

A BRIDGE TO INTER-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION: THE GÜLEN-JESUIT EDUCATIONAL NEXUS

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Abstract

The Gülen movement's educational mission is, at its core and in its praxis, remarkably similar to the centuries-old Jesuit educational tradition. It can be argued that both educational movements are united in a *shared* mission today – a deep concern for the spiritual freedom of the individual and a commitment to the betterment of the world.

Both movements seek to instill values such as honesty, dedication, compassion and tolerance. To achieve this goal, students are offered a narrative of the past as a foundation on which to build an understanding of the modern world. Furthermore, they are educated holistically – in ethics and social justice as well as the sciences – what Gülen calls a ‘marriage of mind and heart’.

This paper focuses on four shared values of education: commitment, responsibility, virtue and service. Within this framework, themes found in the Gülen educational movement, such as the Golden Generation and the concept of *hizmet*, are compared to similar Jesuit notions such as A.M.D.G., *cura personalis*, and ‘Men and Women for Others’. Differences and nuances are also addressed in the paper. The discussion aims to highlight the importance of values-oriented education in the modern world. The Gülen–Jesuit educational nexus is one positive bridge to inter-religious understanding and, importantly, collaborative action.

The educational endeavors associated with the Turkish-Muslim Gülen movement have popularized, possibly more than any other facet of the group, Fethullah Gülen's mission to promulgate and cultivate an individually transformative Islam in the modern world. As the teachers and business partners of the Gülen movement continue to work to form conscientious, open-minded and just students in different cultures across the world, they will continue to be challenged and influenced by a myriad of different perspectives, religions, and socio-political groups; and, in turn, they will succeed in positively influencing those same cultures, as they have in many cases already. Of the many groups with which the Gülen movement has interacted in its ever-expanding intercultural milieu, this paper will focus on one: the educational charge of a Roman Catholic religious order called the Society of Jesus, a group more commonly known as the Jesuits.

This paper shows that the educational mission of the Gülen movement is, at its core, remarkably similar to the mission of the centuries-old Jesuit Catholic educational tradition. In fact, it can be argued that the Gülen and Jesuit educational missions are, in theory and in praxis, united in a *shared* mission today; one that is rooted in a deep concern for the spiritual freedom of the individual and dedicated to the betterment of the world. In analyzing this shared mission, this paper aims to discuss the importance of values-oriented education; particularly by addressing how the Gülen-Jesuit educational nexus can act as one positive bridge to inter-religious understanding and, importantly, cooperation and action in our transitioning world.

In order to achieve this end, this paper begins with a short analysis of each movement's background with regard to education. Afterwards, the each movement's notion of religious education is discussed. Finally, the focus turns to the mission themes the educational movements have in common. While there is a plethora of shared mission traits from which one could choose, for practical purposes this paper uses as its foundation for comparison four themes distilled by William J. Byron, S.J., from a mission statement from Georgetown University, the Jesuit university in Washington, D.C., which reads:

Georgetown seeks to be a place where understanding is joined to commitment; where the search for truth is informed by a sense of responsibility for the life of society; where academic excellence in teaching...is joined with the cultivation of virtue; and where a community is formed which sustains men and women in their education and their conviction that life is only lived well when it is lived generously in the service of others (Byron 1997, 653).

The first of these themes is a *commitment* to the understanding that God works in the world through people. The second is a *responsibility* to raise individual students to act justly in and for the world. The third is *virtue*, with the understanding that the way to achieve the mission of these schools is through educating students to be morally upright. Finally, the fourth theme is the need to be actively engaged in *service* to make the world a more peaceful, tolerant and just place to live. Commitment, responsibility, virtue, and service are, significantly, foundational for not only Jesuit schools, but Gülen schools as well.

