

## “For the Relief of Human Suffering”: The Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief in the context of Cold War initiatives in development, 1940-1968”<sup>1</sup>

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At its April 1940 General Conference the newly-formed Methodist Church voted in favor of a motion from Ernest Tittle of the Committee on the State of the Church to declare June 2<sup>nd</sup> “a day of prayer, fasting and self-denial” in the Methodist Church. On this day, an offering “for the relief of human suffering without distinction of race, color or creed” was to be collected “as a preparation for further sacrifices to be made” by the Church during this time of war in Europe and Asia. The General Conference approved the eight agencies to receive Methodist overseas relief donations which had been selected by the ecumenical Committee on Foreign Relief Appeals.<sup>2</sup> A subsequent amendment proposed that a “Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief” (MCOR) should be created to “divide and distribute the funds received to the Approved Agencies or directly to the field.”<sup>3</sup> Twenty-eight years later MCOR had received and spent a total of \$29 million dollars “for the relief of human suffering.”<sup>4</sup> Few persons in 1940 would have anticipated MCOR persisting for more than a few years after its inauguration; indeed plans

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my research assistant at Palmer Theological Seminary, Landon Eckhardt, for his generous assistance with this project and Emily Onoroto and Glen Messer for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper.

<sup>2</sup> The approved ecumenical agencies eventually included the American Bible Society, Church Committee for China Relief, American Committee for Christian Refugees, American Friends Service Committee, Central Bureau for Relief of the Evangelical Churches of Europe, World’s Student Christian Federation, International Missionary Council, YMCA, YWCA.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert Welch of the Methodist Committee on China Relief, missionary statesman John R. Mott, Bishop Arthur J. Moore of Georgia, and Ralph Diffendorfer of the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the newly-constituted Methodist Church (and others) proposed an amendment to General Conference to create the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief. Helen Buckler file, Gaither Warfield address. File 2041-3-7:08, Records of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Methodist Church Archives - GCAH, Madison, New Jersey. Henceforth all file numbers may be assumed to refer to holdings of the General Commission on Archives and History in Madison, NJ.

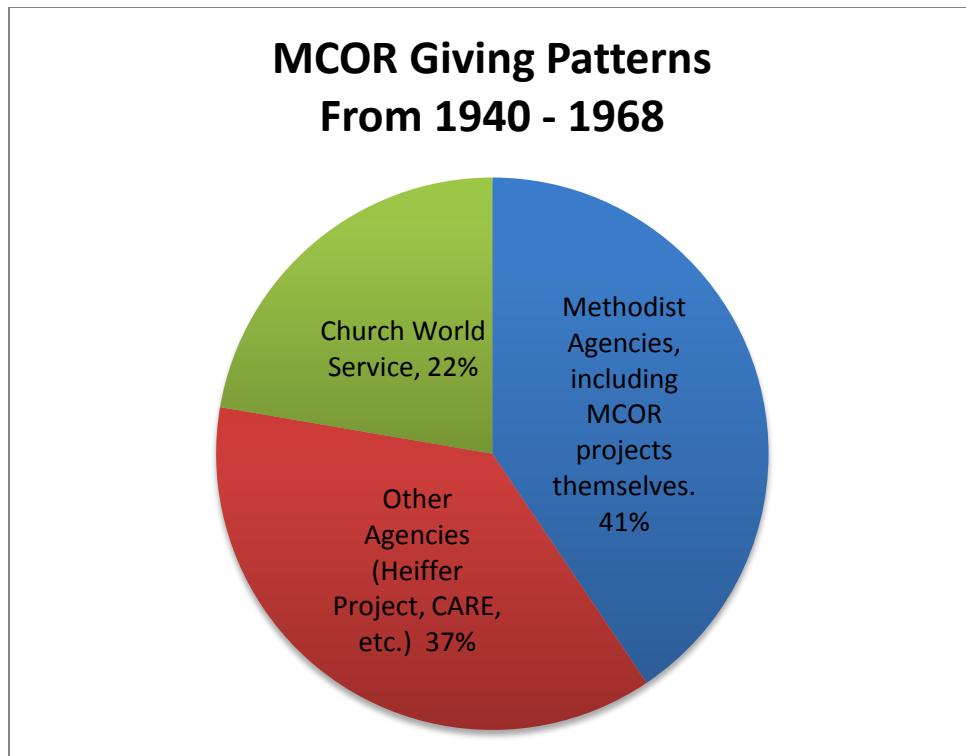
<sup>4</sup> December 1940 Annual Meeting, File 2041-3-1:01; File 2041-3-4:04.

were underway in the late 40s to dismantle MCOR.<sup>5</sup> In 2015 the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The above description of the General Conference decision to institute MCOR illustrates at least two constituent aspects of MCOR's identity and action which remained important for the ensuing decades. The initial motion by Ernest Tittle placed MCOR squarely in the context of the devotional life of the Methodist Church; the founding of MCOR took place with the simultaneous call for prayer, fasting, and sacrifice in the face of suffering. MCOR would continue to both proudly claim its Methodist identity as well as struggle with that same identity within the milieu of secular as well as ecumenical relief agencies and governmental bureaucracy which it sought to influence and from which it also received benefits. Second, the General Conference action in 1940 foreshadowed the strong ecumenical impulse of MCOR. The General Conference first approved the agencies selected by the ecumenical Committee on Foreign Relief appeals. The establishment of MCOR itself was a second step. Throughout the years covered in this paper (1940-1968), MCOR gave fifty-nine per cent of its income to other relief agencies – both religious and secular (see Figure 1) It sought to both take its cues from and influence these ecumenical and secular relief organizations, especially in the areas of refugee resettlement and food aid.

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<sup>5</sup> In this paper I have chosen to not use the definite article when referring to the MCOR and simply call it MCOR. This is both less cumbersome and more similar to the way in which UMCOR is referred to today.



**Figure 1: MCOR Giving, 1940-1968<sup>6</sup>**

The purpose of this paper is to trace the decade by decade development of MCOR's work in overseas relief. It focuses on the ways MCOR engaged the wider context of U.S. and U.N. foreign aid practices and the growing participation of similar relief organizations – ecumenical and secular – whose aims were similar to MCOR from 1940 to 1968. It highlights the politically and theologically contested nature of how and why this aid was given. Although MCOR was engaged in dozens of countries and activities during this thirty year period, this paper concentrates on those countries and relief programs which received the most attention and funding from MCOR during this time. The paper will proceed first by setting this study within the wider context of similar research efforts in the fields of transnational history, development studies, and Methodist studies. The second and most substantive part of the paper comprises a

<sup>6</sup> The data analyzed for the creation of this chart was derived from financial audit records of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Methodist Church Archives – GCAH.

decade by decade analysis of MCOR's work as it responded to an assortment of endogenous and exogenous pressures such as Methodist and ecumenical agency policy, the developing field of international relief and development as it was shaped by governmental and nongovernmental actors, and world crises themselves. The third part of the paper is an assessment of the theological and missiological motives for MCOR's work which appear most salient during MCOR's nearly thirty year history. The paper concludes with several questions for normative reflection on the current and future shape of Methodist involvement in international development as a dimension of its missionary identity.<sup>7</sup>

## Historiographical Context

There are at least three areas of research within which this project is situated and seeks to make a contribution. Most generally, this paper is part of the growing scholarly literature on non-state actors in U.S. diplomacy and what is known as transnational history. After decades of focus on governmental sources, historians in the past fifteen years have increasingly recognized that the work of nonprofit agencies, foundations, and even tourist organizations must be analyzed to better understand the way diplomatic decisions were shaped by and framed for the wider public.<sup>8</sup> Only somewhat more narrowly, this project hopes to contribute to the research on religion as an important factor in international development efforts by scholars and practitioners

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<sup>7</sup> The sources utilized in this paper are such that few conclusions can be drawn regarding MCOR's work "on the ground" in dozens of countries around the world during this period. Doubtless MCOR positively affected thousands of peoples' lives during its first thirty years in many different ways. Those stories, while important, are not the focus of this paper although it is important to always be cognizant of the fact that policy debates, internal memos, and public relations material did matter for the work MCOR was doing.

<sup>8</sup> C. A. Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006); Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Peter Gatrell, *Free World? The Campaign to Save the World's Refugees, 1956-1963* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); Joshua J. Yates, "To Save the World: Humanitarianism and World Culture" (University of Virginia, 2006).

in the field of development studies. Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies including the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank now recognize religion as an underutilized resource for poverty alleviation efforts around the world.<sup>9</sup> Courses in “religion and development” are being taught at large research universities in America, Australia, the United Kingdom (University of Birmingham is one leader in this regard), and elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> Theological seminaries and Christian colleges around the world are also paying attention to international development. Courses on the subject are offered at Asbury Theological Seminary, Boston University School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, and a number of universities in South Africa. Eastern University has offered graduate degree programs in international development with a theological reflection component for over twenty years. Some faith-based NGOs like World Vision have been the subject of considerable ethnographic as well as historical research.<sup>11</sup> Few, however, have researched MCOR in spite of its history as one of the first,

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<sup>9</sup> The World Faiths Development Dialogue, founded in 1998, is one product of former World Bank president James Wolfensohn’s interest in religion and development. See <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/wfdd>. A revealing example of USAID engagement on this topic is USAID, “Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding: An Introductory Programming Guide,” (Washington, D.C.: United States Agency for International Development, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> The theme of religion and development was first seriously engaged in a 1980 volume of the journal *World Development* but little follow-up treatment of the topic was done until the late 1990s. The following are some of the more important recent contributions to the discussion in development studies: Cassandra Balchin, “The F-word and the S-word - too much of one and not enough of the other,” *Development in Practice* 17, no. 4 (2007); Kurt Alan Ver Beek, “Spirituality: A Development Taboo,” *Development in Practice* 10, no. 1 (2000); D. G. R. Belshaw, Robert Calderisi, and Chris Sugden, Faith in development partnership between the World Bank and the churches of Africa, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001), <http://www.worldbank.icebox.ingenta.com/content/wb/170>; Gerard Clarke, “Agents of Transformation? Donors, faith-based organisations and international development,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2007); Gerard Clarke and Michael Jennings, eds., *Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Severine Deneulin and Masooda Bano, *Religion in Development: Rewriting the Secular Script* (New York: Zed Books, 2009); Severine Deneulin and Carole Rakodi, “Revisiting Religion: Development Studies Thirty Years On,” *World Development* 39, no. 1 (2011); Shawn Flanigan, *For the Love of God: NGOs and Religious Identity in a Violent World* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 2009); Jeffrey Haynes, *Religion and Development: Conflict or Cooperation?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Denis Goulet, “Development Experts: One-eyed Giants,” *World Development* 8, no. 7-8 (1980).

<sup>11</sup> Recent work on World Vision includes: Gary F. Vanderpol, “The Least of These: American Evangelical Para-church Missions to the Poor, 1947-2005” (Th.D. dissertation, Boston University, 2010); David P. King, “Seeking a Global Vision: The Evolution of World Vision and American Evangelicalism” (Emory University, 2012); Erica Bornstein, *The spirit of development: Protestant NGOs, morality, and economics in Zimbabwe* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005). The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies publishes the journal *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* which frequently covers development-related themes as well.

largest, and most influential denominational relief agencies in the United States. MCOR's prominence is also significant as a major contributor to the National Council of Churches' Church World Service organization.<sup>12</sup>

This paper is also pertinent as part of the continued effort by Methodist leaders and denominations to discern how best to be in relationship with one another in transnational ecclesial structures, such as the World Methodist Council, the United Methodist Church, or other Methodist denominations comprised of members in multiple countries; Methodism strives to be "in connection" but the ways it has done this has varied considerably over the years and in a variety of contexts. From a theological standpoint it is important to reflect upon MCOR's work for what it reveals about the marks of Methodist ecclesial practice and mission historically as well as in the present day.<sup>13</sup> The \$29 million spent by the Methodist Church from 1940-68 suggests that international relief and development efforts were an important part of what it meant to be the church. But what meaning may be ascribed to this financial commitment and MCOR's activities ecclesiologically? Finally, from a missiological point of view, what can one learn from MCOR's work and the way it was framed to the Methodist public which might help us better

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<sup>12</sup> The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Mennonite Central Committee both preceded MCOR in their founding by more than a decade but MCOR executives still claimed to be the first denominational relief agency. File 2041-3-7:08. The AFSCA at one point had thirty-seven Methodists on its staff. MCOR Scrapbook 2045-4-6. Among historical studies I am only aware of former UMCOR executive director Norma Kehrberg's work on the United Methodist Committee on Relief written to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MCOR/UMCOR. Norma Kehrberg, *Love in Action: UMCOR: 50 Years of Service* (1990). Church World Service and World Council of Churches development agencies have received more attention. See Kenneth Slack, ed. *Hope in the Desert: The Churches' United Response to Human Need, 1944-1984* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986); Ronald E. Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope* (New York: Friendship Press, 1996); Michael H. Taylor, *Not Angels but Agencies: The Ecumenical Response to Poverty – A Primer*, Risk Book series (London: SCM, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> The MCOR archive appears to have been wholly excluded from consideration in Linda Gesling's history of the Methodist Board of Missions and Church Extension. Linda Gesling, *Mirror and Beacon: The History of Mission of the Methodist Church, 1939-1968* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 2005). Russell E. Richey, Dennis M. Campbell, and William B. Lawrence, *Marks of Methodism: Theology in Ecclesial Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005).

understand how development efforts today are an aspect of Methodism's missionary vocation.<sup>14</sup>

Is today's UMCOR, for example, simply "Oxfam with Hymns" such that its theological purpose is muted or irrelevant? Is there something – or ought there be something – distinctively Christian or even Methodist about its work which sets it apart from groups like Oxfam or the Red Cross?<sup>15</sup>

## MCOR Begins, 1940-1949

Unlike many relief agencies which had their genesis in the American response to World War II in Europe, MCOR traces its origins and its greatest share of financial resources to the ravages brought on by the civil war and Sino-Japanese War in China in the late 1930s.<sup>16</sup> Before becoming the head of MCOR, Bishop Herbert Welch led the Methodist Committee for China Relief since its founding in 1937 and, in 1939, merged this organization into the ecumenical Church Committee for China Relief.<sup>17</sup> Methodist Episcopal involvement in other foreign relief appeals prior to the late 1930s was also significant through such ecumenical relief organizations as the Near East Relief, European Student Relief, and others.<sup>18</sup> MCOR Board member and 1946 Nobel Peace Prize laureate John R. Mott worked with relief agencies during and after WWI and WWII and likely passed on knowledge of how these organizations ran to MCOR.<sup>19</sup> This

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<sup>14</sup> In this paper I am aware of the difficulty of completely separating out MCOR's work from the wider Board of Missions and Church Extension. These two entities were closely interrelated with one another.

