

Preface

What is the *GLOBAL ETHIC*?

The Global Ethic concept

The term GLOBAL ETHIC refers to a set of common moral values and ethical standards which are shared by the different faiths and cultures on Earth.

These common moral values and ethical standards constitute a humane ethic, or, the ethic of humanity. In view of the process of globalization this ethic of humanity has been termed by the famous Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher Professor Hans Küng as the "GLOBAL ETHIC".

Although the concept of a GLOBAL ETHIC was at first introduced by Professor Hans Küng in 1989 it is, in his own words, "not a new invention but only a new discovery" of common principles which are as old as humankind.

There can be no doubt that a globalizing world with its tremendous social, ecological and moral problems needs a globalization of moral values and ethical standards, in short: a GLOBAL ETHIC, in order to survive as a place where our grandchildren and great-grandchildren can live a decent life.

In fact, already now and in the past quite a large number of fellow human beings all

over the world have not been able to live a life in dignity, exactly because human beings have been unable to follow the most basic rules of humane coexistence which our religious and non-religious traditions have provided for since thousands of years.

The GLOBAL ETHIC is not a new religion but a set of common moral values and ethical standards which are shared by all faiths and belief systems. Without a basic consensus over ethics any society is threatened sooner or later by chaos or a dictatorship. Therefore, there can be no sustainable world order without a GLOBAL ETHIC.

In the words of Professor Hans Küng "the GLOBAL ETHIC means neither a global ideology, nor a single unified global religion transcending all existing religions, nor a mixture of all religions. Humanity is weary of unified ideologies, and in any case the religions of the world are so different in their views of faith and 'dogmas', their symbols and rites, that a 'unification' of them would be meaningless, a distasteful syncretistic cocktail."

Instead, according to Hans Küng, "the GLOBAL ETHIC seeks to work out what is

already common to the religions of the world now despite their differences over human conduct, moral values and basic moral convictions. In other words, the GLOBAL ETHIC does not reduce the religions to an ethical minimalism but represents the minimum of what the religions of the world already have in common now in the ethical sphere. The GLOBAL ETHIC is not directed against anyone, but invites all, believers and non-believers, to make this ethic their own and act in accordance with it."

As Professor Küng has stressed again and again, the GLOBAL ETHIC "is no substitute for the Torah, the Sermon on the Mount, the Qur'an, the Bhagavadgita, the Discourses of the Buddha or the Analects of Confucius". Instead, "the GLOBAL ETHIC is nothing but the necessary minimum of common values, standards and

What are the basic contents of the GLOBAL ETHIC?

In fact, at the root of this fundamental consensus of values, standards and attitudes is a simple but very profound principle: "Treat others as you would like to be treated" or "Do not treat others as you would not like to be treated". That is the so-called GOLDEN RULE of life which is found in the scriptures of all major faiths – in different words but with the same divine meaning.

The GOLDEN RULE is the most fundamental common ethical denominator of all religious and non-religious belief systems on Earth. It is the basic law of peaceful human coexistence and can, therefore, be characterized as the mother of ethics of humankind.

basic attitudes. In other words: a minimal basic consensus relating to binding values, irrevocable standards and moral attitudes, which can be affirmed by all religions despite their 'dogmatic' differences and which can also be supported by non-believers."

The GLOBAL ETHIC was adopted in form of the "Declaration Toward A Global Ethic" by the Parliament of the World's Religions on 4 September 1993. Thereby, for the first time in human history, representatives of the different religions and faiths agreed on a set of common moral values and ethical standards which are shared by all of them. Never before in the history of religions had this happened! Herein lies the tremendous significance of the "Declaration Toward A Global Ethic" for the future of humankind.

The GOLDEN RULE is not only laid down in the basic texts of all world religions but also in the main non-religious philosophical theories where it is often referred to as the principle of reciprocity. The famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant once called the GOLDEN RULE "the categorical imperative" of humane coexistence on Earth.

As the GOLDEN RULE is found in virtually every important religious and non-religious belief system throughout human history all over the Earth it seems to be the basic law or constitution for humankind. And, all other common precepts shared by our different faiths derive from this basic law of humane coexistence of humanity:

- ♦ Have respect for all life, or "You shall not kill"
(As you do not want others to kill you, therefore you should not kill others.)
- ♦ Deal honestly and fairly, or "You shall not steal"
(As you do not want others to steal your belongings, therefore you should not steal their belongings.)
- ♦ Speak and act truthfully, or "You shall not lie"
(As you do not want others to lie to you, therefore you should not lie to others.)
- ♦ Respect and love one another, or "You shall not commit sexual immorality"
(As you do not want others to take your wife / husband, therefore you should not take the wives / husbands of others.)

There are many other moral values and ethical standards which are shared by all faiths and belief systems, like the respect of human rights (i.e. every human being must be treated humanely), love and compassion, justice, caring and sharing, environment protection, honesty, integrity, accountability, moderation etc which all form part of the GLOBAL ETHIC.

What needs to be done?

Let us try to make the GOLDEN RULE and the many other common ethical standards and shared moral values to be accepted as the GLOBAL ETHIC of humankind by as many people as possible!

Obviously, if the great majority of people would practise the GOLDEN RULE and follow the directives of the GLOBAL ETHIC we would definitively live in a better and much more peaceful and just world.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we start to educate our children about the GOLDEN RULE and other common ethical standards.

We should do this not only in our families but also in the public school system.

This means that education about the GOLDEN RULE, shared moral values and common ethical standards should become an integral part of the curricula of kindergardens and primary and secondary schools all over the world.

In fact, such an education would be an education for peace – peace in the family, peace in the community, peace in the country and peace among nations.

Such an education would be a peaceful but forceful weapon against the spread of extremism on all sides.