Mission & Background

Both the Gülen and Jesuit educational movements seek to instill in students values such as honesty, dedication, conscientiousness, compassion and tolerance. To achieve this goal, students are offered a narrative of the past as a foundation on which to build an understanding of the modern world and their individual roles in making it more peaceful and just. Furthermore, students in Gülen and Jesuit schools are educated holistically in the sciences as well as ethics and social justice; a "marriage of mind and heart," as Gülen says (Michel 2003, 84). Each

movement strives to create people of genuine freedom and authenticity who can be active and sincere voices of dialogue and action in an increasingly-divided world.

However, while the Gülen and Jesuit missions are strikingly similar, it ought not to be assumed that these movements are the *same*. After all, Gülen education, like Jesuit education, is far from monolithically expressed: both traditions are vast, have many layers, and are often as diverse as the cultures in which they thrive. Furthermore, each movement is involved in communities in ways that are broader than just their educational initiatives. For instance, while it can be said that the Jesuit circles have some political clout in many countries¹ and, in times past, held major political sway, the Jesuits today do not have the same cultural base and political aspirations as the Gülen movement in Turkey does. But, nuances aside, the educational movements are separated by two prominent, albeit basic, differences worth mentioning: the fundamental scriptural inspirations for each, and the teaching—or not—of courses in religious education. The paper will now look at the first of these differences.

The Gülen movement is comprised of Muslims, mainly, who look to the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad for practical inspiration; whereas Jesuits, as Roman Catholic Christians, primarily, look to the life and teachings of Jesus. While Jesus is without a doubt greatly revered in the Islamic tradition, Jesus' role in the Christian tradition is fundamentally different than the Jesus of the Qur'an. This is based on a significantly different theology that is beyond the scope of this paper. However, Muhammad and Jesus are not the only two inspirations upon which these movements were founded. The Jesuit educational movement finds its spiritual heritage in the life and writings of Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), while the Gülen movement owes much of its heritage to the life and thought of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1878-1960).

Ignatius of Loyola did not originally envision himself as the leader of a religious order whose major ministry was education. When the Society of Jesus was founded in 1540, the Protestant Reformation was sweeping Europe. In that milieu Ignatius believed that his order would be a missionary movement the aim of which would be to recall people to the Catholic faith. In some ways this vision was fulfilled, in no small part, by the spread of Jesuit schools around the world. In the end, "education was a ministry to which Ignatius, intent on saving souls and defending the Catholic church, was drawn not because he planned it but because so many of his contemporaries, seeing his success in training his own men, wanted it for themselves and their sons" (Troy 1991, 606-7).

Quite similarly Fethullah Gülen did not envision himself as the "leader" of an educational movement when he was a student. Even now, Fethullah Gülen finds this title somewhat imprecise, saying, "I am tired of saying that I do not have any schools" (Aslandoğan and Çetin 2005, 32; from Webb 2000:106). Yet, much like Ignatius was drawn into the realm of education by the spirit of the times and his skill as an educator, Gülen too has found that his schools are perhaps the greatest success of his movement. Furthermore, as Ignatius' original movement grew in Counter Reformation Europe, the Gülen movement has grown in response to the modernization and secularization of Turkey and acts, in many ways, as a moderate yet dedicated challenge to the more radical Islamist movements arising in many parts of the world (Yavuz 2003a, 4).

The Jesuit movement spread because at its core "lies a determination to make education not just a next-step commodity for the privileged, but a powerful tool for transforming society

1 "While the twenty-eight [American Jesuit universities] are independent, they work together through the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Associations, an effective Washington lobby" (Troy 1991, 607).

as well” (von Arx 2005, 317). This is based on the Jesuit understanding of “recognizing the God-given dignity of each person; acknowledging that each had God-given gifts and talents that could bless our world; and deciding to assume moral agency in helping those gifts to bear fruit, through education” (von Arx 2005, 318). Likewise, Gülen’s concept of education is rooted in the deeply rich Islamic traditions of Rumi and Nursi, who also understood the inherent dignity of each individual, being inspired by the Qur’an. Gülen himself ascribes to the “Sufi model of self-cultivation,” which “teaches followers to internalize values of tolerance, patience, dignity, self-esteem, and self-sacrifice for the sake of the community,” and which recognizes the gifts of every person (Yavuz 2003b, 34).

