



FETHULLAH GÜLEN  
*Biographical Album*


GÜLEN  
INSTITUTE



# Brief Portrait

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*“Be so sympathetic and tolerant that your bosom becomes wide as the ocean. Be inspired with faith and love the human being. Let there be no troubled souls to whom you do not offer a hand and about whom you remain unconcerned.”*

 ethullah Gülen is a Turkish scholar, preacher, thinker, author, opinion leader, education activist, and peace advocate. He is regarded as the initiator and inspirer of the worldwide civil society movement, the Gülen Movement, which is committed to education, dialogue, peace, social justice, and social harmony. Gülen has published more than sixty books in Turkish, many of which have been translated to more than thirty languages. He was listed among the top hundred public intellectuals in the world by Foreign Policy magazine in May 2008.

Gülen is known for his philosophical and active stance for human rights, democracy, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, science, spirituality, and against violence, segregation, and turning religion into a political ideology. Not only does his discourse cherish values such as empathetic acceptance, altruistic service to

one's community and humanity in general, the complementary roles of mind and heart, sincerity, and love of the creation; his life exemplifies them. “Serving humanity to serve God” and “living to let others live” are the core principles of his understanding of service. His promotion of sympathy, compassion and harmonious coexistence can best be reflected in a comparison with that of Rumi, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Anatolian Sufi and spiritual poet and one of Gülen's sources of inspiration.

Gülen started his career as a preacher and education activist. In time, he succeeded in mobilizing hundreds of thousands of people for the purpose of serving society by uniting around high human values. Despite the high regard millions hold for him, he considers himself only one of the volunteers of the civil society movement he helped originate and denounces any attribution of leadership. Gülen has never married, and has spent most of his life in Turkey, his native country. He currently resides in Pennsylvania, the United States, at a retreat facility.



The city of Erzurum



## Early Life

Fethullah Gülen was born into a family of modest means in Erzurum, Turkey, in 1941, and was raised in a spiritually enriching environment. He completed his education in modern and traditional institutions. He studied Islamic sciences and attained his teaching certification. He attended the training circles of local Sufi teachers, where he learned the



principles of Islamic spirituality and humanism. He was also introduced to the writings of Said Nursi, a renowned scholar of Islam who taught that Muslims should welcome the benefits of modernity and find inspiration in the sacred texts to engage with it.

Gülen's parents played a great role in his early education. His father, an imam, enjoyed reading classical books, reciting poetry, and meditating on the early period of Islam. It was he who

instilled a love of learning and love for the Prophet and his companions in the young Gülen. His mother, a volunteer Qur'an instructor, taught him the recitation of the sacred book and exemplified spiritual life and perseverance.

Gülen became a *hafız*, one who knows the entire Qur'an by heart, at the age of twelve, and started preaching in local mosques when he was only fourteen years old.

For centuries, the spiritual and humanistic tradition of Islam has been represented mainly by Sufism, which became a major source of Gülen's thought and discourse.







Selimiye Mosque



## Early Career

Passing the exam administered by the Turkish State's Directorate of Religious Affairs in 1959, Gülen was appointed as an imam and preacher to an historic mosque in Edirne, a city in the European part of Turkey. In this period of his youth, he was both socially active and personally ascetic. Living humbly and residing in a small section of the mosque, he had the opportunity to deepen his knowledge of Islamic tradition, informally study the social and natural sciences, and examine the classics of both Eastern and Western philosophy and literature. It was his familiarity with a broad range of literature that would equip him for his comprehensive interpretations.



Gülen in his twenties

Gülen became a well-known preacher in the city in only a short time. He developed good relations with local authorities, leaders and members of the society through his outreach efforts. In the meantime, he witnessed the erosion of spiritual and moral values, especially among younger generations, and strove to find a solution to the problem. For this purpose, he organized a series of public lectures. In recognition of his success in public service, Gülen was promoted to the positions of central preacher and director of a boarding school in İzmir, a large city on the Aegean coast of Turkey.

a- The monumental Selimiye Mosque in the city of Edirne

b- Daru'l-Hadis Mosque and the Qur'an school where Gülen preached and taught

c- The historic Üç Şerefeli Mosque to which Gülen was appointed as an imam and preacher



The city of Izmir





# Nationwide Preacher and Education Activist

Working in Izmir was the turning point in Gülen's career, as the city would be the cradle for the movement that crystallized around his discourse and activism. He maintained his ascetic way of life. He found only a couple of hours a day to sleep because of his daily commitments of reading, preaching, teaching, giving lectures and seminars, and meeting with community



Gülen giving a public lecture

members. He attracted the attention of learned citizens, including the academic community and college students, as well as common people. Gülen's discourse was distinguished by his depth of knowledge, sensitivity and stellar eloquence. His topics ranged from religious practices to social justice, from child education to naturalism. His sermons were well structured, and the systematic presentation of some topics would extend over many months, which was uncommon at that time. He also expanded the function of the mosque by launching a Q&A series in which he responded to people's concerns and curiosities, including those regarding the challenges of modern times.



Gülen speaking in a coffee house

In his endeavors, Gülen especially aimed at urging the younger generation to harmonize intellectual enlightenment with virtuous spirituality, and to serve fellow humans altruistically. During the years of political turmoil in Turkey, he witnessed many young Turks' attraction to extremist ideologies via the violent polarization of socialism and nationalism. He strove to inspire the Turkish youth and lead them toward an apolitical way of service to society, based on a peaceful life-style.



Gülen traveled to numerous cities and towns across Turkey to give sermons in mosques and speeches at gatherings in various places, including theatres and even coffee houses. His sermons and speeches were recorded on tape, distributed by volunteers all around the country, and enthusiastically embraced. In his thirties, Gülen was already one of the few preachers recognized nationwide.

As Gülen asserts, he simply thought to cultivate the public credit given to him by channeling good intentions and devotional energy toward a positive end. He encouraged people to set up student dormitories and hostels to promote better education for the youth. He also encouraged people to establish university preparatory courses to support children, especially the children of middle- and low-income families, in their preparation for higher education. People who shared Gülen's service-ethic initiated local scholarship funds for needy students,

from which thousands of students would benefit every year.