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Introduction

The text entitled "Introduction" was produced by an Editorial Committee of the Council of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. It was meant to serve as a brief summary of the "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" for publicity purposes.

The world is in agony. The agony is so pervasive and urgent that we are compelled to name its manifestations so that the depth of this pain may be made clear.

Peace eludes us - the planet is being destroyed - neighbors live in fear - women and men are estranged from each other - children die!

This is abhorrent.

We condemn the abuses of Earth's ecosystems.

We condemn the poverty that stifles life's potential; the hunger that weakens the human body, the economic disparities that threaten so many families with ruin.

We condemn the social disarray of the nations; the disregard for justice which pushes citizens to the margin; the anarchy overtaking our communities; and the insane death of children from violence. In particular we condemn aggression and hatred in the name of religion.

But this agony need not be.

It need not be because the basis for an ethic already exists. This ethic offers the possibility of a better individual and global order, and leads individuals away from despair and societies away from chaos.

We are women and men who have embraced the precepts and practices of the world's religions:

- We affirm that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic.
- We affirm that this truth is already known, but yet to be lived in heart and action.
- We affirm that there is an irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions. There already exist ancient guidelines for human behavior which are found in the teachings of the religions of the world and which are the condition for a sustainable world order.

We Declare:

We are interdependent. Each of us depends on the well-being of the whole, and so we have respect for the community of living beings, for people, animals, and plants, and for the preservation of Earth, the air, water and soil.

We take individual responsibility for all we do. All our decisions, actions, and failures to act have consequences.

We must treat others as we wish others to treat us.

We make a commitment to respect life and dignity, individuality and diversity, so that every person is treated humanely, without exception. We must have patience and acceptance. We must be able to forgive, learning from the past but never allowing ourselves to be enslaved by memories of hate. Opening our hearts to one another, we must sink our narrow differences for the cause of the world community, practicing a culture of solidarity and relatedness.

We consider humankind our family. We must strive to be kind and generous. We must not live for ourselves alone, but should also serve others, never forgetting the children, the aged, the poor, the suffering, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely. No person should ever be considered or treated as a second-class citizen, or be exploited in any way whatsoever. There should be equal partnership between men and women. We must not commit any kind of sexual immorality. We must put behind us all forms of domination or abuse.

We commit ourselves to a culture of non-violence, respect, justice, and peace. We shall not oppress, injure, torture, or kill other

human beings, forsaking violence as a means of settling differences.

We must strive for a just social and economic order, in which everyone has an equal chance to reach full potential as a human being. We must speak and act truthfully and with compassion, dealing fairly with all, and avoiding prejudice and hatred. We must not steal. We must move beyond the dominance of greed for power, prestige, money, and consumption to make a just and peaceful world.

Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed first. We pledge to increase our awareness by disciplining our minds, by meditation, by prayer, or by positive thinking. Without risk and a readiness to sacrifice there can be no fundamental change in our situation. Therefore we commit ourselves to this global ethic, to understanding one another, and to socially beneficial, peace-fostering, and nature-friendly ways of life.

We invite all people, whether religious or not, to do the same.

Declaration Toward a Global Ethic

The Principles of a Global Ethic

Our world is experiencing a fundamental crisis: A crisis in global economy, global ecology, and global politics. The lack of a grand vision, the tangle of unresolved problems, political paralysis, mediocre political leadership with little insight or foresight, and in general too little sense for the commonweal are seen everywhere: Too many old answers to new challenges.

Hundreds of millions of human beings on our planet increasingly suffer from unemployment, poverty, hunger, and the destruction of their families. Hope for a lasting peace among nations slips away from us. There are tensions between the sexes and generations. Children die, kill, and are killed. More and more countries are shaken by corruption in politics and business. It is increasingly difficult to live together peacefully in our cities because of social, racial, and ethnic conflicts, the abuse of drugs, organized crime, and even anarchy. Even neighbors often live in fear of one another. Our planet continues to be ruthlessly plundered. A collapse of the ecosystem threatens us.

Time and again we see leaders and members of religions incite aggression, fanaticism, hate, and xenophobia - even inspire and legitimize violent and bloody conflicts. Religion often is misused for purely power-political goals, including war. We are filled with disgust.

We condemn these blights and declare that they need not be. An ethic already exists within the religious teachings of the world which can counter the global distress. Of course this ethic provides no direct solution for all the immense problems of the world, but it does supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order: A vision which can lead women and men away from despair, and society away from chaos.

We are persons who have committed ourselves to the precepts and practices of the world's religions. We confirm that there is already a consensus among the religions which can be the basis for a global ethic - a minimal fundamental consensus concerning binding values, irrevocable standards, and fundamental moral attitudes.

I. No new global order without a new global ethic!

We women and men of various religions and regions of Earth therefore address all people, religious and non-religious. We wish to express the following convictions which we hold in common:

- ◆ We all have a responsibility for a better global order.
- ◆ Our involvement for the sake of human rights, freedom, justice, peace, and the preservation of Earth is absolutely necessary.
- ◆ Our different religious and cultural traditions must not prevent our common involvement in opposing all forms of inhumanity and working for greater humaneness.
- ◆ The principles expressed in this Global Ethic can be affirmed by all persons with ethical convictions, whether religiously grounded or not.
- ◆ As religious and spiritual persons we base our lives on an Ultimate Reality, and draw spiritual power and hope therefrom, in trust, in prayer or meditation, in word or silence. We have a special responsibility for the welfare of all humanity and care for the planet Earth. We do not consider ourselves better than other women and men, but we trust that the ancient wisdom of our religions can point the way for the future.

