

# From Chaos to Communion: Ecumenical Peacebuilding Amid Conflict

*Mohammad HekmatAfshar*

*The University of Gothenburg, Sweden*

*gushekmo@student.gu.se*

## Abstract

This essay, by focusing on contemporary events and outstanding initiatives, observes how Christian ecumenism, advocating for peace since 1925, has addressed conflict. The transitional evolution of the Church from denominations to a unique organization committed to social reform is explored, beginning its mission prior to World War II and culminating its initiatives at the 1925 Stockholm Conference. It commemorates the redemptive potential of youth involvement, interfaith conversation, and ecumenical diakonia in service to the speeding global injustices - racial trauma, displacement, climate change, etc. Grounded on faith, love, and symbolic literacy, the paper progresses models of spiritual anthropology and economic freedom. By viewing interreligious quarrels through theological and practical understanding, Ecumenism transcends contextual conflict and guides a shift toward justice and harmony, as envisioned by Jesus Christ. This peacebuilding approach, originating from divine compassion, offers a cooperative and all encompassing path to unity and reconciliation, though it remains far from a panacea for human suffering.

## Keywords

Ecumenism, Peacebuilding, Interreligious Dialogue, Diakonia, Stockholm Conference, Youth Engagement, Faith and Grace, Social Justice, Symbolic Literacy, Reconciliation

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## Introduction

Throughout human history, and particularly during times of war, the desire of peace has been universal but elusive to human endeavor. Christian churches view it as a topic that is inherently linked to their mission, which more often than not leads to painful reflection on whether or not they have been active enough in carrying out their duty as peacekeepers (Söderblom, 1930). Ecumenical peacebuilding, as a collaborative venture among Christian communions, is increasingly an on the frontline response to global conflicts, seeking to embody Christian values in world relations and contribute toward bringing about a more just and peaceful world.

Early in the 20th century, that is, during World War I, the Church faced serious issues such as internal conflicts and generally being controlled by nationalism (Karlström, 1954/2004, p. 511). Ehrenström enlightens about governments when they had the slightest fear for the opinion of the Churches (1954/2004, p. 553). Karlström characterized Christianity as "a chaos of rival denominations and a mass of impotent individualities" (1954/2004, p. 511). Early ecumenical meetings, like the 1917 meeting in Upsala, laid the groundwork by calling for the Church to be the active conscience of nations and to make efforts to create world understanding (Karlström, 1954/2004, p. 527). One of the most important practice oriented rather than doctrine-based conferences was the 1925 Stockholm Conference (Universal Christian Conference on

Life and Work [UCCLW], 1926, p. 361). The Church was requested to declare war without arbitration to be the worst sin and to strive towards employing law rather than war to resolve international disputes (UCCLW, 1926, p. 71).

Following World War II, the World Council of Churches (WCC) was founded in 1948 and subsequently became a specialized agency with special focus on ecumenical peacemaking (ACT Alliance & World Council of Churches [ACT-AWCC], 2022, p. 10). Initially, churches worked together to alleviate the great suffering of people. Ecumenical activities evolved over time, primarily in the understanding of diakonia (service), toward a Faith and rights based approach to addressing structural injustice (ACT-AWCC 2022, p. 23). Today's ecumenical peacebuilding is exemplified by the WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, which began in 2013. Churches are encouraged by this initiative to confront contemporary challenges such as racial justice, gender justice, land and displacement, truth and trauma (Enns, 2022, p. 268).

The positive contributions that youth can make to peacebuilding are examined in this essay. In order to combat division, the Enemy, Stranger, Neighbor, Friend initiative demonstrates how they question conventional wisdom and promote interFaith collaboration (Jiménez & Robinson, 2022, p. 760). More cooperation for peace, is also made possible by the WCC's activities in interreligious dialogue and projects (Pratt, 2021, p. 662).

### **Historical Background: Early 20th Century and 1925 Stockholm**

The English accounts provide detailed information of the UCCLW held in Stockholm during August 19 to 30, 1925 (UCCLW, 1926, p. vi). The central purpose of the conference was to investigate applied Christianity in everyday life, excluding discussion of doctrine, custom or issues of church (UCCLW, 1926, p. 1).