Although Fethullah Gülen never personally met Nursi, his understanding of education was greatly influenced by his teachings, among others (Michel 2003, 81). Of those teachings that influenced Gülen were Nursi’s three goals for his community of followers:

- (1) To raise Muslims’ religious consciousness (self-transformation very important); (2) to refute the dominant intellectual discourses of materialism and positivism; and (3) to recover collective memory by revising the shared grammar of society, Islam. This faith community empowers communal life by stressing the power of knowledge, freedom, and initiative to build stable Muslims selves and communities (Yavuz 2003a, 5).

Gülen, however, departed from Nursi in several important ways. M. Hakan Yavuz writes that, “Gülen leads a different form of movement [than Nursi], one that is more praxis oriented and seeks to transform society and institutions by expanding its circles of sympathizers” (Yavuz 2003a, 3). This focus on praxis, especially through educational initiatives, is very different from Nursi’s original faith movement:

Although Nursi was focused on personal transformation, Gülen has focused on personal and social transformation by utilizing new liberal economic and political conditions. As a combined ulema-intellectual persona, Gülen not only preaches inner mobilization of new social and cultural actors, but also introduces a new liberative map of action. His goals are to sharpen Muslim self-consciousness, to deepen the meaning of the shared idioms and practices of society, to empower excluded social groups through education and networks, and to bring just and peaceful solutions to the social and psychological problems of society (Yavuz 2003b, 19).

Bekim Agai argues that the main reason for this departure from Nursi’s faith movement is “Gülen’s perception of education and of the effects resulting from engagement in the educational sector” (Agai 2003, 54). Due to the spread and popularity of Gülen schools, the movement has become more than just a faith-based movement battling localized issues. It has instead become a world-wide educational movement that seeks to build a more peaceful world through dialogue and cooperation.

Religious Education

Before this paper turns to the four common mission themes of Gülen and Jesuit schools, it should be noted that Gülen schools, while certainly faith-based initiatives, often do not teach religion as an academic subject. In Turkey, for instance, Gülen schools teach only one hour of religion per week, and even that is a constitutional prescription. In other countries religion is often not taught at all (Agai 2003, 51). In fact, Gülen schools make the choice not to teach religion to avoid proselytizing. This has been a major reason for the movement’s success, especially in areas and cultures where communities are religiously diverse, such as Germany or the Philippines, or antagonistic towards religion, such as some formerly Communist Central Asian countries. Gülen has made it a point to clearly state that Gülen

schools are not *madrassas*, but it should be remembered that they are not secular schools in the traditional sense of the concept either. Rather, Gülen schools seek to lead students to live ethically by the example of their teachers, not by teaching doctrinal Islam. For example, Thomas Michel, S.J., noticed that because Gülen schools in places like the Philippines and Kyrgyzstan were religiously diverse, the values teachers “sought to communicate were universal Islamic values such as honesty, hard work, harmony, and conscientious service rather than any confessional instruction” (Michel 2003, 70).

On the other hand, Jesuit schools do teach religion and Catholic doctrine in the classroom and this is often a major reason why many people send their children there. However, just as a large part of religious education in Jesuit schools takes place outside of the classroom--i.e., through service opportunities, faith sharing groups, and other religious community activities--so too do Gülen schools find ways to bring religion to their students. Bayram Balici acknowledges that education extends beyond the classroom saying that the methods of the Gülen schools are similar “th[ose] of the Jesuits in that the pupils are permanently being educated regardless of whether they are in the classroom or the dormitory” (Balici 2003, 160). This does not diminish the fact that Gülen schools find their greatest strength in leading others to faith by the example of their teachers. In fact,

... even without teaching Islam explicitly, their schools serve Islam because they deliver knowledge. From Gülen’s perspective, knowledge itself becomes an Islamic value when it is imparted by teachers with Islamic values and who can show students how to employ knowledge in the right and beneficial Islamic way (Agai 2003, 62).

