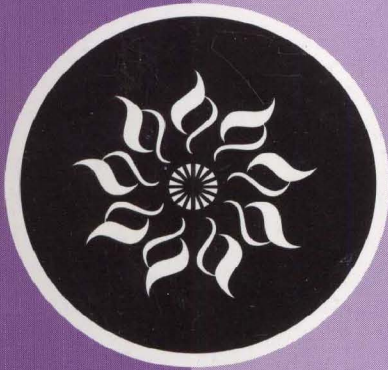


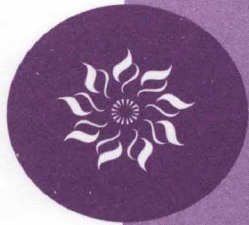
Council
for a
Parliament
of the
World's Religions



A Call to Our Guiding Institutions

*Presented on the occasion of the
1999 Parliament of the World's Religions*

*December 1 through 8, 1999
Cape Town • South Africa*



A Call to Our Guiding Institutions

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From the *Global Ethic* to A *Call to Our Guiding Institutions*

INTRODUCTION

Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed first. . . . [And] 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.

Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration
1993 Parliament of the World's Religions • Chicago

We find ourselves at a moment when people everywhere are coming to recognize that the world is a global village. The perils and promises of this new reality bring to mind several ancient understandings: that human beings are interdependent and responsible for the care of the Earth; that we are each worthy of a meaningful life and obliged to help the human community toward a life of peace and dignity; that the choices shaping a just, peaceful, and sustainable future are choices we must make together. Unique to this moment is the possibility of a new level of creative engagement between the institutions of religion and spirituality and the other powerful institutions that influence the character and course of human society.

What is needed now is a persuasive invitation to our guiding institutions to build new, reliable, and more imaginative partnerships toward the shaping of a better world. In the face of unprecedented challenges to the well-being of the Earth and its people, a clear, calm call to such creative engagement may be the harbinger of a new day. As we find new ways to cooperate with one another, an unprecedented process of transformation can unfold, and new hope can emerge.

At the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, therefore, and on the occasion of the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions in Cape Town, South Africa, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) extends such an invitation: *A Call to Our Guiding Institutions*.

Continuing the Parliament Tradition

The 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions and its keynote document, *A Call to Our Guiding Institutions*, continue a tradition born in Chicago in 1893. At the first Parliament of Religions, several hundred leaders, scholars, theologians, and other representatives of the world's religions came together to ponder the place of faith and spirituality in the modern world. As the deliberate formal encounter of many religions, East and West, this unprecedented gathering marked the beginning of modern interreligious dialogue.

This tradition was reborn in 1993 as more than seven thousand people from a wide spectrum of the world's religious and spiritual communities gathered again in Chicago. Throughout the 1993 Parliament, participants were challenged to think critically and holistically about the role of religious and spiritual communities in the pursuit of creative solutions to the world's most pressing problems. They explored issues of religious and spiritual identity, engaged in thoughtful dialogue with persons of other traditions and cultures, and searched for effective ways of bringing the attention, energy, and influence of religion and spirituality to bear on the critical issues confronting the planetary community.

In order to provide a context for these reflections, the 1993 Parliament offered a thoughtful and provocative statement of fundamental ethical principles shared by the world's religious and spiritual traditions. That statement took form in a groundbreaking document, *Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration*, which was signed by nearly two hundred religious and spiritual leaders from around the world. It set forth four fundamental commitments that remain powerfully relevant in the face of the issues that the 1993 Parliament addressed—non-violence and respect for life, solidarity and a just economic order, tolerance and a life of truthfulness, and equal rights and partnership between men and women.

The Next Step

On the occasion of the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions in Cape Town, South Africa, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions urges continuing reflection on the commitments at the heart of the *Global Ethic* and renewed efforts to apply them. Essential to such efforts is the acknowledgment that we live in a world in which powerful institutions exercise a significant and inescapable influence on our collective future. Woven through the core documents and practices of these institutions are values, perspectives, and assumptions that can be examined in the light of the principles of the *Global Ethic*. Asking them to examine their roles for a new century, the *Call* will make it clear that the principles and commitments of the *Global Ethic* relate directly and immediately to their functioning. It will also

propose a process of creative engagement that will involve not only the religions of the world but all other guiding institutions as well.

The Council's hope is that the *Call* will provide encouragement and direction for those wishing to offer gifts of service to the world. Such gifts express a fundamental spiritual inclination toward good will, generosity, hospitality, compassion, righteousness, and justice. Indeed, the existence of goodness in the world has often been directly related to the spirit in which such gifts are given. Though ambitious endeavors and noble projects have made undeniable contributions, the world needs and continues to thirst for such individual and collective gifts of service—now, more than ever.

The Nature of the *Call*

A Call to Our Guiding Institutions is not a prescriptive or admonitory document. It is instead an appeal for active, ongoing dialogue about the creation of a just, peaceful, and sustainable future on behalf of the entire Earth community. For this reason, the *Call* consists of specific, particular invitations rather than sweeping declarations or hectoring injunctions.

Furthermore, the authority of the *Call* will come only in small measure from its endorsement by religious and spiritual leaders. Its strength flows primarily from its expression of beliefs and convictions already deeply held—and held in common—by the world's religious and spiritual communities, and from the collaborations each part of the *Call* may inspire.

In the pages that follow, key excerpts from the document *Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration* appear in the margins of the various sections. These serve as reminders that the *Global Ethic* sets the stage for the *Call* and informs its core.

All are invited to reflect on this document and to respond in ways that will move our world toward a just, peaceful, and sustainable future.

RATIONALE

Visions of the World

Visions of the world-as-it-might-be have always found expression through religious and spiritual traditions. These traditions embody human aspirations: for meaning and purpose in life; for respect and mutuality between diverse peoples, cultures, and religions; for justice and peace; for the alleviation of suffering; and for harmony with the Earth. In the practice of these traditions, their respective communities have gained a glimpse and a taste of the world as it might be.

In the long historical struggle to realize their respective visions, however, religious and spiritual communities have sometimes adopted divisive, unjust, inhumane, and Earth-denying attitudes and practices. Sadly, this phenomenon has been most clearly manifested in interreligious relations. All too often, these relations have been marred by intolerance, oppression, and even violence, dramatically undermining efforts to build a better world.