### **Historical Background and Preparations**

Following World War I, the ecumenical movement accelerated its long term vision of peace and unity, and it was this that produced the 1925 Stockholm Conference (Karlström, 1954/2004, p. 539). Among the pre conference requirements at Uppsala in December 1917 with delegates from several countries, emphasized the Christian vocation to unity and its manifestation in everyday life (Söderblom, 1930). Organizers collaborated with organizations such as the British Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship (COPEC), which was regarded as critical to the subsequent Stockholm Conference (UCCLW, 1926, p. 8). Others such as Walter Simons, an influential figure at Stockholm, supported initial initiatives such as the Eisenach Resolution, which opposed war and advocated peaceful resolution of conflicts (Söderblom, 1930). The Roman Catholic Church, as invited, was absent because of concerns over papal jurisdiction (Karlström, 1954/2004, p. 539).

### **Core Principles and Debates**

Church social responsibility was the focus of the conference. The Bishop of Saxony, Ludwig Ihmels, described how the Church should propagate the Gospel and accept its social responsibility (UCCLW, 1926, p. 72). There was a call to repentance for the historical neglect by the Church where he proclaimed, we recognize our guilt (UCCLW, 1926, p. 131). This represented a move toward more practical Christianity outside of individual salvation to encompass transformation of society (UCCLW, 1926, p. 640).

The subject of Christian Charity and the Social Problem, emphasized that Christian love must be more than just good works. It must develop into group activities that transform society (UCCLW, 1926, p. 132). Professor Arvid Runestam, further explained that love is of the greatest worth when it is a demonstration of self sacrifice and serving the needy (UCCLW, 1926, p. 142). As a desire for a perfect society and a heart for what the Church views as belief, the idea of the Kingdom of the Gospel was being promoted. The

Church also had a global mission to bring people together in a world dominated by racism, economic and national conflict (UCCLW, 1926, p. 157). Bishop Charles, speaks out about the insufficiency of firearms removal and believes the very mindset creating conflict, must be changed. The participants in the meeting expressed their curiosity to support international bodies like League of Nations (UCCLW, 1926, p. 445). Christian Education emphasized a lot in the rewriting of history books (UCCLW, 1926, p. 619). Professor Otto Nordenskjöld, cautioned that history would be manipulated to further nationalistic ends or to glorify war. Instead, he desired facts and individuals coexisting (UCCLW, 1926, p. 620). He suggested establishing a committee that would scan books for containing any false or questionable material to meet this need (UCCLW, 1926, p. 621).

### **Outcomes and Legacy**

In the single exception, the Stockholm Conference was exceptional in the sense that, it did not impose formal resolutions on its central issues (UCCLW, 1926, p. 719). Instead, a last message that formalized the overall consensus and accepted shared shortcomings and assumptions, was voted on by representatives. Likewise, the majority of the participants internalized the message (UCCLW, 1926, p. 720). The exception to the no resolutions policy was the overall agreement on a Continuation Committee (UCCLW, 1926, p. 715, para. 13). The committee would be established to include delegates from various places and religious denominations (UCCLW, 1926, Section II, p. 708). It had the mandate of gathering and ascertaining facts, propagating the conference thoughts throughout the world and organizing future meetings (UCCLW, 1926, p. 1). The Conference established that Christian living involves attempting to make societies better, rather than one being individually saved (UCCLW, 1926, p. 105).

Despite mankind error and some initial hesitation, the participants were overall more pleased with the conference than anticipated, experiencing a strong fellowship in Christ and an agreed-upon mission (Ehrenström, 1954/2004, pp. 547–548). The conference was conclusive to the ecumenical movement, determining fundamental concepts about the way the Church addresses global social, economic and political issues (Abrecht, 1970/2004, p. 236). Its emphasis on applying the Gospel to the life of society, was a turning point in Christian social practice and reflection (Abrecht, 1970/2004, p. 237). That heritage continues in later ecumenical suggestions and schemes, such as the World Council of Churches Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (Enns, 2022, p. 268).

### **Life and Work Digital Collection, Legacy in Motion**

Eccumenic movement reveals Christian churches coming together to face world issues by action and confraternity rather than focusing on disagreement on belief. This practice was demonstrated at the 1925 Stockholm Conference and continues to be practiced in present programs (Karlström, 1954/2004, pp. 540–541).