Since the '80s, Gülen-inspired entrepreneurs and educators have set up more than a hundred highly successful private schools in Turkey. As of the '90s, similar private schools have been started mostly in countries in Central Asia and Africa, and some in Europe and the Americas. In the meantime, participants in the movement have also established universities, hospitals, relief organizations, tutoring centers, business associations, media outlets, publishing houses, etc.

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a- Yamanlar High School, established in Izmir by Gülen-inspired people  
b- A top-notch university preparatory course in Istanbul





Azerbaijan



Macedonia



Nigeria



Madagascar



a



b



c

## Start of a New Era

Fethullah Gülen delivered his last sermons in 1991 in the largest mosques of the country, after which he ceased preaching. However, he continued to be active in community life, teaching small groups of graduate students and taking part in service projects. He traveled abroad to the United States in 1992, where he visited the 8<sup>th</sup> President of Turkey, Turgut Özal, during his medical treatment in Houston. He also met Turkish-American academics and community leaders, as well as the leaders of other American faith communities.

During the '90s, Gülen pioneered a rejuvenation of the interfaith dialogue spirit in the Turkish-Muslim tradition, which was forgotten amidst the troublesome years of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Journalists and Writers Foundation, of which Gülen has been the honorary president, organized a series of gatherings involving leaders of religious minorities in Turkey. In January 1998, Pope John Paul II sent a celebration message to Gülen for the Ramadan Festival, in appreciation of his interfaith dialogue initiatives. In the following month, Gülen met the Pope at the Vatican for the purpose of improving dialogue. Gülen offered to help organize a number of interfaith events in Harran and Jerusalem to contribute to peace in the region. His name eventually became a symbol for interfaith dialogue and understanding in Turkey.

During this period, Gülen made himself increasingly available for comment and interviews in the media and began to meet often with prominent state dignitaries, authors, journalists, artists, businessmen and media leaders. His aim was to help cultivate a mutual understanding of peaceful coexistence among the diverse

a- Gülen with Chief Rabbi of Turkey's Jewish community David Aseo in 1996

b- Gülen with Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew in 1996

c- Gülen with Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi Doron in 1999



Gülen with Pope John Paul II  
at the Vatican in 1998





constituents of a society divided into many biased ideological factions. On many occasions, Gülen reiterated his ideas and opinions regarding human rights, modernity, humane secularism, democracy, open society, and tolerance. He always emphasized that his way of service to society was apolitical but not anti-politics. In his own words, his principle was to keep the same distance to every political party and to support whomever is serving society without discrimination.



Nonetheless, some marginal religious groups in Turkey opposed Gülen's interfaith dialogue initiatives and even accused him of being "heretical" and, more oddly, "a hidden cardinal." Responding in friendship, Gülen often declared that interfaith dialogue was not a novel thing that he had invented, but rather, a neglected tradition of Turkish society and a religious obligation for establishing sustainable peace. Conversely, some ultra-secularist, ultra-nationalist, and communist circles, who stood for and even benefited from a closed and divided society, started a defamation campaign in the media against Gülen, accusing him of having a long-term political agenda to turn Turkey into a theocratic state, an ideology that Gülen has always disavowed. They eventually persuaded a prosecutor to bring charges against him in 2000. These charges were found to be baseless and were dismissed in 2008. (For further reading, see: Loye Ashton, "A Contextual Analysis of the Supporters and Critics of the Gülen Movement" at [www.guleninstitute.org/index.php/Articles](http://www.guleninstitute.org/index.php/Articles))



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a- Gülen with Prime Minister Tansu Çiller in 1996

b- Gülen with Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit in 1997

c- Gülen receiving visitors from the cinema and the press



Gülen with the recipients  
of the Journalists and  
Writers Foundation's  
"Tolerance Awards" in 1996