Yet, today there is a broad and deep movement toward openness, goodwill, and warm-hearted and loving engagement among religious and spiritual communities around the world. Sustained encounters between people of different religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions have heightened the momentum toward actualizing our many visions of a better world, as well as stronger possibilities for establishing ethical common ground. New awareness of shared ethical principles opens the way into a new era of creative engagement—where we find and implement new modes of outreach, cooperation, and constructive common action, not only among the world's religions but among all of the world's guiding institutions.

Towards a Global Ethic

While the world's religious and spiritual traditions differ profoundly with respect to various beliefs and practices, they nevertheless hold in common certain ethical principles. One formulation of this ethical common ground is found in the document, *Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration*, issued on the occasion of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions.

The document identifies four universal directives that offer a basis for a "global ethic":

- Do not kill.
- Do not steal.
- Do not lie.
- Do not commit sexual immorality.

These directives are further described and emphasized in the following affirmations:

- Have respect for life.
- Deal honestly and fairly.
- Speak and act truthfully.
- Respect and love one another.

Towards a Global Ethic then proposes that these affirmations lead to four vital commitments (listed here with excerpts from the text):

▪ **Commitment to a Culture of Non-Violence and Respect for Life.**

"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."

"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... must not be encouraged. Instead we must cultivate living in harmony with nature and the cosmos."

▪ **Commitment to a Culture of Solidarity and a Just Economic Order.**

"No one has the right to rob or dispossess in any way whatsoever any other person or the commonweal... No one has the right to use her or his possessions without concern for the needs of society and Earth."

"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."

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

"No woman or man, no institution, no state or church or religious community has the right to speak lies to other humans."

"We must cultivate truthfulness in all our relationships instead of dishonesty, dissembling, and opportunism... We must courageously serve the truth and we must remain constant and trustworthy, instead of yielding to opportunistic accommodation to life."

▪ **Commitment to a Culture of Equal Rights and Partnership between Men and Women.**

"No one has the right to degrade others to mere sex objects, to lead them into or hold them in sexual dependency."

"The relationship between women and men should be characterized not by patronizing behavior or exploitation, but by love, partnership, and trustworthiness."

These commitments have profound implications for the inner life of individuals and the shared life of the human community.

First, 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."

Second, they suggest the outlines of "a vision of peoples living peacefully together, of ethnic and ethical groupings and of religions sharing responsibility for the care of the Earth," a vision made possible by the discovery and embrace of common ethical principles.

Addressing the Critical Issues

Reflecting on the shared principles expressed in the *Global Ethic* we see the critical issues of our time in stark relief: disintegrating community, unrelenting demand on the Earth's limited resources, aggravated injustice, growing divisions between rich and poor, spiritual indirection. At the same time, if we address these agonies from the perspective of shared moral commitments, we can find hope. That endeavor can be described in the following ways:

▪ **Building Community in Diversity**

Diversity is a hallmark of our contemporary experience. Today every metropolitan center is home to a striking variety of cultures, ethnic and national groups, and religions. Never before has the encounter between people from different paths and perspectives been so widespread, touching individuals and communities everywhere, enriching the tapestry of our lives together, and recasting the dynamics of our world. When such encounters take place in an atmosphere of respect and mutuality, then new understanding and cooperation can emerge. More evident at present, however, are the tensions, hostilities, and even violence that arise from misunderstanding, fear, and hatred of those who are different. The urgent task is to embrace human diversity in such a way that we no longer erect barriers out of differences but, by understanding and appreciating them, build bridges to harmonious, vibrant community.

▪ **Commitment to Sustainability**

The issue of sustainability addresses the relationship of basic human needs to the continued viability of the Earth. Today the human family numbers has exceeded six billion. If our present rate of population growth and resource consumption continues, we are likely to approach and then exceed the limits of the Earth's ability to support us. Economic analysis suggests that to meet even the basic needs of so many would require a huge increase in agriculture and industry, prompting thoughtful persons to ask whether the Earth can possibly sustain such demands. For example: levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide have risen dramatically; one-half of all land has already been transformed for human use; and one-half of all accessible fresh water has been claimed to meet current human needs. As a result, one of every eight plant varieties and ever-greater numbers of animal species are at risk of extinction, a prospect that further imperils the planet and its human community. The challenge is to find sustainable ways to peacefully meet the needs of all people while preserving the integrity of the whole community of life on Earth.

▪ **Striving for Justice**

Currently, four-fifths of the world's people live on one dollar (U.S.), five rand (South Africa), or fifty rupees (India) per day or less. Wrenching poverty, exacerbated by systemic injustice and inequitable distribution of resources, gives rise to disease, crime, violence, and hopelessness. Current trends toward globalization and modern models of "development," which are rarely community oriented, have often increased hardship and privation for millions of people. Injustice of this kind and scope poisons the familial, social, and spiritual life of us all. It is imperative, from both an idealistic and a pragmatic point of view, that the sufferings of a majority of the human community be alleviated through urgent economic, political, and social reform.

▪ **Solidarity and Service**

The division of the world into rich and poor, north and south, empowered and disenfranchised, privileged and exploited, is growing. These divisions feed, and then feed upon, a pervasive alienation. If we are unaware of our fundamental connection to one another, we will not choose to work for justice and therefore will find no peace. The remedy is to identify compassionately with others—with their joys and sorrows, their sufferings and struggles, and their essential human needs. Such solidarity is the root of justice and the wellspring of service. In rediscovering our shared humanness and in serving one another, we emerge from estrangement into community.

▪ Seeking Spiritual Grounding

Without spiritual grounding, visions of a far better world cannot be realized. In an age of profound spiritual yearning, the religious and spiritual traditions of the world offer wisdom

to move beyond our narrow self-interest
and to build community in the spirit of hospitality;

to recognize the interdependence of all systems that support life
and to choose sustainable ways of living;

to see that the needs of others make a claim on our lives
and to strive for justice and peace;

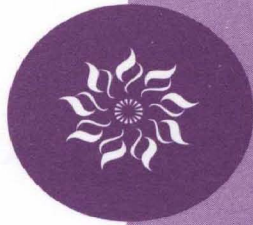
to remember our place in the human family
and to express compassion through service;

to deepen spiritual awareness as the wellspring of personal
transformation and to embrace the whole human community.

