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## **Framing International Aid: A Case of the YMCA**

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### ***Introduction***

Many of the models utilised by international NGOs (INGO) seem to be self-evident to most of the activists. The work is done because it is believed that it should be done according to manner it is done. Theoretically, we can speak of, at least, routinisation of the action (like Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann<sup>1</sup> states it), lock-in of some model (like path-dependency theory states it<sup>2</sup>) or modifying action according to some model organisation or central organisation in the field (as John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan<sup>3</sup> put it). This routinisation or lock-in leads to a situation where it is cheaper to follow some existing path of action than invest on creating a new one. Additionally, the staff copies the models of central organisations in order to get legitimacy to their own organisation and to themselves as professionals. The main thesis in this paper is to describe how the Young Men's Christian Association has acted as this sort of central organisation which has developed many of the principles and practices utilised in today's INGOs.

The World Alliance of YMCAs<sup>4</sup> is one of the oldest (founded in 1855) and largest nongovernmental organisations in the world. Today, it reports having 45 million members and 14 000 local associations in 122 countries<sup>5</sup>. Thus, it has more members than all Nordic Lutheran churches together. The movement is alive and a vital part of the contemporary Ecumenical Movement. Like other ecumenical youth organisations, the YMCA aims to train young people to interconfessional and interfaith dialogue. While doing this, these organisations are forums where future church leaders learn practical work.

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<sup>1</sup> Berger & Luckmann 1972, 55-58, 113-122

<sup>2</sup> Arthur 1989; 1990; David 1985; 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer & Rowan 1977.

<sup>4</sup> 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 the period after the name was changed in Centennial Conferences in August 1955.

<sup>5</sup> Mission & History s.a.

Along being an ecumenical organisation, the YMCA is a vital part of the international society. ‘The Geneva society’ was formed round the International Committee of the Red Cross<sup>6</sup> and the World Alliance of YMCAs<sup>7</sup>. These two ‘children’ of Henri Dunant were in close co-operation, especially during both World Wars<sup>8</sup>. Later, when the amount of international organisations in Geneva increased, the YMCA co-operated with other organisations as well. It has a consultative NGO status in the ECOSOC (category II), UNESCO (category B), ILO (special list), UNICEF, and Council of Europe<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup>. The movement has been a laboratory of youth work methods, like youth clubs, youth centres, gang work, scouting, youth camps, international youth assemblies, interconfessional and interfaith dialogue and immigrant training projects. The YMCA has also been either a mother or a midwife to many large nongovernmental organisations. Best known of these are the Scouts<sup>11</sup>, basketball<sup>12</sup> and volleyball<sup>13</sup> organisations and different Army canteen organisations like the American United Service Organisation (USO)<sup>14</sup>. In addition to this, many US universities and colleges can be traced back to YMCA education programs<sup>15</sup>. It also played a role in the emergence of the World Council of Churches<sup>16</sup> and the UNHCR<sup>17</sup>. As these organisations emerged, they got their leadership and

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<sup>6</sup> The ICRC was founded in Geneva in 1863. However, contrary to the World Alliance of YMCAs, the ICRC is not an INGO but an international governmental organisations (IGO), since it was founded by a treaty of several governments. the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), founded in 1919, in turn, is a federation of national Red Crosses, and thus, classified as an INGO.

<sup>7</sup> The Central International Committee (1902-1955 as World’s Committee) of the World’s Alliance of YMCAs was founded in 1878 in Geneva.

<sup>8</sup> Strong 1955a, 470; 1955b 546n2., 557f.

<sup>9</sup> *Yearbook of International Organisations* 1996/1997, 1596. ECOSOC (Idem, 1531f.) Category II covers “organizations with a special competence but concerned with only a few of the Council’s activities.” UNESCO (Idem, 1537f.) Category B covers “organizations which have given proof of their ability to supply UNESCO, at its request, with advice on questions coming within their purview, and to contribute effectively by their activities to the implementation of UNESCO’s program.” ILO (Idem, 994) special list “covers organizations having an interest in one or more topics of relevance to ILO.” And, “UNICEF grants consultative status to international development and humanitarian NGOs already holding consultative status with ECOSOC (Idem, 1512).”

<sup>10</sup> Both were first used in the YMCA Helsingfors (Helsinki) World’s Conference in 1926.

<sup>11</sup> 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).

<sup>12</sup> *YMCA invents Basketball* (2000).

<sup>13</sup> *YMCA invents Volleyball* (2000).

<sup>14</sup> *Born at the YMCA* (2000).

<sup>15</sup> The American way (s.a.).

<sup>16</sup> Muukkonen 2002, 143-148.

<sup>17</sup> Holborn 1975, 124f.

other resources from the YMCA. Early leaders of these organisations brought YMCA methods and practices to these new organisations<sup>18</sup>.

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*<sup>19</sup> 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. In this paper, I focus on the historical role of the YMCA in the development aid and in the aid for the victims of war.

## **Previous Studies**

In spite of this significant role of the YMCA, it has not aroused great interest among neither social scientists nor theologians. 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<sup>20</sup>.

Focusing on a bit wider picture, one can see that there is a general lack of theoretical knowledge of the function of international nongovernmental organisations<sup>21</sup> (INGO)<sup>22</sup>, in general, in spite of

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<sup>18</sup> This is in accordance with Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison's (1991, 98f.) argument that movement intellectuals have a trend to "seek legitimacy in more established intellectual contexts" like universities, public administration or business. When these intellectuals 'institutionalise themselves' they also diffuse the main ideas of the movement to a new context.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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. On the works on the YMCA, see the summary in my *Ecumenism of the Laity* (Muukkonen 2002a, 22ff.).

<sup>21</sup> 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).

<sup>22</sup> Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss (1995, 358) mention already ten years ago 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." The situation has not much improved from that.

their importance in contemporary political discussion<sup>23</sup>. Studies of both third sector and social movements have focused on the local and national level or on the demonstrations against some IGOs. 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.

Along with INGOs, 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.