The retreat facility in Pennsylvania,  
where Gülen currently lives

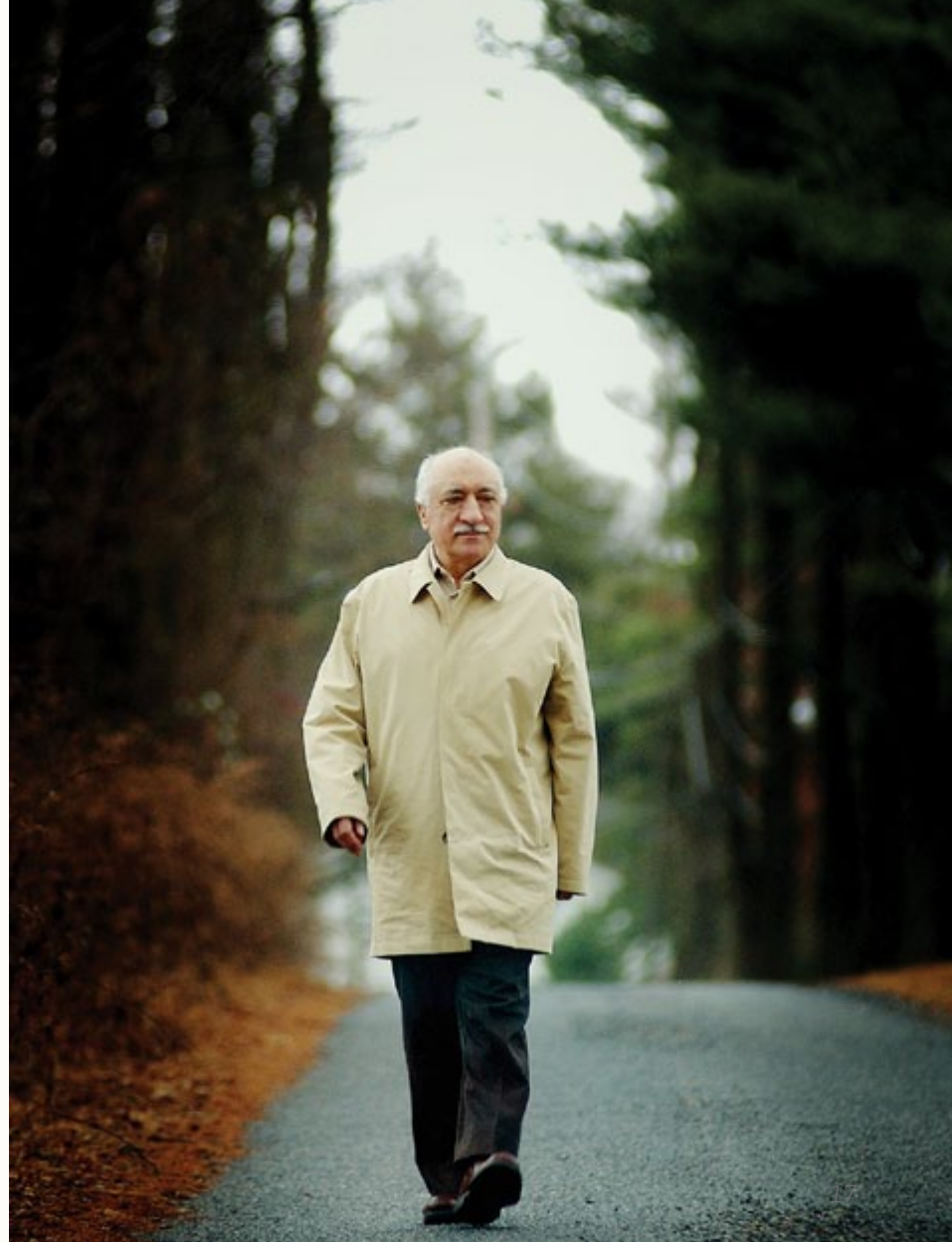


## Years of Retreat in the United States

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In 1999, Fethullah Gülen traveled to the United States to receive medical care for his cardiovascular condition. He underwent a heart operation in 2004, following which his doctors recommended he avoid stress. For this reason, he chose to live far away from the politically-charged atmosphere in Turkey, and was granted permanent residency by the U.S. government in 2006. He was among the first Muslim scholars to publicly condemn the September 11 attacks. His condemnation message appeared in *The Washington Post* on September 21, 2001.

Gülen currently lives with a group of students and his doctors at a retreat facility in Pennsylvania, where he dedicates his time to reading, writing, teaching, individual and small group worship, and receiving a few visitors, as his health permits. He has been visited by American academics and religious leaders as well as members of the Turkish-American community. He maintains his ascetic and spiritual way of life, spending





most of his time in his modest room. He remains concerned with happiness and alleviating the suffering of humans around the world. He also encourages people to be involved in organizing aid campaigns for those affected by natural disasters throughout the world, in places such as Indonesia, Myanmar, and Haiti. Most days he devotes a half an hour to conversation and answering the questions, and is sometimes consulted about service projects. His conversations are recorded and made available to the public on a website ([www.herkul.org](http://www.herkul.org)). Throughout the years in Pennsylvania, he has been interviewed several times by local and international journalists.



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a- Turkish journalist Nuriye Akman interviewing Gülen in 2004  
b- Gülen suffers from several health problems and receives routine medical care.



Gülen in his room  
at the retreat facility





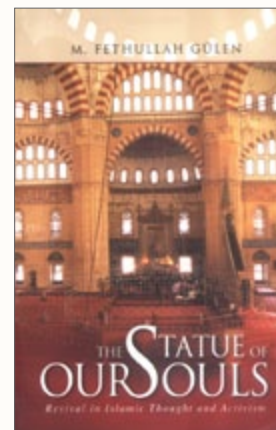
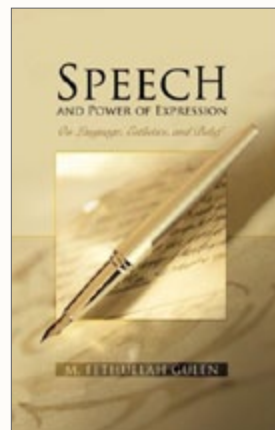
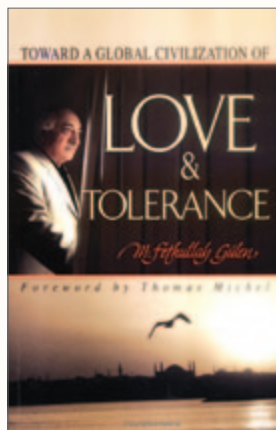
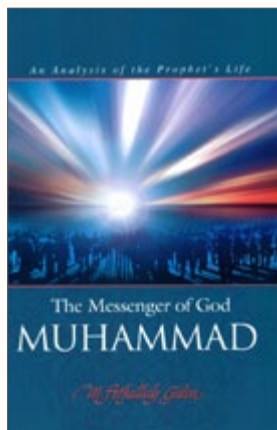
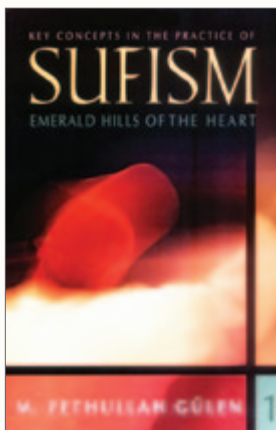


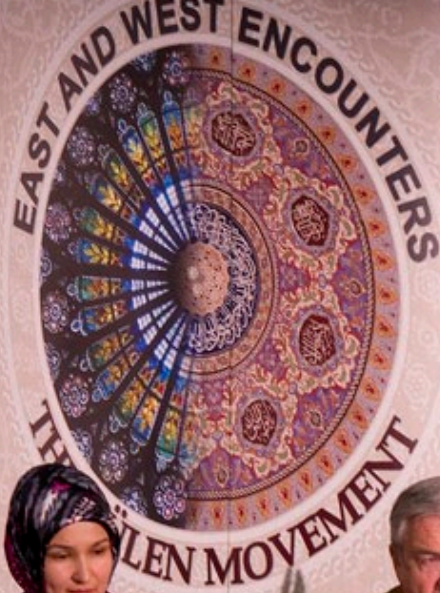
# Gülen's Works

Fethullah Gülen's works can be classified in two main genres: recorded speeches and books. The former comprises the published collections of audiotapes and visual material from his sermons and conversations over decades. His books consist of the compilations of the lead articles he has published in various periodicals and the edited transcriptions of his speeches. He has also published a book of poetry which has appealed to lyricists and musicians. Gülen has published more than sixty books in Turkish, many of which have become bestsellers in Turkey, reaching millions of copies in total. Some of his books have been translated to other languages.