Creative Engagement

When reflecting on the future of the human community, one must consider the world's most powerful institutions—institutions whose policies, for better and for worse, influence every aspect of life on the planet. Clearly, the critical issues facing the world today present an acute ethical challenge to these institutions.

What is urgently needed is a new opening to creative engagement among the guiding institutions—an active, attentive, and inventive collaboration, rooted in shared moral principles and expressed in mutually sustained programs on behalf of the peoples of the twenty-first century.



A Call to Our Guiding Institutions

- RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY
- GOVERNMENT
- AGRICULTURE, LABOR, INDUSTRY, AND COMMERCE
- EDUCATION
- ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA
- SCIENCE AND MEDICINE
- INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
- ORGANIZATIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

A ***Call to Our Guiding Institutions*** is offered with the understanding that those who helped to craft this document and those who choose to endorse and implement it are themselves—like all human beings—influenced by the very institutions addressed here. And because all of us, as social beings, participate in one or more of these institutions, each of us therefore shares responsibility for their endeavors and effects.

This document reflects the collective wisdom of the many thoughtful persons from within each of the guiding institutions who have participated in its drafting—leaders, scholars, workers, teachers, executives, interpreters, activists, ethicists, and others. We are deeply indebted to the hundreds of women and men from around the world, young and old, of diverse religious, cultural, and professional backgrounds, who have participated over the past three years in the shaping of this *Call*.



Guided by a vision of the world as it might be, with deep concern for the well-being of the Earth, its people, and all life, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions respectfully calls upon the world's guiding institutions to reassess and redefine their roles in order to assure a just, peaceful, and sustainable future. We invite these institutions to join with each other in a process of creative engagement to address the critical issues that face the world.

We seek common cause with those who strive for justice, peace, and sustainability. We seek to join with those whose lives embody the process of creative engagement. We do this with the knowledge that the future of the whole community of life on Earth depends on the realization of a collaborative, coherent, and moral vision of a better world.

A CALL TO OUR GUIDING INSTITUTIONS

Preamble

As human beings

- ...we are all interdependent and must relate to each other respectfully and peacefully;
- ...we are all—children, women, men—worthy of a meaningful life, and must treat all others with fairness, kindness, encouragement, and love;
- ...we are all responsible for the care of the Earth on which we depend and the well-being of the communities in which we live;
- ...we know that our individual and collective futures will be reshaped by the extent to which we link our societies in partnerships that reach across the continents and across racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual, social, political, economic, and religious lines.

As religious and spiritual persons

- ...we center our lives in an Ultimate Reality, which our traditions call by various names (the Absolute, Allah, Brahman, Dharmakaya, God, Great Spirit, the One, Waheguru), drawing hope and strength therefrom, in trust and vision, in word and silence, in service and solidarity;
- ...we seek to foster creative engagement among the guiding institutions that so profoundly influence life on Earth, in order that we may find imaginative new ways to address the critical issues that confront us all.

As members of the Earth community

- ...we affirm the keystone principle of the document *Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration*:

Every human being must be treated humanely!

We further affirm the four commitments ensuing from this principle:

- 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.

Together, on the occasion of the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions in Cape Town, we extend this *Call* to these guiding institutions whose decisions and actions will mean so much to the future of the entire community of the Earth, urging each to reassess and redefine its role for a new century toward the realization of a just, peaceful, and sustainable future.

The Call to **RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY**

- A** *We envision a world in which*
- ... the diverse religions, spiritual paths, and cultures are recognized and respected;*
 - ... religious and spiritual communities exist in harmony;*
 - ... the pursuit of justice and peace is nurtured by religion and spirituality and by dialogue between religious and spiritual communities;*
 - ... religious and spiritual teachings on wisdom, love, and compassion are prized;*
 - ... service is seen as an essential, uplifting religious and spiritual act;*
 - ... the Earth and all life are revered and cherished.*

B Religion helps human beings find meaning in life and history. It offers paths to enlightenment and salvation and encouragement to follow such paths. Among the noblest functions of religion is the promulgation of systems of beliefs, practices, and ethics that honor the humanity and dignity of each person and foster the vitality and moral well-being of the society.

When individuals and communities struggle with ethical questions, religion and spirituality provide necessary and trustworthy values, norms, motivations, and ideals, all grounded in an ultimate reality. At the same time, ethical challenges demand that religious and spiritual people bring their most cherished principles to bear in the real world. How should we treat the stranger in our midst? What claim do the needs of others make on our lives and energies? How should we respond to the threats of an enemy? It is in answering such questions that religious and spiritual communities live their convictions.

Today, we face these enduring questions and age-old problems in the context of new global realities. Greed, injustice, hatred, and violence are everywhere

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.

*Towards a Global Ethic:
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exacerbated by a burgeoning human population and unprecedented ecological pressures. It is vital that we develop a global perspective in order to meet adequately our ethical responsibilities as human beings.

From such a perspective, our religious and spiritual communities can best serve by extending the hospitality that our traditions teach. In solidarity with those in need, we can act with compassion, generosity, and courage to build a just and joyous life for all. In so doing, however, we must realize that religious and spiritual individuals and communities cannot act alone but must engage with people from all walks of life, who possess expertise and experience of every sort. Only in such a collaborative spirit can we find the basis for real service and genuine hope.