Commitment

This paper now turns its attention to the four common mission themes Gülen and Jesuit schools share in common. The first marker of Gülen and Jesuit educational philosophy that this paper addresses is the virtue of *commitment*. In the Jesuit context, William J. Byron, S.J., describes commitment in the following way:

Jesuit education focuses on the care of the person and the cultivation of one’s personal human potential. Jesuit alumni are persons who are taking a voyage of self discovery. They have a place to stand. They have a sense of place in the human community and the world of ideas. They hold common ground from which they can exercise ‘their conviction that life is only lived well when it is lived generously in the service of others’ (Byron 1997, 654).

Embodied in this concept of commitment are two Jesuit ideals that are also held by the Gülen movement, albeit named differently. The first of these is the motto of the Society of Jesus, *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* (or, as it is abbreviated, A.M.D.G.). Literally, this translates from the Latin as “For the Greater Glory of God.” The second concept within commitment is that of *cura personalis*, which translates to “care for the person.”

The first of these concepts, A.M.D.G., can be understood to mean that one ought to glorify God’s greatness in everything one does in life. In this understanding of God and the world, everything in all of creation is filled with the Spirit of God, and one’s actions should reflect this truth. God should be remembered constantly and acknowledged with every choice one makes in life.

Fethullah Gülen’s writings on education indicate that this theme of commitment is a vital part of his movement’s mission as well. Gülen’s understanding of morality approaches this ideal of A.M.D.G.: “to learn to live in the presence of God” (Yavuz 2003b, 25). In fact, Gülen’s

usage of a quote from the Turkish poet and mystic Yunus Emre also comes fairly close to the ideal of A.M.D.G.: “We love the created for the sake of the Creator” (Agai 2003, 64-5). Furthermore, and maybe most importantly, Gülen firmly believes that “dialogue rests on the premise that all kinds of humans share values because they have the same Creator; dialogue is able to show these shared values” (Agai 2003, 65). Both the Gülen and Jesuit communities understand that this common creator to Whom people call out is the One that binds people together and strengthens them in their commitment for justice.

The understanding that God permeates all of creation is embodied in the notion of *cura personalis* as well. Kevin O’Brien, S.J., says that,

God labors in and through us. If God works with each of us so tenderly, patiently and lovingly, then teachers must aspire to emulate these same qualities in their relationship with students. This is what Jesuit educators mean by *cura personalis*: caring for each student in mind, body and spirit (O’Brien 2003, 9).

This is exhibited most strongly in Gülen’s writings about the relationship between teacher and student. Gülen says that, “A young person is a sapling of power, strength, and intelligence. If trained and educated properly, he or she can become a ‘hero’ overcoming obstacles and acquire a mind that promises enlightenment to hearts and order to the world” (Gülen 1996d, 51). Michel expands upon this, saying:

Teachers in Gülen schools must be committed to cultivating virtue in their students because, Gülen warns, ‘when [people] are left with no ideals or aims, they become reduced to the condition of animated corpses, showing no signs of distinctly human life....Just as an inactive organ becomes atrophied, and a tool which is not in use becomes rusty, so aimless generations will eventually waste away because they lack ideals and aims’ (Gülen, 1996d, 51; Michel, 174-75).

The knowledge that all actions ought to be made for the Greater Glory of God must be nurtured by caring and religiously grounded teachers. This ensures, in Gülen schools and Jesuit schools alike, that students will be committed to making choices out of freedom to act with justice and love in the world. As O’Brien says, teachers encounter the same grace they give when their “students stretch their minds to realize their God-given potential, wonder about new ideas, marvel at the intricate beauty of the world, strive for a more just and gentle world, and grow in love for themselves and others. This is what makes desks like altars, and all of us like sacraments pointing to the divine” (O’Brien 2003, 12).