Gülen's books in English:

- *Speech and Power of Expression*, New Jersey: The Light, 2010.
- *The Messenger of God, Muhammad: An Analysis of the Prophet's Life*, New Jersey: The Light, 2005.
- *Emerald Hills of the Heart: Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism* (Four volumes), New Jersey: The Light, 2004.
- *The Statue of Our Souls: Revival in Islamic Thought and Activism*, New Jersey: The Light, 2005.
- *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance*, New Jersey: The Light, 2004.
- *Essentials of the Islamic Faith*, New Jersey: The Light, 2006.
- *Essays, Perspectives, Opinions*, New Jersey: The Light, 2004.
- *Pearls of Wisdom*, New Jersey: The Light, 2005.
- *Questions and Answers about Faith*, Fairfax: The Fountain, 2000.





# EAST AND WEST ENCOUNTERS THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT

December 5 - 6, 2009 / University of Southern California



One of the international conferences on the  
Gülen Movement, held at the University of  
Southern California, Los Angeles



# The Gülen Movement

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Also called the “Voluntary Service” (*Hizmet* in Turkish) by participants, the Gülen Movement is a worldwide civic initiative rooted in the spiritual and humanistic tradition of Islam and inspired by the ideas and activism of Fethullah Gülen. It is a faith-inspired, non-political, cultural and educational movement whose basic principles stem from Islam’s universal values, such as love of the creation, sympathy for the fellow human, compassion, and altruism. The movement is not a governmental or state sponsored organization. It focuses on the betterment of the individual toward a positive change in society. The movement is distinguished for its support of democracy, its openness to globalization, its progressiveness in integrating tradition with modernity, and its humanistic outlook. Gülen describes it as “a movement of people united around high human values,” and disapproves of the attribution of the movement to his name.

The bases of the movement are diverse service projects that are initiated, funded, and conducted by people who are motivated to various extents by Gülen’s humanitarian discourse. Ranging from private schools to poverty aid programs, these projects are independent of each other in operational terms, so the movement has no hierarchical structure.

The Gülen Movement has paved an exemplary way of working together to overcome the problems of humankind, regardless of religious, ethnic or cultural differences. The movement sets a precedent, not only with its activities, but also through its ways of generating financial support, thanks to its revivification of the Islamic values of giving and hospitality. Research shows that the average financial contribution of participants in the movement to the service projects is 5 to 10 percent of their annual income.

Although the movement’s origins are tied to the Turkish-Muslim identity, the Gülen Movement is now active in as many non-Muslim as Muslim countries and attracts participants of diverse faiths and cultures. The explanation for this, as sociologist Helen Rose Ebaugh writes, is that the infrastructure of the movement, in terms of organizational leadership, volunteers, financial donors and the inspiration behind the movement, is transported by the Turkish diaspora, ie. by Turkish immigrants settling in countries all over the world as students, professionals and businessmen. The result is that the movement is now transnational in its outreach and impact.

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For further reading: Helen Rose Ebaugh, *The Gülen Movement: A Sociological Analysis of a Civic Movement Rooted in Moderate Islam*, New York and Heidelberg: Springer, 2010



Students of a Gülen-inspired elementary school with their teacher in Turkey



# Educational Institutions

*“If we do not plant the seeds of love in the hearts of young people, whom we try to revive through science, knowledge, and modern culture, they will never attain moral perfection.”*

— F. Gülen, *Pearls of Wisdom*

Education is the pivotal field of service in the Gülen Movement. Hundreds of educational institutions have been established by Gülen-inspired people in Turkey and more than a hundred countries throughout the world.

The Gülen-inspired schools are non-religious private institutions sponsored by generous entrepreneurs, altruistic educators, and dedicated parents. Using cutting-edge instructional technology and having demonstrated outstanding academic achievements, many of these schools rank among the most prestigious in their countries. Each school follows the curriculum of the host country, with a majority of the subjects taught in English. The schools provide scholarships for students who cannot afford the tuition. As many people have observed, Gülen-inspired schools are symbols of peaceful coexistence and dedication to the service of humanity. They also serve as an environment for intercultural, interethnic, and interfaith harmony, especially in conflict-ridden regions such as the Philippines, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Northern Iraq, Bosnia, and Kenya.



Samanyolu High School in Ankara



Fatih High School in Istanbul



Çağlayan Elementary School in the city of Urfa



One of the tutoring centers in south-eastern Turkey

There are several Gülen-inspired universities in Turkey and abroad. They are private universities supported by foundations, and with their academic achievements, stand in service of their respective nations and humanity in general.

The Gülen-inspired dormitories are distinguished facilities where students can live and study together under the tutelage of dedicated teachers. These residencies provide living arrangements, especially for those who cannot afford room and board, in addition to tuition and books.

The Gülen-inspired preparatory courses are among the best in Turkey. They prepare students for the state exams mandatory for all students who wish to attend science high schools and universities. All these course-centers provide scholarships for students who cannot afford the tuition.

Many tutoring centers and reading rooms have been set up by Gülen-inspired charitable foundations, especially in south-eastern Turkey, where the youth and women have fewer opportunities to pursue higher education. These centers and rooms are free and open to everyone. The teachers working there are all volunteers.