### **The Stockholm Conference (1925), A Foundational Moment**

Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, wanted to document its work in English, and an equivalent book was prepared in German (UCCLW, 1926, p. vi). The conference centered on Life and Work, steering clear of matters of dogma, ritual and church affairs. This meant that, the conference esteemed Christian action of a practical sort based on religious Faith (UCCLW, 1926, p. 1).

#### **A. Foundational Framework of the Conference**

##### **1. Nature of the Conference**

The Stockholm Conference of 1925 was intended to foster harmony among the churches and not as a governing or as a doctrinal authority. In the official report, it was structured as an occasion for reciprocal encouragement and joint counsel and not as a debating assembly, a parliament of churches, or a synod (UCCLW, 1926, p. 2).

## **2. Six Main Subjects Deliberated (Sections 1 & 2)**

It laid down six fundamental themes as follows, The Purpose of God for Man and the Responsibility of the Church, The Church and Economic and Industrial Problems, The Church and Social and Moral Problems, The Church and International Relations, The Church and Christian Education, and Forms of Cooperation and Federative Action by the Christian Communions (UCCLW, 1926, p. 13), which laid down its working Christian programme and recommitted itself to addressing problems of our day in society through ecumenical cooperation.

## **3. Message Instead of Formal Resolutions**

Rather than making formal conclusions about these very complex issues, the conference resorted to a single message which expressed its entire spirit. There was a need for an exception in the choice of a Continuation Committee, which would carry on the work and the spirit of the conference (UCCLW, 1926, pp. 15-16).

## **B. Thematic Discussions at the Conference**

### **4. Christian Education**

Otto Nordenskiöld, vigorously campaigned history textbooks to encourage international understanding and counteract national bias. He called for a commission to regulate textbooks on false claims and further objective truth based representations of different people and cultures (UCCLW, 1926, pp. 619–621).

### **5. Broader Ecumenical Engagement and Principles**

The ecumenical movement spreads further than particular conferences and it promotes:

#### *5.1. International Relations and Peacebuilding*

Early initiatives involved a Peace Appeal in 1914 on the basis of For Peace and Christian Fellowship (UCCLW, 1926, pp. 2–3). Nathan Söderblom's Nobel Lecture in 1930, concerned the Church's mission to promote fraternity, to require a supranational structure of justice and to redefine the function of military forces to preserve peace (Söderblom, 1930). The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, that was widely debated during the Stockholm Conference, became a valuable instrument of these activities (UCCLW, 1926, p. 38).

#### *5.2. Social Justice and Economic Life*

It opposed laissez-faire capitalism<sup>1</sup> by placing major emphasis on the "church's duty to act on social and economic issues" (Karlström, 1954/2004, p. 510). The movement understood that Christianity cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> An economic system known as laissez-faire capitalism allows the government to have little to no influence over the market. It is predicated on the idea that, in the absence of government oversight, regulation or intervention (such as price limits, subsidies or labor laws), free markets, powered by private individuals and competition, will self regulate through supply, demand and profit incentives. "Laissez-faire" means "let do" or "let it be" in French, which means to allow the economy function naturally.

separated from social and political concerns, asserting it must utilize contemporary media like the Press in spreading its teachings (UCCLW, 1926, p. 39).

## **6. Youth Engagement in Peacebuilding**

"Young people are engaged in peace education, interFaith dialogue and conflict prevention through such novel efforts as the Enemy, Stranger, Neighbor, Friend (ESNF) project. The project addresses othering dynamics and strives to empower youth leaders with the skills required to guide constructions of the other in religious symbols and doctrine to religious literacy and anti stereotype warfare. The ESNF project embodies both the dialogical richness and practical optimism ecumenical peacebuilding pursues, especially in youth spaces of plural identities and post conflict contexts" (Jiménez & Robinson, 2022, p. 761).

## **C. Legacy and Ongoing Mission**

### **7. Enduring Commitment to Unity and Justice**

Ecumenical peacebuilding values are particularly pertinent to today's interreligious dialogue, as becomes clear from these new ideas and proposals that also take on meaning in the new themes of Sections 1 and 2, like Stockholm's focus on shared solutions, reform of Christian education and prophetic action for social justice (CCW, 2025).

