in their early stage, without any clear form. This stage is characterised by 'voices in the wilderness', i.e., lonely prophets who articulate the grievances and theorise possible solutions for them. Much of this theorising is based on existing values, which are modified to meet the facts of new experiences. Ann Swidler has said that culture serves as a 'tool kit' for new movements⁴. Movements use resources that they have in their cultural repertoire and modify them for their own purposes. After consensus has been achieved, there emerges, according to Douglas, either a voluntary organisation or a social movement⁵. If the explanation of the situation and actions needed is widely accepted, a social movement tries to influence the government to implement reforms. If the view is accepted only by a limited group, a voluntary organisation emerges. After this, the growth of the organisation is dependent on the struggle for resources in its environment. These, in turn, are de-

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² Lester Salamon (1987) argues that NPOs do not emerge either because of market or state failure. On the contrary, state intervention happens when voluntary organisations fail to perform their function.
³ Krashinsky 1986.
⁴ Swidler 1986.
⁵ Douglas 1997, 45.
pendant on the number of competitors struggling for the same resources, and the power of its enemies and allies.

Applied to the YMCA, this means that industrialism created an enormous unstructured situation where old models seemed to have little relevance. In this situation, churches were not able to cope with the flood of young people who migrated from rural areas to towns. Sarcastically, it may be said that pastors and theologians escaped either to ritualism (England) or to doctrinal orthodoxy (Germany). When, at the same time, liberal theology was attacking the old Christian beliefs, the Evangelical Revival of the 18th and 19th century arose as a protest movement against these developments. Along with spiritual renewal, the awakening stressed classical Christian philanthropy as well. The YMCA was but one, and a rather late, stream in this revival. This Evangelical Revival can be seen as that general social movement which gave birth to the YMCA. This means that the discourse of Evangelicalism was largely the discourse of the YMCA as well.

The awakening had various streams. In Britain, there was a working class stream organised through Methodism and other new dissident denominations. They, in turn, supplied leaders, for example, to the emerging Labour Movement. Thus, this stream of the awakening was organised through new denominations and the Labour Movement. Along with this dissident stream, there were liturgical, missionary, Biblical and social streams that partly overlapped, partly competed.

The revival alone does not explain the emergence of the YMCA. As Senaud has shown in Shedd’s history book, there were numerous “YMCA’s before the YMCA.” The resource mobilisation approach emphasises the ability to raise needed resources. In this task, Nasmith’s Young Men’s Societies had failed, although other determinants were rather similar. The YMCA and Evangelical Alliance represented the religiosity of the emerging and expanding middle class. This middle-class basis gave the YMCA the possibility to mobilise the financial resources needed. In particular, the upper middle class supplied both monetary resources and organisational skills that gave the YMCA a firmer basis than Nasmith’s Societies. Another reason for the YMCA’s survival during the critical years when organisational infant mortality is highest, was its ability to gain legitimisation among the upper classes as well. Since stability is much valued by the middle class, from their point of view the YMCA was a perfect tool for reformation without revolutionary changes.

In Germany, the Jünglingsvereine had a different function. They were tools for local parish work. Thus, they got their legitimisation from the status of those pastors who founded them. Although organisationally independent, the Jünglingsvereine were one part of church and this guaranteed both monetary and human resources.

In French speaking Europe, the YMCAs were often temporary student groups. However, the fast growing network of the YMCA gave stability to groups, which traditionally were rather short lived. This network phenomenon gave the YMCA

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1 Pelling (1965, 129); Brand (1974, 16); Smith (1993).
the possibility to test new organisational methods and, if they were successful, spread them to other local associations.

The emergence of the YMCA was, however, not mainly a product of the right structural factors at the right time. The human factor was crucial. Without the ability to mobilise committed laymen, the idea would have remained an interesting but short incident. In religious movements, the flame of the spirit is always important. In many senses, “faith moves mountains”. The most important aspect is that faith does not count costs. The other is that the word ‘impossible’ does not belong to the vocabulary of faith inspired people. The special aspect of the YMCA was its lay character. The London YMCA was basically led as a team and members were not primarily ‘listeners of the Word’ but ‘doers of the Word.’ The YMCA was able to give meaningful responsibilities to its male members. An achievement that few churches have been able to do.

The flame of the spirit enabled the YMCA to overcome another obstacle, the denominational boundary. When the ideology of the movement was centred on the person of Jesus, other aspects of faith were less important. Here again, the lay character of the YMCA played a significant role. Doctrinal purity was not as important to them as it was for the Evangelical Alliance, which had a long and detailed doctrinal basis. Although many YMCA leaders, especially pastors, were involved in the Evangelical Alliance, the significant aspect of the YMCA was its doctrinal openness.

In social movement studies, Robert D. Benford\(^1\) and David A. Snow\(^2\) have emphasised the significance of movement frames. They can be seen as eyeglasses through which the movement’s adherents saw the world. When the YMCA modified its identity, ideology and mission, it was done in the general frame of the Evangelical/Pietistic faith. In this frame, the Kingdom of God was seen as a transcendent realm, which, however, was already present in believers’ souls. From this perspective, extension of this kingdom meant converting unbelievers. Social programs, although important in themselves, were seen as strategies of this evangelising enterprise.