1. **Secularisation theory<sup>24</sup> 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.**
2. **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.**
3. **Sociology of religion has been an isolated sub-field of sociology<sup>25</sup>. For this reason, the findings of sociologists of religion have not influenced movement studies in general.**
4. **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.**
5. **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.<sup>26</sup>**

In theology, there has been similar ignorance of lay organisations. During the past fifty years, both ecumenical studies and sociological studies of ecumenical organisations have concentrated on

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<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> 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." On secularisation theory, see Casanova 2001; Demerath 2000; Hadden 1987; Martin 1978.

<sup>25</sup> Smith 1983; Hannigan 1991. My own experience in Finland confirms this. During the last ten years, I have been almost the only sociologist of religion in annual meetings of the Westermarck Society (Finnish Sociological Association). The leading scholars of Finnish sociology of religion have been present only occasionally. A similar silence can also be seen in Finnish social science periodicals.

<sup>26</sup> Smith 1996, 2ff.

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 YMCA, YWCA and World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) do not exist in the realm of ecumenical<sup>27</sup> or missionary<sup>28</sup> 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<sup>29</sup>.” Thus, the official ecumenism between churches has been seen as ‘The Ecumenical Movement’, and research has focused on it. However, official organisations do not emerge from nowhere. They are results of long pioneer work of individual people and various groups. The story of the YMCA is a story of how both ecumenical movement and international aid emerged, shaped their form and were institutionalised.

### ***The Birth and Expansion of the YMCA***

The London YMCA, founded in 1844, has been seen as the first YMCA in the world. This is true only with a strict sense: it was the first with that name. However, there are older YMCAs today which have originally had some other name<sup>30</sup>. Actually, there were two main roots from where the YMCA movement spread. The first was the German movement that can be traced to Basle *Jünglingsverein* (1787) and the second is the British movement. The London YMCA, however

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<sup>27</sup> 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 Communique Sept-Oct 1967, 10f.; Jan-Feb 1968, 14), Hromadka (483f - compare Strong 1955a, 495; Luknic 1983), Oldham (746f - compare Clements 1999, 42-52; Shedd 1955b, 356, 363) Söderblom (938f - compare to Andrae 1931, 85-95; Sundkler 1968, 36-39,96-99). 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.

<sup>28</sup> 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 to the WSCF but does not mention the YMCA or the YWCA at all!

<sup>29</sup> Gulin 1967, 312 (my translation from the original Finnish text).

<sup>30</sup> On these, see Senaud 1955; Binfield 1973, 138-148.

created the YMCA concept that was adopted by others and, thus, it carries the honour of being the father of other YMCAs.

The YMCA movement emerged in a situation where industrialism had caused an uncontrolled migration to towns<sup>31</sup>. The First YMCA in London in 1844 was a typical peer-group<sup>32</sup> of the time which aimed to solve the problems of its own constituency<sup>33</sup>. After its founding, the association spread quickly with the help of political attitude to solve social problems with philanthropic associations<sup>34</sup>. Most associations of this kind, were, however, secular organisations. The speciality of the YMCA was that, along with political and cultural factors, its foundation was based on the Evangelical Awakening<sup>35</sup>. The difference of the YMCA to other similar Christian youth organisations was the impact of the growing business-class which wanted to utilise their entrepreneurial skills in the field of religion<sup>36</sup>. This created a solid economic basis that enabled long-term planning.

Contrary to Britain, the German YMCAs, *Jünglingsvereine*, as they were then called, were not based on the lay activity of the business-class but were tools for the young pastors in their attempt to reach the youth. Their models were mainly based on the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*- type small groups of Pietism and guilds of apprentices.<sup>37</sup>

The YMCA mission has been expressed in the Paris Basis<sup>38</sup> which was adopted at the First World's conference at Paris in 1855<sup>39</sup>. It reflected those values and practices that the YMCAs had already exercised during their short existence. Thus, in terms of Clifford Geertz<sup>40</sup>, the Paris Basis was a *model of* the YMCA of the 1850s although it later became a *model for* the YMCA and other ecumenical organisations.

The Basis has three parts: Preamble, Fundamental Basis and Three Additional Proposals.

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

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<sup>31</sup> WConf 1855a, 56. On the migration of youth, see Gillis 1974, 39, 55.

<sup>32</sup> On the growth of English friendly societies, see Gorsky (1998).

<sup>33</sup> WConf 1855a, 57-60, 65; Shedd 1955a, 18-24. On peer groups, see. Gillis (1974, 37-93)

<sup>34</sup> Thane 1996.

<sup>35</sup> On the religious context of the first YMCAs, see WConf 1855a, 57-60; Morse 1913, 1-14; Senaud 1955, 3-14; Shedd 1955a, 15-101; Binfield 1973; Stursberg 1977, 7-70; Rouse 1993, 309-327.

<sup>36</sup> Shedd 1955a, 27-32.

<sup>37</sup> WConf 1855a, 52; Shedd 1955a, 55; Stursberg 1977, 10.

<sup>38</sup> On detailed analysis of the Paris Basis, see Theurer (1966), Jentsch (1968; 1971), Gambarotto (1991) and Muukkonen (2002a, 85-106, 144-148; 2002b).

<sup>39</sup> WConf 1855a, 3-24; WComPle 1950, 2; Shedd 1955a, 61, 106-113.

<sup>40</sup> Geertz 1973, 93

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.

The significance of the Preamble is in its two emphases: First, according to it, Christian unity is God-given and not man-made. This freed the laity in the YMCA from the theological work of *building* unity to the manifesting this unity. Second, the Preamble emphasises the inviolability of the independence of local associations. As a consequence, the YMCA has never built strong international or even national organs. The strength has always been on the local level.

The Fundamental Principle (which has often alone called the Paris Basis) states that the movement consists of missionary oriented young men. It emphasises the person of Jesus, the status of the Bible and the extension of the Kingdom of God. In that time, the mission view of the movement was mainly seen as converting unbelievers by means of social work and evangelisation. A special feature was the strategic emphasis on collecting the existing resources in order to reach the critical mass for successful work.

There were three Additional Proposals, of which the first later got the status of the Second Fundamental Principle. It followed the British philanthropic tradition that denied political action of the charity organisations<sup>41</sup>. There was also the influence of the becoming North American Civil War, which threatened the unity of the new-born international organisation<sup>42</sup>.