- C We call on the institutions of religion and spirituality to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with the institutions of religion and spirituality to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited

- 1 to deepen respect and mutual welcome between religious and spiritual communities—in that spirit of hospitality which is to be found in each tradition;
- 2 to strengthen the search for those shared ethical and spiritual values and principles that can enable religious and spiritual communities to engage creatively with one other and with the world;
- 3 to encourage religious and spiritual individuals and communities to speak out for the welfare of all human beings in the name of their own values and in solidarity with others;
- 4 to provide leadership to assure that the Earth is respected, revered, and protected;

- 5 to find practical means to bring those elements of their teachings that address justice, peace, and care for future generations to wider and more immediate effect through engagement with the other guiding institutions;
- 6 to work closely with the institutions of government to bring religious teachings and values to bear in the struggle against corruption, dishonesty, and bribery at all levels;
- 7 to safeguard against the use of religious and spiritual belief and practice as briefs for intolerance, tools for political manipulation, or warrants for conflict, terror, and violence;
- 8 to urge their adherents to work together—within and across traditions—to respond directly to the critical issues facing the world: intolerance; racism; violence; the threat of annihilation through the use of nuclear weapons; social, political, and economic injustice; systematic deprivation and exploitation of children and women; and ecological degradation;
- 9 to promote service—in solidarity and in partnership with the poor and vulnerable—to the entire human family and to the Earth as an affirmation of their teachings on personal spiritual growth, social justice, and life lived in ever-deepening relationship to Ultimate Reality.

The Call to **GOVERNMENT**

A *We envision a world in which*
 ... universal human rights and responsibilities,
 grounded in fundamental ethical and moral
 principles, are upheld;
 ... the structures of power are accountable to and serve
 the needs of all generations;
 ... our leaders are worthy of public trust;
 ... peace within and among nations is the rule and
 not the exception;
 ... the great decisions in human affairs are made with
 a thoughtful care for the future of the planetary
 community.

B Among the noblest functions of government is
 securing for its citizens their individual and collective
 well-being. This end can only be achieved through
 the honoring and safeguarding of human dignity
 and the constructive mediation between individual
 freedoms and collective action. When government
 succeeds in this purpose, it assures the social,
 political, and ecological integrity of the community.

Mere laws, prescriptions, and conventions alone
 cannot achieve a better social order. Freedom,
 justice, and peace rest on a common, enduring
 regard for the equal and inalienable rights of all
 people. What is required is that we as citizens live
 by a shared ethic that clarifies our mutual concerns
 and common values while transcending narrowly
 defined boundaries and interests.

Nowhere is the need for such a shared ethic more
 apparent than in international relations. Today, our
 world is a field of competing nations. For the world
 to become a true community, we must work toward
 a profound affirmation of global interdependence,
 moving beyond the present model of tenuously

On the basis of personal
 experience 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
 freedom presumes a
 consciousness of responsibility
 and duty, and that therefore
 both the minds and hearts of
 women and men must be
 addressed;
- that rights without morality
 cannot long endure and that
*there will be no better global order
 without a global ethic.*

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 Religions • Chicago

balanced power among nation-states toward a model of robust cooperation within the human family.

The art of governing—at local, regional, national, and international levels—can be understood in terms of the skillful application of ethical mandates and moral convictions to political realities. How can governments move beyond national concerns toward global responsibility? What steps can be taken toward the responsible use of power so as to nurture a global culture of justice, peace, and sustainability? What is the responsibility of the citizenry in fostering ethical government in a global context? To meet these responsibilities effectively will demand of both those who govern and the governed an unshakable commitment to the cultivation of a high moral will and a truly global perspective.

- C We call on the institution of government to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with the institution of government to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited

- 1 to recognize and realize universal human rights—with all their civic, political, economic, social, and cultural implications, and with particular regard to women, children, the aged, and the poor;
- 2 to encourage and create initiatives and alliances to foster a culture of justice and peace at local, national, regional, and international levels;
- 3 to work most urgently and effectively to encourage and implement sustainable ways of living in a rich yet fragile world;
- 4 to seek the advice and cooperation of religious and spiritual leaders and communities in an effort to bring their teachings and values to bear in the struggle to end bribery, dishonesty, and corruption at all levels of government;

- 5 to enter into close dialogue and counsel with religious and spiritual communities concerning the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the criteria (if any) for a "just war";
- 6 to mitigate the factors that lead to violent conflict and war: government (and government-authorized) sales of arms; possession and threat to use nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; and policies that underwrite economic exploitation, social or political injustice, or the destruction of communities and habitats;
- 7 to denounce, counter, and deter genocide, as well as persecution, oppression, and terrorism of any sort, whether directed at members of a religious or spiritual community, of an ethnic or national group, of a culture, generation, or gender;
- 8 to broaden the role of the military to include such peacemaking functions as: meeting the challenges of natural disasters, famine, and epidemic; building or repairing vital infrastructure; or conducting ecological surveys;
- 9 to take up their responsibility in the international effort to remedy the indebtedness of the poorest nations and establish more transparent, holistic, and culturally sensitive measures for assessing economic development;
- 10 to move toward a model of "communities of communities," from the village level through the international, with an ethos of service to the common good.

The Call to **AGRICULTURE, LABOR, INDUSTRY, AND COMMERCE**

- A We envision a world in which*
- ... our productive activities are creative and vital and give meaning to our lives;*
 - ... high moral standards and trustworthiness guide all interactions in the marketplace and the workplace;*
 - ... economic, social, and physical well-being is not the exception but the normal human condition;*
 - ... agricultural policies, labor relations, industrial development, and commercial exchange are just, harmonious, and culturally enriching;*
 - ... agriculture, industry, business, and investment are conducted with constant thoughtful regard for the vitality and fragility of the Earth and all life;*
 - ... the essential needs of all are met in a manner that can be sustained well into the future.*

- B Among the noblest functions of agriculture, labor, industry, and commerce are the creative development and production of goods, services, and information to meet the basic physical and social needs of each human community—in a sustainable, renewable, and non-disruptive manner.*

What we human beings desire, however, often eclipses material interests. What we work toward is often other than material prosperity. People everywhere feel the need to make something of themselves and their world that goes well beyond calculations of solvency. This perspective on human happiness and fulfillment is a considerable complement to current theories of the dominance of the market economy.

Consequently, economic power should be wielded in the service of economic justice and the commonweal. Wealth should be used equitably.

There is no global peace without global justice!

...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.

...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 for those who suffer, with special care for children, the aged, the poor, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely.

...We must value a sense of moderation and modesty instead of an unquenchable greed for money, prestige, and consumption. In greed, humans lose their "souls," their freedom, their composure, their inner peace, and thus, that which makes them human.

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State economic plans, corporate financial investments, agricultural techniques, and industrial processes should always do justice to human dignity and the community of life on Earth.