### **8. Broader Vision of the Ecumenical Movement**

Finally, the ecumenical movement has evidenced a long commitment to unity among Christians from the earliest conferences through today, not toward unity however, but as an intelligent response to achieving constructive social, political and economic change (Karlström, 1954/2004, pp. 539–542). It hopes to provide a climate of brotherhood and productive cooperation between different Christian communions and towards society in general, for action towards solution of problems from crime and education through peace between nations to social justice (UCCLW, 1926, pp. 580–581).

## **Individual Case Study, Ecumenical Peacebuilding in Action**

### **Interreligious Economic Independence (IEI)**

As an independent church state vision, I would suggest interreligious conversation on economic independence through means like cofoundations of factories, whose dividends further peace construction, moral education and ecumenical international cooperation. This interreligious economic independence (IEI) movement, is a structural move beyond previous ecumenical efforts, e.g., the Stockholm Conference's emphasis on "means of cooperation and federative attempts by the Christian communions" (UCCLW, 1926, p. 628). While such initial prototypes were dependent on trusting convening and institutional convening, IEI charts a course to moral autonomy by shared investment. Shared enterprise makes interreligious collaboration nonreliant. Here, religion is everlasting and about Divine salvation, while politics is mundane and short sighted to greed, political dominance, military clout and geopolitcal concerns.

### **Humane Common Sense of Conscience (HCSC)**

In a previous articulation, I've distinguished the Divine path, rooted in compassion, benevolence and unconditional love, from Mankind's way of thinking, which is ego and world based (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p.68). This latter path, focuses on the material soul (Self) without the Divine soul (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p.65). Peace in contrast, stems from Faith, leading to a shared spirit of unity (WCC, 2021, p. 19). This echoes Francis of Assisi's focus on peace and universal brotherhood, exemplified by his prayer and his meeting with Sultan Malik al-Kamil in 1219 (Franciscan Media, 2024). Seeking peace through Faith based unity, goes beyond specific religious boundaries, emphasizing Divine compassion.

### **Faith, Genetic Grace and Ecumenical Ascent**

Stating that Faith, a gift from God is conveyed through Grace, it's argued it goes beyond the intellectual scope of Belief Systems based on memory, rituals and historical norms (HekmatAfshar 2025, pp. 59–60). Simply remembering God through convention and doctrine or belief, doesn't assure spiritual transformation (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p. 60). Furthermore, Faith is a Divine gift given by God through Grace, while religious rituals and prayer are choices made by Belief Systems for their adherents (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p. 60). Therefore, belief alone isn't enough to have Faith in God, according to biblical thought (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p. 60). Salvation comes from Faith, as supported in the Bible (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p. 60): *You have been saved by Faith through the Grace of God. In case you may boast, this is not by works which you did, but it is a gift of God* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Proposing that a set of genomic codes in humans, not just men, acts as a key factor in spiritual growth through Divine reminders, these individuals are termed Post Man Human (PMH) (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p. 59). This perspective sees a Genetic Pool of Salvation (GPS) as Adam's legacy, based on the idea that He was the first Divine incarnation (p. 64). The concept aligns with Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28, which state that, *the Son of Human came to serve and sacrifice His life*. This sacrificial mind, labeled HU (HekmatAfshar, 2025, pp. 59, 64), allows for a transcendent awakening, independent of time and place (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p. 59). Faith, in this context, is a direct connection to God, and reminding, not remembering, stands opposed to belief. These ideas offer a framework for ecumenical unity rooted in a shared Divine origin, rather than in doctrinal conformity (HekmatAfshar, 2025, p. 68). Arvid Runestam saw the value of love in personal sacrifice and caring for others' needs (UCCLW, 1926, p. 142). Interpreting this sacrificial love as diaconia's concern for humanity, leads to a reevaluation of ecumenical cooperation within a spiritual anthropology (HekmatAfshar, 2025, pp. 64-65).

To foster interreligious dialogue on Divine purpose, it's crucial to differentiate between History and Religion (HekmatAfshar, 2024), and to distinguish between Human and Man (HekmatAfshar, 2025, pp. 59, 64-65). Religious groups like the World Council of Churches (WCC), World Council of Mosques (WCM), International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), and Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), showcase religion based collaboration. These groups can serve as core partners in developing Interreligious Economic Independence (IEI), promoting peace through ethical business practices rather than political reliance.