This commitment is not easy, however, and Ignatius memorialized this struggle in a prayer of his, the *Memorare*, part of which reads that a person should serve God and in doing so, “To give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to head the wounds.” Gülen reiterates this sentiment in his own words, saying, “People of service must resolve, for the sake of the cause to which they have given their heart, to cross over seas of ‘pus and blood’” (Gülen 2000, 83; Nelson). Similarly, he says that one must remain committed to:

Preferring the sacred cause over all worldly and animal desires; being steadfast in truth, once it has been discovered, to the degree that you sacrifice all mundane attachments for its sake; enduring all hardships so that future generations will be happy; seeking happiness, not in material or even spiritual pleasures, but in the happiness and well-being of others; never seeking to obtain any posts or positions; and preferring oneself to others in taking on work but preferring others to oneself in receiving wages—these are the essentials of this sacred way of serving the truth (Gülen 2000, 84; Nelson).

Responsibility

The second shared trait of Jesuit and Gülen education is *responsibility*. With regard to this value, Byron describes the spirituality of Jesuit schools as,

a spirituality of choice. The Jesuit heritage offers centuries of evidence of informed action following upon deliberate choice. And all action, in the Jesuit tradition, is for the greater glory of God. God, in the Jesuit view, is to be found and served in the work of building not the Tower of Babel, but a New Jerusalem, a better society. And this construction project is undertaken by exercising responsibility for the life of society (Byron 1997, 654-5).

Those involved in Jesuit and Gülen education undertake the responsibility of building a better world, one student at a time. The way the Jesuit mission fosters this is by creating what Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991), a Father General of the Society of Jesus, called, “Men for Others,” or in modern parlance, “Men and Women for Others.” At a meeting of Jesuit Alumni in Europe in 1973, Arrupe stated that, “men who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors; men completely convinced that love of God which does not issue injustice for men is a farce”² (Byron 1997, 653). Pedro Arrupe’s ideal of ‘education for others’ was a “compromise between education and Christian activism,” and a vision of responsibility (Troy 1991, 607).

Fethullah Gülen’s concept of the “Golden Generation” (*yeni nesil, altın nesil*), a generation “armed with the tools of science and religion,” is strikingly similar to the Jesuit concept of “Men and Women for Others” (Agai 2003, 57). The Golden Generation is Gülen’s,

description of a future generation that is educated in all respects and that forms the basis for the perfect future, the ‘Golden Age.’ This generation will be educated ‘representatives of the understanding of science, faith, morality, and art who are the master builders of those coming after us’ (Gülen 1998k, 128)—that is, the movement’s teachers. Combining knowledge and human values, this new generation will solve the problems of the future (Agai 2003, 57).

This Golden Generation is achieved through responsibly educating youth in acquiring the “freedom to realize the power of God, and through this realization...in turn be freed from man-made oppression and persecution” (Yavuz 2003a, 6).

The Golden Generation is characterized by faith, love, idealism, selflessness and action (Agai 2003, 57). Faith is vital in the raising of this generation because it is only through remembrance and knowledge of God that one comes to understand what is beneficial for humanity. From faith comes love, idealism and selflessness, virtues that are made true only through action (Agai 2002, 37). This action is a responsibility of the Golden Generation and, in fact all of humanity. In this action is the need to,

to rekindle the altruistic desire to let others live in the hearts of our fellow citizens...In such an activism, there is a need to identify a set of shared values that will form the trajectory of such a broad social action which will include all segments of the society, the villager and the city dweller, the intellectual as well as the merchant, the student as well as the teacher, the lay person as well as the preacher (Gülen in Ergene 2006:330; Aslandoğan and Çetin, 35).