Fatih University in Istanbul





Volunteers bringing food aid to  
a remote village in eastern Turkey





## Relief & Healthcare Organizations

*“There is no limit to doing good to others. Those who have dedicated themselves to the good of humanity can be so altruistic that they live for others. However, such altruism is a great virtue only if it originates in sincerity and purity of intention, and if it does not define the others by racial preferences.”*

— F. Gülen, *Pearls of Wisdom*

The Gülen-inspired relief organization “Kimse Yok Mu” (meaning “Isn’t Anybody There?”) is one of the largest and most effective in Turkey. It aims to bring aid to disaster victims and other needy people in Turkey and around the world. Having created new fundraising techniques, the organization raised considerable funds for the victims of the Tsunami in south-east Asia, the floods in Bangladesh, and the earthquakes in Pakistan, Peru, and Haiti. Kimse Yok Mu built around 20 schools in those countries after the catastrophes. The organization brings poverty aid and medical assistance to many African countries every year.



Sudanese woman receiving food aid from Kimse Yok Mu



There are several Gülen-inspired relief organizations in the United States. Helping Hands Relief Foundation, established in New Jersey in 2008, aims to create real and lasting change for people in need in the United States and around the world. It is dedicated to providing relief to disaster victims and the poor, and to helping people prevent, prepare for, and respond to needs and emergencies.



There are also several hospitals in Turkey founded by Gülen-inspired entrepreneurs and doctors. These high-tech modern hospitals provide top-notch care in an atmosphere that respects the patients as human beings, and provide sponsorship for economically disadvantaged citizens.

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a- Raindrop Helping Hands' aid to Hurricane Ike victims in 2008  
b- Sema Hospital, one of Istanbul's largest private hospitals





Kimse Yok Mu volunteers carrying food supplies in Bangladesh







# Interfaith & Intercultural Institutions

The Gülen Movement is well-known for its interfaith and intercultural dialogue activities. There are numerous institutions for dialogue established by Gülen-inspired people in many countries. These initiatives aim to help bring various communities together in order to promote understanding, mutual respect, compassion, cooperation, and broader community service.



The 20<sup>th</sup> Abant Meeting on “Democratization for a New Social Consensus” (March 2010) organized by the Journalists and Writers Foundation. The JWF is the leading organization for interfaith and intercultural dialogue in Turkey.



Luncheon Forum featuring John J. Cullerton, Illinois Senate President, by Niagara Foundation in Chicago



Lecture on “Christian-Muslim Relations since Nostra Aetate” organized by Intercultural Dialogue Platform in Brussels, Belgium

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Left Page - The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Dialog and Friendship Dinner in Houston (November 2009) organized by the Institute of Interfaith Dialog. Headquartered in Houston, Texas, the IID serves seven southern states.



*Zaman* headquarters in Istanbul is supported by news bureaus in Ashgabat, Baku, Brussels, Bucharest, Frankfurt, Moscow, New York, and Washington, DC.



# Media & Publishing Institutions

Among several Gülen-inspired television stations in Turkey, Samanyolu TV is committed to balanced, objective, and socially responsible reporting of news; family-oriented programming; and the promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. The station broadcasts globally by means of satellite.

The mission of Ebru TV, broadcast in the United States, is to continually educate, inspire and entertain viewers of all ages through original first-rate programming in the sciences, sporting events, fine arts, and every aspect of culture.

*Zaman* newspaper is the largest circulating daily in Turkey. Inspired by Gülen's ideas, *Zaman* reports diverse ideological perspectives and opinions in an objective fashion, emphasizes dialogue and tolerance, and has been a rigorous advocate for freedom of speech. It is published in multiple languages and distributed in 35 countries.

The media group in Turkey that is considered to be inspired by Gülen's ideas includes *Aksiyon*, the

leading weekly magazine, and Cihan News Agency which is active in more than 50 countries.

Among several Gülen-inspired periodicals, *Sizinti*, the monthly magazine of popular science and culture, has been published since 1979. With nearly a million subscribers, it is the bestseller of its kind in Turkey. *The Fountain*, a magazine of scientific and spiritual thought, is published in English-speaking countries.

There are more than twenty publishing houses in Turkey inspired by Gülen's thought. Publishing in many languages and great numbers, they are considered to have vastly contributed to the fields of education and literature.



# Recognition

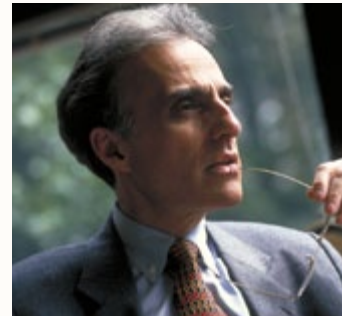
“You are contributing to the promotion of the ideas of tolerance and interfaith dialogue inspired by Fethullah Gülen in his trans-national social movement. You do it through your everyday lives. You are truly strengthening the fabric of our common humanity, as well as promoting the ongoing cultural and educational ties that bind our world together.”  
—**Bill Clinton**, 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the US, in his video message delivered at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Friendship Dinner held by the Turkish Cultural Center, New York City, on September 25, 2008



“Fethullah Gülen’s notion of ‘empathic acceptance, tolerance, and respecting people as they are’ is very important. These are really beautiful and necessary ideals. It is wrong to try to change others forcibly, which has a lot of examples today.” —**Prof. Dr. Annemarie Schimmel**, German Orientalist and scholar



“Gülen reminds us of the understanding of Islam which stems from love of God and love of human beings that is practiced in Turkish public Sufism.” —**Bülent Ecevit**, Former Prime Minister of Turkey



“The Gülen Movement has become a very influential voice in the world in both the dialogue of religions and the civilization of societies.” —**John Esposito**, Professor at Georgetown University



“In this post-9/11 world of real and perceived ‘clash,’ the millions participating in the Gülen movement continue to provide us with both spiritual and practical guidance towards peace and tolerance of others. In a world where the



most prominent Muslim leaders speak of conflict and confrontation, Gülen provides us with a new voice that calls people of all faiths to the divine table.” —**Ambassador Akbar Ahmed**, Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University



“The [Gülen-inspired] school is offering Muslim and Christian Filipino children, along with an educational standard of high quality, a more positive way of living and relating to each other.”