### **Symbolic Literacy as Ecumenical Praxis**

Ecumenical peacebuilding needs to be based on understanding symbols and theological insights. True cooperation needs a rethinking of meaning, not just talks between groups. By revisiting religious ideas and taking apart cultural stories of separation, we can act in ways that challenge common ideas and build reconciliation on what is seen as a Divine plan, instead of just cultural memory. The focus of the Stockholm Conference on global knowledge and Christian teaching strikes a chord because of the dense symbolism (UCCLW, 1926, p. 619). Ecumenical consciousness today, embraces solutions along with nostalgia.

The service ethic itself offers hope. Rights and Faith based service offer a solid basis for action, even when political or structural obstacles remain (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 71). Creating networks of collaboration, especially with secular organizations and people of different beliefs, is key to turning divided realities into common goals (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 83). Putting resources into training, theological education and gaining skills through experience, is important for turning ecumenical ideas into real action (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 113).

This ecumenical theology, which blends practical action with theological thought, is typical of how ecumenical social thought started, as seen in the works of thinkers like Abrecht and Söderblom. I believe

that the future of peacebuilding lies where sacrificial views of humanity, symbolic awareness and ethical work, come together; not just technical talks, but real cooperation across religious boundaries.

### **Course Literature: Theological Depth and Ethical Tension**

In order to foster mutual respect, understanding and cooperation for the good of all, interreligious conversation entails complex exchanges between individuals from various religious backgrounds (FABC, 1987, pp. 10–11). It is regarded as essential to maintaining human existence and creating inclusive, peaceful and long lasting civilizations (Helde, 2021, p. 16).

### **Major Elements and Objectives of Interreligious Dialogue**

As the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences noted in 1987, human relationships rely on conversation, enabling people to connect and form communities (FABC, 1987, p. 1). Helde (2021) points out that sharing thoughts, listening with empathy and withholding judgment, builds trust and strengthens bonds (p. 24). Marbaniang (2018) suggests that, this process leads to shared understanding and fellowship, transforming individuals into allies working together for the common good (p. 104).

### **Addressing Challenges and Promoting Peace**

Interfaith dialogue attempts to address major problems like communal issues and conflicts, through finding common ground and encouraging partnership (Marbaniang, 2018, pp. 104-105). It can lower tension, prevent violent conflict and strengthen social unity, especially when religion or culture is a factor (Helde, 2021, p. 16). Dialogue shows people the similar values in major religions, for example, love, mercy, tolerance and coexistence (Helde, 2021, p. 7). Dialogue may help to reach Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education, equality, peace, justice, strong institutions and teamwork (Helde, 2021, p. 21).

### **Deepening Self and Other Understanding**

Dialogue aims to deepen self and other understanding, potentially leading to a restatement of religious belief when suitable (Marbaniang, 2018, p. 104). People who have an open and dialogic attitude, are better able to embrace different points of view, which promotes development and understanding without requiring them to compromise their essential convictions (Helde, 2021, p. 26). In order to enable participants develop mutual understanding and trust, ongoing discourse advances by exposing taboos, fear and prejudice, recognizing differences and forging agreements and common ground (Helde, 2021, p. 40).

### **Forms of Interreligious Dialogue**

Kuruvachira (n.d., p. 5) suggests several kinds of dialogue, which involve different levels of interaction:

1. Dialogue of Life: This is everyday interaction where people of diverse faiths coexist openly, sharing life's joys, sorrows and challenges. It's a natural process rooted in care, welcome and regard. Ordinary persons, laypeople, are key in fostering this dialogue (Kuruvachira, n.d., pp. 8-9).
2. Dialogue of Works (or Action): This focuses on working together on humanitarian, social, economic or political goals, like advocating for social justice, harmony and liberation. This can be in local projects or in foreign groups. The laypeople are extremely important (Kuruvachira, n.d., pp. 9-10).
3. Dialogue of Experts (or Theological Exchange): Here, specialists discuss theological concepts to grow their knowledge of each other's beliefs and appreciate spiritual values. The aim is to dispel biases and encourage understanding (Kuruvachira, n.d., pp. 10-12).
4. Dialogue of Religious Experience: This includes sharing core spiritual practices like prayer, contemplation, belief and worship. This exchange allows people to explain the basis of their beliefs

(Kuruvachira, n.d., p. 12). This dialogue calls for deep regard for other religions and avoiding blending them (Kuruvachira, n.d., p. 13).