As it can be seen from above, the emergence of the YMCA can be explained by existing knowledge in various emergence theories. The important finding is that no theory on its own explains the birth of the YMCA. This leads us to Wittgenstein’s theory of family resemblance. If movements and organisations are seen as family members, they are all different. When theories are models of one or more organisations/movements, they draw a picture of these organisations/movements. Now, in a family picture, we can see that one child can have the eyes of his grandmother but a similar nose to his aunt. In the same way, organisations/movements can be seen as unique combinations of various organisational details. Moreover, like humans, organisations/movements have closer and more distant relatives. Thus, focusing on one or two theories only, would not give a full view in its all richness. In sum, the theoretical lesson of the YMCA is that there

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\(^{1}\) Benford 1997.

\(^{2}\) Snow & Benford 1992.
are various determinants that lead to the emergence of movements. Moreover, different combinations of elements can lead to the same result.

### 7.1.2. Change in the YMCA

Since Weber’s bureaucratisation theory and Michel’s oligarchisation theory\(^1\), there have been different schemes dealing with the life career of a social movement. They start with the restlessness of people and end in the institutionalisation of the movement\(^2\). The idea of stages is based on Weber’s thesis of bureaucratisation, which, in turn, was based on the root metaphor of a prophet coming from the wilderness to challenge the power of the priesthood. His mistake was to suppose that prophetism is always unstructured charismatism. When he trusted the Old Testament scholars of his time\(^3\), he did not remember that prophets could already be inside the establishment, like Jesaiah (Jewish prince) or Martin Luther (Catholic monk)\(^4\). Thus, the concept of stages should be used with care.

However, the coin is not one-sided. In many cases, the theories of stages really seem to explain the development of a movement. For such cases, the typologies are valuable. Rex Hopper’s four stages (preliminary, popular, formal and institutional) give a loose framework for the development of a movement. The stages that are missing from this theory are the stages inside the institutional stage. Moreover, it seems that the popular stage in the YMCA only emerged after its institutionalisation. Many movements still hold some movement characteristics, even if they are institutions\(^5\). This can be seen in the following cases. First, there are mobilisation episodes inside institutions that are sometimes called protest cycles. In such situations, the old institution is activated from its latent institutionalised stage\(^6\). It cannot be called a new movement because it uses the resources, reputation, experience, and ideology of the institutionalised movement. Thus, much of the energy that a new movement uses to develop these aspects can be used for other purposes. Second, there is the phenomenon of second generation that is central in religious movement studies and especially in church-sect theory\(^7\).

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1 Michels 1911.
3 On the influence of Old Testament research on Weber, see Berger 1963.
4 In cases when the elite of the society lead social movements, the concept of stage does not work in the way that theorists have supposed. For example, Scandinavian Lutheran Churches shifted from Catholicism to Lutheranism, while being all the time on an institutional level (Juva 1962, 187), although the preliminary and popular levels of German Lutheranism had influence in them.
5 Mikko Juva (1962, 193) has argued that the entire Finnish Lutheran church became a protest movement in the nineteenth century when it adapted the criticism of Finnish revival movements.
6 See, for example, Bert Klandermans’ (1994) analysis of the transformation of the Dutch Peace Movement.
7 The distinction is originally from Ernst Troeltsch who elaborated Weber’s prophet-priest distinction (1992, 331-343). Later elaborations are by H. Richard Niebuhr (1954), J. Milton Yinger (1957), and Charles Y. Clock and Rodney Stark (1965).
It states that the second generation is always closer to the main population than the generation of revival. This, in turn, leads to new protest and to a new sect. However, the second generation can also be a new boom for the movement with new challenges. The protest against the secularisation of the movement does not always create a new sect, but can remain in the parent movement. In the YMCA, this has been evident: there have been new prophets for new generations that have revitalised the movement. Third, in the case of worldwide movements, a movement can be in different stages in different countries. Fourth, as della Porta and Diani note, movements can become bureaucratised, more radical or commercialised. In the YMCA, we have seen all these developments. Bureaucracy increased, although it was kept under control; student revivals and the Social Gospel radicalised the YMCA and made it more aggressive in its extension policy; and the YMCA became highly commercialised with its gymnasium services and large hotels.

Frame theory offers a fruitful view on the change of the mission of the movement. When the frame changes, the world is ‘a new world’ and the situation must be interpreted in a new way. Sometimes the change was not total, but remained in some basic master frame. In the YMCA, these major shifts in frames occurred in interaction with the Muscular Christianity movement, the Social Gospel, the Orthodox churches and Asian cultures. Along with these, general trends in the world naturally affected the thinking of YMCA people. Muscular Christianity changed the frame of Evangelicalism to Christian manliness. Social Gospel changed the transcendent Kingdom of God to an immanent brotherhood of men. Positive contacts with the Orthodox enlarged the Protestant frame to an ecumenical one, and Asian YMCAs widened the Euro-American perspective to a global one. In spite of these shifting frames, the master frame remained the same: the unifying factor of the movement was the person of Jesus and unity in Him. This master frame enabled the YMCA to tolerate different worldviews among its constituency.

In general, social movement theories focus more on temporary protest events than on organisational evolution. Because of the short lifespan of these kinds of movements, they have not been interested in the transformation of old institutionalised movements. Moreover, although the basic difference between elementary and conventional behaviour has been abandoned, Weber’s dichotomy of charismatic and bureaucracy has determined the boundaries of subdisciplines. Social movement research focuses on mobilisation processes, and established institutions traditionally ‘belong’ in the realm of organisation studies.