—**Thomas Michel**, Ex-Director of the Jesuit Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome, in his paper, “Fethullah Gülen as Educator”

“Gülen’s activities are an enterprise to be applauded. Let me add that if my ancestors had not seen that tolerance from the Ottomans and Turkey, I would not be alive.” —**Jak Kamhi**, Prominent Turkish-Jewish Businessman



“The Journalists and Writers Foundation and their honorary president Gülen are the first group who made it possible for the members of the different faiths to come around the friendship dinner tables. We now follow their footsteps in these activities.” —**Mesrob Mutafyan II**, Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul

## In the Press

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### The Washington Post

Gülen's condemnation message of the September 11 terrorist attacks that appeared in *The Washington Post* on September 21, 2001:

*We condemn in the strongest of terms the latest terrorist attack on the United States of America, and feel the pain of the American people at the bottom of our hearts.*

*Islam abhors such acts of terror. A religion that professes, "He who unjustly kills one man kills the whole of humanity," cannot condone senseless killing of thousands.*

*Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their loved ones.*

Fethullah Gülen  
Honorary Chairman  
Journalists and Writers Foundation,  
Turkey

### Turkish Schools Offer Pakistan a Gentler Vision of Islam

By Sabrina Tavernise (May 4, 2008, excerpted)

### The New York Times

The schools, which also operate in Christian countries like Russia, are not for Muslims alone, and one of their stated aims is to promote interfaith understanding. Mr. Gülen met the previous pope, as well as Jewish and Orthodox Christian leaders, and teachers in the schools say they stress multiculturalism and universal values.

The Turkish schools, which have expanded to seven cities in Pakistan since the first one opened a decade ago, cannot transform the country on their own. But they offer an alternative approach that could help reduce the influence of Islamic extremists.

They prescribe a strong Western curriculum, with courses, taught in English, from math and science to English literature and Shakespeare. They do not teach religion beyond the one class in Islamic studies that is required by the state.





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## Meet *Foreign Policy*'s Top Public Intellectual of 2008

(August, 13, 2008, excerpted)



*Foreign Policy*: You preach a moderate, tolerant Islam. What do you think causes terrorism?

*Fethullah Gülen*: Islam abhors and absolutely condemns terrorism and any terrorist activity. I have repeatedly

declared that it is impossible for a true Muslim to be a terrorist, nor can a terrorist be regarded as a true Muslim. Terrorism is one of the cardinal sins that the Qur'an threatens with hellfire.

To defeat terrorism, we must acknowledge that we are all human beings. It is not our choice to belong to a particular race or family. We should be freed from fear of the other and enjoy diversity within democracy. I believe that dialogue and education are the most effective means to surpass our differences.



## Gülen Inspires Muslims Worldwide

(January 21, 2008, online edition, excerpted)

The chief characteristic of the Gülen movement is that it does not seek to subvert modern secular states, but encourages practicing Muslims to use to the full the opportunities they offer. It is best understood as the Islamic equivalent of Christian movements appealing to business and the professions.

## How Far They Have Travelled

(March 6, 2008, excerpted)

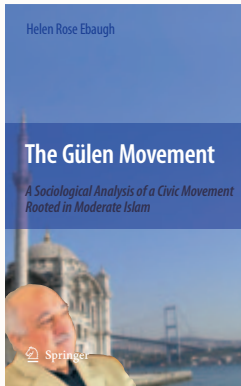


Turkish-based movement sounds more reasonable than most of its rivals and is vying to be recognized as the world's leading Muslim network.

With his stated belief in science, inter-faith dialogue and multi-party democracy, Mr. Gülen has also won praise from many non-Muslim quarters. He is an intensely emotional preacher, whose tearful sermons seem to strike a deep chord in his listeners; but the movement he heads is remarkably pragmatic and businesslike.

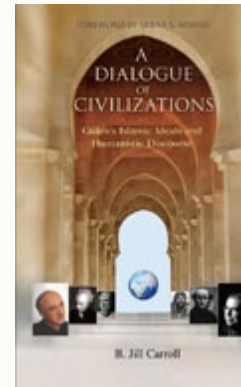
"If you meet a polite Central Asian lad who speaks good English and Turkish, you know he went to a Gülen school," says a Turkish observer.

# Literature on the Gülen Movement



*The Gülen Movement: A Sociological Analysis of a Civic Movement Rooted in Moderate Islam* by Helen Rose Ebaugh — Based on interview data and visits to Gülen-inspired institutions, the book describes the movement from a sociological perspective, especially through the lens of social movement theory. It is the first book, grounded in empirical methodology,

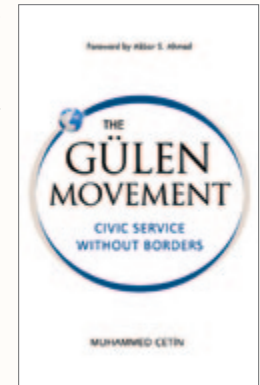
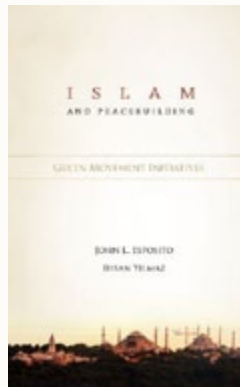
to describe the movement to a Western audience.



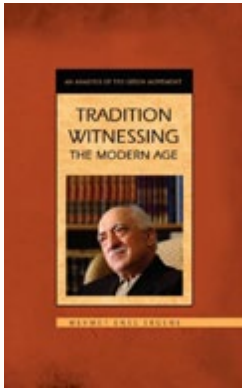
*A Dialogue of Civilizations: Gülen's Islamic Ideals and Humanistic Discourse* by Jill Carroll — Dr. Carroll places the ideas of Fethullah Gülen into the context of the larger humanities and compares his opinions with those of major philosophers. The book includes chapters on the ideas of the philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Confucius, Plato and Sartre.

*The Gülen Movement: Civic Service Without Borders* by Muhammed Çetin — The book conceptualizes the Gülen Movement using social movement theories in which the author defines Gülen initiatives as a civic service dedicated to fostering dialogue within the global community. Dr. Çetin first examines the movement as a cultural actor, and then continues on another aspect of the movement as a civil society actor.