### **Challenges and Considerations**

Interfaith dialogue, despite its strengths, struggles with issues such as fundamentalism, which refuses to listen and rejects opposing views (Marbaniang, 2018). Efforts to promote interfaith discussion are not always well received. This is because the abuse of religion has, unfortunately, contributed to human suffering, causing widespread cynicism and negative attitudes toward faith based projects, as well as a lack of religious understanding that creates distrust and prejudice. Some view dialogue as weak, since it is sometimes seen as intangible and difficult to measure (Helde, 2021, p. 47—48). There is a common myth that conversation aims at conversion. This is not the case. The true goal is to increase understanding and commitment to shared moral values (Kuruvachira, n.d.).

### **Principles for Effective Dialogue**

There are ten principles of good dialogue outlined in the Guide to Interreligious Dialogue (Helde, 2021, p. 37):

1. Make a secure space where people can easily share thoughts.
2. Recognize the main goal is to understand others' views, not to prove yourself right.
3. Use good communication skills like listening with empathy, and being sincere and respectful.
4. Set basic rules that encourage respectful discussion.
5. Take risks by sharing feelings and questioning ideas openly to reach understanding.
6. Value relationships more than specific problems, and build trust to manage disagreements.
7. Discuss hard questions slowly, and step back if needed to keep the discussion helpful.
8. Don't avoid tough subjects or give up; stick to the goals of learning and building relationships.
9. Expect to change your own thinking and beliefs about others.
10. Share what you learn with others by applying new insights in communities and acting on them.

### **Dialogue with the Texts, Key Concepts and Intersections**

Contemporary ecumenical theology gives importance to *Diakonia*, defined as the responsible service of the gospel by deeds and words done by Christians responding to people's needs (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 16). Rooted in both faith and rights (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 8), it addresses a vital part of the church's purpose, based on human dignity, justice and peace (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 14). Ecumenical ethics and accountability are challenged, urging churches to address international problems like poverty, migration as a driver for development, and climate change. The mobility of people represents globalization. Almost a billion people are mobile, either inside or outside their countries, searching for better money making chances, escaping conflict or poverty, seeking better health and education for children or reacting to shifts in the environment, climate and the economy (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 58). Notably, *diakonia* is required for a church to exist (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 8).



Paraphrasing from experiences of trauma, displacement and racism, Fernando Enns builds the theology of reconciliation in *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in Toward an Ecumenical Theology of Companionship*. He accomplishes this by developing companionship through dialogical response to suffering (Enns, 2022, p. 268). This relates to the diaconal dedication to complete purpose with material, social, and Divine parts of human life. Modern ecumenical theology confirms Diakonia as action based on Faith and rights, using biblical ideas of human dignity and justice (Sauca, 2020, p. 14). It supports an integrated method to service, dealing with the full scope of human reality with responsible reactions in different situations (Sauca, 2020, p. 32).

Those involved in Diakonia are asked to form strategic alliances with secular groups and civil society, including those of other Faiths, to serve human rights and provide community service. This partnership comes from respect and shared trust in the common good (Sauca, 2020, p. 84). It also calls for the creation of a diaconal language that can state its nature with both theological and secular conversation (Sauca, 2020, p. 76). Youth led movements, like the ESNF, show how interreligious discussion can move past theoretical ideas, making people's movements and responsibility in different societies.

### **Strategic Realism vs. Idealism**

Nathan Söderblom, in his writings, voiced the Church's duty to foster fellowship and support an international legal system for peace (Söderblom, 1930), yet this vision presents a paradox when compared to the practical strategies later adopted. For instance, *The Called to Transformation Ecumenical Diakonia* acknowledges the changed circumstances of diaconal work, specifically limited resources, which requires alliances with secular and interreligious groups, moving efforts toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (ACT-AWCC, 2022, p. 21). A similar path is traced in Paul Abrecht's *The Development of Ecumenical Social Thought and Action*, 1970. A shift occurred where earlier ecumenical actions sought to implement Gospel principles in social contexts (Abrecht, 1970/2004, p. 237). There was an increasing understanding of the complications involved in achieving these ideals, like national rivalries (Bell, 1926, p. 54). As Monod stressed at the Stockholm Conference, the movement gradually insisted that Christianity maintain its place in social and political matters (UCCLW, 1926, p. 30), advocating for engaged participation, not passive observation.