The Golden Generation is comprised of “ideal universal individuals, individuals who love truth, who integrate spirituality and knowledge, [and] who work to benefit society” (Gülen, 1998; Nelson). Gülen describes such a person as “*zul-cenaheyn*,” that is, “one who possesses two wings,” and that demonstrates a “marriage of mind and heart” (Gülen, 1996b; Nelson),

2 Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe, Valencia, Spain, July 31, 1973.

between faith and scientific knowledge (Gülen, 2004). The Golden Generation is comprised of “genuinely enlightened people” (Gülen, 1996a; Michel 2003) who serve humanity (Gülen, 2000; Yildirim & Kirmizialtin, 2004) (Nelson).

However, Gülen says that,

Until we help them through education, the young will be captives of their environment. They wander aimlessly, intensely moved by their passions, but far from knowledge and reason. They can become truly valiant young representatives of national thought and feeling, provided their education integrates them with their past, and prepares them intelligently for the future (Gülen; Michel 2003, 72-3).

Educators in the Gülen and Jesuit educational movements have the responsibility to help students “fuse religious and scientific knowledge together with morality and spirituality,” in order “to produce genuinely enlightened people with hearts illuminated by religious sciences and spirituality, minds illuminated with positive sciences...[who are] cognizant of the socio-economic and political conditions of their time’ and willing and prepared to work for positive change in the world” (Gülen, 1996a, 39; Michel 2003, 76).

Virtue

The third of the educational virtues that the Gülen and Jesuit movements have in common is “virtue” itself. In the context of values-education, this somewhat nebulous word means moral cultivation and strength. Although Byron is speaking of Jesuit education here, his words certainly encapsulate the mission of the Gülen educational movement as well: “Jesuit education is education of the heart, cultivation of the will, development of the mind; it is a celebration of the person—body and soul, mind and heart—striving for excellence” (Byron 1997, 655).

This “striving for excellence” is integral to Gülen’s understanding of virtue because he argues that “Islam is not about ‘being’ but rather ‘becoming’ a moral person by internalizing the Muslim model of... a perfect human being” (Yavuz 2003b, 26). For Gülen, “the main duty and purpose of human life is to seek understanding,” and one does this through perfecting one’s morals and growing in knowledge through education (Ünal and Williams 2000:305; Aslandoğan and Çetin 2005, 35). True “Islam” is the embodiment of virtue for which Gülen education strives; and morality is a major component of his vision of Islam (Michel 2003, 82). With regard to morality, Gülen states that it,

is the essence of religion and a most fundamental portion of the Divine Message. If being virtuous and having good morals is to be heroic—and it is—the greatest heroes are, first, the Prophets and, after them, those who follow them in sincerity and devotion. A true Muslim is one who practices a truly universal, therefore Muslim, morality (Gülen 1996d, 30; Michel 2003, 82).

However, one must be diligent about being virtuous. Gülen continues, saying that,

Those who want to reform the world must first reform themselves. In order to bring others to the path of traveling to a better world, they must purify their inner worlds of hatred, rancor, and jealousy, and adorn their outer world with all kinds of virtues. Those who are far removed from self-control and self-discipline, who have failed to refine their feelings, may seem attractive and insightful at first. However, they will not be able to inspire others in any permanent way, and the sentiments they arouse will soon disappear (Gülen, 1999a, 30; Michel 2003, 78).

The essence of virtue, for Gülen, is the transformation of the self through the cultivation of virtue and living a moral life. To achieve this knowledge of how to live morally, education in

ethics and the practice of discipline are necessary (Yavuz 2003b, 26). Education leads one to make right decisions and,

Right decisions depend on having a sound mind and being capable of sound thought. Science and knowledge illuminate and develop the mind. For this reason, a mind deprived of science and knowledge cannot reach right decisions, is always exposed to deception, and is subject to being misled (Gülen 1998a).