<sup>15</sup> This has been a vexing question in World Council of Churches circles for decades as outlined in chapter five of Taylor, *Not Angels but Agencies: The Ecumenical Response to Poverty – A Primer*.

<sup>16</sup> By the mid 1940s the number of denominational relief agencies had risen to "twenty-five or more." Crusade for Christ promotional pamphlet, MCOR Scrapbooks, 1946-53, File 2045-5-1.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Welch, "Methodism and War Relief," *Western Christian Advocate*, 3 October 1940 in MCOR Scrapbook.

<sup>18</sup> I have previously written about the European Student Relief in "Missiological Contributions from the 1920s for the contemporary "Transformational Development" Movement." Paper presentation, Transformational Development Conference, 2009, Eastern University, St. David's, Pennsylvania.

<sup>19</sup> Report of the Chairman, October 1941, File 2041-3-1:03; April 7-8, 1943 reports, File 2041-3-1:05. <sup>19</sup> Benjamin L. Hartley, "'That they All May be One': John R. Mott's Contribution to Methodism, Inter-religious Dialogue, and Racial Reconciliation" *Methodist Review* 4(2012).

background is helpful in understanding the depth of experience and the power of the appeal which was made at the General Conference of 1940.

MCOR's Asian focus, ecumenical breadth, theologically moderate orientation, and politically conservative approach to global social welfare concerns may be best illustrated by examining the work of MCOR's first executive secretary Bishop Herbert Welch (1862-1969) who served as head of MCOR from 1940 until 1948. His personal papers and published documents demonstrate his admiration for Chinese Methodist bishops and the 100,000 Methodists in China whom they served, as well as for Chiang Kai Shek and his wife. Welch was hopeful for the future of China in the early 1940s.<sup>20</sup> The country was the focus of the Methodist Board of Mission and Church Extension's work for decades previously.<sup>21</sup> Ecumenical enthusiasm also fired the imaginations of church leaders like Herbert Welch who saw the possibility of a new "Christendom" – a term used with positive connotations at the time. The United Nations' Declaration on Human Rights was one outcome of this ecumenical enthusiasm.<sup>22</sup>

Welch was a political and theological moderate who tended to be most sympathetic with persons of a similar disposition.<sup>23</sup> His moderate stance on a number of issues helped MCOR be an organization with a wide appeal to a newly and not entirely united Methodist Church in the years after 1939. Welch thus helped MCOR avoid charges of being sympathetic to communism,

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<sup>20</sup> In 1942 Herbert Welch wrote an eighteen page paper on "The New Day in China" brimming with optimism about China's future under the direction of Chiang Kai Shek. Herbert Welch Papers, File 2127-7-5:15.

<sup>21</sup> Gesling, *Mirror and Beacon: The History of Mission of the Methodist Church, 1939-1968*: 49.

<sup>22</sup> By "Christendom" these leaders meant "'a social philosophy,' which the church (largely through its laity) would need to midwife 'in collaboration with those who do not call themselves Christians.' J. Nurser, *For all Peoples and Nations: Christian Churches and Human Rights* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005). 18. For further background on this period see Dana L. Robert, "The first globalization: The internationalization of the Protestant foreign missionary movement between the world wars," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 26, no. 2 (2002).

<sup>23</sup> For example, Welch's assessment of the Methodist Chinese bishops in a 1941 *World Outlook* article notes approvingly of their moderate political disposition: "The average I should estimate to be a sane progressivism in the spirit of the old adage, 'Be not the first by whom the new are tried. Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.' Herbert Welch papers, File 2127-7-7:7.

something that distracted donors and organizational personnel in the National Council of Churches and the Methodist Federation for Social Service.<sup>24</sup> Even though Welch was one of the founders of the Methodist Federation for Social Service in 1907 (together with Frank Mason North, Harry Ward, and others), he refused an invitation to attend the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Methodist Federation for Social Action when invited to do so by the MFSA's chief executive. He claimed that since the organization had

become not a reconciling agent in which liberals and conservatives may stand together in their efforts to understand and apply the principles of the Gospel to our social situation, but rather a propaganda agency for one point of view, I cannot myself feel that I should have any share in it. And when you call the conservatives to come in and share, I think you are asking them in reality to come in and submit.<sup>25</sup>

His moderate stance was also clear in his position on race relations in the early 1940s. In letters to his friend Lewis Oliver Hartman in Boston (where Welch had served for some years), he expressed frustration with Ernest Tittle's call at the 1940 General Conference to prohibit subsequent conferences to be held at hotels which were segregated on the basis of race. In these letters he also criticized Hartman's own call to end the Central Jurisdiction (a racially segregated ecclesial structure in the American Methodist Church from 1939 until the early 1970s) saying that such a structure would probably be necessary for more than a century!

Truth and love and time will accomplish wonders, but the time factor must not be ignored. My chief quarrel with the radicals is that they are deficient in a historical sense, that they have little perspective. "He that believeth shall not make haste." Don't be impatient because God moves slowly! ...I love you, even when I cannot agree with you.<sup>26</sup>

Theologically, Welch's published writings reflect a popular Methodist piety that stressed holiness of heart and life noting that "[t]he Gospel is as wide as humanity and as deep as human

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<sup>24</sup> The suspicion raised toward the Methodist Federation for Social Action as having communist sympathies is well-known. National Council of Churches Criticisms, File 2041-4-2:10.

<sup>25</sup> Letter to Charles C. Webber, MFSA, 12 March 1942, Herbert Welch Papers, .File 2127-7-6: 25.

<sup>26</sup> Letter to Lewis Hartman, 24 June 1942. Herbert Welch Papers, File 2127-7-6: 25.

need, and the true Methodist accepts it in its fulness[sic].”<sup>27</sup> Nowhere in his papers did he expound on the recent theological developments of Boston Personalism or neo-Orthodoxy. Nor did Welch have much sympathy with persons of a more fundamentalist ilk. On one occasion he even chastised a more conservative Methodist who wrote to Welch criticizing him for saying in a public forum that the author of Hebrews was unknown. Welch responded with a terse letter of criticism of his own.<sup>28</sup>

At times, Welch wrote with the fiery passion of an evangelist when, for example, he condemned the “strange reluctance” in Methodist colleges and elsewhere “to make open avowal of allegiance to Jesus Christ[.]” As a former president of Ohio Wesleyan College, Welch sought after a kind of Christian holism in the church as well as other institutions including Methodist colleges and MCOR. Such an extensive discussion of Welch is important because MCOR bore the imprint of Welch’s influence for decades after he first led MCOR in 1940. Doubtless his successors were mindful of his influence on the organization for some time. He was even an honored guest at some MCOR meetings. Welch did not die until 1969, at the age of 107.

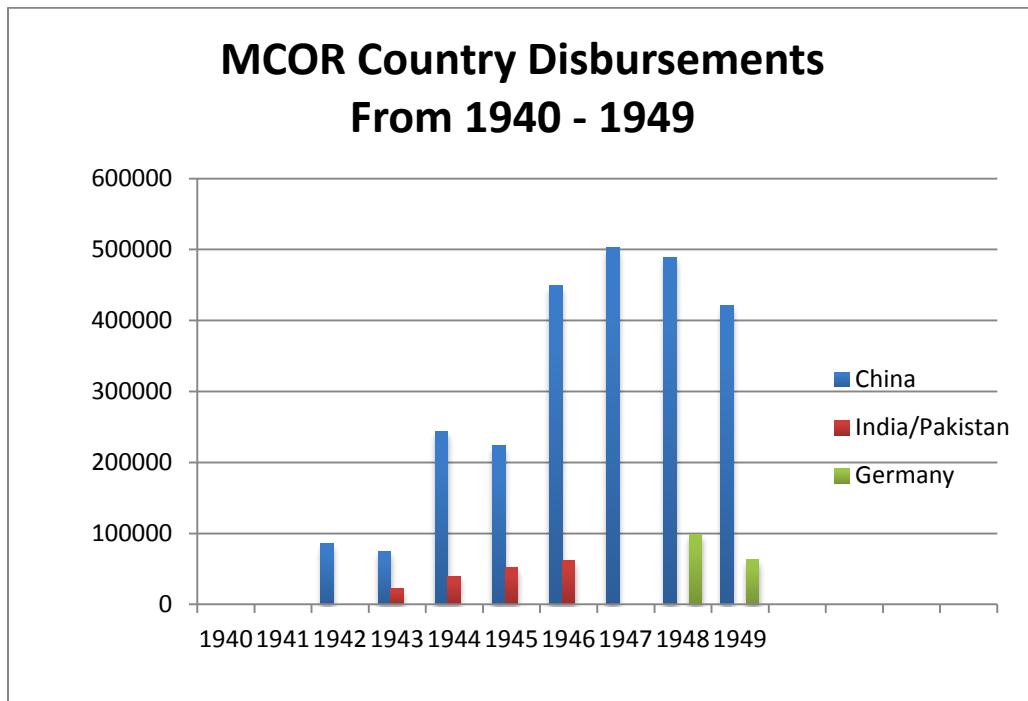
The personality of MCOR’s founding executive secretary shaped MCOR considerably in its first decade of existence, but Welch was far from the only influence. The world was at war. The demands upon MCOR were legion: aid to refugees in China and Europe; famine in India; desperate missionaries and Methodist church workers in conflict zones. Financial reports indicate that in the first four years of existence MCOR distributed \$779,000 to approved agencies and spent \$550,000 under its own auspices with most of this latter amount going to work in China (see Figure 2 below). Over four times more money was spent in China relief (\$279,000) than in Europe from 1940-44. Although expenditures for European relief grew

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<sup>27</sup> Herbert Welch, “Seven Marks of a True Methodist,” Herbert Welch papers, File 2127-7-7:8.

<sup>28</sup> Herbert Welch Correspondence. File 2127-7-6: 25.

significantly at the end of the European war in 1946, MCOR's focus on China remained dominant and relief appeals to Methodists often noted how there were more refugees in China than in all of Europe and that their situation was even more dire.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 2: MCOR Country Disbursements, 1940-49 (top funding destinations)<sup>30</sup>**

The close interrelationship between MCOR and the Board of Missions and Church Extension is also evident in the way MCOR funds were utilized in these early years. Much of MCOR expenditures were focused on caring for Methodist pastors and their families in China,

<sup>29</sup> Even in 1946 the amount of funds being dispersed through MCOR (not including ecumenical agencies) was going to China and India at an amount nearly double that being spent in all of European relief (\$612,784 vs. \$381,363). MCOR Scrapbook 2045-4-6. On the situation of Europe and China compared see 1940 MCOR Annual Meeting. File 2041-3-1:01; MCOR Scrapbook 2045-4-6.

<sup>30</sup> For 1940 and 1941, there were gaps in the financial recordings to the point that an estimation was difficult to ascertain. For the most part, the rest of the 1940s were accurate, but in some cases a rough estimate had to be made due to the changes in MCOR's financial accounting. Other destinations of MCOR funding are not included in this graph. They included Malaysia, other European countries, and Japan. The amount given to "other European countries" prior to 1948 also included Germany but the amount going to Germany was not specified in the MCOR financial audit reports. Total amount of expenditure to "other European countries" reached a peak in 1947 of \$356,798. This category was not included in the above graph because the countries which comprised this category changed during this decade.

India, and Europe as well as for Methodist missionaries, schools, and clinics. This was done in spite of the fact that early on, in 1943, a set of “Guiding Principles” had explicitly noted that MCOR funds were not to be used for “the support or emergency needs of missionaries or the meeting of deficits in the work budgets of the several divisions of the Board of Missions.”<sup>31</sup> In practice, however, this is what occurred, and the records show that MCOR decision-makers felt they had little choice in light of the desperate situation of so many Methodist church workers in Europe and Asia.<sup>32</sup> MCOR was praised in news bulletins for having “saved the Church in China” as well as in India and parts of Europe because of its support of pastors and their families.<sup>33</sup> MCOR had learned that although they were given a mandate in 1940 to help others “without distinction of race, color, or creed” this was not easy to put into practice. This continued to be a matter of tension for MCOR for years to come.<sup>34</sup>

With the end of the war in 1946, ecumenical leaders in the U.S. recognized the value of reducing the number of ecumenical aid agencies working around the world and formed the Church World Service (CWS) from a merger in 1946 of the Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid in Europe, the American Christian Committee for Refugees, and the American Commission for World Council Service.<sup>35</sup> CWS became the lead voluntary organization in delivering supplies (clothing, blankets, food, tools, medicine) to Europe and Asia by the end of its first year. CWS accounted for 80% of all the relief goods shipped from the U.S. by voluntary organizations.<sup>36</sup> Herbert Welch boasted in an announcement to Methodist supporters that Methodists contributed

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<sup>31</sup> Statement of Discussion of Post-War Work, April 1943, File 2041-3-1:05.