After two world wars and the end of the cold war, the collapse of fascism and nazism, the shaking of the foundations of communism and colonialism, humanity has entered a new phase of its history. Today we possess sufficient economic, cultural, and spiritual resources to introduce a better global order. But old and new ethnic, national, social, economic, and religious tensions threaten the peaceful building of a

better world. We have experienced greater technological progress than ever before, yet we see that world-wide poverty, hunger, death of children, unemployment, misery, and the destruction of nature have not diminished but rather have increased. Many peoples are threatened with economic ruin, social disarray, political marginalization, ecological catastrophe, and national collapse.

In such a dramatic global situation humanity needs a vision of peoples living peacefully together, of ethnic and ethical groupings and of religions sharing responsibility for the care of Earth. A vision rests on hopes, goals, ideals, standards. But all over the world these have slipped from our hands. Yet we are convinced that, despite their frequent abuses and failures, it is the communities of faith who bear a responsibility to demonstrate that such hopes, ideals, and standards can be guarded, grounded, and lived. This is especially true in the modern state. Guarantees of freedom of conscience and religion are necessary but they do not substitute for binding values, convictions, and norms which are valid for all humans regardless of their social origin, sex, skin color, language, or religion.

We are convinced of the fundamental unity of the human family on Earth. We recall the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. What it formally proclaimed on the level of rights we wish to confirm and deepen here from the perspective of an ethic: The full realization of the intrinsic dignity of the human person, the inalienable freedom and equality in principle of all humans, and the necessary solidarity and interdependence of all humans with each other.

On the basis of personal experiences and the burdensome history of our planet we have learned

- ♦ that a better global order cannot be created or enforced by laws, prescriptions, and conventions alone;
- ♦ that the realization of peace, justice, and the protection of Earth depends on the insight and readiness of men and women to act justly;
- ♦ that action in favor of rights and freedoms presumes a consciousness of responsibility and duty, and that therefore both the minds and hearts of women and men must be addressed;

II. A fundamental demand:

Every human being must be treated humanely.

We are all fallible, imperfect men and women with limitations and defects. We know the reality of evil. Precisely because of this, we feel compelled for the sake of global welfare to express what the fundamental elements of a global ethic should be - for individuals as well as for communities and organizations, for states as well as for the religions themselves. We trust that our often millennia-old religious and ethical traditions provide an ethic which is convincing and practicable for all women and men of good will, religious and non-religious.

At the same time we know that our various religious and ethical traditions often offer very different bases for what is helpful and what is unhelpful for men and women, what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil. We do not wish to gloss over or ignore the serious differences among the individual religions. However, they should not hinder us from proclaiming publicly those things which we already hold in common and which we jointly affirm, each on the basis of our own religious or ethical grounds.

- ♦ that rights without morality cannot long endure, and that there will be no better global order without a global ethic.

By a global ethic we do not mean a global ideology or a single unified religion beyond all existing religions, and certainly not the domination of one religion over all others. By a global ethic we mean a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes. Without such a fundamental consensus on an ethic, sooner or later every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and individuals will despair.

We know that religions cannot solve the environmental, economic, political, and social problems of Earth. However they can provide what obviously cannot be attained by economic plans, political programs, or legal regulations alone: A change in the inner orientation, the whole mentality, the "hearts" of people, and a conversion from a false path to a new orientation for life. Humankind urgently needs social and ecological reforms, but it needs spiritual renewal just as urgently. As religious or spiritual persons we commit ourselves to this task. The spiritual powers of the religions can offer a fundamental sense of trust, a ground of meaning, ultimate standards, and a spiritual home. Of course religions are credible only when they eliminate those conflicts which spring from the religions themselves, dismantling mutual arrogance, mistrust, prejudice, and even hostile images, and thus demonstrate respect for the traditions, holy places, feasts, and rituals of people who believe differently.

Now as before, women and men are treated inhumanely all over the world. They are robbed

of their opportunities and their freedom; their human rights are trampled underfoot; their dignity is disregarded. But might does not make right! In the face of all inhumanity our religious and ethical convictions demand that every human being must be treated humanely!

This means that every human being without distinction of age, sex, race, skin color, physical or mental ability, language, religion, political view, or national or social origin possesses an inalienable and untouchable dignity, and everyone, the individual as well as the state, is therefore obliged to honor this dignity and protect it. Humans must always be the subjects of rights, must be ends, never mere means, never objects of commercialization and industrialization in economics, politics and media, in research institutes, and industrial corporations. No one stands "above good and evil" - no human being, no social class, no influential interest group, no cartel, no police apparatus, no army, and no state. On the contrary: Possessed of reason and conscience, every human is obliged to behave in a genuinely human fashion, to do good and avoid evil!

It is the intention of this Global Ethic to clarify what this means. In it we wish to recall irrevocable, unconditional ethical norms. These should not be bonds and chains, but helps and

III. Irrevocable directives.

1. *Commitment to a Culture of Non-violence and Respect for Life.*

Numberless women and men of all regions and religions strive to lead lives not determined by egoism but by commitment to their fellow humans and to the world around them. Nevertheless, all over the world we find endless hatred, envy, jealousy, and violence, not only between individuals but also between social and ethnic groups, between classes, races,

supports for people to find and realize once again their lives' direction, values, orientations, and meaning.

There is a principle which is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years: What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others. Or in positive terms: What you wish done to yourself, do to others! This should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions.

Every form of egoism should be rejected: All selfishness, whether individual or collective, whether in the form of class thinking, racism, nationalism, or sexism. We condemn these because they prevent humans from being authentically human. Self-determination and self-realization are thoroughly legitimate so long as they are not separated from human self-responsibility and global responsibility, that is, from responsibility for fellow humans and for the planet Earth.