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1 This has been the case of Finnish revival movements, which have remained in the Lutheran church and have not become sects.
2 Della Porta & Diani 1999, 148f.
3 Along with frame theory, worldview theories explain these shifts in people’s thinking (see chapter 2.3.1.).
4 The resource mobilization approach, which draws much from the organisational theories, is an exception (see McCarthy and Zald 1987).
5 In 1999, Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (1999, 16) argued in their textbook on social movements as follows: “...social movements are not organizations, not even of a peculiar kind.
In third sector research, there have been three basic theories, which explain the change in an organisation’s mission and other basic values. Adaptation theories state that an organisation modifies its outlook and strategies in order to accommodate itself to its environment. This environment can be the whole society or a small niche. Institutional theory states that this adaptation happens because organisations need legitimacy in order to access resources. Thus, in all environments there are certain practices and institutional models which are seen as the ‘right ones’. Some central organisations in each field are the models for others. Other organisations try to adopt the standards of these model organisations. Additionally, there are some basic cultural values that an organisation must fulfil in order to gain legitimacy. Both theories hold that an organisation is able to change in order to adapt itself into a new context. In contrast with these, ecological theory sees organisations as stable entities without much power to change themselves. Changes in the whole system occur when old organisations die and new ones emerge. Although this study more supports the two previous theories, the last has its value in emphasising the importance of stable core elements in organisations. Moreover, its value is in its emphasis on organisational resources in various niches.

Adaptation has been the dominant feature of the YMCA. The movement has been able to adapt itself to very different contexts. The only major exceptions were the Communist world and the majority of Islamic countries. This adaptation was possible because of the stress on local independence and the broad frame of Christianity. Additionally, the movement benefited from both modernism and westernisation.

This adaptation did not happen without cost. When the YMCAs rooted themselves in various contexts, these contexts forced the movement to adopt the institutional values that the hosting society had. This process had both positive and negative effects. The positive effects became evident when the movement was able to diffuse innovations from one culture to another. The negative effects were seen during wartime, when YMCA members identified themselves more with their nations than with Christianity. There were serious tensions between French and German YMCAs, between British and Indian YMCAs and between the Japanese and Chinese movements. In addition to this, there were vast theological differences between the American and German movements. These differences only diminished after the Second World War - and the solution was only in part based on the YMCAs ability to negotiate a consensus. From the end of the 19th century, the American YMCA had been increasing its influence. After WW II, American dominance was a fact. Theologically, the major opponent of the American YMCA...
had been the German *Jünglingsvereine*. When these were destroyed by the Nazis in the 1930’s, this opposition vanished. When the German YMCA was re-established after the war, American influence directed its organisation. The World’s Alliance and most of the movement were Americanised. From the perspective of institutional theory, the institutional model shifted from the German to the American movement. However, the American model also included elements that safeguarded local and national characteristics. The YMCA stress on local independence maintained the diversity of the movement. This can be seen, for example, in the membership basis of national movements. The Paris Basis was often better suited to different situations than the American Portland Basis. Moreover, in Catholic Poland and in Orthodox countries, the German church attached model worked better than the American interdenominational model. Nevertheless, the transformation of the YMCA mission was mainly based on the diffusion of the American model, which replaced the older European models.

As stated above, the American model was developed around the Four-fold Programme. It gave the YMCA a powerful way to operationalise its strategic and tactical goals. Although the aim was to sacralize the gym, it often happened that physical education instructors left religion to be the duty of the general secretary. This was one reason behind the secularisation of the North American YMCA. Another factor was the Social Gospel, which transformed the Kingdom of God from the transcendent to the immanent. In the frame of the Social Gospel, the main task was to implement the ethical teachings of Christ. To exaggerate, it was not so important whether you were Christian, Hindu or Muslim - as long you obeyed the ethical rules of the kingdom. The ideals of this immanent kingdom were mixed with traditional American self-understanding of their nation. Early New England settlers saw their society as being based on the ethics of the Bible. Thus, from the American perspective, there was not much difference between this idealised view of America and God’s Kingdom. This attitude explains also why the American government was so eager to support American missionaries - they were spreading the American lifestyle as Gods kingdom.

In sum, the change of the mission view of the YMCA can be located in the shift in the understanding of the Kingdom of God. In the middle of the 19th century, it was a transcendent heavenly city towards which pilgrims were travelling in an evil world, as John Bunyan describes in his novel. With Muscular Christianity and the Social Gospel, the kingdom became immanent. The world was seen as God’s world. It was a world that was given to man to take care of. Along with this new orientation, the fatherhood of God led believers to see Christ as the big brother of Christians, and the world as a brotherhood of all humans.

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1 In this idealised view of America, there was no place for those social evils of which the Social Gospel spoke. To modify the old joke, it was an “In God we trust” America, but not a “...everyone else pays in cash” country.
7.2. Contribution of YMCA Research to Theology and Sociology

7.2.1. The YMCAs as *Ecclesiolae in Ecclesia*

In the field of theology, this study might have been an ecumenical or church historical study as well as one of practical theology. This research has been an interdisciplinary enterprise. The theoretical starting point has been a tradition in practical theology that always uses the tools of secular disciplines when they help to explain the subject. This means that theology has often been a receiving partner in this interdisciplinary dialogue. This has been the starting point of this study as well. I have developed my theoretical basis from social movement research, third sector studies, organisational theories, sociology, philosophy and worldview studies. I believe that ‘pearls’ of these various approaches have enriched my study and does so to practical theology in general.