### **Comparing Theological Voices**

Agendas for change are necessary, according to Jürgen Moltmann and Fernando Enns. According to Raimon Panikkar, there is an essential connection between the earthly, human and Divine aspects of life; they cannot exist apart (Thadathil, 2012, p. 4). Pluralism is a part of human nature, according to Panikkar (Thadathil, 2012, p. 11), and dialogue is the needful answer to other cultures, faiths and perspectives. He believes that seekers must understand others to grasp ultimate mystery (Thadathil, 2012, p. 12). He imagines a universal theology promoting religious pluralism and sound dialogue between religions. This universality is the moral ground for cooperation between religions, especially when trust, representation and common conscience are at stake. He states that interreligious dialogue needs mysticism and sees it as a valid way of knowing God and a source of liberation (Marbaniang, 2018, p. 106—107).

Moltmann (2024) speaks of a fidelity to the entirety of creation and of encouraging contemporary ecological theology (p. 179). Enns's (2022) friendship theology speaks to truth, trauma and racial justice, and insists on deeper change in human trust and solidarity in Christ, as well as insisting on ecumenical thinking being decolonized (p. 283).

The subjects Abrecht and Simons write about, rather are issues and viable solutions. Abrecht (1970/2004) posits that the WCC has to make difficult decisions in countering social and economic problems (p. 237).

W. Simons displayed realism instead of deterrence in what he uttered during the 1925 Stockholm Conference on Crime, Justice and Individualized Care (Simons, in Bell, 1926, pp. 290, 299). This difference shows that theology drives change, while realism focuses on practical action.

## **Conclusion**

Scholarly sources suggest that peace and justice are grounded in literature. Diakonia, understood as service to humanity guided by morality, faith and rights, is central to the church's purpose, particularly when addressing issues like poverty, migration and climate change (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 68). Along the reconciliation journey, the concept belongs to a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, which is an effort to address racial injustice, trauma and truth through solidarity and community (Enns, 2022, p. 272). It can heal sites of conflict in the long term through sensitive interreligious dialogue based on profound theological and symbolic knowledge. Rather than relying only on institutions, transformative ecumenism rethinks traditional teachings, metaphors, and how people see their community, which can foster peace through meaning instead of just procedures.

According to the WCC–ACT definition, the joint ecumenical work of the ACT Alliance and World Council of Churches on ecumenical diakonia, shows that the ecumenical movement has strongly resonated with regional issues. It has started institutional relationships, applied social and political pressure, and made diaconal work more professional, showing strategic realism in its actions (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 10).

Theologically, there are internal disagreements and different views on the Kingdom of God (UCCLW, 1926, p. 453). Some view it, the same source stating, as a new order ruled by God in social context, while others view it as a matter of belief for salvation or pardon. Therefore, it doesn't matter if we consider Kingdom of God as individual or communal, material or spiritual (UCCLW, 1926, pp. 453–454). Churches may be less politically influential because Christians tend to be in the minority in a nation (UCCLW, 1926, p. 451). Hence, there have to be calls to action rather than just rhetoric (UCCLW, 1926, p. 502).

Peace efforts must be locally specific and well rooted in areas of conflict in order to function. To hold a real progress, it's crucial for Christian organizations, secular groups and individuals of all religions, to collaborate while embracing their mutual goal of creating a sustainable and just society (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 112). Continued investment in developing diaconal skills and training practitioners with both theological insight and technical skills, is needed to handle complex global problems (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 113). By restating diakonia as a prophetic call for justice, focusing on economic, climate, gender, racial and health equality, the ecumenical movement can empower and heal. It can inspire a new generation of diakonia to actively change social structures (ACT–AWCC, 2022, p. 105). Through an inclusive vision that combines spiritual belief with practical action, the Church can fulfill its role in building peace.

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Therefore, no ethical clearance from an institutional review board was necessary, and no consent to publish was applicable.

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