This principle implies very concrete standards to which we humans should hold firm. From it arise four broad, ancient guidelines for human behavior which are found in most of the religions of the world.

nations, and religions. The use of violence, drug trafficking and organized crime, often equipped with new technical possibilities, has reached global proportions. Many places still are ruled by terror "from above"; dictators oppress their own people, and institutional violence is widespread. Even in some countries where laws exist to protect individual freedoms, prisoners

are tortured, men and women are mutilated, hostages are killed.

A. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: You shall not kill! Or in positive terms: Have respect for life! Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: All people have a right to life, safety, and the free development of personality insofar as they do not injure the rights of others. No one has the right physically or psychically to torture, injure, much less kill, any other human being. And no people, no state, no race, no religion has the right to hate, to discriminate against, to "cleanse", to exile, much less to liquidate a "foreign" minority which is different in behavior or holds different beliefs.

B. Of course, wherever there are humans there will be conflicts. Such conflicts, however, should be resolved without violence within a framework of justice. This is true for states as well as for individuals. Persons who hold political power must work within the framework of a just order and commit themselves to the most non-violent, peaceful solutions possible. And they should work for this within an international order of peace which itself has need of protection and defense against perpetrators of violence. Armament is a mistaken path; disarmament is the commandment of the times. Let no one be deceived: There is no survival for humanity without global peace!

2. Commitment to a Culture of Solidarity and a Just Economic Order.

Numberless men and women of all regions and religions strive to live their lives in solidarity with one another and to work for authentic fulfillment of their vocations. Nevertheless, all over the world we find endless hunger,

C. Young people must learn at home and in school that violence may not be a means of settling differences with others. Only thus can a culture of non-violence be created.

D. A human person is infinitely precious and must be unconditionally protected. But likewise the lives of animals and plants which inhabit this planet with us deserve protection, preservation, and care. Limitless exploitation of the natural foundations of life, ruthless destruction of the biosphere, and militarization of the cosmos are all outrages. As human beings we have a special responsibility - especially with a view to future generations - for Earth and the cosmos, for the air, water, and soil. We are all intertwined together in this cosmos and we are all dependent on each other. Each one of us depends on the welfare of all. Therefore the dominance of humanity over nature and the cosmos must not be encouraged. Instead we must cultivate living in harmony with nature and the cosmos.

E. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means that in public as well as in private life we must be concerned for others and ready to help. We must never be ruthless and brutal. Every people, every race, every religion must show tolerance and respect - indeed high appreciation - for every other. Minorities need protection and support, whether they be racial, ethnic, or religious.

deficiency, and need. Not only individuals, but especially unjust institutions and structures are responsible for these tragedies. Millions of people are without work; millions are exploited by poor wages, forced to the edges of society,

with their possibilities for the future destroyed. In many lands the gap between the poor and the rich, between the powerful and the powerless is immense. We live in a world in which totalitarian state socialism as well as unbridled capitalism have hollowed out and destroyed many ethical and spiritual values. A materialistic mentality breeds greed for unlimited profit and a grasping for endless plunder. These demands claim more and more of the community's resources without obliging the individual to contribute more. The cancerous social evil of corruption thrives in the developing countries and in the developed countries alike.

A. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: You shall not steal! Or in positive terms: Deal honestly and fairly! Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: No one has the right to rob or dispossess in any way whatsoever any other person or the commonweal. Further, no one has the right to use her or his possessions without concern for the needs of society and Earth.

B. Where extreme poverty reigns, helplessness and despair spread, and theft occurs again and again for the sake of survival. Where power and wealth are accumulated ruthlessly, feelings of envy, resentment, and deadly hatred and rebellion inevitably well up in the disadvantaged and marginalized. This leads to a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence. Let no one be deceived: There is no global peace without global justice!

C. Young people must learn at home and in school that property, limited though it may be, carries with it an obligation, and that its uses should at the same time serve the common good. Only thus can a just economic order be built up.

D. If the plight of the poorest billions of humans on this planet, particularly women and children, is to be improved, the world economy must be structured more justly. Individual good deeds, and assistance projects, indispensable though they be, are insufficient. The participation of all states and the authority of international organizations are needed to build just economic institutions.

A solution which can be supported by all sides must be sought for the debt crisis and the poverty of the dissolving second world, and even more the third world. Of course conflicts of interest are unavoidable. In the developed countries, a distinction must be made between necessary and limitless consumption, between socially beneficial and non-beneficial uses of property, between justified and unjustified uses of natural resources, and between a profit-only and a socially beneficial and ecologically oriented market economy. Even the developing nations must search their national consciences.

Wherever those ruling threaten to repress those ruled, wherever institutions threaten persons, and wherever might oppresses right, we are obligated to resist - whenever possible non-violently.

E. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means the following:

- ◆ We must utilize economic and political power for service to humanity instead of misusing it in ruthless battles for domination. We must develop a spirit of compassion with those who suffer, with special care for the children, the aged, the poor, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely.

- ◆ We must cultivate mutual respect and consideration, so as to reach a reasonable balance of interests, instead of thinking only of

unlimited power and unavoidable competitive struggles.

We must value a sense of moderation and modesty instead of an unquenchable greed for

3. *Commitment to a Culture of Tolerance and a Life of Truthfulness.*

Numberless women and men of all regions and religions strive to lead lives of honesty and truthfulness. Nevertheless, all over the world we find endless lies, and deceit, swindling and hypocrisy, ideology and demagoguery:

- ◆ Politicians and business people who use lies as a means to success;
- ◆ Mass media which spread ideological propaganda instead of accurate reporting, misinformation instead of information, cynical commercial interest instead of loyalty to the truth;
- ◆ Scientists and researchers who give themselves over to morally questionable ideological or political programs or to economic interest groups, or who justify research which violates fundamental ethical values;
- ◆ Representatives of religions who dismiss other religions as of little value and who preach fanaticism and intolerance instead of respect and understanding.

A. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: You shall not lie! Or in positive terms: Speak and act truthfully! Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: No woman or man, no institution, no state or church or religious community has the right to speak lies to other humans.

B. This is especially true

- ◆ for those who work in the mass media, to whom we entrust the freedom to report for the

money, prestige, and consumption. In greed humans lose their "souls," their freedom, their composure, their inner peace, and thus that which makes them human.

sake of truth and to whom we thus grant the office of guardian. They do not stand above morality but have the obligation to respect human dignity, human rights, and fundamental values. They are duty-bound to objectivity, fairness, and the preservation of human dignity. They have no right to intrude into individuals' private spheres, to manipulate public opinion, or to distort reality;

- ◆ for artists, writers, and scientists, to whom we entrust artistic and academic freedom. They are not exempt from general ethical standards and must serve the truth;
- ◆ for the leaders of countries, politicians, and political parties, to whom we entrust our own freedoms. When they lie in the faces of their people, when they manipulate the truth, or when they are guilty of venality or ruthlessness in domestic or foreign affairs, they forsake their credibility and deserve to lose their offices and their voters. Conversely, public opinion should support those politicians who dare to speak the truth to the people at all times;
- ◆ finally, for representatives of religion. When they stir up prejudice, hatred, and enmity towards those of different belief, or even incite or legitimize religious wars, they deserve the condemnation of humankind and the loss of their adherents.

Let no one be deceived: There is no global justice without truthfulness and humaneness!

C. Young people must learn at home and in school to think, speak, and act truthfully. They

have a right to information and education to be able to make the decisions that will form their lives. Without an ethical formation they will hardly be able to distinguish the important from the unimportant. In the daily flood of information, ethical standards will help them discern when opinions are portrayed as facts, interests veiled, tendencies exaggerated, and facts twisted.

D. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means the following:

4. *Commitment to a Culture of Equal Rights and Partnership Between Men and Women.*

Numberless men and women of all regions and religions strive to live their lives in a spirit of partnership and responsible action in the areas of love, sexuality, and family. Nevertheless, all over the world there are condemnable forms of patriarchy, domination of one sex over the other, exploitation of women, sexual misuse of children, and forced prostitution. Too frequently, social inequities force women and even children into prostitution as a means of survival - particularly in less developed countries.

A. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: You shall not commit sexual immorality! Or in positive terms: Respect and love one another! Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: No one has the right to degrade others to mere sex objects, to lead them into or hold them in sexual dependency.

B. We condemn sexual exploitation and sexual discrimination as one of the worst forms of human degradation. We have the duty to resist wherever the domination of one sex over the other is preached - even in the name of religious conviction; wherever sexual

◆ We must not confuse freedom with arbitrariness or pluralism with indifference to truth.

◆ We must cultivate truthfulness in all our relationships instead of dishonesty, dissembling, and opportunism.

◆ We must constantly seek truth and incorruptible sincerity instead of spreading ideological or partisan half-truths.

◆ We must courageously serve the truth and we must remain constant and trustworthy, instead of yielding to opportunistic accommodation to life.

exploitation is tolerated, wherever prostitution is fostered or children are misused. Let no one be deceived: There is no authentic humaneness without a living together in partnership!

C. Young people must learn at home and in school that sexuality is not a negative, destructive, or exploitative force, but creative and affirmative. Sexuality as a life-affirming shaper of community can only be effective when partners accept the responsibilities of caring for one another's happiness.

D. The relationship between women and men should be characterized not by patronizing behavior or exploitation, but by love, partnership, and trustworthiness. Human fulfillment is not identical with sexual pleasure. Sexuality should express and reinforce a loving relationship lived by equal partners. Some religious traditions know the ideal of a voluntary renunciation of the full use of sexuality. Voluntary renunciation also can be an expression of identity and meaningful fulfillment.

E. The social institution of marriage, despite all its cultural and religious variety, is characterized by love, loyalty, and permanence. It aims at and should guarantee security and mutual support to husband, wife, and child. It should secure the rights of all family members. All lands and cultures should develop economic and social relationships which will enable marriage and family life worthy of human beings, especially for older people. Children have a right of access to education. Parents should not exploit children, nor children parents. Their relationships should reflect mutual respect, appreciation, and concern.

F. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means the following:

- ♦ We need mutual respect, partnership, and understanding, instead of patriarchal domination and degradation, which are expressions of violence and engender counter-violence.
- ♦ We need mutual concern, tolerance, readiness for reconciliation, and love, instead of any form of possessive lust or sexual misuse.

Only what has already been experienced in personal and familial relationships can be practiced on the level of nations and religions.

IV. A Transformation of Consciousness

Historical experience demonstrates the following: Earth cannot be changed for the better unless we achieve a transformation in the consciousness of individuals and in public life. The possibilities for transformation have already been glimpsed in areas such as war and peace, economy, and ecology, where in recent decades fundamental changes have taken place. This transformation must also be achieved in the area of ethics and values! Every individual has intrinsic dignity and inalienable rights, and each also has an inescapable responsibility for what she or he does and does not do. All our decisions and deeds, even our omissions and failures, have consequences.

Keeping this sense of responsibility alive, deepening it and passing it on to future generations, is the special task of religions. We are realistic about what we have achieved in this consensus, and so we urge that the following be observed:

1. A universal consensus on many disputed ethical questions (from bio- and sexual ethics through mass media and scientific ethics to economic and political ethics) will be difficult to attain. Nevertheless, even for many controversial questions, suitable solutions should be attainable in the spirit of the fundamental principles we have jointly developed here.