The critical note that this research makes for all of these theological sub-disciplines, deals with the present avoidance of research on lay movements and laity in general. As I stated in the introduction, it is unbelievable that an organisation like the YMCA has been neglected in theology. A religious movement with 45 million members is not a small detail in a footnote of contemporary Christianity. The research process has strengthened this opinion. The influence of lay organisations on Christianity is often indirect, but no less remarkable. Lay organisations, like the YMCA, have activated and educated lay people, who serve their churches in many positions. Christian youth organisations give young people ideas and impulses at an age when they get their formative generational experiences. These experiences then direct their life course. Thus, it is important to churches to know which kind of theology these young people have received in their youth. Another issue that became evident during the process of this study, is that both theologians and ministers found their own new ‘sandbox’ in official ecumenical organisations and left lay organisations to laymen. This is unfortunate, because both need each other.

Because of this lack of interest in lay ecumenical movements, this study has emphasised many of the achievements of the YMCA – even to the point that it may sound like apologetics. This has been exaggerated by the focus on YMCA documents only. However, this has not been the intention. The YMCA is not the organisation that has brought all good things to the church – but it is definitely one of them. This study has purposefully limited the impact of the YWCA, WSCF, Bible and missionary societies, the Sunday School movement, the Scout movement and others to a minimum. We need similar organisational studies of other lay ecumenical organisations to balance the view. In order to have a better view of the networks, influence flows and interaction dynamism in the ecumenical movement, we, then, need inter-organisational research that combines the findings of these organisational studies.
THE LAITY are often said to be the spearhead of the church. Laity form the troops of the church, and the Christian message is preached in everyday life – if it is preached. No church has enough capacity to train laity to fulfil this task. Lay Christian organisations can help in this task. Lay organisations can reach secularised people who have a critical attitude towards churches. There are many reasons for these negative attitudes. In this study, I have mentioned how European churches lost the confidence of young people because they were willing tools for states. In India and other Third World countries, churches and missionary bodies were often part of the colonialising structure. Compared to lay movements, churches are more distant and bureaucratic: they do not offer such meaningful responsibilities to their members as lay movements. Compared to lay movements, the sense of unity and brotherhood is not on the same level. It is surprising that I have not found any research that focuses on the theological aspects of the optimal size of a parish or of the optimal size of the church. In Finland, we have some parishes with more than 50,000 members. I doubt if they can be called parishes in any theological sense. Without ecclesiola in ecclesia, churches lose their vitality and even the best attempts to modernise the service are useless.

At the same time, lay organisations are in constant danger of reducing their final goals to their means. Theologians and pastors are needed to remind lay organisations of their final goal. Without theologically educated movement intellectuals, movement goals are replaced by goals that differ from Christian ones. We have seen this process in North America especially, where the Y is hardly Christian anymore. An opposite danger lies in some revivalistic movements. The Catholic Church has traditionally warned that lay theology, without knowledge of church doctrines and tradition, can lead to extreme Fundamentalism. For both reasons, theological study on lay organisations is important.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY (including ‘theologically oriented sociology of religion’) has focused mainly on issues that interest churches as organisations. There is much research on Christian education, deacon work, religiosity, church structures, liturgy, etc. Most of these studies ignore the impact of lay organisations as their research object. This study reminds scholars about the importance of lay organisations. Below, are some remarks that relate this study to subfields of practical theology.

In the field of Christian education, the role of Sunday Schools is well known. The idea has diffused from a religious movement to all churches and is now an established part of Christian nurture. In the same way, the Scout movement has found a permanent place in the youth work of churches. In Finland, perhaps the most studied fields of Christian nurture are those of religious education in schools and in the confirmation schools of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church. The aspect

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1 The classical nonprofit theory of Burton Weisbrod states that nonprofit organisations arise out of state failure to fulfil the special needs of some individuals. This can be applied directly to churches as well. Established churches cannot answer the needs of all groups. Religious movements fulfil these needs inside churches. They provide special religious emphases without separating themselves into sects. Thus, allowing a certain variety within the church fosters, paradoxically, church unity and reduces sectarianism.
that is ignored in this field in general, is how ideas have been diffused from revival movements and lay youth organisations to these established forms of religious education. James Douglas has argued that voluntary organisations serve as sources and test fields of new ideas and practices. When an innovation emerges, it will be tested first in voluntary organisations; and if the innovation is useful, it will be diffused to the public sector. Douglas states that “almost without exemption every major social service was originally undertaken by voluntary sector.” The church and religious education is not an exception to this general rule. Most forms of present day youth work have their origin in religious movements and lay organisations. A focus only on ‘official’ religious education means that the research’s role is reactive evaluation of existing practice. A focus on Christian nurture in lay organisations could give research an active role in the search for new methods.

