

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	VI
Introduction	7
Historical context	7
The aim of this book	15
Approach	16
PART I: Irreligion and the Uniting of Religion	23
1 Framing a united religion: President Bonney’s speeches	24
Introduction	24
The Swedenborgian, lawyer, poet on irreligion	25
Bonney’s ir-religion at the final session of the World’s Congresses	28
Presenting unity suitable to the audience in the opening addresses.....	30
Religion and irreligion framing the parliament.....	35
Conclusion.....	36
2 Locating irreligion and unity: The individual congresses	37
Introduction	37
The Mother of Religions: Judaism and its concept of irreligion	38
Irreligion and the colorless religion of Columbus	42
Christianity as the civilizing religion: Disciples of Christ.....	44
One place for Christianity in Universalism: The Universalist Church	46
A universal church against all sectarianism: The New Jerusalem Church	48
Morality and religion only in Christianity: The Evangelical Association	53
United to divide the world: Imperialist Religion in the congresses of missions	53
The politics of (non-)religion making: The Evangelical Alliance	57
Interreligious gatherings and no religion: The Theosophical Congress	59
Conclusion.....	62
3 Exhibiting imperialist spaces of religion and unity	64

PART II: Localization of Theosophy as Religion.....	67
4 Creating a theosophical congress for the US public	70
Introduction	70
Warm-up in Cincinnati	72
Professor Chakravarti, “a pronounced Theosophist”	73
On financing the congress	79
Planning at conventions.....	81
Locating theosophy in the World’s Congresses	85
Excursus: The Psychical Congress and the National Delegate Convention of Spiritualists	89
Conclusion	94
5 Representing the unity of religion in connection with theosophy.....	95
Introduction	95
Gyanendra Nath Chakravarti: A figure to perform unity	96
Dharmapāla: Buddhist-theosophical ethics for everyone.....	97
Hikkaduve Sumangala: Controversies and the break with the society	102
The Maha-Bodhi Society: Unification through collaboration vs. separation.....	107
Hirai Kinzō: Entitism or truth unites	110
Dvivedi: Performing on theosophical platforms as a Sanskrit professor	112
Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb: Esoteric Islam to unite East and West	116
Friedrich Max Müller: Ambivalent collaborations with the society	123
Vivekānanda and the Theosophical Society: Collaborations necessary	130
Unscheduled interreligiosity at the Theosophical Congress	135
Conclusion	137
6 Negotiating an ambiguous theosophical unity of religion(s)	138
PART III: Theosophy and the Negotiation of Religion and Interreligiosity	143
7 After Chicago 1893: Barrows and Olcott meet.....	144
8 Locating religion and theosophy in interreligious congresses	148
Introduction	148
San Francisco 1894: Public interest in the theosophical concept of religion.....	148
Chicago 1894: Controversies about Theosophists in a liberal religious society....	150
Paris 1889 and 1900: Theosophists, Spiritists, Spiritualists on the world stage	151

Benares 1900: A second parliament that never took place	155
London 1924: Restructuring the scientification of Comparative Religion	159
Francis Younghusband's imperialistic concept of religion.....	165
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and the exhibiting of religion as unity	167
Chicago 1933: The World Government by Unseen Powers takes over.....	173
Conclusion.....	174
General Conclusions: Theosophy and the Location of Interreligiosity	177
Uniting "all religion" and how Theosophy favored interreligious relations.....	177
Interreligiosity, globality and esotericism.....	182
Appendix	187
Bibliography	189