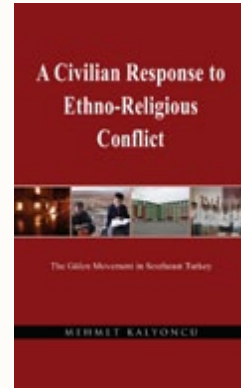
*Islam and Peacebuilding: Gülen Movement Initiatives* by John L. Esposito and Ihsan Yilmaz — The exploration of the contributions is made with regards to the title in hand by the thought and practice of the global movement associated with the Turkish Muslim scholar Fethullah Gülen. The importance and distinctiveness of teaching of Gülen and the practice of the movement is that it is rooted in a confident Turkish Islamic heritage while being fully engaged with modernity.







*Tradition Witnessing the Modern Age: An Analysis of the Gülen Movement* by Mehmet Enes Ergene — The author addresses different aspects of the Gülen Movement with a focus on the movement’s adaptation of the modern world and its influence on “the secularist Turkey.”

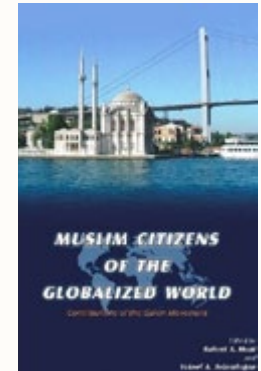


*A Civilian Response to Ethno-Religious Conflict: The Gülen Movement in Southeast Turkey* by Mehmet Kalyoncu — The author studied the positive effect of the actions of the movement in Southeast province called Mardin that faces ethno-religious conflict.

*New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* by Graham E. Fuller — The Former vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council at CIA wrote about Turkey’s new role in the Middle East especially from a political perspective along with its relations with other Muslim countries. As a means to portray a better view of a Muslim country with its relation to other Muslim countries, Fuller dedicates a section to “The Fethullah Gülen Movement.”



*Muslim Citizens of the Global World: Contributions of the Gülen Movement* (edited) by Robert A. Hunt and Yuksel A. Aslandogan — The book explores the responses and contributions of Muslims in general and Turkish Muslims in particular to the waves of democratization, scientific revolution, changing gender roles, and religious diversity in an increasingly globalized world.



# Essentials of Gülen's Thought

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The **human being** is the essence and vital element of being, the index and core element of the universe. Human beings are at the center of creation; all other things, living or non-living, compose concentric circles around them.

Human beings, be they man or woman, young or old, white or black, are to be respected, protected and inviolate. Their belongings cannot be taken away, nor can their chastity be touched. They cannot be driven out of their native lands, and their independence cannot be denied. They cannot be prevented from living in accordance with their principles, either.



**Compassion** is a key which opens up the rustiest locks. It is like the hand of the Messiah, which can revive dead souls.

**Love** is the most direct and safest way to human perfection. It is difficult to attain the rank of human perfection through ways that do not contain love.

Only those who overflow with love will build the happy and enlightened world of the future. Their lips smiling with love, their

hearts brimming with love, their eyes radiating love and the most tender human feelings.

Love is the rose in our belief, a realm of the heart that never withers. Above all else, just as God wove the universe like lace on the loom of love, the most magical and charming music in the bosom of existence is always love.

**Emphatic acceptance** is our safest refuge and our fortress against the handicaps that arise from schism, factions, and the difficulties inherent in reaching mutual agreement.

Emphatic acceptance (*hoshgoru* in Turkish), a term which we sometimes use in place of the words respect, mercy, generosity, or forbearance, is the most essential element of moral systems. It is a very important source of spiritual discipline and a celestial virtue of perfected people.



Only a few people seem to realize that **social harmony** and peace with nature, between people, and within the individual can only come about when the material and spiritual realms are reconciled.



The **peace** of this global village lies in respecting all these differences, considering these differences to be part of our nature, and ensuring that people appreciate these differences.

Interfaith **dialogue** is a must today, and the first step in establishing it is forgetting the past, ignoring polemical arguments, and giving precedence to common points, which far outnumber polemical ones.



People who want to guarantee their future cannot be indifferent to how their children are educated. The family, school, environment, and mass media should all cooperate to ensure the desired result. The school must be as perfect as possible with respect to its curriculum, the scientific and moral standards of the teachers, and its physical conditions. A family must provide the necessary warmth and atmosphere in which to raise children.

In schools, good manners should be considered just as important as other subjects. If they are not, how can children grow up with sound characters? **Education** is different from teaching. Most people can be teachers, but the number of educators is severely limited.





Good **morals** and sound conscience, and good manners and virtues, are like a currency universally acceptable and which is not affected by changes in the values of other means of exchange. Those provided with such qualities are like merchants with the highest credit who can do business wherever they want.

Those who want to reform the world must first reform themselves. If they want to lead others to a better world, they must purify their inner worlds of hatred, rancor, and jealousy, and adorn their outer worlds with virtue.

Humility is like a key to all other virtues. One who is humble may have all other virtues, whereas one who lacks humility usually is deprived of other virtues as well.

Those who value their parents and regard them as a path to God's mercy are the most prosperous in both worlds.



Since its appearance on the earth, humanity has found true peace and happiness in religion.



**Religion** is the best school, a most blessed institution founded to inculcate in people good moral qualities. It is open to everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, and only those who attend it attain peace, satisfaction, and freedom.



**Science** and technology are beneficial to the degree that they guarantee human happiness and help us attain true humanity. If they are developed to harm humanity, they become devils blocking our road.

Ignorance is the worst friend, whereas knowledge is the most faithful companion.



**Art** is the spirit of progress and one of the most important means of developing emotions. Those who cannot make use of this means are unfortunate indeed, and live a numbed, diminished life.

True knowledge shows itself through art. If a person has never produced anything in the name of art, how can we say that he or she knows very much?



**Civilization** does not mean being rich and putting on fine airs, nor does it mean satisfying carnal desires and leading a luxurious, dissipated life. What it really means is being civil and courteous, kind-hearted, profound in thought, and respectful to others.

Civilization means more than scientific advancement, modern means of transportation, ships, and living in large cities with skyscrapers. While such things may be adjuncts to civilization, it is folly and ignorance to identify civilization with them.