What has been said about Christian education can be said about deacon work and missionary work as well. These sectors of Christianity have been mainly powered by religious movements. This study reveals an interesting aspect of the social emphasis of the WCC and other international church bodies. One important root for this emphasis has been the Social Gospel, which had an influence through the YMCA, YWCA, and the WSCF to the WCC. The debate between Americans and Germans in these organisations reflects different views of Christianity. These views have direct effect on deacon activity in churches. John Wilson and Thomas Janoski note that “not all religious bodies emphasize volunteering to the same degree.” In particular, conservative Protestants interpret Biblical stewardship and charity in spiritual terms. Their volunteering would be in the fields of evangelism and stewardship inside the church. Wilson and Janoski call this the other-worldly emphasis. On the other hand, liberal congregations are much more involved in social activity than present day Evangelicals, a prioritisation which the authors call this-worldly emphasis. Practical theology should pay more attention to the questions of voluntarism and its significance both to churches and other religious organisations.

ECUMENICAL STUDIES have also ignored lay ecumenical movements. The WSCF has been a significant exception. Although studies have recognised different theologies behind ecumenical documents and resolutions, they have studied these theologies as if leading theologians have developed them in isolation. If I am allowed to exaggerate, one gets an impression of a group of monks, who have developed their thinking in their chambers, engaged in discussion about their thinking. Interpretations of doctrines have been taken as given, without going behind them. There should be research on how the Zeitgeist, generational experiences, peer groups, social networks, personal friendships, religious movements and their counter movements, and other social factors influence the formation of

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1 Douglas 1987,48f.
2 Examples of stewardship could be serving as leaders of Sunday Schools or other groups, singing in the choir, arranging bazaars, playing instruments in the service, etc.
doctrines. Speaking of some church leader’s theology, without recognising his revival movement background is the same as studying the political thinking of some statesman, without mentioning his political party affiliation!

I do not say that there is not this kind of research. It is not rare to see these background factors in biographies of these leaders. Unfortunately, there is not always links between these biographies and the studies of those resolutions they made. The impression that I have got of the Ecumenical Movement during this study is that it has been largely an enterprise of old friends. Young men and women, who became friends in their youth, met each other through years in international conferences of the YMCA, the YWCA and the WSCF. When they got older, they received influential posts in their churches – and continued their interaction on an official level. In official conferences, there were not enemy views at the conference tables because old friends respected the faith of each other and trusted each other. One reason for the contemporary ‘winter’ period in the Ecumenical movement might be that leaders nowadays do not have similar contacts in their youth as the pioneers had. They grow within their churches and only when they have got their posts, come to negotiation tables. They are representatives of their churches, not intimate friends.

Because of these kinds of factors, ecumenical studies, and systematic theology in general, should interact more with sociology of religion and its secular affiliated disciplines. If we could see that doctrines are not necessarily God-given but products of social interaction, we could be more tolerant towards different interpretations that emerge in different contexts. The lesson of the YMCA for all theology is that there are many truths and many correct interpretations of the Gospel. The message must be interpreted in each culture in a way that it is possible to understand by people using the concepts of that culture. It is a unity of diversity, or as it was said in YMCA documents, ‘maximal ecumenism’.

CHURCH HISTORY has focused on religious movements and organisations more than other theological sub-disciplines. However, even in it, there is a tendency to see religious movements as isolated events. Special studies have focused on movement but general textbooks have often ignored the findings of these movement studies. In this way, the general history of Christianity has been that of leaders and institutions, not that of the laos, people of God.

From the point of view of this study, the problem of historical studies is that too often they see various movements as isolated events. Movements work in a context of general historical events but the intermovement links are not studied systematically. During the course of this study, I have frequently lacked information on connections between church leaders and their movement backgrounds. Especially important are the generational experiences and significant others in the youth of church leaders. In this respect, the name of Mikko Juva’s autobiography is noteworthy: I Followed the Vision of my Youth. Along with personal backgrounds, I missed information on interorganisational links of ecumenical leaders. Historical network analysis of influential people and organisations is definitely

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1 Juva 1994.
needed in order to have an appropriate view on the emergence and development of the Ecumenical Movement. Church history should perhaps direct itself more to the direction of social history and use more sociological methods in its work.

If theological disciplines do not acknowledge lay religious organisations their view on Christianity is one-sided. The influence of youth on religion did not end with the collapse of Student Christian Movement after the 1960s.

7.2.2. The YMCA as a Unity-Seeking Religious Movement

William Bainbridge argued a few years ago that the church-sect theory is still “the cornerstone of religious movement studies.” I agree that the theory explains a great deal of collective religious behaviour, especially in North America, but I claim that it totally ignores those movements that are not aiming to separate themselves from established churches. It does not explain the mechanism by which the Evangelical Alliance emerged and faded. It does not explain the rise of the YMCA, YWCA, WSCF, Missionary Movement, Bible societies, or the Ecumenical Movement in general. It does not explain the rise and fall of the Social Gospel. It does not even explain religious behaviour in those revival movements that remained inside established churches. The effort to attain the ‘right’ form of religion is not the only trend in Christianity. The 20th century was characterised by the effort towards unity and in this effort the lay movements played a crucial role. Thus, future study on religious movements must create some movement–church unity theory to balance the church–sect theory.