<sup>32</sup> Annual Meeting, February 1944, File 2041-3-1:06.

<sup>33</sup> 1947 MCOR News Bulletin. MCOR Scrapbook 2045-5-6.

<sup>34</sup> This is mostly clearly seen in a July 1949 *Inasmuch* newsletter article summarizing the work of MCOR since 1940. MCOR Scrapbooks 2045-4-7. This challenge of prioritization was extensively discussed in a January 1963 meeting, File 2041-3-2:10. Also discussed in 1964 MCOR Fall Meeting, File 2041-3-2:13; Gaither Warfield, “Report of the General Secretary,” January 1966 File 2041-3-3:07.

<sup>35</sup> MCOR Scrapbooks 2045-4-6.

<sup>36</sup> Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope*: 3.

more financially than any other denomination to the predecessor organizations of the CWS.<sup>37</sup>

The Methodists were nearly always one of the top donors to the CWS as well.<sup>38</sup> A number of CWS's leaders were also Methodists in subsequent years. One of those leaders in the 1950s was Gaither Warfield, the executive secretary of MCOR and a vice chairman of CWS.<sup>39</sup>

The aspect of CWS's work which received the most enthusiastic Methodist support in the late 1940s was the institution of the CROP program. Begun in 1947 as a "Wheat Relief Project," it focused on Midwest farmers to provide gifts in kind of wheat. With attendant publicity these gifts went on a "Friendship Train" to deliver America's record 1947 wheat harvest to port cities and then on to "CROP Friendship Food Ships" for delivery to the hungry around the world.<sup>40</sup> Soon named the Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP), Methodist farmers gave generously from their grain harvests to this effort. In fiscal year 1948-49, Methodist farmers' gifts of grain were valued at \$532,931. This estimate of the value of agricultural foodstuffs was nearly double the amount given by the next highest denominational group, the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and about half of the total MCOR budget in real dollars.<sup>41</sup> Methodists continued this pattern of being the largest denominational donor to CROP for the next several years, in large part due to its large rural constituency.<sup>42</sup>

For the most part, these donations of food to CROP and the CWS were destined for Europe, a place of greater familiarity to donors and the CWS than Asia, even though MCOR's own focus in the late 1940s was still primarily on Asia – with Europe being nonetheless a

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<sup>37</sup> While this was certainly sometimes true it was not always the case as Welch noted, for example, in a February 1944 Annual Meeting. File 2041-3-1:06.

<sup>38</sup> Gaither Warfield paper on the history of MCOR, Helen Buckler files, File 2041-3-7:08. In this twenty year retrospective MCOR is referred to as the second highest donor to CWS.

<sup>39</sup> MCOR Scrapbook 2045-4-6. In 1971 fully 25% of CWS's budget was provided by the United Methodist Church. Gaither Warfield Paper, File 2167-3-3:98.

<sup>40</sup> Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope*: 5-6.

<sup>41</sup> Annual Meeting, 1950, File 2041-3-1:08.

<sup>42</sup> February 1953 Annual Meeting, File 2041-3-1:10.

significant area of concern.<sup>43</sup> This would be a source of friction between MCOR and the Church World Service in the 1950s as MCOR sought to steer CWS funds away from Europe and toward Asia. In a letter to CWS's executive director in 1957, Warfield wrote that

[t]he people of my denomination think of Asia, especially Korea and India, when overseas relief is mentioned. They would feel that the present proposal does not cover the most important areas. They have never been happy under the emphasis that the World Council of Churches has put into Europe. I do believe that any contemplated study should cover the main areas in all parts of the world.<sup>44</sup>

The first World Council of Churches gathering held outside of the Western world (in Lucknow, India) in 1952-53 spurred the WCC-related Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees to look beyond Europe as well.<sup>45</sup>

Policy disagreements between MCOR and CWS did not seem to affect the CWS's CROP program. The CROP program was also an example of American Protestant relief efforts working in a synchronous relationship to U.S. foreign and domestic policymakers. With bumper crops of grain in the American heartland after World War II (in part due to the increased use of nitrogen fertilizers which grew alongside the munitions industry) came depressed agricultural prices for farmers' harvests.<sup>46</sup> CROP provided a way to solve the problem of agricultural surpluses while also promoting a humanitarian and Christian objective. In 1948 the U.S. passed legislation such that the U.S. government paid the costs of transportation of CROP grain.<sup>47</sup> The passage of Public Law 480 in 1954 strengthened the ability of CROP to distribute agricultural commodities.

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<sup>43</sup> Daniel Sack, *Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). 143-44.

<sup>44</sup> Gaither Warfield letter to Norris Wilson on 25 November 1957. File 2042-3-1:7-9.

<sup>45</sup> Taylor, *Not angels but agencies: The ecumenical response to poverty - a primer*: 6.

<sup>46</sup> Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia*: 61.

<sup>47</sup> Vernon W. Ruttan, *Why Food Aid?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). 4.

The ulterior objective of the CROP program which U.S. policymakers clearly were negotiating was not something communicated to Methodist donors on the farm or anywhere else. For rural Methodist donors it was billed as simply an opportunity to be generous, have compassion, and fight communism with food. Throughout the 1950s, MCOR leaders repeatedly stressed that CROP was “our program” among Methodists in the Midwest and sought to build a sense of pride among rural Methodists concerning all of the good work their generous donations were doing.<sup>48</sup> That it was also being used as part of U.S. farm policy to maintain somewhat higher grain prices was left unsaid.

Another case of MCOR’s involvement in governmental foreign aid policies also occurred in 1948 with the passage of the Displaced Persons Act. The plight of European refugees was well-known to the American public in the post-war years and in 1948 the problem expanded even more with the creation of the state of Israel resulting in over 900,000 Palestinian refugees. The intensification of the Cold War during these years was also a factor and the connection between anti-communism and refugees was made explicit in the Displaced Persons Act of 1948.<sup>49</sup> In explaining MCOR’s engagement in helping displaced persons, one report noted that a number of Methodists were instrumental through petitioning the U.S. government in the passage of the 1948 law. Church World Service had the responsibility of getting displaced persons to the United States and then member denominations were to each take responsibility for resettling a certain number of persons. MCOR took responsibility for the resettlement of 5,000 persons in the next four years at a cost of \$333,831. By 1960 MCOR resettled 12,137 refugees in 47 different states. While a significant undertaking to be sure, MCOR involvement paled in

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<sup>48</sup> Letter from Gaither Warfield to Fred Gaston, 25 September 1957, Church World Service -MCOR, File 2042-3-1:03. CARE, File 2041-3-7:10; CROP materials, File 2042-3-1:03.

<sup>49</sup> Gatrell, *Free World? The Campaign to Save the World's Refugees, 1956-1963*: 16.

comparison to Catholic Relief Services' resettlement of 200,000 persons during the same period of time.<sup>50</sup>

MCOR's marked influence on governmental policy obscures the fact that it was only in 1948 that MCOR's status was made somewhat more permanent by the General Conference held that year. MCOR's mandate also changed that year to include "rehabilitation" rather than just relief in the scope of its work.<sup>51</sup> There was little debate about this shift; it was becoming increasingly clear that MCOR's existence as an organization and the nature of its work needed to focus increasingly on "rehabilitation" – what others were now calling "development."

MCOR was not using the term "development" in the late 1940s or 1950s, but the term at this time did acquire a transitive function in foreign aid discourse.<sup>52</sup> "Development" in the late 1940s was becoming something that could be prescribed for another rather than just something that happened (intransitive).<sup>53</sup> As first and foremost a relief agency, it is understandable that MCOR's work now in "rehabilitation" carried a similar connotation of "development" as something given to another. "Rehabilitation" then and now refers to a kind of professional healing service one typically does not do on one's own. In contrast to "development," however, "rehabilitation" suggests a goal of returning a person or a society to a previously held state – as

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<sup>50</sup> The Catholic Relief Services had been founded in 1943 specifically in response to the world refugee and displaced persons problem. *Ibid.*, 131. Helen Buckler papers, File 2041-3-7:08.

<sup>51</sup> The need to shift from relief to rehabilitation is mentioned only a few times in the MCOR records. Herbert Welch papers, File 2127-7-7:8; Scrapbook, File 2045-4-6.

<sup>52</sup> MCOR did not begin to use the language of "development" *per se* until about 1966. "Rehabilitation" and "endemic circumstance" were close synonyms used earlier. MCOR was given a mandate at the 1964 annual conference to address endemic circumstances but Warfield noted how the agency was having a hard time find a term to reflect their work. Within 2-3 years "development" began appearing frequently in MCOR's records and promotional material.

<sup>53</sup> Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith, Third Edition* (New York: Zed Books, 2008). 73.

in, before a war – rather than to a longer period of “development” without a clear notion of when “being developed” would be achieved.<sup>54</sup>

### **MCOR Expands: 1950-1959**

The end of the 1940s brought with it the continued struggle to assist refugees and devastated countries in Europe – most notably with the 1947 Marshall Plan – and also saw the beginning of a shift in focus for the U.S. government to Asia as nationalist rebellions in India, Indonesia, and Vietnam overturned colonial regimes in the region.<sup>55</sup> The communist takeover of China in 1949 led to the expulsion of thousands of missionaries back to their homes and 900,000 refugees to Hong Kong. In light of these developments and the worsening relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the U.S. began to reframe foreign policy in relationship to their growing fear of communism’s spread – especially in Asia.<sup>56</sup>

Foreign aid funding priorities in the U.S. followed this fear of communism. MCOR joined in with its own anti-communist rhetoric in the late 1940s from time to time as well decrying the “sinister shadow of the hammer and sickle” spreading across Europe. In response, MCOR’s work was described as “spiritual aid” which strengthened the churches of Europe. This aid was described as allowing churches

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<sup>54</sup> Philanthropic foundations (Rockefeller, Ford, and others) crafted much of the discourse about development in the 1930s and 40s. While MCOR’s Herbert Welch appreciated the work of the Rockefeller Foundation in China in the early 1940s the extent to which these foundations *directly* influenced MCOR’s work is difficult to discern. These foundations were vitally important as trend-setters in development during the 1940s, however, and their indirect influence upon MCOR is no doubt significant. See Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia*; Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). On Welch’s appreciation of the Rockefeller Foundation see “A New Day in China,” Herbert Welch Papers. File 2127-7-5:15.

<sup>55</sup> Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia*.

<sup>56</sup> In 1950 Truman authorized the first wheat loan to India in 1951 in order to prevent it from possibly turning communist. \$50 million worth of “community development” assistance to India was also committed to India due to fears of communism’s spread. *Ibid.*, 136.

to do evangelistic work on an unprecedented scale, strengthening them as centers of spiritual enlightenment, enlarging their social welfare activities until the Russians clamp down, [creating] little islands of democratic thinking and living in the midst of totalitarianism. The Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief must continue to save men's bodies that their souls may be saved.<sup>57</sup>

This anti-communist rhetoric of fear was matched by an equally impressive expression of deepening American confidence in the late 1940s "for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas."<sup>58</sup> These words, from the opening paragraph of President Truman's Point Four speech in January of 1949, captured the imagination of the press and the Methodists in the following years. MCOR executives praised Point Four as "one of the wisest things which our nation has undertaken to fight communism and assist backward peoples."<sup>59</sup> The most extreme praise appeared in an article in the Methodist mission magazine *World Outlook*. William W. Clemes, a member of the National Council of Churches staff, wrote that "[i]t may well be that the future of missions as well as the fate of the entire world is wrapped up in the success or failure of Point Four."<sup>60</sup> That such a remark could be made over two years after Truman's speech is a testimony to how deeply inspiring Point Four was to Methodists – and Protestants more broadly – and how closely "missions" could be paired with U.S. foreign policy in the early 1950s.

Such anti-communist rhetoric and positive portrayals of modernization in "Point Four" rhetoric was part and parcel of much of the Methodist ethos in the early 1950s – within MCOR and well beyond it. The war-time experiences of MCOR's new executive in 1952, Gaither Warfield, surely contributed to his own anti-communist feelings. He was captured by the

<sup>57</sup> Report to MCOR by T. Otto Nall, 1947, MCOR Scrapbook, 2045-4-6. Refugee camps in the Middle East after 1948 were also seen as possible hotbeds for the nurture of communists. Report on Arab Refugees, 1952-53, File 2041-3-7:02.

<sup>58</sup> Harry S. Truman Inaugural Address in 1949, cited in Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith, Third Edition*: 71.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Gaither Warfield to Dr. W.A. Cade of Raleigh North Carolina, 6 January 1953, Advance Special Reports 1948-1953, File 2041-3-6: 04.

<sup>60</sup> William W. Clemes, "Point Four – Road to Peace," *World Outlook*, May 1951, 233-37.