2. In many areas of life a new consciousness of ethical responsibility has already arisen. Therefore we would be pleased if as many professions as possible, such as those of physicians, scientists, business people, journalists, and politicians, would develop up-to-date codes of ethics which would provide specific guidelines for the vexing questions of these particular professions.

3. Above all, we urge the various communities of faith to formulate their very specific ethics: What does each faith tradition

have to say for example, about the meaning of life and death, the enduring of suffering and the forgiveness of guilt, about selfless sacrifice and the necessity of renunciation, about compassion and joy? These will deepen, and make more specific, the already discernible global ethic.

In conclusion, we appeal to all the inhabitants of this planet. Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed. We pledge to work for such transformation in individual and collective consciousness, for the awakening of our spiritual powers through reflection, meditation, prayer, or positive thinking, for a conversion of the heart. Together we can move mountains! Without a willingness to take risks and a readiness to sacrifice there can be no fundamental change in our situation! Therefore we commit ourselves to a common global ethic, to better mutual understanding, as well as to socially beneficial, peace-fostering, and Earth-friendly ways of life.

We invite all men and women, whether religious or not, to do the same!

The Following Persons Signed the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic

Bahai

Juana Conrad, Jacqueline Delahunt, Dr. Wilma Ellis, Charles Nolley, R. Leilani Smith, Yael Wurmfeld.

Brahma Kumaris

B. K. Jagdish Chander Hassija, B. K. Dadi Prakashmani.

Buddhism

Rev. Koshin Ogui, Sensei.

Mahayana: Rev. Chung OK Lee.

Theravada: Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, Preah Maha Ghosananda, Ajahn Phra Maha Surasak Jivanando, Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, Luang Poh Panyananda, Ven. Achahn Dr. Chuen Phangcham, Ven. Dr. Havanpola Ratanasara, Ven. Dr. Mapalagama Wipulasara Maha Thero.

Vajrayana: H. H. The XIVth Dalai Lama. Zen: Prof. Masao Abe, Zen Master Seung Sahn, Rev. Samu Sunim.

Christianity

Blouke Carus, Dr. Yvonne Delk.

Anglican: Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, James Parks Morton.

Orthodox: Maria Svolos Gebhard.

Protestant: Dr. Thelma Adair, Martti Ahtisaari, Rev. Wesley Ariarajah, Dr. Gerald O. Barney, Dr. Nelvia M. Brady, Dr. David Breed, Rev. John Buchanan, Bischof R. Sheldon Duecker, Prof. Diana L. Eck, Dr. Leon D. Finney, Jr., Dr. James A.

Forbes, Jr., Bishop Frederick C. James, Archbishop Mikko Juva, Prof. James Nelson, Dr. David Ramage, Jr., Robert Reneker, Rev. Dr. Syngman Rhee, Rev. Margaret Orr Thomas, Prof. Carl Friedrich v. Weizsäcker, Prof. Henry Wilson, Rev. Addie Wyatt.

Roman Catholic: Rev. Thomas A. Baima, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Fr. Pierre- Francois de Bethune, Sr. Joan M. Chatfield MM, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh CSC, Abbot Timothy Kelly OSB, Jim Kenney, Prof. Hans Küng, Dolores Leakey, Sr. Joan Monica McGuire OP, Fr. Maximilian Mizzi, Dr. Robert Muller, Fr. Albert Nambiaparambil, Bishop Placido Rodriguez, Bishop Willy Romelus, Dorothy Savage, Brother David Steindl-Rast OSB, Brother Wayne Teasdale.

Native Religions

H. I. G. Bambi Baaba.

Akuapim: Nana Apeadu.

Yoruba: S. K. H. Oseijeman Adefunmi I, Baba Metahochi Kofi Zannu.

Native American: Archie Mosay, Burton Pretty On Top, Peter V. Catches.

Hinduism

Dr. M. Aram, Jayashree Athavale-Talwarkar, S. H. Swami Chidananda Saraswati, Swami Chidananda Saraswati Muniji, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Sadguru Sant Keshavadas, P. V. Krishnaya, Dr. Lakshmi Kumari, Amrish Mahajan, Dr. Krishna Reddy,

Prof. V. Madhusudan Reddy, Swami Satchidananda, S. H. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, S. H. Dr. Bala Siva Yogindra Maharaj.

Vedanta: Pravrajika Amalaprana, Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, Pravrajika Vivekaprana.

Jainism

Dr. Rashmikant Gardi.

Digambar: Narendra P. Jain.

Shwetambar: S. H. Shri Atmanandji, Dipchand S. Gardi, S. E. Dr. L. M. Singhvi, S. H. Acharya Sushil Kumarji Maharaj.

Judaism

Helen Spector.

Conservativ: Prof. Susannah Heschel.

Reformed: Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, Norma U. Levitt, Rabbi Herman Schaalman, Dr. Howard A. Sulkin.

Orthodox: Prof. Ephraim Isaac.

Islam

Tan Sri Dato Seri Ahmad Sarji bin Abdul-Hamid, Dr. Qazi Ashfaq Ahmed, Hamid Ahmed, Mazhar Ahmed, Hon. Louis Farrakhan, Dr. Hamid Abdul Hai, Mohammed A. Hai, Dr. Mohammad Hamidullah, Dr. Aziza al-Hibri, Dr. Asad Husain, Dato Dr. Haji Ismail bin Ibrahim, Dr. Irfan Ahmad Khan, Qadir H. Khan, Dr. Abdel Rahman Osman,

Prof. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Imam Dawud Assad, Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, Hon. Syed Shahabuddin.

Neo-Paganism

Rev. Baroness Cara-Marguerite-Drusilla, Rev. Deborah Ann Light, Lady Olivia Robertson.