In the modern world, instances of the exploitation of human beings, the Earth itself, and all life are more numerous than ever. The reality of globalization, the interconnectedness of the world economy, and the inherent fragility of the Earth's ecosystem heighten the need for new strategies. At the same time, an extraordinary prospect has opened up: a worldwide awareness of the sensitive roles of agriculture, labor, industry, and commerce in relation to the pursuit of a more equitable and humane world.

- C We call on the institutions of agriculture, labor, industry, and commerce to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with the institutions of agriculture, labor, industry, and commerce to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited

- 1 to develop and extend common statements of ethical standards and practices for production, exchange, investment, lending, and employment that could be accepted, implemented, and monitored around the world;
- 2 to expand long-term goals to include not only the increase of wealth, but also the alleviation of poverty and the advancement of the social, cultural, spiritual, and ecological well-being of communities;
- 3 to afford all peoples and nations the opportunity to participate equally in a global market, operating on trade agreements that safeguard and promote community-based economics and regional trade;
- 4 to act immediately and comprehensively to ensure that fair compensation and humane working conditions are the norm, and the scourges of forced child labor, prison labor, sweatshops, and virtual slavery are put to an end;

- 5 to bring their collective experience, knowledge, and skills at persuasion and innovation into partnerships with organizations of civil society dedicated to the rights of working men and women, intercultural and interreligious understanding, social justice, ecology, and community-based economics;
- 6 to pay careful attention to corollary effects of patterns of agriculture, manufacture, investment, marketing, and distribution in light of their impact on local communities and ecological systems worldwide;
- 7 to become at once exemplars and advocates of sustainability, carefully weighing short-term economic benefits against the continued viability of the Earth's ecosystem and the constant basic needs of the whole human community;
- 8 to create joint structures with other guiding institutions to address more immediately and effectively the principal problems of our time, including severe ecological degradation, the deep indebtedness of poorer countries, massive unemployment, the widely unrewarded labors of women, and generations of poverty and malnutrition.

The Call to **EDUCATION**

- A We envision a world in which*
- ... learning, as a singularly enlivening human pursuit, is available to all;*
 - ... intergenerational learning is cherished;*
 - ... ethical, moral, and spiritual questions are an integral part of academic and civil discourse;*
 - ... the world's ethnic groups, cultures, and religious and spiritual communities are taught lifelong about each other in such a way that each becomes appreciative of the other;*
 - ... every human being has the opportunity to grow in personal and intellectual responsibility and committed service to the entire community of life;*
 - ... understanding and reverence for the vital yet fragile Earth provides the groundwork and incentive for sustainable living.*

- B Among the noblest functions of education is the discovery of imaginative, enduring ways to translate and then to question humanity's knowledge, traditions, travails, and insights. Through this process of discovery and reflection, education equips the members of each successive generation to lead honorable, grateful, and engaged lives, which enrich their respective communities.*

The principles of a global ethic make it clear that education should be a basic and universal human right. Girls and boys around the world should have full access to learning. Educators must seek out and adapt astute methods and well-researched materials to advance literacy in their regions, thus laying foundations for the equity and well-being of all societies. Young learners should be protected from child labor and other kinds of exploitation harmful to their development. Moreover, life-long learning should be a cultural opportunity and a personal challenge for people of all ages.

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.

... 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.

... 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.

... 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.

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Particular attention must be paid to learning about values, since an understanding of how values are adopted, adapted, and shared is crucial to a peaceful and harmonious life. As no institution can do this work alone, it is important that families, schools, neighborhoods, local religious and spiritual communities, and each of the guiding institutions collaborate in this effort. Public education must never be used to further the exclusive aims of interest groups, ideologies, political parties, or religions.

Education is one of the most precious gifts a society can give for the enrichment of the society itself. We are obliged to make wise and equitable investments to develop excellent teachers and to build a basic infrastructure capable of carrying out essential educational tasks.

- C We call on the institution of education to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with the institution of education to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited

- 1 to renew their commitment to universal education and to develop and extend common statements of ethical standards and practices that can be accepted, implemented, and monitored around the world;
- 2 to work together with other guiding institutions to provide and strengthen the economic and material base for the development of educational systems worldwide;
- 3 to address the needs of the world's poorest and least educated, with full-fledged universal literacy as a primary goal;
- 4 to explore the most substantial and expedient ways to expand and enrich the education of girls and women worldwide;

- 5 to make the best use of new media and new technologies to broaden intercultural access and exchange, while at the same time honoring local knowledge and traditional ways of knowing;
- 6 to ensure that broadened intercultural access and exchange have a positive impact in areas of vital concern, with particular emphasis on sanitation, health care, parenting, and enrichment of the lives of the neglected and dispossessed;
- 7 to integrate learning about different cultures, religions, and spiritual practices into the standard educational process;
- 8 to promote respect for other ways of life and teach non-violence and peace-making at every stage of learning;
- 9 to promote ecological literacy and the study of sustainability as essential to education at all levels;
- 10 to acknowledge that moral and spiritual questions are as critical to academic as to civil discourse and therefore to include considerations of values, personal responsibility, moral integrity, and community service throughout higher education.

The Call to the **ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA**

- A We envision a world in which*
- ... the stories and images that matter most are those that enrich understanding, deepen responsibility, and nurture personal growth;*
 - ... the networks of communication and modes of artistic expression that link diverse peoples, regions, and ways of life are characterized by integrity and mutuality;*
 - ... the arts and communications media play an active, thoughtful role in enabling a much wider discussion and more profound analysis of the most critical issues and decisions facing the human community;*
 - ... the sacred stories, symbols, and wisdom of the world's religious and spiritual traditions are broadly disseminated and cherished.*

- B Among the noblest functions of the arts and of communications media is the weaving of a sense of community that comes from shared access to the central stories of a culture and the signal events of an era. As a transformative force, the arts and communications media have a special role: to inspire, warn, inform, challenge, set in perspective, and dramatize both our deeds and our dilemmas. In so doing, they energize, broaden, embolden, and deepen public discourse.*

The freedom of the arts and of communications media to inform the public and critique society or government is essential to a just social order. This freedom must be exercised with care for the fabric of each society and the whole cloth of humanity. On the part of the arts, freedom demands a sensitivity to cultural and historical context. On the part of communications media, it also

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.