Russians and imprisoned by the Germans for a brief time during his missionary service in Poland and married a Polish woman, Hania Maria Dropiowska. Doubtless he was vividly aware of the oppression of the Polish people by the Soviets during the 1950s. Warfield's anti-communism, however, was not extreme. He was a compassionate church leader and able administrator. Warfield served as traveling secretary for the Student Volunteer Movement, as an associate pastor in New York City, and then as a missionary in Poland where he was an effective evangelist, pastor, district superintendent, and Bible training school administrator. One of the most endearing aspects of his character is revealed in a secret arrangement he had with the treasurer of the National Council of Churches for the latter to serve as the intermediary for a "pension check" to Warfield's Polish father-in-law and retired pastor. Warfield regularly sent checks to the NCC with instructions to provide his father-in-law with a fictitious pension and to never mention Warfield's role in providing this retirement benefit.<sup>61</sup>

Warfield came to MCOR in 1946 as Associate Secretary when Welch was still serving as Executive Secretary. Warfield also served under Titus Lowe who led MCOR from 1948 until 1952, the year Warfield took over the leadership of MCOR. Titus Lowe described Warfield as the "presiding genius" behind Methodist work with displaced persons after the war.<sup>62</sup> The start of Warfield's work as MCOR's chief executive coincided with a 1952 General Conference decision to more closely align MCOR with the Board of Missions and otherwise tinker with the composition of its board.<sup>63</sup> (Plans to terminate MCOR as a denominational entity were scrapped when the Korean War began in 1950.) The solidifying of MCOR's status was accompanied by a

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<sup>61</sup> Gaither Warfield papers, Personal, File 2041-4-3:09.

<sup>62</sup> *Inasmuch*, 6, October 1952.

<sup>63</sup> "Report of the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief to the Annual Meeting of the Board of Missions and Church Extension" January 20-24, 1953, File 2041-3-6:02. The Board of Missions now had the responsibility of selecting six out of the eighteen board members of MCOR and also was one of the organizations which needed to sign off on any plan to terminate MCOR's work.

call for missionary expansion by the Methodist mission board and the establishment of the Advance program as another permanent fundraising structure in the Methodist Church.<sup>64</sup> In the early 1950s about half of MCOR's budget was raised through the Advance.<sup>65</sup>

Because of the Communist Revolution in China in 1949 the high levels of MCOR-giving to that country in 1949 dropped by \$50,000 to \$370,249 for 1950. By May of 1952 China was not even listed in the MCOR treasurer's report.<sup>66</sup> The hope that Welch had expressed for China's "New Day" in 1942 under the leadership of Chiang Kai Shek was dashed. China never again received sustained funding from MCOR for the remaining thirty years, although some MCOR funds were sent to China in the early 1960s.

In contrast to China, India represents the most consistent and one of the three largest destinations of MCOR funds throughout the three decades under consideration and, along with Korea, was the focus of much of MCOR's work in the 1950s (see Figure 3). In the early 1950s the amount given to India increased significantly for at least three different reasons. Most obviously, India had been a major focus for Methodist missionaries for decades. As was MCOR's pattern in the 1940s, most relief work in the 1950s was directed to Methodist leaders, institutions, and missionaries serving in India. At the end of the 1940s, Methodism had 10 Conferences, 300,000 members, over a thousand preaching places and churches, 314 missionaries, 350 Indian pastors, and hundreds of educational institutions.<sup>67</sup>

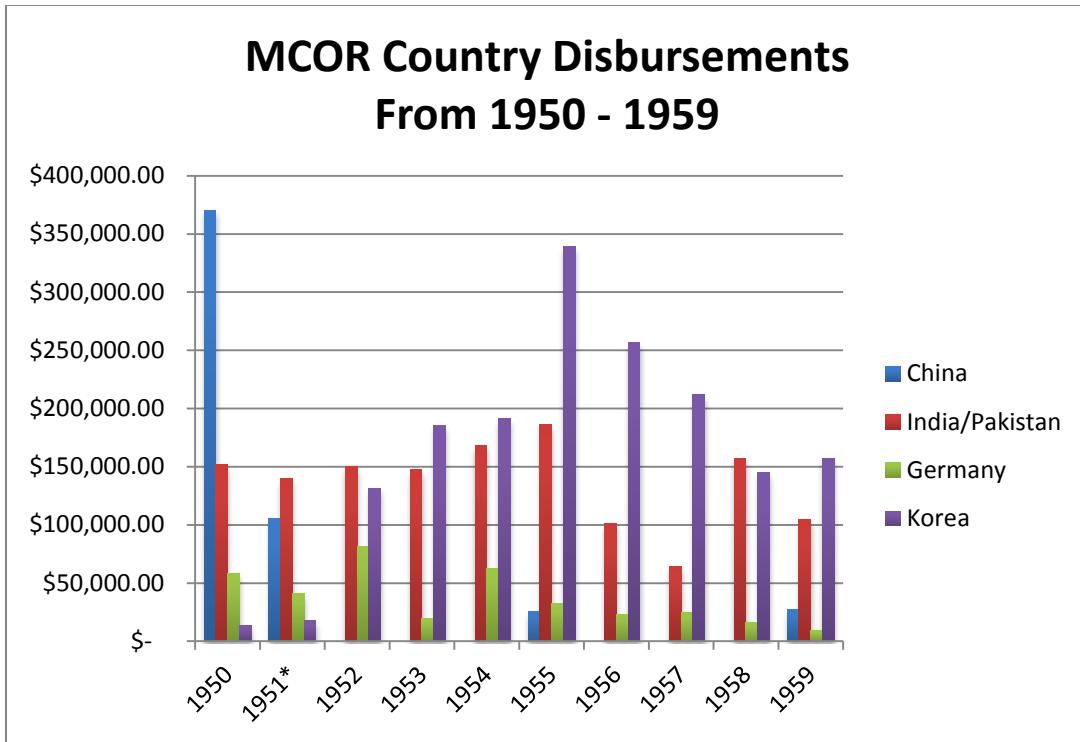
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<sup>64</sup>: Advance Committee 1951-53. 2041-3-6: 02. Goals for increasing the number of Methodist missionaries in the 1952-56 quadrennium (from 959 to 1,200) after a decade of decline are identified in File 2041-3-6:05. Legislation passed at the 1952 General Conference concerning MCOR is provided in MCOR Scrapbook.

<sup>65</sup> Other revenue generating programs in the Methodist Church for MCOR in the early 1950s included the Week of Dedication and the Fellowship of Suffering and Service.

<sup>66</sup> *Inasmuch*, 4, August 1950; *Inasmuch*, 6, October 1952.

<sup>67</sup> Board of Missions and Church Extension, *Methodism and India* (New York: The Methodist Church, 1946). 27.



**Figure 3: MCOR Country Disbursements, 1950-59 (top 4 funding destinations)<sup>68</sup>**

A second reason for MCOR's strong support of India during this time was because of the many different humanitarian crises which were unfolding in that country in the early 1950s. In the 1950s, the immediate need in India was to address famine, violence, and a refugee crisis caused by droughts, floods, and the separation of Pakistan and India.<sup>69</sup> The amelioration of tuberculosis, a widespread disease in India, was also a target of significant funding.<sup>70</sup> MCOR sent over \$10,000 to India on a monthly basis in the late 1940s and early 50s mostly for the purpose of procuring food. The CROP program was responsible for the delivery of American grain to India in the 1950s as well.

The final and probably the most indirect reason for Methodist involvement in India was that it was a major focus of U.S. foreign policy in the early 1950s. Communism had spread in

<sup>68</sup> For 1951, the disbursement amount shown above going to Korea is an estimate due to a change in MCOR's method of financial accounting.

<sup>69</sup> Staff Report, 1952, File 2041-3-1:9.

<sup>70</sup> Report by Bishop J. Waskom Pickett in June 1954, File 2041-3-1:15.

China and then Korea and the Truman administration was eager to provide assistance to India to ensure that it too did not fall to the communists. It was easier said than done, however, with India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru having some communist sympathies during these years. Nehru even sought to mimic the Soviet example of centrally-planned rapid industrialization while depending on food aid from the U.S.<sup>71</sup> The American press and foreign policy experts, however, mostly portrayed India in hopeful terms as a country engaged in a great contest between its own democratic capitalism and the communism of its even larger northern neighbor. The stakes were high in this contest, and America bet big. Truman authorized the first wheat loan to India in 1951 in the face of droughts in India in the north and south and also lobbied Congress for \$8.5 billion in aid and "community development" work.<sup>72</sup>

MCOR supported the president and even criticized Congress in its slowness to approve the 1951 wheat loan and in other actions taken later by the U.S. State Department.

The American government has lost a great opportunity to show its friendship for a democratic government which is fighting Communism by delaying consideration of the [Spring of 1951] request of the President to give two million tons of wheat to India. Even if that request is finally granted there will still be need for additional food in India.<sup>73</sup>

Criticism of the U.S. was not limited to such brief comments in passing. In an executive committee meeting June 1954 report, Bishop J. Waskom Pickett outlined four reasons for the deterioration of Indian/American relations. Topping his list was his accusation of the "[c]onstant talk of America leading the world. No new nation likes to be told that any other nation proposes to lead." He also condemned State Department spokesperson remarks concerning America's readiness to provide arms to other nations and American criticisms of India's desire to remain

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<sup>71</sup> Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia*: 135-38.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>73</sup> "Multi-Purpose Food for India," *Inasmuch*, 5 June 1951. Multi-purpose Food was a kind of fortified granola bar which was developed at the California Institute of Technology as a versatile food to help in the battle against hunger. MCOR supported the Meals for Millions Foundation which distributed the food item. Prominent missionaries like E. Stanley Jones and Frank Laubach gave testimony as to its usefulness for the Indian context.

neutral in the Cold War. While such condemnations were likely never widely shared among American Methodist donors they well illustrate the extent to which MCOR leadership was engaged and even sometimes enraged by American foreign policy during this time.<sup>74</sup>

Like India, Korea was also a major focus of Methodist missionary endeavor ever since Henry and Ella Appenzeller began the Methodist Episcopal work there in 1885. Unlike India, however, MCOR involvement in Korea began suddenly with the onset of war on the Korean peninsula. Once again, the focus of concern was providing assistance to Methodist pastors and missionaries in that country who, in turn, sought to aid their neighbors in need.<sup>75</sup> MCOR donations to Korea rose dramatically from \$13,000 in 1950 to over \$300,000 by 1955. Perhaps in part due to the rapid “scaling up” of MCOR’s work in Korea, MCOR executive Gaither Warfield was quite displeased by the inefficiency of MCOR’s work (as well as that of other Protestants) in reports he made to the MCOR board in 1953. A rare example of Warfield’s frustration with missionaries in Korea for what he perceived as a lack of urgency and programmatic approach in the midst of the war is evident in his report.

The missionary point of view where one hundred years is taken as the approach to some problem rather than the brief decade which we have in Korea, seems to be a hindrance.... Our missionary leaders have rightly been careful not to start new institutions realizing the terrific drain this would be later on for the Korean Church. They have failed, however, to set up temporary shelters and organisations to help orphans and others. Somehow or another they have not grasped the right approach with regard to program.<sup>76</sup>

As the war came to a close in 1953, MCOR began working on what increasingly became known as “community development” efforts – in Korea and India as well as Hong Kong. “Community development” was a somewhat new approach in international development circles in the 1950s and at that time aimed at providing a kind of softer alternative to communism

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<sup>74</sup> Report by Bishop J. Waskom Pickett in June 1954, File 2041-3-1:15.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from Gaither Warfield to Dr. W.A. Cade of Raleigh North Carolina, 6 January 1953, File 2041-3-6: 04.

<sup>76</sup> Gaither Warfield “Relief and Rehabilitation in Korea,” 1953, File 2041-3-7:05. This criticism of missionaries was unusual for Warfield. He was generally more willing to criticize the inflexibility of the Methodist Board of Missions than missionaries themselves.

alongside the modernization efforts focused on increasing agricultural yields and industrialization. Community development had long referred to efforts in urban America, but only in the 1950s did it become a term to refer to international efforts aimed at rural villages. Community development efforts simultaneously held to a romantic ideal of the rural village and the power of outsiders to “facilitate” the transformation of those villages. It sought to “improve the people through improving the land, and to improve the land through improving the people.”<sup>77</sup> “Model villages” were established in India and elsewhere and many large philanthropic foundations threw their support behind the effort.

