



Franz Deutsch

## **Peace Leaflets A Starting point for Dialogue**

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### TESTING TOLERANCE

Let us assume somebody makes a fictitious statement such as: "I like fairy tales; my favourite fairy tale is 'The fairy tale of Bethlehem' with all its embellishments." Not long ago, the individual guilty of such heresy would have ended up at the stake.

And today? Even today, such an utterance, made in a rural Catholic Bible session, would meet with strong disapproval and might lead to the expulsion of the heretic.

This simple fictitious example may illustrate how far we have progressed from the Middle Ages, but at the same time it will show how far we have to go yet. The obvious conclusion would be that this fictitious individual would have been smart to keep his conviction to himself. Is the masquerade to go on and on? It is an accepted truism that freedom has to reach its limit when it interferes with the freedom of others.

A not too laudable personal experience comes to my mind: During a local Bible session, I once went so far as to remark that I could not believe that there is a hell and hell's torture, because otherwise I would lose faith in the existence of a wise creator. Hearing this, a woman said her whole philosophy of life would collapse if she did not believe that there is a hell. I was shocked, as I had absolutely no wish to undercut anybody's conception of salvation. It also was my last visit to such a gathering.

I began to look for other guide posts which might help us in our endeavour to find the truth. I have tried to expand on that subject in other 'Peace-Leaflets'.