Sikhism

Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji, Bhai Mohinder Singh, Dr. Mehervan Singh, Hardial Singh, Indarjit Singh, Singh Sahib Jathedar Manjit Singh, Dr. Balwant Singh Hansra.

Taoism

Chungliang Ai Huang.

Theosophism

Radha Burnier.

Zoroastrianism

Dastoor Dr. Kersey Antia, Dr. Homi Dhalla, Dastoor Dr. Kaikhusroo Minocher Jamaspasa, Dastoor Jehangir Oshidari, Rohinton Rivetna, Homi Taleyarkhan, Dastoor Kobad Zarolia, Dastoor Mehraban Zarhosty.

Interreligious Organizations

Karl Berolzheimer, Dr. Daniel Gomez-Ibanez, Ma Jaya Bhagavati, Peter Laurence, Dr. Karan Singh, Dr. John B. Taylor, Rev. Robert Traer, Dr. William F. Vendley.

And many other persons whose signatures were not identifiable.



History of the Foundation

The question of a Global Ethic goes back to Professor Hans Küng's book "Global Responsibility. In Search of a New World Ethic" (1990), which was first published in English in 1991. This book developed programmatically the idea that the religions of the world can make a contribution to the peace of humankind only if they reflect on those elements of an ethic which they already have in common: on a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes.

Underlying the Global Ethic project is the basic conviction that there can be:

- ◆ No peace among the nations without peace among the religions.
- ◆ No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.
- ◆ No dialogue between the religions without research into the foundations of the religions.

The first major result of this research into the foundations of the religions was the "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" which was endorsed by the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993. The draft was written by Hans Küng in the Institute for Ecumenical Research at the University of Tübingen.

In this declaration, for the first time representatives of all the religions came to an agreement on the principles for a global ethic and committed themselves to four irrevocable directives:

- ◆ Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life.
- ◆ Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order.
- ◆ Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness.
- ◆ Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.

The Global Ethic Foundation has come into being through the generosity of Count K. K. von der Groeben. In 1995 he read "Global Responsibility" and was so impressed by it that he donated a substantial sum towards the dissemination of the idea of a global ethic.

The interest from the capital of the Foundation will ensure that a small research team under the direction of Hans Küng can engage in long-term work to further a global ethic. The Foundation will also support wider initiatives and projects in line with its aims. The basis of the Foundation's programme is the "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" endorsed by the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Aims of the Foundation

I. To carry out and encourage inter-cultural and inter-religious research.

This aim will be achieved in particular through theological and other research into the foundations of the religions, especially through the production and promotion of academic publications (books and articles) in the interest of inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-denominational understanding.

II. To stimulate and implement inter-cultural and inter-religious education.

This aim will be achieved in particular through

- ◆ teaching and lecturing to disseminate the results of the research sponsored by the Foundation, especially the ideas relating to a fundamental ethic common to all men and women, a global ethic. This will be done in churches, colleges, academies, schools, universities, associations and interested groups of every kind, both national and international;
- ◆ further education of those interested, through conferences, lectures, seminars or workshops aimed at deepening the theme of a global ethic;

◆ publicity to promote a global ethic through the media (newspaper articles, interviews, radio and television programmes).

III. To enable and support such inter-cultural and inter-religious encounter necessary for research and education.

This aim will be achieved in particular through

- ◆ the stimulation and encouragement of initiatives in society, politics and culture in the interest of understanding between peoples (e.g. confidence-building measures between the religions);
- ◆ promotion of encounters between people of different cultures and religions (colloquia, study trips and congresses);
- ◆ the development of the existing network of inter-cultural and inter-religious relations to further a global ethic;
- ◆ access to key documents and literature with the help of modern communication technologies.

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**To safeguard peace, freedom and justice;
to strengthen democratic institutions;
to combat poverty; and
to preserve a sound natural basis for the generations yet to come
– these are the global challenges of today.**

For more than 40 years the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAF) has been co-operating with partners in over 120 countries in the world in order to cope with these challenges.

KAF's international activities aim at

- implementing the principle of non-violent conflict resolution,
- supporting democracy and the rule of law,
- respecting human rights,
- promoting understanding across national and cultural borders,
- providing help towards self-help in development,
- fighting the causes of poverty and
- encouraging environment protection.

In fact, this is active peace policy on a global scale.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation has been named after the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and is guided by the principles of Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) who is one of the founding fathers of a modern,

peaceful and truly democratic Germany and of a united Europe, too.

In addition, KAF's values are derived from both the Catholic Christian Social Teachings and the Protestant Christian Ethics. However, KAF is open to all faiths and belief systems, even to non-believers, as long as they subscribe in words and in deeds to the universal values of peace, freedom and justice.

Legally speaking, KAF is a non-government organization registered in the German Registrar of Societies. It has strong ties to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Party for which KAF serves as a think-tank and a training institution. However, all KAF training programmes are open to the general public, too.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation was founded in 1956 in order to conduct civic education for public servants, public opinion leaders and politically interested citizen in order to promote peace, freedom, justice, democracy, the rule of law and the unique German concept of social market economy (Soziale Marktwirtschaft).

In Germany, KAF – apart from its headquarters in Berlin - is operating 1 academy, 2 centres and 21 institutes of political education. More than 60 representative offices abroad are running dialogue, education and development programmes together with over 200 foreign partner organizations in more than 120 countries.

Already since the 1970ies, KAF has been cooperating with a number of well-known Malaysian partner organizations to support the development of a modern Malaysia:

- Malaysian Institute of Management (MIM),
- Institute for Policy Research (IPR),
- Malaysian Strategic Research Center (MSRC),
- Institute for Development Studies (IDS) in Sabah and
- Movement for Progress (AZAM) in Sarawak.