MCOR’s work in Korea in community development began around 1955 in the “tri-village project,” in which model villages were established along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel separating North and South Korea. The first experiment with this form of community development was criticized in an MCOR report as being too closely tied with the Korean Methodist Church, but a subsequent effort “following closely the guidelines laid down” by Glen Leet of the Community Development Foundation was more successful. MCOR described this work as “based on small (in a monetary sense) projects growing out of common community desires and efforts. The villagers get together to build a sadly needed dam, irrigation ditch or bridge.” By 1964 MCOR had over thirty projects like this in South Korea.<sup>78</sup>

Similar efforts at creating model villages, although perhaps not so explicitly tied with the field of community development as in the above case, took place by the early 1960s in India by the CWS (with significant MCOR support) and in Hong Kong with the Wesley Village

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<sup>77</sup> Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia*: 77-78. For a good historical review of community development as a movement in foreign aid circles see Lane E. Holdcroft, “The Rise and Fall of Community Development, 1950-1965: A Critical Assessment,” in *Agricultural Development in the Third World*, ed. Carl K. Eicher and John M. Staatz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

<sup>78</sup> Gaither Warfield, Report of the General Secretary, September-October 1964, File 2041-3-2:13.

completed in 1959 during World Refugee Year.<sup>79</sup> Warfield described this latter refugee resettlement village or “colony” in an idyllic tone perhaps reminding his donors of their own recent transplantation in a rapidly suburbanizing America. “No Methodist who has been in this colony can ever forget Wesley Village, glistening white on a green hillside. There a visitor is apt to hear the singing of hymns from the community house, intermingled with the happy voices of children playing in the yard.”<sup>80</sup>

In addition to joining in the wider governmental and agency interest in “community development,” another foreign policy arena with which MCOR remained quite engaged just as they had in the 1940s was in food aid. In its leading role as a supporter of CROP, MCOR boasted that persons associated with CROP were influential in writing the legislation for what became Public Law 480, the Food for Peace bill.<sup>81</sup> The enthusiasm for this bill was palpable in the MCOR newsletter *Inasmuch* two months after its passage, calling the new Church World Service “Share our Surplus” program “[t]he greatest world-wide food relief program in the history of American churches” which will “at least quadruple the number of overseas hungry and undernourished currently being aided.”<sup>82</sup>

The Green Revolution had begun in the 1950s (even if the term was not coined until the 1960s) as new seed varieties, irrigation projects, and fertilizer inputs were increasingly utilized. Through CROP and Methodist involvement in “rural reconstruction” and Community Development projects in the 1950s American Methodists sought to play a role in this “revolution” as well. MCOR inspired Methodist donors by its vision of agricultural development

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<sup>79</sup> “Project Daya,” *Inasmuch* 19, May 1960.

<sup>80</sup> Gaither Warfield, manuscript intended for *World Outlook*, December 1959. File 2042-3-7:06.

<sup>81</sup> Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope*: 15. For the subsequent history of food aid legislation fifty years after the passage of PL 480 see Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell, *Food Aid after Fifty Years: Recasting its Role* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>82</sup> *Inasmuch*, 10, September 1954.

in 1950s India which drew on rural Methodist pride toward their ancestors who settled on the American frontier:

The roar of tractors where no tractor had ever been, emerging fields replacing jungles and strong men thoroughly enjoying a job of muscle encourage, reminded me of the pioneer spirit that won the West in the United States. I am glad that I saw the first trees fall and three years later visited the modern 16,000 acre farm which was hewn from the wilderness... Seventeen villages provide shelter. Fifteen to thirty acres of rich, black soil go to each family.<sup>83</sup>

MCOR's work in resettling refugees continued much as it had in the 1940s, though the kinds of refugees receiving Methodist assistance were no longer victims of World War II but increasingly of communism. In the 1950s the refugee situation which captured the most Methodist attention – and that of Americans more generally – was undoubtedly the Hungarian revolt against the communists in 1956. "For weeks, Methodists swamped the MCOR office with letters, telegrams and telephone calls, demanding a Hungarian for sponsorship."<sup>84</sup> Anti-communist feeling certainly played a role in this Methodist enthusiasm as did the sudden onset of the Soviet invasion. Gaither Warfield expressed gratitude for Methodists' willingness to help out in resettling Hungarian refugees but was quick to encourage his *Inasmuch* readers "not to forget" refugee problems in Hong Kong, Korea, and elsewhere. MCOR also encouraged its donors to petition Congress to pass a new law for refugee assistance after the 1953 Refugee Relief Act expired in 1956.<sup>85</sup> MCOR promotional materials frequently mentioned the importance of Methodist support of the United Nations' World Refugee Year of 1959 as well.<sup>86</sup>

## MCOR Matures: 1960 to 1968

<sup>83</sup> *Inasmuch*, 8, September 1953. The ideal of American yeoman agriculture was commonplace in the rhetoric of "rural reconstruction" in the 1950s. Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia*: 76. Community Development efforts of CWS are also highlighted in "Project Daya," *Inasmuch*, 19 May 1960.

<sup>84</sup> *Inasmuch*, 14, May 1957.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> "Report of the Secretary for Refugee Resettlement," February 1960, File 2041-3-2:01. *Inasmuch*, 18, October 1959; "Refugee Resettlement in W. R. Y." *Inasmuch*, 19 May 1960.

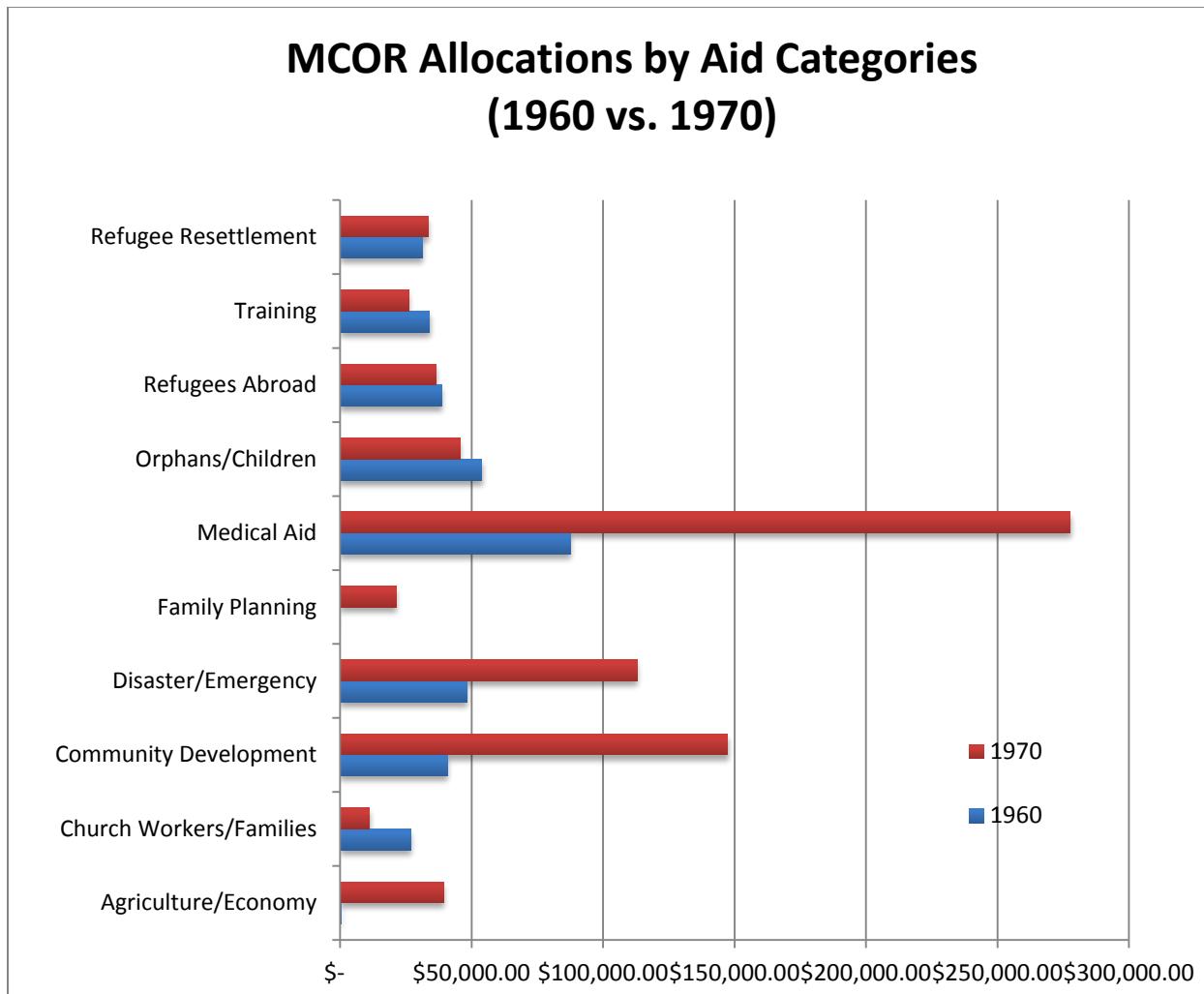
The United Nations declaration of the “Development Decade” in 1962 was preceded in 1960 by the Food and Agricultural Association’s “Freedom from Hunger” campaign. The campaign aimed to increase agricultural productivity and involved significant investment in community development efforts. The campaign received exuberant Methodist and World Council of Churches support. The WCC had been involved in the crafting of this UN program, and an MCOR press release in 1960 declared “Freedom from Hunger” a “bold compassionate effort – one that may well prove the most significant and far-reaching effort in church history.”<sup>87</sup> The decade proceeded with MCOR indeed spending considerably more on agricultural development and community development projects by 1970 than they had in 1960 (see Figure 4).<sup>88</sup> The CROP program of Church World Service continued with significant Methodist involvement even while that program was increasingly facing criticism for possibly supporting repressive regimes and for perhaps being an unhealthy merger of church and state interests.<sup>89</sup> Refugee resettlement too remained an important way for Methodists in America to give hands-on help in providing hospitality for refugees but the program experienced little change in this decade.

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<sup>87</sup> “Methodists Join Battle for Freedom from Hunger,” Frances Brockman file, 1960, File 2041-3-7: 07.

<sup>88</sup> The graph below is simply a re-presentation of data provided in a 1970 MCOR report which for the first time sought to compare MCOR funding patterns by category of aid.

<sup>89</sup> Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope*: 35, 64.



**Figure 4: MCOR Allocations by Aid Categories (created by MCOR in 1970)<sup>90</sup>**

In addition to increased funding going toward agricultural and community development, three additional conclusions may be drawn about the decade of the sixties with regard to MCOR programs. First, in terms of the countries given most attention, the most striking difference in MCOR's activity was that most aid was given to India as opposed to Korea (see Figure 5). India continued to suffer from devastating famines and refugee situations throughout the 1960s. However, instead of just continuing to focus on delivering food aid, there was a pronounced

<sup>90</sup> In the original table constructed by MCOR staff the category identified here as "Family Planning" was recorded as "crowdedness." The commentary in the MCOR report on what was meant by "crowdedness" seemed best represented by the phrase "Family Planning" used here.

increase in attention to agricultural development and community development projects in India during the 1960s through MCOR's own work and its support of CWS programs and its subdivision, Agricultural Missions, which increasingly moved in this direction.<sup>91</sup>

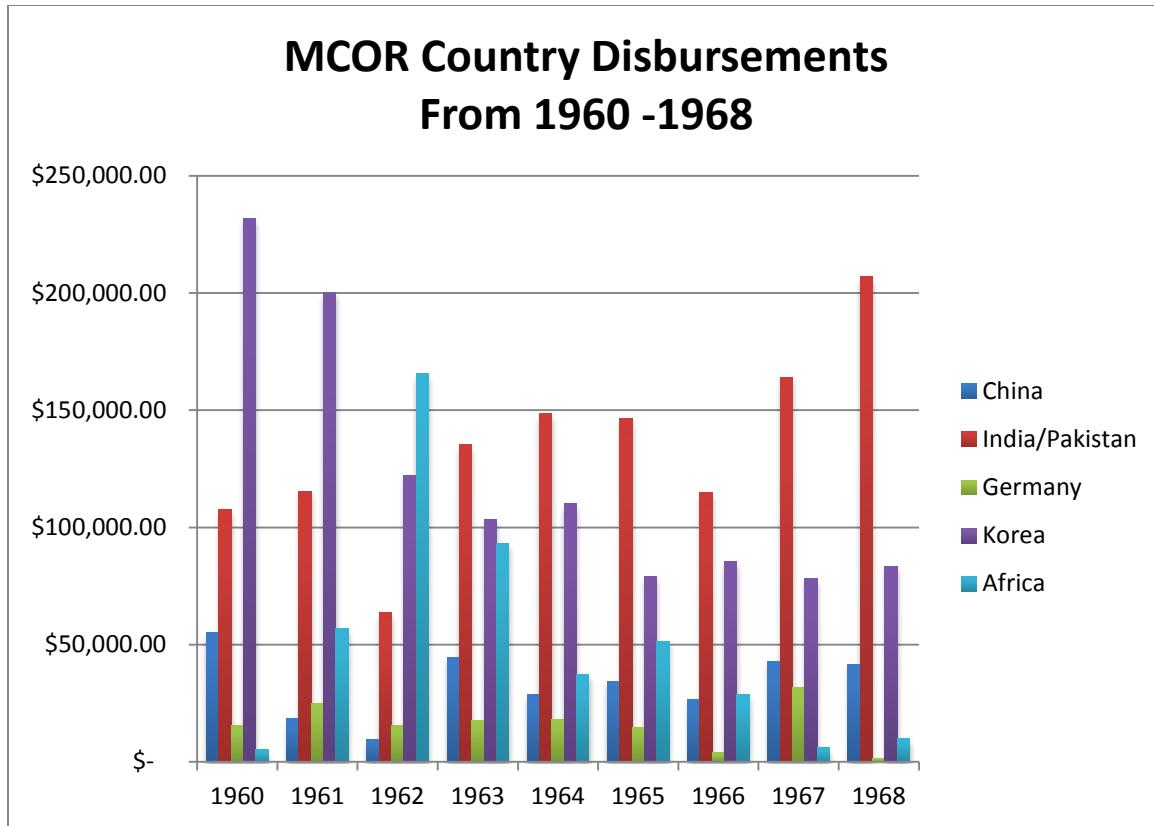
Second, when various programmatic areas are evaluated over the course of the 1960s – something MCOR staff in fact did in 1970 – the areas of most significant growth and decline relative to expenditures in 1960 were, respectively, in the areas of medical relief and aid to Methodist church workers (see Figure 4). The growth in medical relief efforts can mostly be attributed to efforts to establish clinics and hospitals in Vietnam and to anti-tuberculosis programs in India alongside continued attention to medical institutions developed by Methodists in that country.<sup>92</sup> The reduction by more than half in aid to Methodist church workers, which had been a major mode of MCOR expenditures in the preceding two decades, is in large part due to the growing professionalization of MCOR in the 1960s and is reflective of sentiments shared by Gaither Warfield to de-emphasize relief to Methodist workers in a 1966 report.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> January 1966 meeting. File 2041-3-3:07. Starting in 1959 a growing percentage of CROP funds were being used for agricultural development and community development projects but by the mid-1960s the value of commodities and other items shipped by the CWS was in excess of \$32 million. Stenning, *Church World Service: Fifty Years of Help and Hope*, 35, 43.

