



WORLD RELIGIONS - SEARCHING FOR COMMONALITY AND COMMUNITY

The purpose of this peace leaflet is - as already suggested in the title - to search for a higher form of commonality, to find a common ground in spite of our diverse positions and viewpoints.

In very rough outline, we may distinguish between those who do not believe in God or life after death, those who believe in a god or gods and their respective patron saints, and finally those who believe in an all-wise and all-embracing creative power, incomprehensible as a personified being. To bring all three persuasions under one umbrella is hardly feasible. However, if we leave aside the first group, the atheists, we are left with a certain degree of commonality between the two remaining groups.

After a life-long search characterized by trial and error, I have come to the conclusion that I am a believer, meaning that I believe in an all-wise creator. I do not wish to impose my views on others with this statement of my beliefs, but rather I hope to begin a dialogue.

Let us assume that no creature is the product of chance, and that an all-wise creator looks upon all our actions. Surely then, it is not a stretch of the imagination to think that this creator must embody universal justice. I am, of course, well aware of how often the disadvantaged of this world have been put off with the hope of a compensating justice in the next world. Of how often human beings have been frightened into submission by religion, or of how many have been sent off to fight evil (1) with the promises of reward in paradise.

All of this notwithstanding, universal justice remains a source of hope and meaning for many. Looking through the prism of universal justice, world religions should examine their credos when it comes to tolerance, claims to exclusivity, and truth (2). I believe that we can come to common level of understanding, that the world's religions can become not separate, but instead a "Community of World Religions." Hans Küng once wrote, "No survival without a world ethos. No world peace without dialogue among religions." (3) In the end, unity will be the foundation of future world peace.

EPILOGUE

The question remains: how can atheists then be made a part of the "Community of the Concerned?" I believe that the answer to this lies in our common efforts to preserve our wonderful world, a jewel in the constellations of the cosmos. However, the creation of a consensus for this mission cannot be the goal of peace museums alone, but rather the aim all friends of peace in the world

**ERSTES ÖSTERREICHISCHES FRIEDENSMUSEUM
FIRST AUSTRIAN PEACE MUSEUM**



- (1) See "The Drake Killer" ("Key Episodes," collection)
- (2) See peace leaflet "Believers, Unbelievers and Holy Books."
- (3) Hans Küng, "Project World Ethos," Piper, 1990.