This is especially true

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

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demands accurate and truthful reporting. Privacy and intimacy must be honored. Art or journalism that degrades or injures individuals or communities must be avoided. Any calls to hate or to violence must be rejected.

Today, movies, television, the music industry, the news media, and the Internet have unprecedented significance as sources of information and influence on cultural life and social change. What is our role as consumers and patrons in shaping the character of art and media? How can we best employ the technologies of the near future for education and enrichment and not merely for entertainment? How can we better recognize, understand, nurture, and be nurtured by the presence of artistic genius?

- C We call on the institutions of the arts and communications media to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with the institutions of the Arts and Communications Media to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited

- 1 to develop and disseminate common statements of ethical standards and practices—where possible, across cultures and disciplines—addressing such issues as the universal professional code for news media, socially responsible journalism, and commitments to cross-cultural understanding;
- 2 to design coherent, widely-acceptable approaches to such issues bearing on the news media as rights of privacy, rules of investigational conduct, remedies for misreporting or misquotation, and retractions for the mistaking or perpetuating of rumor as fact;
- 3 to safeguard the means and open up the methods of global communication so that they serve all segments of society equitably;

- 4 to counter the often dehumanizing sameness of globalized mass culture by supporting local and regional traditions and cultures;
- 5 to promote models for the arts and communications media that give voice to all peoples, cultures, and conditions, ensuring their active involvement in deliberations on issues that face the world;
- 6 to establish and enliven liaisons with religious, interreligious, and intercultural groups, in order to increase journalistic coverage and artistic representation of society's religious, spiritual, interreligious, and intercultural dimensions;
- 7 to eliminate religious, ethnic, and cultural caricatures and stereotypes that devalue the experience of human beings and demean their essential dignity;
- 8 to invest effectively in artistic and journalistic projects that address in long-range terms the most critical problems facing the human community and the Earth;
- 9 to further art and aesthetic appreciation by offering all children art education, to include internationally and nationally acclaimed art—both contemporary and historical—as well as the traditional art and crafts of each region.

The Call to **SCIENCE AND MEDICINE**

- A We envision a world in which*
...we wisely explore the mysteries of life;
...our various systems of knowing enhance one another;
...access to knowledge and to the healing arts is not a
privilege but a right;
...our methods of seeking the truths of existence and
well-being draw us together (rather than separate us);
...humanity is enhanced by technology, in a manner
consistent with our responsibility to the rest of the
Earth community.

- B To enlarge our understanding of the physical world*
and of ourselves is among the noblest functions of
science and medicine. From these material and
human realities we draw many of our metaphors,
operating principles, and therapeutic practices.
Science and medicine provide essential tools in our
efforts to nurture the life and growth of individuals
and communities.

As disciplines engaged in observation, experiment, analysis, and discovery, science and medicine also have a social dimension. Researchers and teachers, physicians and engineers, physicists, chemists, and biologists should be committed to benefiting human life and reducing suffering. In fact, civilization has found ways to make most scientific and medical discoveries and technologies beneficial and productive. Some of these, however, have been employed in dangerous, destructive, life-threatening ways. Therefore, we must always consider the consequences of scientific research, medical programs, and technological development in the context of the well-being of the human community and of the Earth's systems of life.

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.

...A human person is infinitely precious and must be unconditionally protected. But likewise the lives of animals and plants that 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.

...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.

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The influence and power of science, medicine, and technology are now so enormous that scientists, physicians, and engineers bear an unprecedented responsibility for the future. Not only their knowledge and technical skills but also their conscientiousness and prudence are critical to what we make of ourselves and our world in the next decades.

Over the course of history, science and religion have often been seen as contradictory or even as mutually exclusive. Increasing openness, however, has recently produced a new level of dialogue between the two. This development could not be more fortuitous: in the final analysis, the wisdom of religion, the knowledge of science, and the art of medicine are indispensable to each other and to a sustainable future.

- C We call on the institutions of science and medicine to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with the institutions of science and medicine to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited

- 1 to enter into dialogue with competent persons from the world's religious and spiritual traditions with regard to the ethical and moral dimensions of research programs and the long-range consequences of scientific, medical, and technological innovation;
- 2 to reflect sincerely on the limitations and moral boundaries of science and medicine in continual dialogue and exchange with other guiding institutions;
- 3 to develop and disseminate common statements of ethical standards and practices for science, medicine, and technology—across cultures and disciplines;
- 4 to resist efforts at control, redirection, or even domination of scientific and medical enterprises by narrowly defined interests, whether economic, political, military, or religious;

- 5 to give priority, in the development of new programs of research, application, and outreach, to those children, women, and displaced peoples around the world who have little access to advanced systems, tools, and modalities of healing;
- 6 to honor and learn from traditional modes of healing in concert with modern technological perspectives on the human body;
- 7 to take always into account, in the design of experimental protocols, public health programs, laboratories, research centers, clinics, and hospitals, the constellation of values, cultural norms, and spiritual concerns of local communities;
- 8 to find ways to focus the creative energies of science and medicine more intentionally, systematically, and intensively on the most pressing issues of human survival, such as food, health, demographic change, and ecological sustainability;
- 9 to enter into dialogue with religious and spiritual communities about the evolving scientific understanding of the origins and complex dynamics of the universe.

The Call to **INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- A We envision a world in which*
- ... all peoples of the Earth have an equal voice and an equal claim to be heard;*
 - ... each person has an undeniable claim to universal human rights, complemented by a personal moral responsibility based on care for others;*
 - ... each person has a right to the fulfillment of basic human needs, balanced by a personal ethical obligation to share;*
 - ... national and regional concerns for equality, security, prosperity, and sustainability are informed by a truly global perspective;*
 - ... any resort to arms to resolve a dispute is understood as a moral failure to engage in heartfelt dialogue;*
 - ... the regional and the global do not subsume but supplement and sustain the local;*
 - ... people from across the planet, from all walks of life, come to see themselves as world citizens.*

- B Among the noblest functions of international intergovernmental organizations is the fostering of communication and cooperation among nations and peoples toward greater global harmony, security, and peace. With this in mind, these organizations invoke and act on principles of international law while appealing on ethical and political grounds for a broadly held vision of a better world.*

The twentieth century has been punctuated by two world wars and plagued by regional and world conflicts. These conflicts have been fueled by ethnic, racial, and religious antagonisms, as well as by economic imbalances and insecurities. In this century, we also have seen pervasive abuse of

No new global order without a global ethic!