<sup>92</sup> Medical aid was also an important aspect of MCOR's early work in subsaharan Africa which began in the mid-1960s. Warfield regrets that medical and educational work was given as much attention as it was to the detriment of the church in several African countries. Report of the General Secretary, May 1965 meeting, File 2041-3-3:02.

<sup>93</sup> Gaither Warfield, "Report of the General Secretary," January 1966, File 2041-3-3:07. The trend toward professionalization is highlighted in a 1972 report as well. File 2041-3-5:03.



**Figure 5: MCOR Country Disbursements, 1960-68 (top 5 funding destinations)<sup>94</sup>**

Finally, the 1960s are also noteworthy for the attention that MCOR began to pay to the continent of Africa as independence movements sweeping across the continent gained the world's – and the church's – attention. In 1961, in just a six month period, \$311,512 was received by MCOR through the Bishops' Appeal for Africa fundraising initiative and then spent in Africa over the next two years. Warfield reported that the “Blankets for Algeria” appeal in the aftermath of that country's war for independence late in 1962 received a greater sudden volume of funds (during Advent of 1962) than any other appeal in over a decade.<sup>95</sup> MCOR reported that

<sup>94</sup> Grouping the entire continent of Africa with other individual countries is admittedly problematic in the above graphic. However, in MCOR financial audits during this time period the numbers for particular African countries were not specified. Most MCOR work on the continent of Africa in this time period was in what is today known as Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rhodesia, and Liberia.

<sup>95</sup> Gaither Warfield report to the MCOR Annual Meeting, January 1963, File 2041-3-2:10.

the Methodists were the only U.S. denomination which had ongoing work in Algeria at this time.<sup>96</sup>

In 1965 Gaither Warfield visited Africa for the first time (which was also the first time any MCOR staff person had visited south central Africa) and wrote a mostly negative report of the Methodist work there as well as of the countries he visited.<sup>97</sup> He criticized Ghana for being excessively “anti-western”; in Rhodesia he was prescient in predicting the country would see future racial violence. He described African political leaders in Rhodesia as having “retain[ed] their faith, but their Christianity is built on an African interpretation of the Saviour.”<sup>98</sup> He did not elaborate on the latter remark, but it seems to imply at least concern for what would soon be labeled theological “contextualization.”<sup>99</sup> Warfield noted with some embarrassment how American Methodism in the mid-1960s only had an established presence in one African country (Democratic Republic of Congo) of those twenty-nine which had recently become independent nations. In light of such a situation, however, Warfield was quick to note the importance of interdenominational cooperation in Africa.<sup>100</sup>

In the 1960s one also observes a growing amount of conflict in MCOR’s ecumenical relationships and a measure of frustration with relief agencies (secular and religious unaligned with CWS) for the ways they seem to be distracting Methodist donors away from MCOR. MCOR had a similar problem internally as leaders frequently noted the problem of Methodist donors giving to MCOR-supported projects which have “glamor” such as the Meals for Millions

<sup>96</sup> Gaither Warfield report, File 2041-3-2:10; Algeria was one of the few predominantly Muslim countries in the Near East / North Africa where Methodists have had a significant presence. Methodist work in Algeria began in 1910. For a six-page review of Methodist work in Algeria and Tunisia see Paul Neff Garber, “The Methodist Mission in North Africa,” *World Outlook*, April 1950.

<sup>97</sup> Gaither Warfield Report. File 2041-3-3:01.

<sup>98</sup> Gaither Warfield report, 1965, File 2041-3-3: 02.

<sup>99</sup> The term was first used at a World Council of Churches consultation in August of 1971. The report from this gathering is reprinted in David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989)..

<sup>100</sup> Report of the General Secretary, May 1965 meeting. File 2041-3-3:02.

Foundation and the Share Our Surplus appeals which resulted in insufficient funds for “projects that folks here do not always understand.” Warfield lamented that “Multi-Purpose Food has very definite limitations and cannot help us in about 80 to 85% of our program. It is very much like the Share our Surplus Appeal, which would take nine tenths of our income if we pushed it with any great emphasis.”<sup>101</sup>

With regard to secular relief agencies MCOR had for some time experienced frustration with Methodists giving to them instead of MCOR. One sees this in promotional material as early as the mid-1940s.<sup>102</sup> As the number of relief agencies proliferated in subsequent years this problem likely worsened. CARE, for example, is criticized by Warfield as being “a very expensive way of giving relief” as early as 1953, even though MCOR continued to give a substantial sum to the organization into the 1960s. He did not want to be public in his criticism. In a 1960 letter to the editor of *The Methodist Story* who wanted to report on other agencies’ inefficiency Warfield stressed that “we should not seek to offend any of the secular organizations in this field.”<sup>103</sup>

Beyond accusations of mere inefficiency, MCOR also had philosophical problems with the way relief was done by some groups claiming that, for example, child “adoption” programs (what today is called child sponsorship) were too individualistic an approach. “To encourage a Methodist group or individual in "adopting" specific persons is, we feel, not only unwise but even un-Christian. Such aid is, in a way, discriminatory... somewhat like giving one child a piece of

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<sup>101</sup> Letter from Gaither Warfield to George A. Rowland, 21 March 1960, File 2041-3-7:14.

<sup>102</sup> Of course, this problem has a much earlier heritage as well going back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with Jabez Bunting establishing the Methodist missionary society in part to lure Methodist dollars away from the London Missionary Society.

<sup>103</sup> Letter to Dr. Thomas Lugg from Gaither Warfield, 22 June 1953, File 2041-3-7:10. Letter to Edwin H. Haynard from Gaither Warfield, 2 March 1960. File 2041-3-7:14. A long letter of criticism from the National Council of Churches directed to Operation Handclasp also expresses frustration from NCC member churches toward members of that relief agency on a number of issues. Letter to D. M. Hanson from R. Norris Wilson 14 April 1960, File 2042-3-2: 06.

chocolate candy where there are 20 other hungry children who must stand and watch him eat it.”<sup>104</sup> Such child sponsorship programs were a special focus for World Vision in the 1950s – especially in Korea. Gary Vanderpol has noted that child sponsorship programs of World Vision were not a mere marketing strategy but “an essential expression of how it saw the poor.”

Consideration of World Vision’s individualistic bent gives further insight into its preoccupation with orphans and lepers. Cut off from the ties of family and society through death or disease, they were—tragically—the quintessential individuals within their societies. Involvement in their lives did not require complex interactions with the intricacies of Asian cultures, but only compassionate attention to their considerable personal needs.<sup>105</sup>

While MCOR harbored a measure of disagreement with child sponsorship programs which World Vision focused on, it is also the case that in 1958-59 MCOR gave World Vision nearly \$17,000 to support their work among orphans in Korea.<sup>106</sup> In the mid-1960s Warfield also met with World Vision president Bob Pierce and was impressed by how quickly they were able to raise funds through a promotional film they had produced and expressed hope that MCOR’s own film would be equally advantageous.<sup>107</sup>

## An Assessment of MCOR Motives

The motives for MCOR’s work are surely far more complicated than the initial charter described them to be in 1940: “For the Relief of Human Suffering.” This humanitarian (and Christian) expression was one of the motives for MCOR’s work but far from the only one. No doubt there were as many variations in the motives for MCOR’s work as there were people who

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<sup>104</sup> *Inasmuch*, 11, May 1955.

<sup>105</sup> Vanderpol, “The Least of These: American Evangelical Para-church Missions to the Poor, 1947-2005,” 75-76. The different approaches of World Vision and MCOR in the 1950s and 1960s are striking. In addition to its greater individualism, World Vision was much more focused on a single country (Korea) until the early 1970s and studiously avoided governmental programs like PL 480. It was also not until 1974 that World Vision added “development” language to its personal statement – about a decade later than MCOR.

<sup>106</sup> “Financial Report for the Fiscal year June 1 1958 to May 31, 1959,” File 2041-3-2:01.

<sup>107</sup> Gaither Warfield Report of the General Secretary, File 2041-3-2:01.

supported and worked for them. In this section, I elaborate on two sets of motives for MCOR's work which appear to be most salient in the historical record. I focus on the ways MCOR sought to *promote* its work among Methodist donors and the theological/missiological themes implicit in that promotion, as well as the ways MCOR leadership (and ecumenical agencies) tended to understand the nature of their work as it related to mission.<sup>108</sup> These two dimensions of MCOR's motive – the public/promotional and the private/reflective – are not mutually exclusive, but nonetheless should be kept in mind in assessing MCOR's' motives.

### **Compassion, Thanksgiving, and Christian Fellowship – with a Touch of Guilt**

The most pervasive purpose for relief that MCOR promoted in its advertisements was as a way of expressing compassion toward those who are suffering, thanksgiving for the experiences of plenty donors experienced, and fellowship with Christians and Methodists in distant regions. It is important to both take at face value the expressions of compassion and thanksgiving one observes in MCOR promotional materials while acknowledging that these most "pure" motives of compassion, thanksgiving, and Christian fellowship are the most difficult to assess. What, for example, was the intention of the artist or the MCOR administrator who approved the promotional materials? How was the promotional material received by donors and is that different from the way one perceives them today? One runs the risk of being excessively critical or even cynical in describing the many ways such ostensibly pure motives of Christian compassion, thanksgiving, and fellowship might have been tainted by a myriad of other factors. And yet so often they were. Daniel Born's study of the problem and complexity of "liberal guilt" in late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature is illustrative of the ways in which

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<sup>108</sup> An analysis of the pictures alone MCOR used in its promotional material is a rich resource to illustrate how MCOR portrayed the poor, influenced donors, and identified the motives which their donors may have already had to give financially to the support of MCOR. Only a few of those pictures are included in this section.

perhaps a similar complexity is refracted in MCOR promotional materials as the Christian virtues of compassion, thanksgiving, and fellowship are invoked.<sup>109</sup>

The following image from MCOR promotional materials which appeared near the American Thanksgiving holiday of 1947 was perhaps the most graphic appeal to compassion and thanksgiving mixed with a heavy dose of guilt in the MCOR record.<sup>110</sup> Other images – and sometimes photographs – which juxtaposed, for example, persons searching garbage for food with that of a full refrigerator were also used in the late 1940s and early 50s. The following poem which MCOR suggested may be used for worship services in the late 1940s is illustrative of the close pairing of compassion, thanksgiving, and guilt found in the images as well.

“I have more food than I can eat –  
They faint with hunger in the street.  
I have more clothes than I can wear –  
Their head, and hands, and feet are bare.  
My walls are thick, and warm, and dry –  
Their walls are rain, and wind, and sky.  
My heart knows love of noble souls –  
Their hearts are hungry, thirsty bowls  
These things let me remember when  
Cries of the needy rise again.<sup>111</sup>



The use of pictures of starving children to spur donors to give was not unique to MCOR.

Scholars who have studied other relief organizations at this time have noted a similar tendency to portray the poor in situations of desperation in order to prompt a reaction among donors.

<sup>109</sup> Daniel Born, *The Birth of Liberal Guilt in the English Novel: Charles Dickens to H. G. Wells* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>110</sup> MCOR Scrapbook, 2045-4-6.

<sup>111</sup> MCOR Scrapbook, 2045-4-6.

Sometimes called “pornography of the poor” such visual images declined in their usage in subsequent years.<sup>112</sup>

Poetic images and pictures evoking compassion mixed with guilt over abundance in the mid-twentieth century provide an intriguing theological contrast with John Wesley’s own experience of poverty that spurred him to action. An article from the late 1940s about MCOR’s work retold this story of Wesley’s experience. After encountering a poor girl begging Wesley wrote, “Thou has adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold? O Justice! O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor child? Everything about thee which cost more than Christian duty required thee to lay out is the blood of the poor.”<sup>113</sup> While on the surface Wesley’s reflection appears similar to the poem above, in fact it comprises a significantly more radical call to action. Rather than giving a bit to MCOR out of one’s abundance to assuage one’s guilt, Wesley declares that “everything... which cost more than Christian duty required” ought be given to the poor. Although used on one occasion, it is striking how very rare such appeals to Wesley’s concern for the poor were made in MCOR’s promotional materials throughout its history.<sup>114</sup>

The motive of relief donations as a way to express Christian fellowship in MCOR promotional materials was perhaps less intertwined with feelings of guilt than other motives invoked in MCOR promotional materials. Promotional materials in one case contained reprinted (and translated) “letters of thanks” from Methodist pastors and church workers from around the

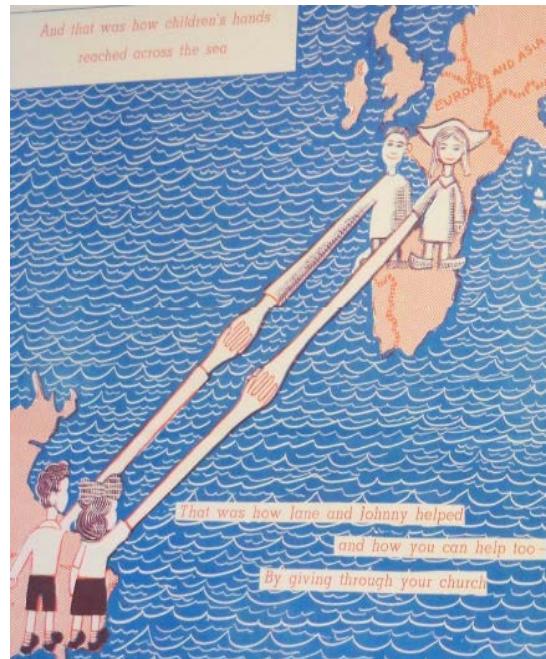
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<sup>112</sup> See Vanderpol’s brief discussion of this in his dissertation on World Vision and related groups, Vanderpol, “The Least of These: American Evangelical Para-church Missions to the Poor, 1947-2005,” 71.

