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Peace Leaflets A Starting point for Dialogue

PEACE - NO UTOPIA

"Peace is no utopia," said Pope John Paul II, when he addressed 1 million of the faithful in Zagreb on September 11th, 1994.

An American pastor donated a very special illustration to the First Austrian Peace Museum. It shows a globe that is divided in 2 halves; one half is marked with the words "Good Night," and the other half is marked "Good Morning."

In my mind, it is a symbol. The line is actually one that divides the optimists from the pessimists—or the ones who believe that we can still avoid catastrophe, and those who believe that we have reached the point of no return. I would rather not know how many pessimists there are, whose arguments run like this: "We are the realists, war is one of the natural laws. Man cannot change, all others are visionaries and dreamers." Fortunately, there are those who view things differently and greet the eleventh hour with a "Good Morning."

Somewhere in a publication issued by the Austrian Research Centre for Peace and Conflict Solution in Schleining, I read this Latin saying: "si vis pacem – para pacem" (if you want peace, prepare for peace). I could not help but think it was very true. When the South African De Klerk was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he said, "All men who believe in peace must redouble their efforts."

Gerhart Bruckmann distinguishes between Utopias and "Realistic" Utopias. The planning and enforcement of a lasting world peace has become a Realistic Utopia. The auspicious words "Peace will become a human right," are carved in granite at the Peace Museum of Sievershausen (Lower Saxony). The making of this optimistic message into reality should be the task of peace museums in the making all over the world.