Education can effectively help to foster virtue in the individual because teachers in Gülen and Jesuit schools work with individual students on a person by person basis. Yavuz says that, “Gülen’s immediate concern is not to achieve changes on the macrolevel; rather, he focuses on the spiritual and intellectual consciousness of the individual” (Yavuz 2003b, 29). By cultivating virtue at the level of the individual the Gülen and Jesuit educational movements work to build a virtuous generation outfitted with firm moral foundations onto which they can build a better society.

Service

According to Gülen, action “should be the most indispensable element or feature of our lives” (Gülen, 1996b, 85; Nelson), for he believes that “moral consciousness toward other cultures can be raised only through participating in action” (Yavuz 2003b, 27). This final and immensely vital component of both Gülen and Jesuit education is found in the virtue of service which is at the core of “the Jesuit conception of education as pursuit of knowledge in service of the world” (Byron 1997, 655). It is only after knowledge of God and one’s own self is obtained that one is free to “search[h] out and mee[t] human need” (Byron 1997, 655).

To highlight this point, Gülen argues that,

if you wish to keep masses under control, simply starve them in the area of knowledge. They can escape such tyranny only through education. The road to social justice is paved with adequate, universal education, for only this will give people sufficient understanding and tolerance to respect the rights of others (Gülen, 1996a, 4; Michel 2003, 74).

The teacher who frees his or her pupil from the oppression of ignorance performs a great service, *hizmet*, to all of humanity. For Gülen, *hizmet* is devotion to Islam through serving others (Agai 2003, 59). A major aspect of *hizmet* for Gülen is this service in honor of God through teaching (Afsaruddin 2005, 18). Through teaching, the teacher has the ability to serve humanity by influencing the hearts and souls of their students. The service of education is “a cure for resolving identity conflicts...a bridge between the people inside and outside Turkey, and...the basis for an interreligious dialogue” (Gülen 1997d, 214; Agai 2003, 55).

Quite possibly, the greatest service the Gülen movement is giving to the world now is opening the doors to true and authentic dialogue between Islam and other faiths.

On account of his schools, as Gülen says, “we have more to give humanity than we have to take” (Ünal and Williams 2000, 318). Gülen calls those in his movement to “Be so tolerant that your bosom becomes wide like the ocean. Become inspired with faith and love of human beings. Let there be no troubled souls to whom you do not offer a hand and about whom you remain unconcerned” (Gülen 1996, 87). This is a call that those in Jesuit education strive to hear and answer as well.

Conclusion

In many ways, the Gülen movement's pairing of Islam with universal education has challenged the contention of pundits and bloggers that Islam and modernity are incompatible with one another (Yavuz 2003b, 2). In fact, the Gülen movement has become for many in the West sound evidence that Islam and modernity are not divergent philosophies; rather, the Gülen movement can be "the way in which they can interact with and transform each other" (Yavuz 2003b, 2). As the Gülen movement's schools spread, they will continue to interact with non-Muslim groups such as Jesuit institutions—and this is already starting to occur. In the end, the dialogue between like-minded—and in the case of the Gülen-Jesuit nexus—like-spirited groups, is vital in order for there to be a just and equitable transition from the concept of a "Muslim world," i.e., in opposition to a "non-Muslim world," to a new world in which those in faith-based communities work together with a shared mission toward common goals.

This paper has shown that in theory, as well as in praxis, the Gülen and Jesuit educational missions have similar hopes and desires for the individual and the world. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, these two movements share a common understanding of how God works in the world—through individuals being committed to cultivating virtues such as responsibility, love, tolerance, and service to humanity in themselves and in their students. It is this confluence, above all the others, that gives the greatest hope for cooperation and collaboration between these two educational movements. And collaboration, in the end, is the hope for the Gülen-Jesuit educational nexus; that students of the Golden Generation and Men and Women for Others will be able to help make the world a more peaceful and just home through shared dialogue, prayer, and service to humanity. A bridge to inter-religious understanding, cooperation and action already exists between these two educational movements; one merely needs to find a way to cross it.