<sup>113</sup> H.H. Smith, “I can’t bear to look at it,” *Arkansas Methodist* in MCOR Scrapbook, File 2045-5-1.

<sup>114</sup> Such neglect of Wesley’s concern for the poor in MCOR promotional materials is unsurprising in light of the historiographical concerns of early to mid-twentieth century Methodist historians who tended to not frequently draw attention to these dimensions of Methodist history.

world.<sup>115</sup> Donors would have likely more easily made connections to people as being similar to themselves rather than an image of a starving child which stressed the differences in human experience. One sees a similar expression of Christian fellowship in an image promoting MCOR among children as well. The children in Europe after World War II are not depicted in a strikingly different way from those in the U.S. Both children



in Europe are smiling and their hands reach equally far “across the sea” as their American counterparts perhaps suggesting a measure of (mostly imagined) reciprocity.<sup>116</sup> A similar expression of Christian fellowship was also used extensively throughout MCOR’s history in fundraising efforts associated with World Communion Sunday, the Fellowship of Suffering and Service, and One Great Hour of Sharing.

Trans-denominational initiatives to promote ecumenism such as World Communion Sunday and One Great Hour of Sharing were ways of raising money for ecumenical efforts in relief which also focused strongly on relief as an expression of Christian fellowship. Renowned ecumenist and Anglican Bishop Stephen C. Neill noted that the WCC "makes possible corporate charitable action on a scale never previously considered possible, and unsurpassed as a means of creating genuine Christian fellowship."<sup>117</sup> Such sentiment was articulated in a theologically intricate way in perhaps the earliest example of rich theological reflection concerning relief work

<sup>115</sup> “Letters of thanks from across the seas to American Methodists,” MCOR promotional brochure, 1946, File 2045-4-6.

<sup>116</sup> “Children’s Hands Across the Sea,” MCOR promotional brochure, MCOR Scrapbook, File 2045-4-7.

<sup>117</sup> Cited in Geoffrey Murray, “Joint Service as an Instrument of Renewal,” in *The Ecumenical Advance: A History of the Ecumenical Movement Volume 2, 1948-1968*, ed. Harold E. Fey (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986).

in the *Ecumenical Review*. Orthodox scholar Nikos Nissiotis made a compelling argument about the ecclesiological significance of inter-church aid as being theologically intertwined with the church's self-expression or *koinonia* rather than being a mere expression of politeness or goodwill. No other scholarly contributions in the early 1960s match Nissiotis's theological depth and nuance with respect to the ecclesiological significance of relief efforts.<sup>118</sup> His contribution, however, does not appear to have strongly impacted ecumenical theological reflection in subsequent years.

### **Relief Related to Mission – Somehow**

MCOR's motive for its work was clearly related somehow to a belief that mission is an integral part of what it meant for Christians to be Christian and Methodists to be Methodist. Getting clarity on this theological motive was difficult for MCOR over the years. MCOR began with an awkward but fruitful relationship to the Methodist Board of Missions and Church Extension. As noted above, from the outset MCOR established "Guiding Principles" which were to prevent it from being used to supplement shortfalls in the Board of Missions' budget – principles which it shortly violated due to the exigencies of need to support Methodist workers in China, Europe, Korea, India, and elsewhere. Far from being something MCOR leadership was embarrassed by, promotional material for MCOR in the 1940s and 50s highlighted for donors the ways their financial contributions helped to promote the mission of the church and Methodism in particular.<sup>119</sup> There was not a concerted effort, however, on MCOR's part to clarify how precisely MCOR was simultaneously to be a way for Methodists to provide "for the relief of

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<sup>118</sup> Nikos A. Nissiotis, "The ecclesiological significance of inter-church diakonia," *The Ecumenical Review* 13, no. 2 (1961).

<sup>119</sup> 1952 General Conference legislation also gave MCOR an explicit mandate to "give special attention and assistance to the national workers and the people of our Methodist churches overseas who are in need because of war or other disasters." MCOR Scrapbook, File 2045-4-7.

human suffering without distinction of race, color or creed” and how it was also related to the Board of Missions and Church Extension which had an evangelistic motive such that the promotion of creed mattered.

A desire to clarify how mission, service, and relief ought to be interrelated did gradually emerge in the early 1950s both for MCOR and among ecumenical relief agencies. MCOR and the Board of Missions and Church Extension appears to have first felt the need for clarification of these terms in a gathering of mission secretaries early in 1953 in Philadelphia. At this meeting a considerable amount of time was spent outlining how best to talk about Methodist mission work at upcoming Annual Conference sessions. Two paragraphs outlining the “Difference between Relief and Missions” were shared at this gathering of conference mission secretaries.

The primary aim of missions is the declaration of the gospel with the intent of inviting all who hear it to become disciples of Jesus Christ. A further aim is to organize such individuals into churches in every land so that by their words and works these disciples may continue to proclaim this message to all mankind. Relief is considered a natural expression of love of Christ for those who are in need, and undergirds and supplements the preaching of the gospel... Aid is given to all who are in need irrespective of race, nation, or creed. Of course the Methodist Church has always felt a definite responsibility for members of our own denomination in lands overseas and gives special consideration to them in this program.<sup>120</sup>

In the above summary of what is encompassed by “mission” there appear to be two dimensions, comprised of first, verbal “declaration of the gospel” and second, the establishment of churches. Relief, on the other hand, “undergirds and supplements” these other activities described as mission. The tension between relief for Methodist workers and relief for persons irrespective of creed is noted but not resolved in this teaching material for Methodist mission secretaries.

In the early years it seems MCOR did not have as much difficulty facing this tension between relief and missions since it was clearly a denominational relief agency with ties to the

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<sup>120</sup> “Advance Specials Presentations to Area and Annual Conferences,” File 2041-3-6:05.

Board of Missions and Church Extension. MCOR itself described its work as “spiritual aid” enabling evangelism to take place and the Advance was described as making possible “our missionary expansion.” Appeals for MCOR were sometimes found within articles which highlighted Methodist evangelistic work.<sup>121</sup> Warfield also affirmed participants at a CROP meeting noting that CROP “achieves its purpose only as it fits into and assists the *total* relief, rehabilitation and *missions* program of the churches as they attempt to function as ‘The Church.’”(emphasis in the original)<sup>122</sup> As MCOR increasingly got involved in “rehabilitation” efforts, however, the distinctions between what it should do and what the Board of Missions and Church Extension should do became less clear.<sup>123</sup>

At least by the mid-1950s one observes that easy connections between relief and evangelism in promotional material were not so easily made in practice. The clearest example of this occurred in September 1953 where Warfield resisted a request by Korean Bishop Lew asking MCOR to pay for several thousand pamphlets to be distributed to prisoners of war in Korea. Bishop Lew wrote:

I agree with you on the school desks and POW suits. They are *things* anyway. In the way of relief of the POW's, can't you consider pamphlets to give out to them? They are sent to an island for training and we provide pamphlets of 20 pages on religious themes...They have to be given out free and therefore are "relief" (emphasis in original).<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> George S. Reamey, “A Fertile Field for Evangelism,” *The Arkansas Methodist*, 25 September 1947 in MCOR Scrapbook, File 2045-4-7.. In the Korean context MCOR noted the necessity of having its staff be fully accepted by the Korean church as missionaries so that the “entire program will be the natural expression of our Methodist Church to live and grow in the spirit of Christ.” 1954 Annual Meeting, File 2041-3-1:14.

<sup>122</sup> Letter from Warfield to “a variety of interested people,” Office of the General Secretary, File 2042-3-1:04.

<sup>123</sup> This is well-illustrated in a description of different types of aid categories in Korea and the respective involvement of MCOR and the Board of Missions in those activities. Rehabilitation projects were more likely to have both MCOR and Board of Missions involvement. MCOR January 1963 meeting. File 2041-3-2:10.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from Hyungki Lew to Gaither Warfield, File 2041-3-1:12. Warfield’s letter to Lew appears to have not been preserved in the MCOR archive so the particular nature of Warfield’s argument against funding pamphlets is not clear. An appeal of MCOR’s to provide “Hymnbooks for Japan” does not appear to have experienced similar questioning as to its appropriateness for relief as these pamphlets were in the Korean context. MCOR Scrapbook, File 2045-4-6.

MCOR's "tri-village project" for community development (discussed above) was also said to have encountered problems because it was too closely associated with the Korean Methodist Church.<sup>125</sup>

Warfield clearly struggled with maintaining an appropriate interrelationship between "mission" and "relief" or what today is called a holistic approach to the Gospel.<sup>126</sup> Over time, it appears as though MCOR (under the leadership of Warfield) created more firm barriers to the possibility of evangelism being related to relief or rehabilitation work. Late in 1954 he described his hope that relief will "succor the needy" and also "create a desire to learn more about the Lord whom we serve."<sup>127</sup> Early in 1966, he questioned the Methodist tendency to provide first for the needs of Methodist workers – something MCOR had done from the beginning – and noted that "[m]aterial relief should never be used as an instrument for evangelism."<sup>128</sup> The extent to which these comments represent a discernible policy shift within MCOR is difficult to ascertain. It stands to reason that such a shift would have been rather natural as the wider field of international development went through a professionalization process and became more detached from church work due to the entrance of governmental involvement in development aid.

Theological reflection on the interrelationship of mission and relief became more common in the 1960s for MCOR as well as in wider ecumenical circles. This was especially the case after 1967. The 1960s were clearly the most fertile decade for Methodist reflection on the

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<sup>125</sup> Gaither Warfield, Report of the General Secretary, September-October 1964, File 2041-3-2:13.

<sup>126</sup> This remains a challenge for many nongovernmental organizations today. See the revealing case study of the Norwegian Mission Society in Clarke and Jennings, *Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*. For an explanation on how the evangelical NGO World Vision seeks to maintain this holism see Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, Revised and Expanded ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011).

<sup>127</sup> Gaither Warfield Report, September 1955, File 2041-3-1:16.

<sup>128</sup> Gaither Warfield, "Report of the General Secretary," January 1966, File 2041-3-3:07. This eight page report is very thoughtfully written and reveals a seasoned denominational bureaucrat reflecting upon his twenty years of service and the increasing complexity of his work as the years have gone by.

meaning of mission in this period. Tracy Jones, D.T. Niles, Eugene Stockwell, Ralph Dodge, and Gerald Anderson all authored or edited books about Methodism and mission between 1960 and 1967.<sup>129</sup> These authors did not all agree with one another. The theological ferment related to the Second Vatican Council, the papal encyclical on development, *Populorum Progressio*, and two important World Council of Churches gatherings (Geneva 1966 and Uppsala 1968) all contributed to a significant increase in reflection on the nature of development in Christian circles.

One sees evidence of this theological ferment within an MCOR meeting in January of 1963. MCOR had a custom of reviewing its policies and asking philosophical questions about the nature of its work once each quadrennium, but their 1963 gathering discussed theology much more than previous ones. Future head of the Division of Overseas Ministries for the National Council of Churches of Christ Eugene Stockwell gave a presentation on the interrelationship of “mission” and “service” in which the two were more interrelated than they were described to be at a 1953 gathering. Stockwell spoke, for example, on mission theologian Leslie Newbigin’s distinction between “missionary dimension” and “missionary intention” whereby all activity in which MCOR engages has a missionary dimension as the mission of God is widely encompassing. “Missionary intention” is a smaller subset of “missionary dimension” and includes such activities as evangelism. Such theological reflection was directly related to a more programmatic challenge of crafting a proper interrelationship between MCOR and the Division for World Missions and the Women’s Division for Christian Service.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ralph Dodge, *The Unpopular Missionary* (Westwood, NJ: Revel, 1964); Daniel T. Niles, *The Message and its Messengers* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966); Gerald H. Anderson, *Christian Mission in Theological Perspective: An Inquiry by Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967); Helen L. Johnson et al., eds., *The Christian Mission Today* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960); Eugene L. Stockwell, *Claimed by God for Mission: The Congregation Seeks New Forms* (New York: World Outlook Press, 1965).

<sup>130</sup> January 1963 Annual Meeting reports, File 2041-3-2:10.

Methodists understood the theological tension between what they called “mission” and “service.” However, what was likely an excellent theological discussion at MCOR’s January 1963 meeting appears to have borne little fruit in concrete policy proposals to theologically delineate the interrelationship of MCOR and the Division of World Missions. Efforts to clarify this relationship had been ongoing since MCOR’s founding. They continued as programmatic tensions. The extent to which theological reflection played a role in these programmatic debates is difficult to discern. The definition of mission put forward in the 1964 *Book of Discipline* may have been influenced by conversations at this meeting.

