

**Hesburgh's Relationships: The Success Story of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute****Alice Reid****Publication Date**

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This past semester, I devoted much of my time to not only researching the incredible life of Father Theodore Hesburgh along with his lasting impact. With a newfound awareness of his presence, I seemed to discover him everywhere at Notre Dame and beyond. I spent hours poring through primary documents in the archives and discussing Hesburgh's multifaceted nature with my professor. In my paper, I look closely at a few key relationships that Father Theodore Hesburgh held that were a crucial part of the formation of the Tantur Institute of Ecumenism in Jerusalem. Whether it was his relationships with Pope Paul VI, donors like I.A. O'Shaughnessy, the Tantur Academic Council, or the Catholic Church hierarchy, Hesburgh had a genuine skill for building lasting relationships, ranging from purely professional to loyal companionship. The Tantur Institute's lasting influence is only one example of how Hesburgh's ability to relate to other human beings is at the heart of his worldwide success.

My research process began by checking out and reading *God, Country, Notre Dame*, Father Hesburgh's autobiography. This book gave a solid foundation and understanding of Father Hesburgh's life, motives, and core values. After this, I reflected on what aspect of Hesburgh's life interested me the most. After looking more into the present-day Tantur Institute of Ecumenism and even a summer program that I could pursue to visit it, I knew I wanted to learn more about Hesburgh's role in this revolutionary institution.

I started by reading up on the background of not only the Tantur Institute, but also the history of ecumenism itself within the Catholic Church, and how Tantur fit into the timeline. For this purpose, I turned to yet another hard copy book checked out from the library, *Hope of Unity*, which was written in honor of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tantur. With the newfound knowledge of the intricacies of interfaith dialogue and the challenges facing the ecumenical movement, I was able to move into more specific information sources. I reached out to First Year of Studies

Librarian Melissa Harden and met with her to talk over how to narrow my research topic and what resources would best help me to make my argument. Ms. Harden helped me find some articles regarding Tantor, and also directed me to Jean McManus, who is the Catholic Studies Librarian at Notre Dame. She was able to help me by offering a list of some resources that could help me including student and alumni newspapers. She also reached out to the Theology Librarian Alan Krieger who gave the suggestion to take a look at the bibliographical references for the book *Hope of Unity* that I had already read, which could bring me to some more related sources. This initial single interaction, which led to dialogues with many different librarians, shows the incredible network within the different subjects at the library, and how each different librarian can offer different insight into how to find sources for a research project. I also made use of the helpful library guides provided for writing and rhetoric students, which gives information and resources to help select a research topic, find reliable sources, and cite correctly. Throughout my research and writing process, I also took advantage of the writing center to help re-focus my ideas by talking through my argument in order to realize what areas needed to be fleshed out.

At this point in my research, I had already made two visits to the archives on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor with my class, but I had only scratched the surface of the wealth of resources available there. The archives offered a unique and fresh perspective on my project, and gave me the opportunity to make some of my own conclusions rather than reading an article in which the author asserted his own argument on the issue. One challenge I faced while searching the archives was that Father Hesburgh's personal papers are closed, so I could only access a limited number of documents. With the help of Kevin Cawley and the other archivists, I learned how to fill out the request form for documents, navigate the online search engine, and decipher the initially complex codes that

represented a particular document. I became a regular at the archives, and was often the last student in the archives on Friday afternoons. I spent hours paging through agendas from meetings regarding the structure of the Tantur Institute and even photos from when Father Hesburgh took O'Shaughnessy on a trip to Jerusalem. Some documents I read or photos I looked at were more helpful than others, but every single item I found in the archives helped me put together a fuller picture of Hesburgh in my mind.

Many of the documents I found in the archives required further research to decipher. For example, I found a letter from an apostolic delegate to Hesburgh. In order to understand what the letter said about Father Hesburgh for the purposes of my paper, I had to first understand the interplay between Jerusalem and Jordan at that time, and the motives that Pio Laghi had for writing the letter in the first place. This is only one example of the analysis required for each and every document I came upon. This process was not entirely foreign since I had applied the same skills in other contexts, but I enhanced my current skill set. I was able to critically analyze different resources to determine their meaning, significance in my argument, and if they were credible or possibly even biased.

My researching skills grew more than I ever could have imagined while writing this paper. Not only were my new experiences at the archives transformative, but I also learned how to take advantage of the many other resources at the library. Especially with a topic so specific as mine, I couldn't have done it without the specialized guidance of the librarians, my professor, and the archivists.