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 opportunities which the YMCA could benefit from. A church

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<sup>41</sup> Randon ” 6 1994, 36.

<sup>42</sup> Wconf 1855,16f.

historian, Kenneth Scott Latourette<sup>43</sup>, has called the first century of the YMCA as the time of revolution. It was that in many senses.

Economically, the YMCA growth was a result of industrialism and a growing middle class in North America and Europe<sup>44</sup>. Industrialism brought wealth and 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 hand: 'the customer is always right' - the YMCA had to modify its mission and activities according to the needs of its customers.

The YMCA extended along with improvement of the improvement of travel- and communication devices<sup>45</sup>. This intensified the ties within the movement and increased the support from national movements (especially from North America) to the World's Alliance and associations in the Third World<sup>46</sup>.

Culturally, a constant phenomenon of the time was a move - from countryside to towns, from Europe to North America<sup>47</sup>. Along with it and the increase of white-collar workers, there emerged a need to take care both of the physical<sup>48</sup> and general education<sup>49</sup> of young men. In this situation, the YMCA modified its activities to meet the new needs of youth. Especially in the US, the YMCA responded to these needs by developing its physical education programs and its many secretary training institutions, which later became colleges or universities. 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

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<sup>43</sup> Latourette 1957, 16.

<sup>44</sup> One of the main theses of the the resource mobilisation theory (McCarthy & Zald 1877, 1224ff.) is that social movements emerge in contexts where there is extra money available. As a result of economic growth, donations to the YMCA increased until the 1930's (Latourette 1957, 70).

<sup>45</sup> The World's Alliance utilised quickly the telegram (WComR 1881, 9-13, 18), railways (Shedd 1955b, 166), and travel agencies (Shedd 1955b, 214).

<sup>46</sup> Strong 1955a, 540.

<sup>47</sup> WConfPrep 1905, 8f.

<sup>48</sup> Macleod 1983, 3-28; Johnson 1979, 17ff. Physical education required significant change in attitudes. From the asceticism that Weber (1970, 95-143) described, there was a shift to the view of body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). In this, the YMCA was part of the Muscular Christianity movement (on it, see Bloomfield 1994, Ladd & Mathisen 1999; Putney 1995; and Muscular Christianity 1994).



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 and grew in a time when, in Britain, Germany and North America, the associations were seen as tools for solving social problems. This general attitude gave both legitimacy for and created demand of YMCA services. 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.

Along factors, mentioned above, wars had a major impact on the YMCA. When young men recruited into armies in the US Civil War, the YMCA went along and started the work with armed forces<sup>50</sup>. The idea spread to other countries and during the First world War, the YMCA took care almost all the soldier's canteen activities on both sides of the frontier<sup>51</sup>. In wars, however, soldiers get also caught and became prisoners of war. A similar work was started then in prison camps in co-operation with the Red Cross as well. 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: after the both World Wars, ex-POWs found themselves in the same camps with a new status of refugees, the YMCA continued assisting refugees, migrants and displaced persons<sup>52</sup>. It was from these YMCA workers that the UNHCR got its first staff<sup>53</sup>.

Religiously, the YMCA was a fruit of the Evangelical Revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Contrary to several other revival movements, which were separatist, 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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The early YMCA leaders were active in the Evangelical Alliance<sup>54</sup> and Sunday School Movement<sup>55</sup>; they were in the spearhead of the Muscular Christianity and student awakenings; they were inspired by the Social Gospel movement;

<sup>49</sup> Ipfling & Chambliss 1994, 42-45.

<sup>50</sup> Shedd 1955b, 164; Morse 1913, 60-65; Hopkins 1951, 84-98.

<sup>51</sup> On the YMCA War Work during the WW I, see Hoffman (1920), *Service with the Fighting Men* (1922), Hopkins (1951, 485-504), Strong (1955b, 578) and Mjagkij (1994, 86-100— on service for African Americans). On work during the WW II, see Vuillet (1945; 1946a,b), Hopkins (1951, 711-714), Strong (1955b, 545-556) and Cedergren (1969).

<sup>52</sup> On the YMCA work for refugees, see Kilpatrick (1955).

<sup>53</sup> Holborn 1975, 124f.

<sup>54</sup> On Evangelical Alliance (EA), see Kirby (1974) and Rouse (1993, 318-324). On the YMCA relationship to the EA, see the report of the First World's Conference (WConf 1855, 77-82) and Shedd (1955a, 106-134).

<sup>55</sup> WConfPrep 1931, 4; WComR 1931, 24; Shedd 1955a, 41.

they led the first meetings of Missionary Movement<sup>56</sup> and the World Council of Churches<sup>57</sup>. Especially Muscular Christianity<sup>58</sup>, Social Gospel<sup>59</sup> and theological liberalism<sup>60</sup> influenced the YMCA mission view. The first legitimised the physical education of the YMCA: “The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.” The latter had its impact on the whole ecumenical movement by changing its understanding of the Kingdom of God. The earlier understanding of the world was that of ‘city of destruction’ from where a pilgrim escapes towards the ‘celestial city’ of heaven as John Bunyan’s famous novel stated<sup>61</sup>. Along with Social Gospel, the world was framed as Creation of God where God’s laws should be enforced. These laws were summed as peace and justice, and extension of God’s Kingdom was seen as extension of these principles. Although, there was a constant debate between Americans and German Barthians on the issue in the inter-World War period<sup>62</sup>. The latter thought that a human has no role in the coming of the Kingdom of God but it was based solemnly on God’s sovereignty<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup>, while that of Catholics was negative<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> On the missionary work of the North American YMCA, see *International Survey* (1931) and Latourette (1957). On the YMCA work in South Eastern Asian countries, see Xing W (1993), Xing J (1993), Ha & Mangan (1994), Risendorph (1994), Keller (1996) and Davidann (1995; 1996; 1998).

<sup>57</sup> Ruth Rouse (1993, 327) mentions that perhaps 4/5 of the delegates in the First Assembly of the world Council of Churches (WCC) were from the YMCA or from its close allies, the YWCA and the Student Christian Movement. See also Stransky (1991, 527) and Warren (1992).