**Culture** is an important resource that must be used by those seeking to develop their community in the most beneficial and appropriate way. There is a vital link between the cohesion and strength of a community's direction and the authenticity of its cultural resources.



A woman's inner depth, chastity and dignity elevate her higher than angels and cause her to resemble an unmatched diamond.

A good **woman** is the one who speaks wisdom, has a refined spirit, and whose behavior inspires admiration and respect.



**Freedom** allows people to do whatever they want, provided that they do not harm others and that they remain wholly devoted to the truth.

**Democracy**, in spite of its many shortcomings, is now the only viable political system, and people should strive to modernize and consolidate democratic institutions in order to build a society in which individual rights and freedoms are respected and protected, and equal opportunity for all is more than a dream.

It is not possible for democracy to take root in a place where there is no tolerance. In fact, advocates of democracy should be able to accept even those who do not share their views, and they should open their hearts to others.

Good administration and politics are characterized by acknowledging rights, the **rule of law**, and consciousness of one's duty.

Islam does not propose a certain unchangeable form of government or attempt to shape it. Islam has never offered nor established a theocracy in its name. Instead, Islam establishes fundamental principles that orient a government's general character. So, politics can be a factor neither in shaping Islam nor in directing Muslims' acts and attitudes in Islam's name.



Were I told while entering Paradise that the **East** and **West** have come together and combined by keeping their own values and respecting each other, I would consider this as one of the greatest glad tidings given to me in my life. Perhaps I would prefer not entering Paradise, because there are many things I would like to tell regarding the coming together of the East and West.



Protecting the **environment**, conserving and looking after the ecological balance are among the principal duties of a Muslim.



Goodness, beauty, truthfulness, honesty, and being virtuous are the essence of the world. Whatever happens, the world will one day find this essence, for no one can prevent such an event.

Quotations, with a couple of exceptions, are from *Pearls of Wisdom* by Gülen





# The Gülen Institute

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The Gülen Institute, established in October 2007, is an independent, non-profit organization and a joint initiative of the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work and the Institute of Interfaith Dialog. The main goal of the Institute is to promote academic research as well as grass roots activity towards bringing about positive social change, namely the establishment of stable peace, social justice, and social harmony by focusing on the themes of education, volunteerism and civic initiatives. The Institute organizes academic and public events, such as conferences and luncheon forums, publishes scientific and popular works, provides student scholarships and faculty research grants, and organizes cultural exchange trips.

Among the values and concerns we share are empathy, hope, love of humanity, compassion, altruism, honesty, dignity, trustworthiness, integrity, peaceful coexistence, social justice and harmony, elimination of violent conflicts and human suffering, prevention of substance abuse, saving youth from self-destruction, and protection of the earth's resources and habitats. The perspectives of the Institute are inspired by the life and works of Fethullah Gülen.





**Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1997-2006, Nobel Peace Prize Recipient**

“I think it is extremely important to have institutions like the Gülen Institute bringing people together, getting them to understand that we all are in the same boat and in today’s world you cannot be secure at the expense of the other, you cannot be safe and prosperous at the expense of other.” (The Gülen Institute Luncheon Forum, April 12, 2010)



**James Baker,  
61<sup>st</sup> US Secretary of State**

Problems of the world would be easy to address if, on the global level, we develop ways of sharing

respect for each other’s religious perspectives. It is in this manner, the Gülen Institute and those who promote shared vision of interfaith dialogue provide truly invaluable leadership.” (Luncheon Forum, May 21, 2008)



**Madeleine Albright,  
64<sup>th</sup> US Secretary of State**

“In a world that lacks direction, there can be no doubt that a pathfinder is

needed. It is much more likely to be found in the values that reside at the heart of the Gülen Institute and this luncheon series. These values include commitment to international dialogue, an understanding of cultural diversity, support for human justice and a love of peace.” (Luncheon Forum, December 3, 2008)



**Sheila J. Lee,  
Member of US Congress,  
18<sup>th</sup> District of Texas**

“The inspiration of the Gülen Institute, who understood

the communicating the word of God, living for others, the spirit of devotion, sacrifice, fidelity and loyalty, was clearly the right path to take.” (Annual Dialog and Friendship Dinner in Houston, November 2009)



## Further Resources

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Some of the international conferences on the Gülen Movement:

East and West Encounters: The Gülen Movement, December 4-6, 2009, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Future of Reform in the Muslim World: Comparative Experiences with Fethullah Gülen's Movement in Turkey, October 19-21, 2009, Arab League headquarters, organized by Cairo University and Hira Magazine, Cairo, Egypt

From Dialogue to Collaboration: The Vision of Fethullah Gülen and Muslim-Christian Relations, July 15-16, 2009, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia

Muslims between Tradition and Modernity: The Gülen Movement as a Bridge between Cultures, May 26-28, 2009, University of Potsdam, Berlin, Germany

Islam in the Age of Global Challenges: Alternative Perspectives of the Gülen Movement, November 14-15, 2008, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C

Muslim World in Transition: Contributions of the Gülen Movement, House of Lords, October 25-27, 2007, London, United Kingdom

Islam in the Contemporary World: The Fethullah Gülen Movement in Thought and Practice, November 12-13, 2005, Rice University, Houston, Texas

For further reading and information:

Gülen's personal websites

[www.fgulen.com](http://www.fgulen.com)

[www.fethullah-gulen.org](http://www.fethullah-gulen.org)

The Gülen Institute

[www.guleninstitute.org](http://www.guleninstitute.org)

Fethullah Gülen Forum

[www.fethullahgulenforum.org](http://www.fethullahgulenforum.org)

Rumi Forum

[www.rumiforum.org](http://www.rumiforum.org)

The Institute of Interfaith Dialog

[www.interfaithdialog.org](http://www.interfaithdialog.org)

The Journalists and Writers Foundation

[www.gyv.org.tr](http://www.gyv.org.tr)

Conferences on the Gülen Movement

[www.fethullahgulenconference.org](http://www.fethullahgulenconference.org)

[www.gulenconference.net](http://www.gulenconference.net)

[www.gulenconference.nl](http://www.gulenconference.nl)



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