What I argue here does not mean that the church–sect theory is outdated. In this study, can be seen elements of the theory that fit for the YMCA as well. The emergence of the WSCF was one kind of protest against YMCA policies of focusing on Evangelical churches and men only. Similarly, the Scout movement in the US (although not in Britain), the USO and even such ecumenical movements as Life and Work, where YMCA leaders were central forces, can be seen as some kind of movement sectarianism. Why did these YMCA leaders not organise these activities inside the YMCA but established new organisations? Moreover, it would be interesting to study the consequences of the North American YMCA concentration on the Four-fold Programme instead of on general evangelisation. It appears that this withdrawal from evangelism left a vacuum that was filled with other movements and organisations.

There is also a third aspect in the movement dynamism that the church–sect theory does not acknowledge. It is the positive attitude that a parent or midwife organisation can have in the emergence of a new body. The YMCA gave birth to many other organisations with an understanding that their mission was a bit different from that of the YMCA and, thus, they had to be independent organisations. The YMCA also nurtured the emerging YWCA, the Scout movement, its

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1 Immanuel Wallerstein (1995a;b; 1998) has frequently argued that it is time to break the boundaries between history and social sciences.

rebellious’ child, the WSCF, even the WCC, church relief organisations and the UNHCR. The YMCA supplied these organisations with trained leaders and other organisational resources. There was little of that distinction and hostility that characterises those relationships which the church–sect theory describes.

7.2.3. The YMCA as an Institutionalised Social Movement

While theology has frequently borrowed a lot from secular sciences, the flow in other direction has been more rare. There have not been many sociologists like Weber, who mastered, for example, exegetical studies and developed his famous charisma–bureaucracy theory based on the prophet–priest distinction in Old Testament studies of his time. In general, classics of sociology were mostly also scholars of religion and this knowledge can be seen in their theories. Religion is an essential part of human behaviour, something which has been neglected in social sciences for decades. Thus, sociological research that takes into account the power of religion necessarily challenges the dominant paradigms. This is true in the case of this study as well. Below I explain how this study, if it does not challenge dominant paradigms in those disciplines in which area it belongs, at least makes critical comments and questions for them.

If theology and sociology of religion have overlooked the study of lay religious movements, social sciences have done it as well. Christian Smith wrote recently of the “curious neglect” by sociologists of the study of religious movements. If the church–sect theory has dominated the sociology of religion, sociologists, in general, have been influenced by the secularisation theory. If religion is a fading phenomenon in modern society, it is not interesting to study. This attitude has been found to be too hasty an explanation¹. Religion is not dead; on the contrary, it is increasing its influence. The increase of religion’s influence started with the Iranian revolution, the rise of right-wing Fundamentalism in the US, and the collapse of Communism. Although ‘Great Narratives’ may be dead, the ‘Eternal Narratives’ continue their life and influence. Durkheim’s view that religion is a stabilising effect in society is only a partial truth. His mistake was that he saw that in religion, society is worshipping itself. Instead, religion has also an absolute element that cannot be reduced to social relationships. Niebuhr² has shown how this absolute element was dominant when early American settlers created the principles that were later manifested in the US Constitution. Thus, religion does not primarily aim to maintain the status quo in society but aims to modify it according to these absolute standards.

The YMCA and other similar movement remind social sciences of two items. First, as a research subject YMCA is worth recognising. How is it possible that there are youth organisations that have more members than Nordic countries have

¹ Since the middle of the 1980s, sociologists of religion have increasingly questioned the validity of the secularisation theory and condemned it as being more an ideology than a scientific theory (Hadden 1987, 597-605; Duke & Johnson 1989; Demerath 2000, 212ff.).
² Niebuhr 1959.
inhabitants, yet sociologists do not pay attention to them? Movements like the YMCA, the YWCA and the Scouts have done their work for more than a century and they have been laboratories of many social innovations. They have been educators of the youth of the world and given visions of internationalism and mutual understanding to future leaders of the world. They have developed organisational models and supplied new teaching methods to schools and other official teaching. The YMCA and the Scouts are perhaps the two largest international youth organisations in the world. Still, studies on them are relatively rare.

The second challenge of the YMCA to social studies is in the field of theories. The YMCA is both a movement and an institution – an institutionalised movement. This is why I have combined theories from both social movement and third sector studies. Although the distinction between movement and organisation had been already seen as inadequate in the 1970’s, the contacts between these sub-disciplines have been rare. Organisation scholars and movement scholars should interact more and benefit from the findings of the other sub-discipline.

Inside sociology, sociology of education is another sub-discipline that is challenged by this study. Like religious education, sociology of education has focused entirely on institutional education. Thus, what was said on religious education is also valid here. It could be said that for old Scouts there is nothing new in such new pedagogical fashions like experimental education or self-directive education.

7.2.4. The YMCA as a Model for Federal International NGOs

The theoretical model, which I developed for this study was mainly due to the lack of theoretical frameworks of INGOs. Although it was developed for the study of the YMCA, it may be used, hopefully, for other INGOs as well. When I started to seek a theoretical basis for the study, I found it hard to force a patchwork quilt like the YMCA into one theory: it is too multi-faceted. Thus, I searched for a theoretical basis from social movement studies, third sector research and worldview studies. What I found was a synthesis of these approaches.