<sup>58</sup> On the Muscular Christianity, see Bloomfield (1994), *Muscular Christianity* (1994), Putney (1995) and Ladd & Mathinsen (1999). On the relationship of the YMCA to the Muscular Christianity, see Macleod (1983, 29-59).

<sup>59</sup> On Social Gospel, see Rauschenbusch (1916), Visser ‘t Hooft (1928), Niebuhr (1937; 1988), Handy 1966, Hopkins (1967) and White & Hopkins (1976). On the neglected voices in the Social Gospel, see Lindley (1990). On the YMCA and the Social Gospel, see Hopkins (1979, 622-633).

<sup>60</sup> On liberal theology and the YMCA, see Hopkins (1951, 511).

<sup>61</sup> Bunyan 1951, 104.

<sup>62</sup> 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.

<sup>63</sup> 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: for Barth, 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.

<sup>64</sup> *Objectives, Principles and Program of YMCA’s in Orthodox Countries* (1932); *World Communique* 1968, Jan-Feb, 14; Anderson 1963; 1985.

<sup>65</sup> Fallon 1922; Dumont 1955, 12f; Willis 1955, 696-699, 712-717.

## ***Character Building in North America***

Although the YMCA was a European innovation, 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 expansion of the YMCA in North America was linked, according to David I. Macleod, to three factors: immigration, urbanisation and the rise of the middle class<sup>66</sup>. He also argues that the rise of physical education was linked to the urban middle class and its need to protect its lifestyle<sup>67</sup> and to the fear that “middle-class boys were growing weak and effeminate<sup>68</sup>.” This turned men to Muscular Christianity, which emphasised male forms of religiosity. Other factors that helped the spread of the YMCA were revivalism<sup>69</sup> and Social Gospel<sup>70</sup>. These were, however, in resonance with each other.

Although the roots of physical education were in German and Swedish systems of gymnastics<sup>71</sup>, physical education of the YMCA was not just copying models from other countries. Behind the emergence of physical education in the YMCA, we can see an influence of two movements in North America: Muscular Christianity and Social Gospel. These two movements were commingled in the North American YMCA and their emphases found an expression in YMCA physical education and social work.

Muscular Christianity<sup>72</sup> had to face negative attitude towards sports and amusements in general. When sports were seen as worldly amusements, it was no wonder that Evangelicals had a negative

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<sup>66</sup> Macleod 1983, 9ff.; Also Zald, 1970, 31f., 38-41.

<sup>67</sup> Hopkins (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.

<sup>68</sup> Macleod 1983, 44.

<sup>69</sup> Hopkins 1951, 6ff.

<sup>70</sup> Latourette 1957, 18ff., 24, 28.

<sup>71</sup> Johnson 1979, 17ff. see also Macleod (1983, 3-28).

<sup>72</sup> Muscular Christianity was, according to Clifford W. Putney, “a movement geared toward reinjecting health and manliness back into Victorian religion.” Along with the emphasis on manliness, “its adherents sought to reduce women’s influence in the Protestant churches.” (Putney 1995)

The movement emerged in Britain in the mid-1800 and spread soon to North America as well. Bloomfield (1994) sees that Charles Kingsley, an advocate and philosopher of Muscular Christianity, was influenced by Emanuel Swedenborg’s theses of the relationship between the soul and the body. She also notes the influence of German romanticism on Kingsley through Thomas Carlyle’s works. Stephen Prickett (2001), in turn, notes that Kingsley was influenced by Matthew Arnold (headmaster of Rugby) who attempted “to create an enlightened and forward-looking religion. For him this meant a Christianity that was ‘scientific,’ ‘non-Semitic,’ Indo-European, and Aryan... containing ‘more of Plato and Socrates than Joshua and David.’” 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 (Putney 1995).

Best known of the outcomes of Muscular Christianity have been YMCA physical education, the Boys’ Brigades, the

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<sup>73</sup>.”

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<sup>74</sup>.” This was the first time when the idea of the Four-fold Programme<sup>75</sup> was included in a mission statement of any YMCA<sup>76</sup>. A few years later, in 1869, the Association Building was erected with a gymnasium, library, class-, reading- and social rooms<sup>77</sup>.

The Social Gospel movement<sup>78</sup> gave another legitimisation to the expansion 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 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. The whole earth is God’s creation and it should follow the law of God. This led Social Gospel proponents to emphasise the immanent aspect of the Kingdom of God.

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.

<sup>73</sup> Kingsley in 1858 (according to Bloomfield 1994, 174).

<sup>74</sup> WComPle 1922, 1; Morse 1913, 79.

<sup>75</sup> 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 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 Juvenalis’ (Juv.Sat 10.356) famous saying reads as follows: “Orandum 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.

<sup>76</sup> *A Brief History of the YMCA Movement* 2001.

<sup>77</sup> Morse 1913, 77.

<sup>78</sup> Social Gospel was a movement in American Protestant churches at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 peak of Social Gospel was the decade before the First World War. The movement faded after WW I but its ideas found a new platform in the YMCA and in the Ecumenical Movement. On Social Gospel, see Hopkins 1967(1940); White & Hopkins 1976; Handy 1966; Visser ‘t Hooft 1928; Niebuhr 1937; 1988.

The major influence of the Social Gospel in the North American YMCA was in its ability to change the concept of Kingdom of God from transcendent to immanent. This led the YMCA to focus on implementation of 'justice and peace' on earth. In its approach to social problems, the association, however, 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<sup>79</sup>. 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.

### ***Missionaries of God's Kingdom***

The YMCA development co-operation is a direct offspring and continuum of its missionary work. The YMCA was a child of the Missionary Movement, its partner and ardent supporter. However, the YMCA was not a general missionary agency. The Paris Basis stated that the *raison d'être* of the YMCA was in the extension of the Kingdom of God among young men. This mission led the YMCA to focus on young men in special situations, like in universities, in railways and in armed forces. Along this, the YMCA planted new associations around the world.