The supreme aim of missions is to make the Lord Jesus Christ known to all people in all lands as their divine Saviour, to persuade them to become His disciples, and to gather these disciples into Christian churches; to enlist them in the building of the Kingdom of god; to cooperate with these churches; to promote world Christian fellowship; and to bring to bear on all human life the spirit and principles of Christ.<sup>131</sup>

Such ruminations on the interrelationship of mission and relief were not unique to MCOR. The Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (DICARWS) of the World Council of Churches in 1955 crafted a statement entitled “Mission and Service: Their Theological Unity and Its Consequences.” The document sought to clarify how the DICARWS should best work in a context of multiple churches’ missionary efforts and specifically with the work of the International Missionary Council (IMC). Called the Herrenalb categories after the town in Germany where it was crafted, this statement was operative in WCC/IMC circles until the mid-1960s. It clarified the respective responsibilities of the DICARWS and the IMC but also likely raised questions about the extent to which a division of labor *organizationally* negatively

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<sup>131</sup> MCOR meeting report, 1964.

affects the holistic expression of the nature of mission *practically* in particular contexts.<sup>132</sup>

Similar fears had been raised by Eugene Stockwell in the 1963 MCOR meeting as well.<sup>133</sup>

The theological nature and scope of mission and relief was a contentious but critical dimension of MCOR's motive for doing its work. Early in its history, the political nature of this motive extended well beyond the Methodist Church. Beginning in the mid-1940s, MCOR and the wider Board of Missions and Church Extension viewed the post-World War II period as an opportunity to create a “New World Order.” The partnership with and pressure placed upon the U.S. government in promoting this new world order is evident in the several governmental and UN programs in which MCOR participated and in the Methodist appeal called the “Crusade for Christ” from 1944 to 1948.<sup>134</sup> By the early 1960s this enthusiasm had been tempered considerably as MCOR debated the problem of providing relief in countries which were hostile to the U.S. government or to Christianity. The extent to which overseas relief was the “first step in the new world order” was surely not as clear as it had been in the 1940s.

## Conclusion

MCOR was a major contributor to relief and development efforts in the mid-twentieth century and continued its efforts after the creation of the United Methodist Church in 1968 and the renaming of MCOR as the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The financial commitments MCOR made in China, India, Korea, and dozens of other countries from 1940 to 1968 is alone impressive to say nothing of the countless lives saved because of MCOR's relief

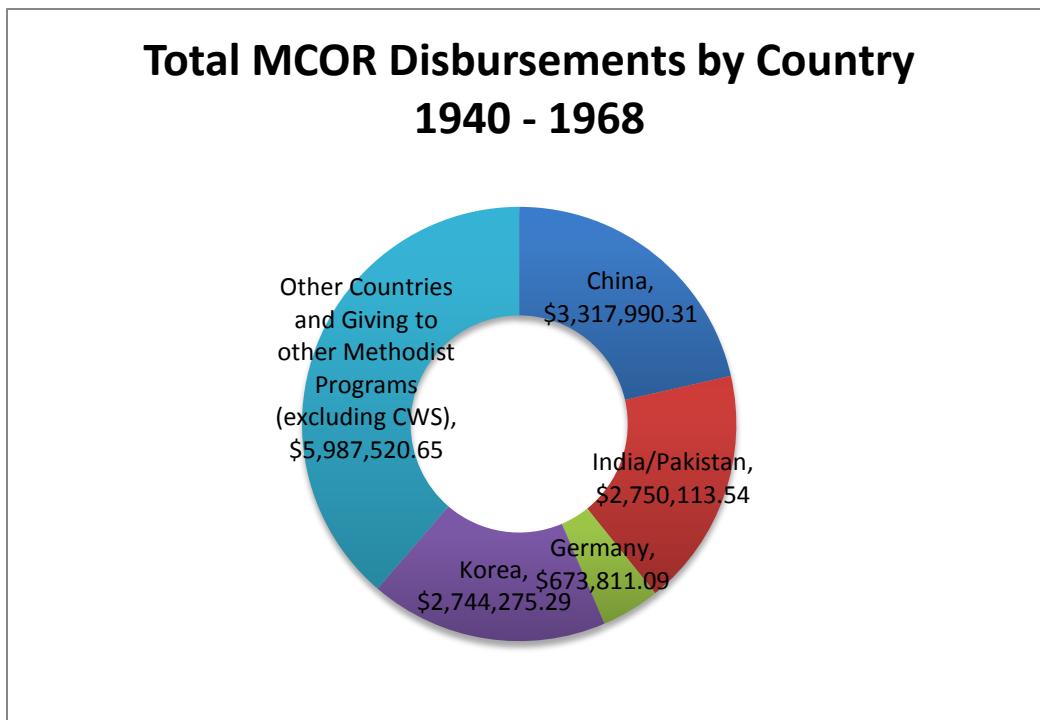
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<sup>132</sup> A list of the Herrenalb categories is provided in Murray, "Joint Service as an Instrument of Renewal," 217-18. See also Taylor, *Not Angels but Agencies: The Ecumenical Response to Poverty – A Primer*: 36, 40. Taylor discusses the challenges of “holism” in the World Council of Churches’ work extensively in two chapters in this text.

<sup>133</sup> January 1963 Annual Meeting reports, File 2041-3-2:10.

<sup>134</sup> “Crusade for Christ: Church Members’ Manual” MCOR Scrapbook, 1946-53, File 2045-5-1; Floyd Shacklock, “Overseas Relief: The First Step in the New World Order,” *Southern Christian Advocate*, 2 March 1944. MCOR Scrapbook, File 2045-4-2.

efforts (see Figure 6). MCOR's work in countries around the world influenced the development of the church in various countries – likely in both positive and negative ways. The ways MCOR garnered Methodist support for a host of ecumenical, U.S. governmental, and U.N. initiatives in relief efforts well-illustrates the extent to which Methodists understood themselves as a leading denomination in America.

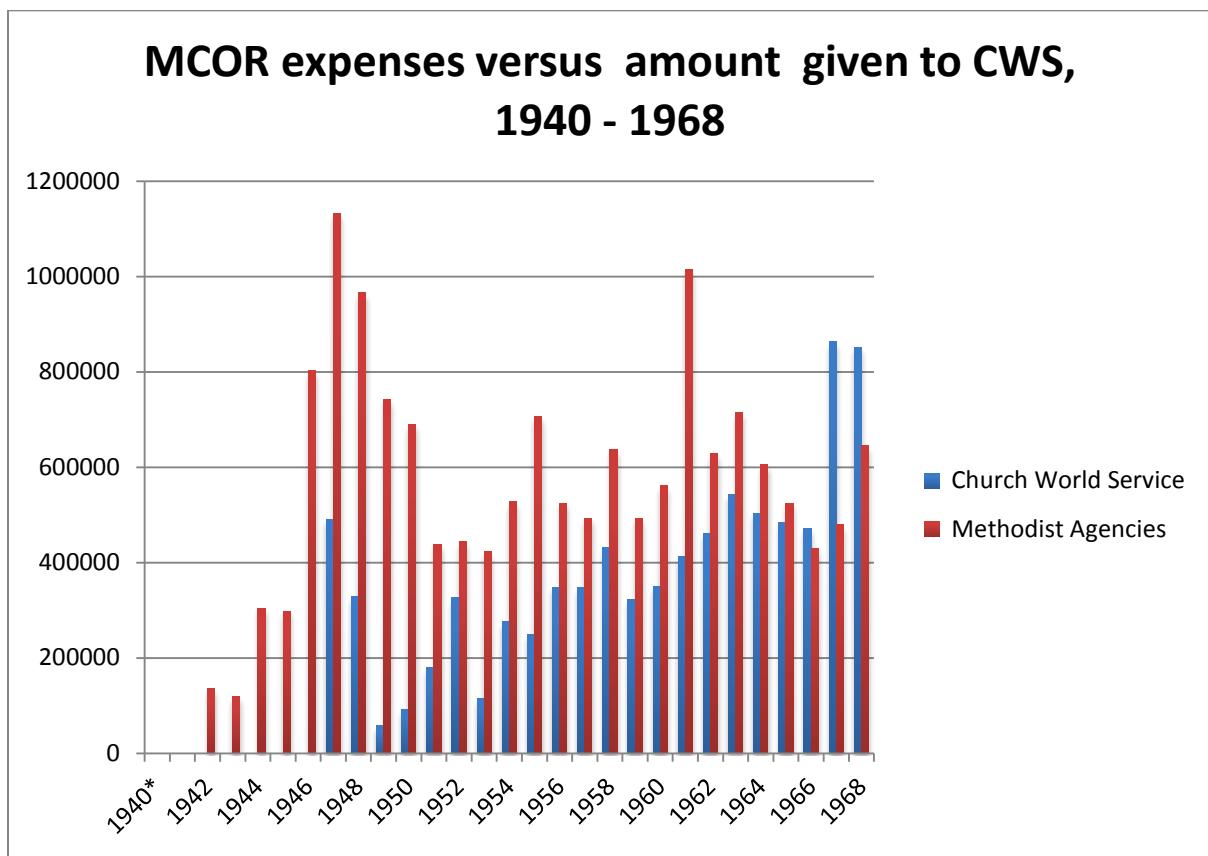


**Figure 6: Total MCOR Disbursements by Country, 1940-68<sup>135</sup>**

MCOR's ecumenical commitment to Church World Service as well as secular and governmental organizations was an important dimension of Methodist relief work from the time of CWS's establishment in 1946 through 1968. As Figure 7 clearly shows, the share of funding MCOR gave to CWS versus the amount MCOR disbursed under its own auspices increased significantly in the 1960s. MCOR maintained their commitment to these ecumenical and secular organizations in spite of their occasional disagreements with these other groups. In an age where

<sup>135</sup> Disbursements to Church World Service and other agencies beyond the Methodist Church are not identified in this graph.

the number of nongovernmental organizations has proliferated in numbers far greater than in the 1950s and 60s, MCOR's early impulse to coordinate relief efforts is surely more needed now than ever. The way UMCOR will engage with new ecumenical partners as old ecumenical organizations such as the U.S. National Council of Churches shrinks and becomes increasingly less representative of American Christianity is an important question which must be addressed.<sup>136</sup> How UMCOR will continue to be engaged ecumenically in an age of dramatic changes in ecumenism globally is also critical. For example, it is not at all clear how older ecumenical networks such as the World Council of Churches will change and relate to newer networks such as the Global Christian Forum.



**Figure 7: MCOR expenses versus amount raised but given to CWS, 1940-68**

<sup>136</sup> The National Council of Churches now has a very small staff and has recently vacated their office space at 475 Riverside Drive in Manhattan where they used to employ dozens of staff.

Similarly, the extent to which MCOR from the very beginning sought to influence governmental foreign aid policy in the United States is a valuable example to many current NGOs which are increasingly realizing the importance of working in advocacy for good government policies in addition to direct service. There is a long history of NGO involvement in advocacy in such groups like Bread for the World, but other NGOs are – relatively speaking – just getting started in this sort of work.<sup>137</sup> Because of the newness of this work for many NGOs, they are approaching the question of advocacy in fresh ways by asking important theological questions about how advocacy might best be done.<sup>138</sup> How might Methodist theologians contribute to this conversation and what might UMCOR learn from more serious engagement with evangelicals who are asking these questions about advocacy in the realm of international development?

The history of MCOR illustrates the many ways Methodists engaged difficult questions in the past with regard to international development. Questions for a fruitful future remain and include issues of a programmatic as well as a theological/philosophical nature:

- How closely ought a denominational relief and development agency work with and be guided by the priorities in Christian mission established by the wider denominational mission agency?
- With the continued proliferation of NGOs which make appeals to Methodists around the world, what is the role of a denominational relief agency?

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<sup>137</sup> For a good assessment of the state of NGO advocacy - although now over a decade old - see Alan Whaites, "NGOs, disaster, and advocacy: caught between the Prophet and the Shepherd Boy," in *Debating Development: NGOs and the Future*, ed. Deborah Eade and Ernst Ligteringen (London: Oxfam GB, 2001).

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, Robert Davis, "What about justice? toward an Evangelical perspective on advocacy in development," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 26, no. 2 (2009).

- If Christians have a distinctive understanding of the human person (theological anthropology) ought such insights make a difference in how development work takes place in human communities? What would that look like?
- Is there something distinctive about the way UMCOR or other Methodist relief agencies do or should do their work which set them apart from secular NGOS?
- Does, for example, Methodist development work remain too closely tied to a kind of unhelpful professionalism of secular development discourse and practice? Might, for example, greater engagement with the “post-development” literature as well as other Christian NGO leaders be beneficial as an exercise in evaluating such work?<sup>139</sup> How, for example, does UMCOR’s work compare theologically with that of World Vision, now one of the largest Christian NGOs?<sup>140</sup>
- How might World Methodists in local congregations be engaged by such a conversation about theology and development and how does congregational discourse about development differ in European Methodism compared to that in the United States?

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<sup>139</sup> These suggestions are not new even among Wesleyans. See David W. Wright, "The Pitfalls of the International Aid Rationale: Comparisons Between Missionary Aid and the International Aid Network," *Missiology: An International Review* 22, no. 2 (1994).

<sup>140</sup> For an example of how World Vision has sought to engage such a question see Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*.

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