My main theoretical basis has been borrowed from Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman. It deals with the importance of the core values in an organisation. Their thesis of hierarchical inertia has been proved valid in the case of the YMCA as well. Elements of this organisational model can be discussed. In the case of organisational core, there might be message and worldview as additional elements (I have included them in ideology). In the shell, there might also be movement intellectuals and organisation’s activities as own elements (I have included them in leadership and structure). It could also be discussed whether there should be some level between core and shell which includes organisational culture and policy, which are not as stable as the core values but not so changeable as the structure. These are always matters of needs. I have called my model an organisational

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1 One of the first international contacts of these research fields occurred in August 2001, when Social Movement Research Group of the European Sociological Association ‘adopted’ third sector scholars in their sessions.
map. Thus, as there are different maps for different purposes, organisational maps can also concentrate on different aspects according to the research needs. In the case of the YMCA, this version of the map gave the possibility to look at how different elements influence the mission.

One of the most important contributions of this study to the studies of INGOs is that it should be multidisciplinary. Another is that INGOs cannot be pushed into one single form. As Anna C. Vakil’s selection of different terminology concerning NGOs indicate\(^1\), there is a variety of perspectives on NGOs that cannot be classified according to classical ways. Instead, they form a family of organisations where everyone is unique but have some similar characteristics\(^2\). Instead of classifications, they can be viewed as having certain dimensions. Some aspects are more dominant in one than in another. The YMCA itself has been a good example of this variety. In the case of other organisations, it can be presumed that some elements that are central for the YMCA do not exist at all in them.

The YMCA challenges INGO studies in at least two ways. First, it challenges the discourse of the size of INGOs. In INGO literature, the is often defined according to monetary transactions through the central body. In the YMCA, most of these transactions have been on a bilateral basis and are not seen in the budget of the World Alliance. If co-operation is on the grassroots level, it cannot be seen in budgets of national organisations either. If monetary transactions on the YMCA grassroots level were included in the figures for the organisation, the rankings of the largest INGOs would be different from what is presently thought. Moreover, monetary transactions are only one way to rank organisations. In the YMCA statistics, there are factors like members, staff, associations and buildings, which all give different views of the size of various organisations.

The second contribution of YMCA research is not so much a challenge but a possibility. In international comparisons of NGOs, there is a problem in that organisational forms differ from each other. Even legal definitions are different. In this multitude, the YMCA, Scouts and other similar organisations could serve as constants. Because the core values are the same, the differences between their national organisations can be taken to reflect the impact of local cultures and political practices.

With all these remarks, I have, hopefully, shown that YMCA research (and voluntary organisation research in general) gives a fresh view on many aspects in theology and social sciences. This study has been a ‘landscape view’ on the YMCA, thus, many aspects have been mentioned only briefly, and perhaps not always in a way that does justice to them. However, I believe that sometimes these ‘landscapes’ are needed. They help to place the ‘portraits’ into the larger context and show areas which are ignored by scholars. Thus far, YMCA research has been concentrated in the US. My hope is that this study would encourage YMCA and other lay movement studies in other parts of the world as well. I would like to end this work with the same words that Willem A. Visser ‘t Hooft

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\(^1\) Vakil 1997, 2060f., 2067.
\(^2\) On Wittgenstein’s family resemblance, see Collier & Mahon 1993.
used when he ended his address to the Consultation on Ecumenical Policy and Practice for Lay Christian Movements in 1962:

Well, this may be somewhat unnecessary to say, but this is really my conclusion from the total ecumenical situation: how much we [World Council of Churches and lay movements] need each other, what a tremendous job there is to be done. In no sense have we arrived at a goal; we are only at the beginning. The danger is largely at the grass roots and it is largely the grass roots which you reach. Therefore if you ask whether there is an ecumenical task for the lay movements, I say 'Of course there is. How could anybody ever have doubted it?'

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1 Visser ‘t Hooft 1962, 43.
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Because this section has been arranged according to committee meetings and conferences, it contains both printed and unprinted conference material. The code at the end of each document refers to the particular troller and archive box where the material is from. The archives are located at the headquarters of the World Alliance of YMCA, 12 Clos Belmont, CH-1208 Geneva, Switzerland.
ExCom - Executive Committee of the World Alliance of YMCAs (since 1955)

1955

1956

1959

ExtCom - Extension Committee

1955

Kandy Consultation

1953a

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1958

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1939

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Appendixes

Appendix A: The Paris Basis 1855

ALLIANCE OF YOUNG MEN’S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

The delegates of various Young Men’s Christian Associations of Europe and America, assembled in Conference at Paris, the 22nd August, 1855, feeling that they are one in principle and in operation, recommend to their respective Societies to recognize with them the unity existing among their Associations, and whilst preserving a complete independence as to their particular organization and modes of action, to form a Confederation on the following fundamental principle, such principle to be regarded as the basis of admission of other Societies in future:

The Young Men’s Christian Associations Seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.

This fundamental principle being admitted, the Conference further proposes:

That any differences of opinion on other subjects, however important in themselves, but not embraced by the specific designs of the Associations, shall not interfere with the harmonious relations of the confederated Societies.

That a travelling certificate of membership be designed, by which members of the confederated Societies shall be entitled to the privileges of any other Society belonging to this Confederation, and to the personal attentions of all its members.

That the system of correspondence adopted by this Conference shall apply to the Societies of this Confederation.
Appendix B: The Jubilee Declaration 1905

At the time when the World’s Alliance of the Young Men’s Christian Associations is commemorating in Paris, its place of origin, the fifty years’ Jubilee of its foundation, we, the authorized representatives of all the Young Men’s Christian Associations of the world, wish first to express our gratitude to Almighty God, Who, during fifty years, has granted so much blessing on the work He has intrusted to us.