The YMCA movement, which in 1855 was composed of eight national movements, representing 348 associations and 35,000 members<sup>80</sup>, spread rapidly to other continents and in 1955 it was expanded to 8,504 associations and 4,683,000 members in 66 countries<sup>81</sup>. Today, as said, it represents 45 million members and 14 000 local associations in 122 countries<sup>82</sup>.

In the early stage, the YMCA idea spread primarily by the members' personal contacts<sup>83</sup>. Although the main aim in this time was converting souls, the methodology of the work was significant for the development of the YMCA international aid. Both the London YMCA and German *Jünglingsvereine* reported in 1855 of several social programs like libraries, educational

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<sup>79</sup> Hopkins 1951, 535.

<sup>80</sup> World's Alliance Statistics 1855-1909.

<sup>81</sup> World's Alliance Statistics 1955

<sup>82</sup> Mission & History s.a.

<sup>83</sup> 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.

programs, visitations of the sick, youth hostels, etc<sup>84</sup>. In this sense, the YMCA members followed the old Christian *Ordo Caritatis* in their enterprise.

Although European associations and the World Alliance had their missionary programs, perhaps the most longstanding effects on the mission view of the whole YMCA movement was the founding of the foreign work (or as it was later called, World Service<sup>85</sup>) of the North American YMCA. 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.

The North American foreign work, which started in 1880s, was intimately linked with the Student Volunteer Movement of the YMCA<sup>86</sup>. It was the YMCA student movement, which took as a declaration of its purpose “the evangelization of the world in this generation<sup>87</sup>.” It was also among this movement where the policy and practices of the foreign work were developed.<sup>88</sup>

The principles of the foreign work were as follows<sup>89</sup>:

- First, it was not a general missionary agency, but specialised its work among young men<sup>90</sup>, as the Paris Basis stated and Americans emphasised<sup>91</sup>. 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.
- Second, the task was to plant “self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating” indigenous YMCAs<sup>92</sup>. This meant that every new association had to stand on their own income. The help from the NAIC was

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<sup>84</sup> WConf 1855.

<sup>85</sup> On World Service, see Latourette (1957).

<sup>86</sup> The aggressive expansion of the YMCA traces its origins to Northfield summer school at Mt. Hermon in 1886 where Dwight L. Moody, along with Luther Wishard, organised a summer school in Mt. Hermon. In that conference, hundreds of young men promised to devote themselves to missionary work. This was the beginning of the Student 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. (Hopkins 1951, 316-321; Latourette 1957, 37-44, 165ff.)

<sup>87</sup> 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, who used the slogan in the title of his manual for Missionary Movement in 1900 (Mott 1900).

<sup>88</sup> Latourette 1957, 33-46. On Student Christian Movement, see Rouse (1948), Shedd (1932), *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (32, Fall 1995 - a special issue on WSCF), Dietrich (1995) and Morse (1913, 187-200).

<sup>89</sup> Latourette 1957, 50, 97; Shedd 1955b, 306ff., 310f.

<sup>90</sup> Later, this task was expanded to youth, in general.

<sup>91</sup> The North American YMCA had restricted its membership to men only in 1867 (Sweet 1953, 4).

<sup>92</sup> In London 1894 Conference, Luther Wishard had emphasised the work among students in Asia: “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 (Shedd 1955b, 341).” In this statement, 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

purposefully limited to 50% of the costs – locals had to raise the rest by themselves. Self-governance, in turn, meant that the leadership should be on native hands. Self-propagating meant self-extension<sup>93</sup>, co-operation and two-way influence<sup>94</sup>.

- Third, to enter a new field required a call from Evangelical missionaries working in the country<sup>95</sup>. With this policy, the YMCA wanted to underline that it was not a church, but a servant of churches in their missionary work.
- Fourth, fraternal secretaries should have experience in general secretary work and have a university degree<sup>96</sup>. This was linked to the goal of indigenous leadership – the YMCA sent only those who had such skills that the locals did not have.
- Fifth, the expansion work could be done on a bilateral national basis instead of via central supervision of Geneva<sup>97</sup>. This is based on the core principles of the YMCA, which emphasises the autonomy of local associations and aims to keep the central organs relatively weak<sup>98</sup>.

The major foreign fields where the North American YMCA worked during 1888-1955 were Asia, South and Central America, and Eastern 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.

In South America, the YMCA limited its activities to social and recreational work. This was due to the Catholic Church, who up to the Second Vatican Council forbade the Catholics to join the

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.

<sup>93</sup> Especially, the Centennial Conference in 1955 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.” (WConf 1955, 82.)

<sup>94</sup> For example, the Indian YMCA sent war-work secretaries to Europe to serve British troops during the WW I.

<sup>95</sup> In Stockholm World Conference (1888), Richard C. Morse, the general secretary of the NAIC, “guaranteed that they had not made, and would not make, a single forward step, excepting in agreement with the Churches (Shedd 1955b, 292).”

<sup>96</sup> Luther Wishard wrote in his report to the World’s Alliance Central International Committee in 1891 (quoted in Shedd 1955b, 310f.):

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.

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

<sup>97</sup> 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)

<sup>98</sup> This policy has a significant theoretical dysfunction. While the money flows go on bilateral basis, they are not seen in the budget of the World Alliance. Consequently, the YMCA is not regarded as one of the ‘big’ international relief agencies – simply because nobody knows the amount of transactions between local associations.

YMCA<sup>99</sup>. The YMCA tried to avoid the label of a Protestant sect and thus dropped the spiritual work from its repertoire in South America.

In India, the strategy was different. If expansion in Europe and Latin America challenged the YMCA to interconfessional dialogue, extension to Asia brought interfaith dialogue into the YMCA<sup>100</sup>. 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 arouse “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.”

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 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 1931, 56 per cent of the membership of 6000 was non-Christian<sup>101</sup>. The rural project was a manifestation of the vision of the first Indian YMCA General Secretary, K.T. Paul.<sup>102</sup>

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

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<sup>99</sup> Fallon 1922.

<sup>100</sup> 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.

<sup>101</sup> *International Survey* 1931, 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* 1956, 89).