... 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 the Earth is absolutely necessary.

... We must utilize economic and political power for service to humanity instead of misusing it in ruthless battles for domination.

... 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.

... 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 the Earth....

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 is 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.

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human rights, alarming ecological and environmental degradation, and the steady increase of economic and social inequities.

Yet we have also witnessed a series of strongly worded international affirmations that have served as the basis for countless reforms. Furthermore, an aroused environmental awareness has prompted a new willingness and new ways to address significant problems related to sustainability. Now, at century's end, the reality that the world has in so many ways become a global village impels our search for new models of international relations.

These two contrasting dimensions of the twentieth century have given rise to an array of international intergovernmental organizations. These include the United Nations, the European Union, the Pacific Community, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, the International Court of Justice, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization, and many others.

If these international organizations are to wield their enormous influence for the public good, they must pursue economic and social justice, support efforts at self-determination and self-sufficiency, and move the world further along toward the equitable sharing of resources. Each organization must also acknowledge, honor, and act to promote a sense of the world as a single, albeit admirably diverse, community that attends patiently and comprehensively to human needs within a larger, delicately balanced environment.

A singular question emerges: How can citizens of the world ensure that all international intergovernmental organizations are grounded in shared ethical principles—fairness, equity, compassion, and concern for the abiding welfare of every succeeding generation?

- C We call on international intergovernmental organizations to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with international intergovernmental organizations to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited

- 1 to operate with transparency in exchanges with peoples and cultures around the world, and in such a way that the fullest participation of civil society is guaranteed;
- 2 to work together with the other guiding institutions to reduce and soon to eliminate the crushing debt of the poorest nations;
- 3 to monitor transnational economic concerns, enterprises, and projects so that forced labor, forced relocation, and enforced isolation are relics of the past;
- 4 to find effective ways to screen agricultural and technological innovations introduced on behalf of peoples whose local sustainability may thereby be jeopardized;
- 5 to help establish more equitable and comprehensive international policies with regard to asylum, sanctuary, and emigration/immigration;
- 6 to eliminate the financial, technical, social, legal, and political barriers to swift, secure, and easily accessible regional, continental, and global communication;
- 7 to influence international policy and to mobilize the personnel and funds to assure that every human being has, for the foreseeable future, sufficient food, fresh water, clean air, adequate shelter, and medical care;
- 8 to safeguard the integrity and uniqueness of the world's diverse cultures, particularly of those peoples most vulnerable in the face of the globalization of the world economy;

THE CALL TO INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

- 9 to assure that resources are available for emergency relief for famine, epidemic, natural disaster, industrial pollution, and other catastrophes; and that such relief campaigns are conducted on a fair, impartial, and apolitical basis, and in a manner that preserves the dignity of the recipient;
- 10 to protect the natural resources of the Earth from depredation, pollution, waste, and exhaustion.

The Call to **ORGANIZATIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

- A We envision a world in which*
- ... freedom of association is assured and encouraged;*
 - ... open discourse is cherished and cooperative common action is nurtured;*
 - ... "public life" is understood as broader and more fundamental than government, which exists by the will of the people and for the sake of the society;*
 - ... societies are constituted and reconstituted through a multitude of voluntary associations that give voice to all;*
 - ... conversation about values and visions is a highly-regarded and well-protected element of public life;*
 - ... the generations and genders speak and listen to each other with mutual respect, at home and abroad;*
 - ... every society understands how to listen and to learn as alternative perspectives and courses of action are presented, discussed, debated, and implemented.*

- B Civil society has come to mean the network of voluntary, non-governmental associations—clubs, youth groups, sports and service groups, professional organizations, trade unions, cultural alliances, independent political parties, philanthropic funds, advocacy centers, community coalitions—that provide the fertile soil in which an expansive, responsible citizenship takes root and flourishes. Among the noblest functions of civil society is mediation between the power of the state and the rights, needs, and responsibilities of individuals and groups.*

The astonishing growth in numbers, projects, and influence of organizations of civil society is one of the most important phenomena of our time.

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.*

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Organizations of civil society are involved in all areas of human concern, providing essential social services, humanitarian relief, and innovative programs for social, economic, and political reform. Moreover, because governments do not easily or naturally extend rights to their citizens, civil society often takes on a prophetic role as the body politic struggles to identify and secure basic rights and meet unfulfilled needs. Such organizations act regionally and globally as monitors—and sometimes as guarantors—of the freedoms, rights, and the very survival of individual citizens. In time, the civil social process can come both to exemplify and to sustain the ethical character and public life of a society.

As individual citizens facing larger societal dynamics and world events, we may often feel that our voices are not heard and our actions are viewed as inconsequential. Yet movements bringing transformation most often have arisen from the grassroots, because it is at this most vital level that rights, needs, and responsibilities are brought into sharpest relief. Because its lifeblood is voluntary association, civil society is an expression of the grassroots. Choosing to associate with others in common cause amplifies our voices and strengthens our actions. Speaking and acting in concert with others, we make a difference in the world.

In itself, civil society is never complete or perfect. It is grounded in the reality that communities—whether rural or urban—are not simply spaces occupied by numbers of discrete people but hubs where history, habits, and harbingers converge. Thus, the chief task of civil society is to broaden the scope of citizen participation, to mediate between the community and the state, and to deepen the pluralistic exchange of ideas. Organizations of civil society have a special responsibility to cultivate and demonstrate moral leadership if they are to contribute to the elevation of public discourse and collective action on behalf of a better world.

- C We call on the organizations of civil society to develop practical ways to engage creatively with other guiding institutions in pursuit of a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

In this spirit, we invite all individuals, communities, groups, and organizations engaged with the organizations of civil society to reassess their roles for the next century.