In addition, KAF has cooperated with other government and non-government organizations on a case-to-case basis, like the Kuala Lumpur Society for Transparency and Integrity (KLSTI), Asian Institute for Development Communication

(AIDCOM), Soka Gakkai Malaysia (SGM), Malaysian Interfaith Network (MIN) etc.

In Malaysia, apart from the above-mentioned goals, KAF is focussing on the promotion of

- inter-cultural, inter-faith and inter-ethnic understanding, tolerance, respect, appreciation and cooperation,
- the fundamental common values of all religions, faiths, cultures and civilizations,
- a holistic concept of a sustainable market economy encompassing well-balanced economic, social, ecological and spiritual development,
- environment protection, and
- integrity, transparency, democratic control and the rule of law in the fight for good governance and against corruption and the abuse of power.

Entirely financed by German government funds, the KAF programmes in Malaysia form part of the flourishing bilateral cooperation between Germany and Malaysia.

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The Malaysian Interfaith Network (MIN) was created during the 1st Taiping Interfaith Dialogue Roundtable which took place from 10 to 13 December 2002.

For the first time since many years, representatives of the various religions in Malaysia, including sisters and brothers of Islam, met and discussed values and concerns which they all have in common.

The over 30 Taiping Roundtable participants informed each other about the many ongoing altruistic social activities of the various faith and interfaith organizations, defined the common values and common concerns they share and set up 6 action groups to address the most urgent concerns.

Finally, they decided to establish the Malaysian Interfaith Network (MIN) in order

- to provide a platform of communication for the various interfaith organizations, initiatives and actions in Malaysia,
- to promote the common values shared by all faiths, and
- to foster interfaith understanding and cooperation.

The Taiping meeting discussed and agreed upon the following

KEY COMMON VALUES :

1. Integrity & Accountability
2. Love & Compassion
3. Respect
4. Justice
5. Freedom
6. Service
7. Environment Protection
8. Unity of Religions
9. Peace
10. Gender Equality
11. Moderation

The Taiping meeting also identified the following

KEY COMMON CONCERNS :

1. Loss of Family Values
2. Extremism
3. Environmental Degradation
4. Infringement of Human Rights
5. Lack of Spirituality
6. Lack of Multi-Faith Education
7. Lack of Tolerance
8. Materialism & Greed
9. Ignorance & Prejudice

Arising from the above-mentioned common values and concerns, the Taiping meeting established the following

6 ACTION GROUPS:

1. Promotion of Family Values
2. Promotion of Multi-faith Education and Common Values, especially the Golden Rule ("Treat others as you would like to be treated")
3. Social Service
4. Environmental Protection
5. Protection and Promotion of Human Rights
6. Promotion of Good Governance

The **MOTTO** of MIN is :

**Treat others
as you would like
to be treated**

The **FIVE MAIN OBJECTIVES** of MIN are :

1. To promote interfaith understanding, tolerance, respect, appreciation and cooperation.
2. To promote the universal perspective and the common values of all faiths.
3. To promote inner peace, peace with all peoples and peace with the environment.
4. To assist in creating a tolerant, progressive and united nation consistent with the spirit of the Malaysian Constitution, the Rukun Negara, Vision 2020 and the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic of the World's Parliament of Religions.
5. To network and co-operate with like-minded organizations within and outside Malaysia.

Contacts:

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This exhibition brochure introduces to you, in its first part, the following religions and faiths: Indigenous Spiritualities, Hinduism, Chinese Religion, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and Baha'i Faith.

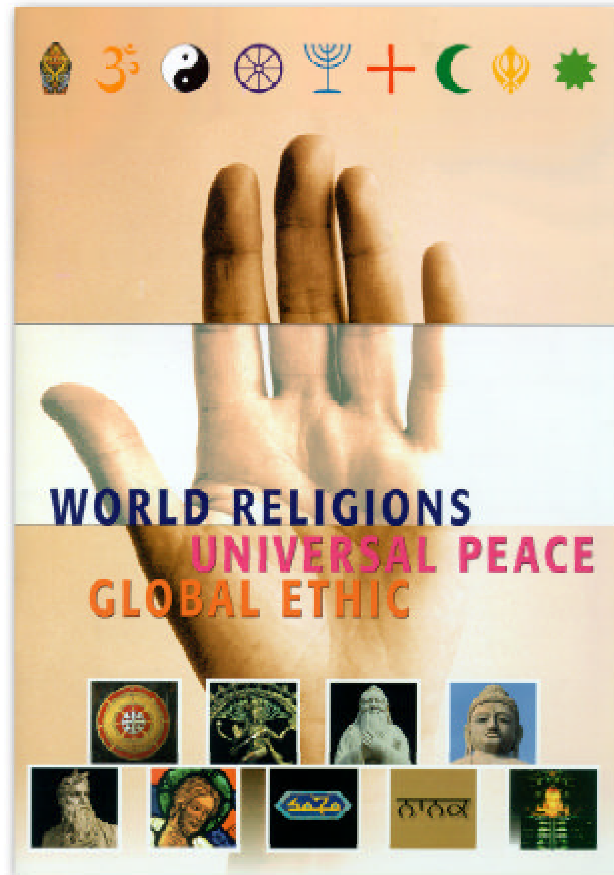
In the second part of this exhibition brochure, you will be informed about

- the Global Ethic concept,
- the Golden Rule principle, and
- six core ethical standards

which all religions and belief systems have in common:

- 1) Treat others as you would like to be treated (i.e. the so-called Golden Rule);
- 2) Every human being must be treated humanely;
- 3) Have respect for life;
- 4) Deal honestly and fairly;
- 5) Speak and act truthfully; and
- 6) Respect and love one another, and be responsible for your partner's happiness.

These are the six basic principles for a global ethic which was accepted by the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993.



This booklet can be obtained at

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