<sup>102</sup> David 1992, 108-131, 200ff.; Latourette 1957, 136f.; Dunderdale 1993(1962), 105-115; Popley 1958, 3, 5f., 11; 1987, 55-80.



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.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>." 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<sup>105</sup>." Along with its religious series, the project published other Indian literature as well.<sup>106</sup>

The success of the Indian YMCA was largely due to the work of its General Secretary, K.T. Paul<sup>107</sup>, who was one of the most prominent Indian Christian leaders. His, as well as the fraternal secretaries', view was to Indianise the YMCA, and the projects mentioned above were applications of this goal<sup>108</sup>. 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<sup>109</sup>." Thus, the Indian YMCA educated the indigenous Christian leadership to Indian Christian churches. Among them

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<sup>103</sup> David 1992, 10f., 132-137, 140; Latourette 1957, 127ff.; Dunderdale 1993(1962), 56-61.

<sup>104</sup> Latourette 1957, 115.

<sup>105</sup> David 1992, 151.

<sup>106</sup> David 1992, 146-159; Latourette 1957, 114f.; Dunderdale 1993(1962), 82-93.

<sup>107</sup> On Paul, see Popley (1958; 1987).

<sup>108</sup> 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).

<sup>109</sup> David 1992, 107.

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.<sup>110</sup>

The contribution of India to the mission view of the World's Alliance was for the foremost in the fields of rural projects<sup>111</sup> and interfaith dialogue<sup>112</sup>. There were also the Indian YMCA leaders who continuously stressed "our responsibility to non-Christian members", as Paul Devanandan titled one of his booklets<sup>113</sup>. It was the Indian YMCA that was advised by Mahatma Gandhi: "Help the Moslems and the Hindus to be Christian towards one another<sup>114</sup>."

## ***Ministry to the Peace of God***<sup>115</sup>

### **Reconciliation**

In the Centennial Conference in 1955, the Centennial Declaration states, among other things, 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.<sup>116</sup>

These words had a long history behind them. It was nothing new but merely an articulation of the ongoing activities. Everything big grows from a 'mustard seed'. Basically the seed was written in the Bible. There is an old dream based on the prophecy of Micah:

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. (4:1)  
 ... they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (4:3)  
 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. (4:4)

The story of the work with the victims of war starts with the practical lesson of Christian unity. As noted above, the World YMCA was built on the vision of unity. The Second Fundamental Principle of the Paris Basis reads as follows:

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<sup>110</sup> David 1992, 71, 106, 347; Bent 1991a, 73f.; 1991b, 268; Newbigin 1991, 729ff. On missionaries' attitudes towards indigenous workers, see Neill (1964, 515f.).

<sup>111</sup> WComR 1955, 84f.

<sup>112</sup> One significant hallmark in this dialogue was a consultation held in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) where the YMCA mission in Buddhist lands was reviewed (*Kandy Consultation* (1953a).

<sup>113</sup> *Kandy Consultation* 1953b.

<sup>114</sup> 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.

<sup>115</sup> Expression from Tracy Strong (WComPle 1953, 28).

<sup>116</sup> Wconf 1955, back cover.

Any differences of opinion on other subjects, however important in themselves, shall not interfere with the harmonious relations of the Constituent Members and Associations of the World Alliance.

As noted, the paragraph was a result of American Civil War that was about to burst out. There was fear that the war would divide also the American YMCA associations<sup>117</sup>. The words became the cornerstone of world wide unity because they pointed that nationalism, political opinions, etc. are less important than Christian unity. This principle was tested some years later in Europe where the Franco-Prussian war broke out. Five days after Napoleon III had declared the war in 1870, the French Swiss YMCA publication *Journal*, wrote:

Brothers of France, we weep with you, we humiliate ourselves with you, we pray with you and for you. Let us not forget how much our brothers of Germany also need our prayers.<sup>118</sup>

This was the beginning of an effort by the Geneva YMCA to mediate through their *Journal* between the Associations of France and Germany. The crucial point was the ancient dilemma of which one comes first: Caesar or Christ? The whole discussion published in *Journal* was also published in England and in US and thus all the founders of World Alliance were aware of this question. The issue was of first importance when planning the VI World Conference in Amsterdam in 1872. There the second Paragraph of Paris Basis was underlined and it was shown that the problems between French and Germans were similar to the situation during the American Civil War. The result was that the Basis was reaffirmed and the YMCA Movement had passed its first serious test.<sup>119</sup>

After the Franco-Prussian war YMCA activities in the field of unity were not as dramatic but no less significant. Tracy Strong writes in *World Alliance History*:

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 world-wide slogans.<sup>120</sup>

When the First World War broke out, the Executive Committee in Geneva was afraid that the division of the world would break the YMCA as well. The Executive chose two principles to be the cornerstones of their policy: Paris Basis and absolute political neutrality. The task was not easy. Both belligerent sides felt that the World Alliance was too friendly to the other side.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Wconf 1855,16f.

<sup>118</sup> Shedd 1955a,179.

<sup>119</sup> Shedd 1955a,178-190.

<sup>120</sup> Strong 1955b,461.

<sup>121</sup> Strong 1955b,469.

The wounds of the war were bitter. The question of war quilt kept the churches, which had been loyal to their countries, suspicious of each other.<sup>122</sup> Similarly the relations between German YMCA and the movements in Allied Countries were bad. Especially relations between the French and the Germans were almost totally broken. It took almost ten years to build bridges between these two movements. The reconciliation was one of the major tasks of World Alliance.<sup>123</sup>

It was not until Helsinki World Conference in 1926 than the wounds of the war had been healed. The resolutions pointed the importance of education and grass-roots contacts (camps, conferences, etc.) in promoting peace.<sup>124</sup> The discussion was not anymore in the past division but the focus was laid more towards future and to mechanisms of how to strengthen the unity.

### **Work for Men in Armed Forces**

Along with the work for reconciliation, the YMCA has been a major actor in the work for young men serving in armed forces. The roots of the YMCA service among soldiers<sup>125</sup> are in two wars: the American Civil War and the Franco-Austrian War and especially its Solferino Battle 1859.