Each is invited:

- 1 to operate on principles of transparency, democracy, accountability, and cooperation;
- 2 to exemplify and cultivate moral leadership through thoughtful, consistent service and advocacy;
- 3 to commit to service to a larger social good, rather than to the self-interest of a particular group;
- 4 to establish firm, friendly, supportive alliances among themselves, toward eventual collaboration in support of larger constituencies and causes;
- 5 to work together with other guiding institutions to assure the poor, the illiterate, and the inarticulate a strong, cogent voice in the public forum;
- 6 to broaden access to participation in civil society, with particular outreach to women, to youth, to indigenous peoples, and to the physically or mentally challenged;
- 7 to clear the public forum of all assumptions that disagreement is equivalent to treason, so that opinion and action are neither compelled nor withheld out of fear;
- 8 to listen to critics and consult with opponents, and to attend patiently to internal controversy, promoting the active, positive agency of each individual and group;
- 9 to make dialogue possible and promising where it seems most unlikely, especially among groups that consider themselves long-standing rivals for power, prestige, or pride of place;
- 10 to help establish new templates of interaction and participation as they expand their partnerships with national governments and international agencies, so that cooperative, inclusive, and non-adversarial approaches to decision making become the norm at every level of society.

ENDORSEMENT

As persons reflecting the broad diversity of the Earth's religious, spiritual, cultural, ethnic, and racial communities, we the undersigned join with the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions in issuing this Call to Our Guiding Institutions.

*We embrace the spirit of this document.
We applaud its invitation to creative engagement.
We commit ourselves to the realization of its aims.
We seek to serve as role models and examples within the institutions with which we are engaged.
We urge all thoughtful and concerned persons to join with us.*

Appendix

Towards A Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration



TOWARDS
A GLOBAL ETHIC
AN INITIAL DECLARATION

1993 Parliament
of the World's Religions

August 28 - September 5, 1993
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

This interfaith declaration is the result of a two-year consultation among more than two hundred scholars and theologians representing the world's communities of faith.

On September 2-4, 1993, the document was discussed by an assembly of religious and spiritual leaders meeting as part of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. Respected leaders from all the world's major faiths signed the declaration as individuals, agreeing that it represents an initial effort: a point of beginning for a world sorely in need of ethical consensus.


The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions and the persons who have endorsed this text offer it to the world as an initial statement of those rules for living on which the world's religions agree.

We invite additional endorsements from women and men everywhere.



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TOWARDS
A GLOBAL ETHIC
AN INITIAL DECLARATION

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TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHIC

AN INITIAL DECLARATION



*T*he 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.*



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 to 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;
- 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.

II. A fundamental demand: Every human being must be treated humanely.

We all are 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.

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 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.

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, 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!
- 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.

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

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 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:
- 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.

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 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.

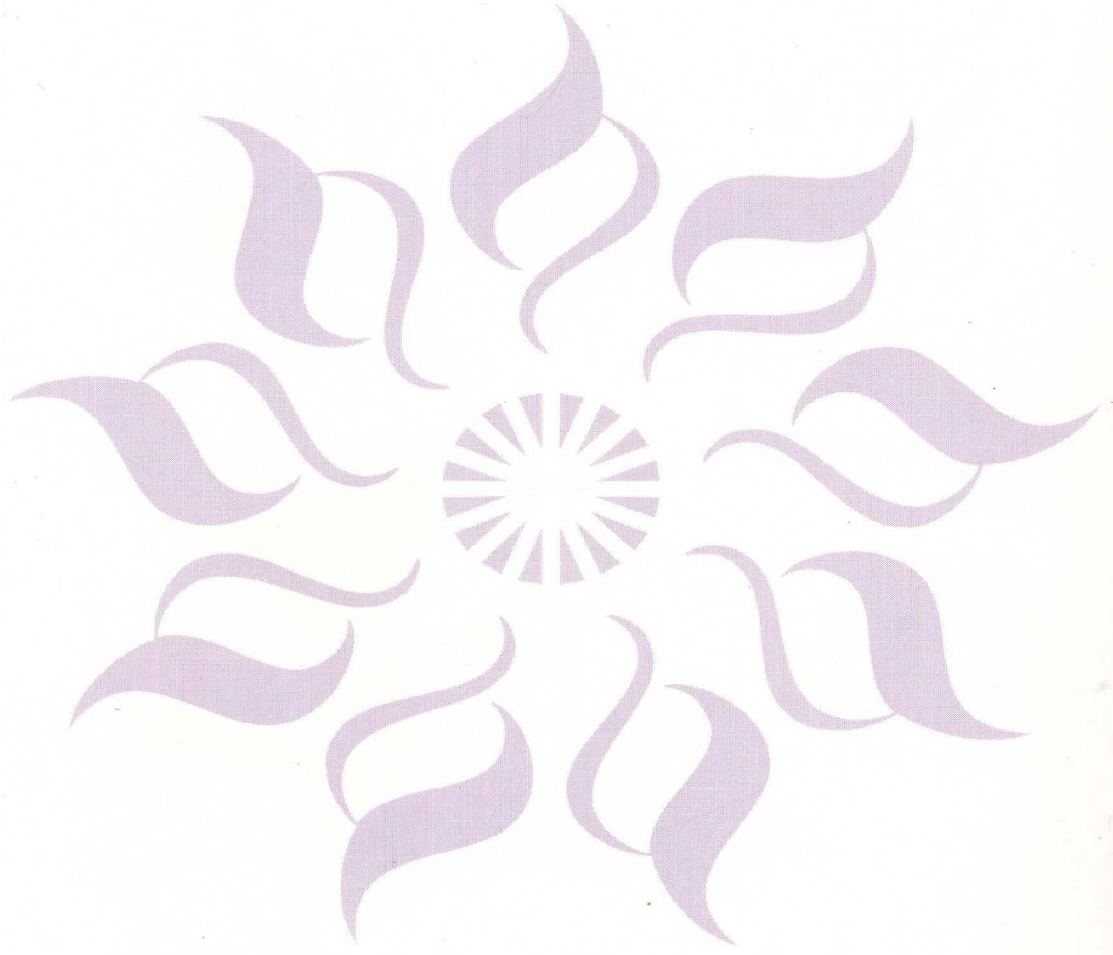
We are realistic about what we have achieved in this consensus, and so we urge that the following be observed:

- 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.

*I*n 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.*



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