We further with to witness our deep thankfulness to the men who founded this Alliance, and gratefully recall the noble examples of faith and life which they have given us.

We desire formally to declare the supreme importance of the fundamental principles which have formed a bond of union between the Associations from the beginning. Consequently, the Conference solemnly reaffirms the Basis adopted in Paris on August 22nd, 1855, as follows:

The delegates of various Young Men’s Christian Associations of Europe and America, assembled in Conference at Paris, the 22nd August, 1855, feeling that they are one in principle and in operation, recommend to their respective Societies to recognize with them the unity existing among their Associations, and whilst preserving a complete independence as to their particular organization and modes of action, to form a Confederation on the following fundamental principle, such principle to be regarded as the basis of admission of other Societies in future:

The Young Men’s Christian Associations Seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.

The Conference also declares that this Basis embodies, with other Fundamental Principles, the following, viz.

A. Personal and vital Christianity on the part of the members.
B. The spirit of the Evangelical Alliance according to John XVII: 21 “That they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.”
C. The activity and responsibility of the members in effort for the extension of the Kingdom of God among young men.¹

¹ WConf 1905.
Appendix C: The Centennial Declaration 1955

THE accredited representatives of Young Men’s Christian Associations in seventy countries and territories throughout the world assembled in Paris in the various Centennial Conferences of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs desire first of all to record their deep thankfulness to Almighty God for the innumerable evidences which have come to them during these unforgettable days together of their unity in Jesus Christ, which finds expression in their fellowship with one another as disciples of one Master and Lord, and in the work of their respective Associations.

They recognize that this fundamental unity of life and aim has been given to them by God for the purpose of extending His Kingdom among young men and boys, and of bringing about an ever-increasing measure of unity of spirit and action between all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures.

The experiences which they have thus had together lead them to covenant with one another in reaffirming the Basis of the World’s Alliance as formulated and accepted in the founding Conference held in Paris one hundred years ago, and subsequently confirmed at the Jubilee Conference of the Alliance in Paris in 1905, namely:

“The delegates of various Young Men’s Christian Associations of Europe and America, assembled in Conference at Paris, the 22nd August, 1855, feeling that they are one in principle and in operation, recommend to their respective Societies to recognize with them the unity existing among their Associations, and whilst preserving a complete independence as to their particular organization and modes of action, to form a Confederation on the following fundamental principle, such principle to be regarded as the basis of admission of other Societies in future:

“The Young Men’s Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their faith and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.

“This fundamental principle being admitted, the Conference further proposes: That any differences of opinion on other subjects, however important in themselves, but not embraced by the specific designs of the Associations, shall not interfere with the harmonious relations of the confederated Societies.”

As the Alliance moves forward into its second century of service, those who have been privileged to participate in the Centennial Conferences now resolve:

That the supreme purpose of the YMCA by which all its policies and practices must be determined is to bear witness, in language which youth can understand, to the saving power of Jesus Christ in the lives of individuals and in every human relationship.
That because the YMCA was in origin, and remains, essentially a Christian movement of youth, its government and activities should increasingly be in the hands of young members who have committed themselves to the Christian faith and life.

That as an interdenominational and interconfessional fellowship within the Church Universal, the YMCA should constantly seek to encourage its members to accept the responsibilities of church membership, and to participate actively in the life and work of their particular churches; should continue to serve in every possible way the cause of unity among Christians of whatever Confession they may be - Protestant, Orthodox, or Roman Catholic; and to witness for Christ on and across the frontiers by which Christendom is still so tragically divided.

That as a Christian Association seeking to serve youth irrespective of their religious belief, the YMCA should witness for Christ on and across those frontiers which separate Christian and non-Christian Faiths.

That as a world-wide Christian fellowship, the YMCA should concern itself fully and without reserve with the promotion of international understanding; the easing of tension; the abolition of war; and the establishment of world peace.

That the YMCA should continue to strive for the removal of every form of social or economic injustice and racial discrimination, and first of all within its own fellowship; and for the protection and enrichment of individual freedom.

That the call should go out to the YMCAs of the world to adopt a bold policy for the expansion and extension of the work of the Association, particularly in those areas in which its service is at present all too limited; to undertake greatly increased efforts for multiplying its leadership, both voluntary and professional, and to give these leaders the necessary equipment to enable them to bear effective Christian witness to their fellows in the world of today; and to provide the financial resources required for these urgently needed developments in the local, national, and world service of the Association.

We render thanks to God for all that He has enabled our World’s Alliance to achieve in peace and war during its first century; we salute those who by their sacrificial service have made it possible for us to enter into this rich heritage; we pledge our unfailing loyalty to all with whom we have been privileged to share in these Centennial experiences, and to our comrades in every part of the world of whom we have been particularly mindful in these days of fellowship together; we proclaim our identity with all who are endeavouring to make the abundance of life, which we believe can ultimately be found only in Jesus Christ, available to the total youth of the whole world; we humbly confess our failures in our devotion to Him and our shortcomings in our efforts to extend His Kingdom; and we offer ourselves and our Associations anew to Him and to His service.

Paris; the 22nd day of August, 1955
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