In 1861 the American Civil War had brought a totally new challenge: Young men joined in armies away from the Churches and local YMCAs. If the YMCA wanted to keep contact to these men it had to go along. Thus the YMCA organised a Christian Commission to work amongst soldiers. Besides the spiritual guidance the work also included nursing and carrying messages home. It was the first time that any organisation placed mobile units for the service of soldiers during the war.<sup>126</sup>

Two years before the war in America Henri Dunant had found himself in Solferino battlefield helping the wounded. Dunant was one of the founders of World Alliance of YMCAs and the *primus*

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<sup>122</sup> Sinnemäki 1986,99. Karlström 1993,531.

<sup>123</sup> Strong 1955b,478ff.

<sup>124</sup> Wconf 1926, 236f.

<sup>125</sup> YMCA work with soldiers during both World Wars is the most studied field of YMCA action. From the numerous reports, memoirs and studies the most significant are *Service with fighting men* edited by William Howard Taft and Conrad Hoffmans *In The Prison Camp of Germany* - both of which are about the First World War. From the Second World War the most interesting books are André Vuillet's three reports and Hugo Cedergrens memoirs *Mit Liv med KFUM*. These books are the ones which the other YMCA historians have cited.

*motor* of Geneva YMCA. In 1864, when it was sure that there would be ‘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 be even the centre, or at least one of the centres, of the spiritual branch of this relief action. The assembly was interested of his short description of the activity carried by the American Associations during the Civil War. The Geneva Association thought, however, that ”his ideas were too vague”!<sup>127</sup>

The work among soldiers obtained its permanent place in the USA during the Spanish-American war in 1898<sup>128</sup>, in India in 1907<sup>129</sup>, in Britain in 1902 and in Germany in 1914<sup>130</sup>. Before the First World War the YMCA work amongst the soldiers and sailors had expanded greatly.<sup>131</sup> Youth in armies was served by the national YMCAs in all the major wars.<sup>132</sup> The YMCA was in that sense ready when the Great War burst out. The World Alliance began to serve both the men in the armies and the prisoners of war.

YMCA Armed Services Departments were official organs of the British and American 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<sup>133</sup>. In the British forces there was a YMCA unit in every division, and 50 000 women were working through the National Women’s Auxiliary<sup>134</sup>. The Indian YMCA had 591 secretaries in France, India, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Palestine<sup>135</sup>. This might be the first time when a Christian religious worker comes from the Third World to hold services in Europe.

In other countries the YMCA did not have as clearly an official status but the Monarchs often supported (and sometimes asked) YMCA to start the work with armed forces<sup>136</sup> and, thus, the YMCA had a semi-official status. In Germany, for example, there were 1000 Soldiers Homes in

<sup>126</sup> Shedd 1955a, 164.

<sup>127</sup> Shedd 1955a, 175, note 1, 179.

<sup>128</sup> Canfield 1902,7-10.

<sup>129</sup> David 1992,132.

<sup>130</sup> Hjelt 1918,4-6.

<sup>131</sup> Shedd 1955b, 387.

<sup>132</sup> Civil War, USA (1861-65), German-Danish (1864), Franco-Prussian (1870), Spanish-American (1898), British-Boer (1899-1902) and Russo-Japanese (1904-05). Strong 1955a,546n.

<sup>133</sup> AFCons 1960, 7.

<sup>134</sup> Hubbard 1960,8f.

<sup>135</sup> David 1992,133.

<sup>136</sup> Anderson 1963, 24f,27. Guskov 1995,17. At least two princes were National presidents of YMCA: Bernadotte in Sweden and Paul in Yugoslavia.

1918<sup>137</sup>. In Switzerland the earliest records of YMCA Army-work are from 1856<sup>138</sup> (Sic! Three years before Solferino).

In practice, the task was shared in a way that so called 'big YMCA countries' took care of themselves, 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 the work of the Red Cross relief activities<sup>139</sup>. It is noteworthy that work in armies seems not to have been regarded against the policy of neutrality. Perhaps it was categorised to the same class as distributing the Bibles to the soldiers. It was easier for the YMCA to obtain the permission for the work among soldiers than among POWs<sup>140</sup>. YMCA work with armed forces also created civilian YMCAs in countries where soldiers were served. Most YMCAs, for example, in Balkan were founded in that time<sup>141</sup>.

The military work of the YMCA had its dark sides as well. Among the US troops in France there were also African-American soldiers. The YMCA had a special programme and own secretaries for them. Although it was good in principle, it did not work that well in practice because the American version of apartheid flourished in this service as well as in other segments of American society. Black YMCA secretaries got fewer resources than their white colleagues and faced structural resistance for their work. However, the experience of liberal atmosphere in French society sowed a seed for black human rights activity in the US YMCA.<sup>142</sup>

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 to run the joint task of service for armed forces.<sup>143</sup> Similar trends also took place in other countries but practically not much changed. For example in Britain the share of YMCA was larger than other organisations' share together.<sup>144</sup>

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

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<sup>137</sup> Hjelt 1918,6.

<sup>138</sup> AFCons 1960, 11.

<sup>139</sup> Strong 1955a,550f.

<sup>140</sup> Strong 1955a,550f.

<sup>141</sup> Anderson 1963,20-25.

<sup>142</sup> Chandler 1995; Mjagkij 1994

<sup>143</sup> Greiner 1960.

<sup>144</sup> Hubbard 1960,9.

...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.<sup>145</sup>

In this sense the work of World Alliance among the armed forces ceased. The World Alliance prepared itself to serve men behind the barbed wire.

### **Serving the Prisoners of War**

The work for the Prisoners of War (POWs) was a natural continuity to the work with armed forces (prisoners were also armed forces). During the First World War the Prisoners Aid of YMCA ran projects in Austria-Hungary, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria. In Great Britain the responsibility laid on the British National Council. In non-belligerent countries such as Denmark, Holland, Japan, Sweden and Switzerland services were given to internees.<sup>146</sup>

The most serious crisis of the work became when the USA joined the war. Because the majority of YMCA work among POWs was done by Americans, German War Ministry forbid all YMCA work among POWs. The World Alliance had to question if American aid could be acceptable at all when it had such results. After the negotiations the work continued among the Central Powers by the Swiss and Swedish workers<sup>147</sup>.

