

THE KYOTO DECLARATION OF THE FIRST WORLD ASSEMBLY

1970

The World Conference on Religion and Peace represents an historic attempt to bring together men and women of all major religions to discuss the urgent issue of peace. We meet at a crucial time. At this very moment we are faced by cruel and inhuman wars and by racial, social, and economic violence. Man's continued existence on this planet is threatened with nuclear extinction. Never has there been such despair among men. Our deep conviction that the religions of the world have a real and important service to render to the cause of peace has brought us to Kyoto from the four corners of the earth. Bahai, Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jew, Muslim, Shintoist, Sikh, Zoroastrian, and others - we have come together in peace out of a common concern for peace.

As we sat down together facing the overriding issues of peace we discovered that the things which unite us are more important than the things which divide us. We found that we share:

A conviction of the fundamental unity of the human family, and the equality and dignity of all human beings;

A sense of the sacredness of the individual person and his conscience;

A sense of the value of the human community;

A realization that might is not right; that human power is not self-sufficient and absolute;

A belief that love, compassion, selflessness, and the force of inner truthfulness and of the spirit have ultimately greater power than hate, enmity, and self-interest;

A sense of obligation to stand on the side of the poor and the oppressed as against the rich and the oppressors; and

A profound hope that good will finally prevail.

Because of these convictions that we hold in common, we believe that a special charge has been given to all men and women of religion to be concerned with all their hearts and minds with peace and peacemaking, to be the servants of peace. As men and women of religion we confess in humility and penitence that we have very often betrayed our religious ideals and our commitment to peace. It is not religion that has failed the cause of peace, but religious people. This betrayal of religion can and must be corrected.

In confronting the urgent challenges to peace in the second half of the twentieth century, we were compelled to consider the problems of disarmament, development, and human rights. Clearly peace is imperiled by the ever-quickenening race for armaments, the widening gap between the rich and the poor within and among the nations, and by the tragic violation of human rights all over the world. In our consideration of the problems of disarmament we became convinced that peace cannot be found through the stockpiling of weapons. We therefore call for immediate steps toward general disarmament, to include all weapons of destruction - conventional, nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological. We found that the problems of development were aggravated by the fact that the resources spent on research, and on the manufacture and stockpiling of such weapons, consume a grossly inordinate amount of the resources of mankind. We are convinced that these resources are urgently needed instead to combat the injustices that make for war and other forms of social violence. Any society in which one out of every four children dies is in a state of war. While development of itself may not bring peace, there can be no lasting peace without it. Therefore we pledge our support to the effort of the United Nations to make the 1970s a decade of development for all mankind.

The social convulsions clearly evident in the world today demonstrate the connection between peace and the recognition, promotion, and protection of human rights. Racial discrimination, the repression of ethnic and religious minorities, the torturing of political and other prisoners, legalized and *de facto* denial of political freedom and equality of opportunity, the denial of

equal rights of women, any form of colonialist oppression - all such violations of human rights are responsible for the escalation of violence that is debasing human civilization.

While we of this Conference speak for ourselves as persons brought together from many religions by our deep concern for peace, we try also to speak for the vast majority of the human family who are powerless and whose voice is seldom heard - the poor, the exploited, the refugees, and all who are homeless and whose lives, fields, and freedoms have been devastated by wars. We speak to our religions, the ecumenical councils and all interfaith efforts for peace, to the nations, beginning with our own, to the United Nations, and to men and women outside established religions who are concerned about human welfare.

To one and all, beginning with ourselves, we say that the point of departure for any serious effort in human enterprise - educational, cultural, scientific, social, and religious - is the solemn acceptance of the fact that men and all their works are now united in one destiny. We live or die together in the struggle for peace. We cannot honestly denounce war and the things that make for war unless our personal lives are informed by peace and we are prepared to make the necessary sacrifice for it. We must do all in our power to educate public opinion and awaken public conscience to take a firm stand against war and the illusory hope of peace through military victory. We are convinced that religions, in spite of historic differences, must now seek to unite all men in those endeavors which make for true peace. We believe that we have a duty transcending sectarian limits to cooperate with those outside the historic religions who share our desire for peace.

We pledge ourselves to warn the nations whose citizens we are that the effort to achieve and maintain military power is the road to disaster. It creates a climate of fear and mistrust; it demands resources needed for the meeting of the needs of health, housing, and welfare; it fosters the escalation of the arms race that now threatens man's life on earth; it sharpens differences among nations into military and economic blocs; it regards peace

as a truce or a balance of terror; it dismisses as utopian a truly universal concern for the welfare of all mankind. To all this we say "No!"

We desire to convey our concern for peace to the United Nations. The achievement and maintenance of peace requires not only a recognition of the existence of the United Nations, but, even more, support for and implementation of its decisions. We urge universal membership in the United Nations, a more just sharing of power and responsibility in its procedures. We urge the member nations to accept its leadership in resolving issues that have led or may lead to conflicts.

It is our hope that this Conference will help us see and accept our responsibility as men and women of religious faith for the achievement of true and lasting peace.