In the Second World War the question of neutrality was taken even more seriously. The Executive of the World's Committee concentrated in the service for POWs. In practice, World Alliance negotiated with the National Councils before it started the work in any country. The role of National Councils was to help with contacts with governmental and church authorities. The representatives of the World Alliance were from neutral countries and they ran the work for POWs.<sup>148</sup>

The relations between the World YMCA and the International Red Cross remained good. There was a mutual understanding in co-operation of these two organisations. 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. International Committee of Red Cross concentrated on camp inspection, organising a central information agency

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<sup>145</sup> WComPle 1953, 28.

<sup>146</sup> Strong 1955a,546-552.

<sup>147</sup> Strong 1955a,553.

<sup>148</sup> Strong 1955a,559.

with mail facilities, handling of all shipments and distributing all materials sent by the national Red Cross Societies.<sup>149</sup>

Most of the work was on reciprocal basis - all prisoners were helped in the same way on both sides of the frontier. Exceptions to this rule were 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. Finally, out of sheer pity many of the camp commandants in Germany urged the YMCA to send in supplies to the Russian POWs as well. Although War Prisoner's Aid was not aloud to work in Italy, it served Italian prisoners in Allied countries.<sup>150</sup>

The work among POWs was so important that it took the whole capacity of the World Alliance staff during war time.<sup>151</sup> It also influenced the future policy of the World Alliances to such an extent that one cannot understand the period after the war without it. After the war the POWs were freed but, in many cases, became refugees.

## **WORK WITH REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

The first YMCA practice in the field of migrants was experienced in the US when State Commissioner for Immigrants suggested in 1906 that YMCA could help immigrants. The International Committee of North American YMCAs answered to the challenge. Tens of thousands of immigrants in educational classes were taught English. Social and religious projects were carried on. Personal help was given from the ship to the point of destination and to find a job and friends. The work expanded from the US to 17 ports in Europe where emigrants were waiting. Thousands of volunteers taught English to immigrants and at the same time learned about their hopes and fears. The work was one of the major laboratories for experience in human relationships.<sup>152</sup>

Next challenges were during and after the First World War. This time the flood of emigrants came from Russia. Major work was done in France, and Paris became a centre for Russian emigrants. The work revolved around YMCA Press, Theological Seminar and Technical Institute but it also contained traditional YMCA activities such as camps, choirs etc. Especially YMCA

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<sup>149</sup> Strong 1955a,557f; Cedergren 1969,70.

<sup>150</sup> Strong 1955a, 562, 573. Cedergren 1969,73f.

<sup>151</sup> Cedergren 1969,94.

<sup>152</sup> Shedd 1955b, 440-443.



Press greatly influenced the maintenance of Russian identity and culture by publishing Russian Classics, Orthodox liturgical books etc.<sup>153</sup>

At the end of the Second World War the flood of refugees and displaced persons (DP)<sup>154</sup> burst out at the same time when the normal apparatus of government and social control collapsed in Germany and East European countries. The YMCA found itself in the midst of the flood. Without clear understanding what would follow, a start was made on what became one of the largest projects in which the World Alliance has taken a responsibility - namely the World's YMCA/YWCA Refugee Services.<sup>155</sup>

It was estimated that in Western Europe there were half a million refugees after the war<sup>156</sup>. The work amongst the POWs turned to work among the refugees and DPs.<sup>157</sup> Officially YMCA joined seven other agencies by signing a common contract with the United Nations Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), and officially started its work under the contract in 1945. But that was officially. The term that was used PWX -ex Prisoners of War- describes the YMCA situation. The YMCA was already there in the refugee camps. 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 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 channel for distributing supplies from the UN, from armies and from churches to refugees.<sup>158</sup> For two years YMCA was 'the umbrella' under which the churches initiated their spiritual ministry until they secured their own agreements with International Refugee Organisation (IRO).<sup>159</sup>

In the work with refugees YMCA adopted the following principles:

1. Services were available to all without discrimination.

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<sup>153</sup> Anderson 1963,19. Guskov 1995,17. Rouse 1993,605. Zernov 1993,661f.

<sup>154</sup> There was a difference in the terms. A refugee had fled from his/her country to another country, a displaced person was a refugee in his/her own country. Their status was officially different. For example, if someone from Eastern part of Germany fled to Western part (s)he was DP but if (s)he fled for example to Austria (s)he was a refugee.

<sup>155</sup> Kilpatric 1955,589.

<sup>156</sup> WComR 1955,20.

<sup>157</sup> Strong 1955a,572-578.

<sup>158</sup> Kilpatric 1955,592ff.

<sup>159</sup> Strong 1951,1.

2. The work was concentrated on those fields where YMCA had some special know-how.
3. Refugees should be helped to solve their problems by themselves.
4. Refugee and non-refugee staff members were regarded equals.

Many of these principles were new then and they had a significant influence on both the work and later the policy of World Alliance.

The refugee work was done mainly in Europe but in the Middle East and in India as well.<sup>160</sup> In Palestine the Jerusalem YMCA membership was mainly Arab-Christian. When the Israel state was founded they had to flee among the at least 850 000 others<sup>161</sup> to West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza strip. Since that time local YMCAs in Jerusalem, Jericho, Nazareth and World Alliance in Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria have organised activities for Refugees and Resettled people. In the 1940s YMCA was the only organization with Palestinian staff. This was because of the experience from Europe, where the work was in the hands of DPs themselves.<sup>162</sup> The work was carried on by the support of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).<sup>163</sup>

In the refugee work YMCA maintained in all levels close working relationships with most of the inter-governmental agencies, churches, YWCA, Red Cross and other voluntary movements. 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 YMCA<sup>164</sup>. The vision of a social movement had been institutionalised.

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<sup>160</sup> Also in Far East the work was done under the title of 'Reconstruction'. WComR 1955,52.

<sup>161</sup> WComR 1955,20.

<sup>162</sup> WComR 1955,56.

<sup>163</sup> Graham-Brown s.a.(1989),97-110.

<sup>164</sup> Holborn 1975,124f.

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