

## **The Process of Drafting and Discussing the Statement**

The discussion was opened for practical suggestions on how to foster inter-religious dialogue and peace. It was decided that the Consultation would prepare a concrete statement presenting the understanding of inter-religious dialogue that had evolved from their meeting and stating the religious perspectives they saw which could be brought to bear in the cause of peace.

It was decided that the statement should (1) be short, but meaningful, (2) make a real point, (3) evade platitudes, and (4) gear itself to the specific situation of world peace today. The following Drafting Committee of five was selected:

Dr. Joseph Spae, Chairman  
Dr. K. L. Sheshagiri Rao  
Dr. G. P. Malalasekera  
Dr. S. J. Samartha  
Dr. Masatoshi Doi, Ex-officio

When the Drafting Committee returned, they presented a statement which was then discussed and voted on item by item. It was decided that ground rules for the voting should be (1) a show of hands and (2) a simple majority of the Consultation participants. Each paragraph was discussed, revised to reflect the discussion, then voted on. All the items in the final statement were passed by a considerable majority, often unanimously or with one or two abstentions.

The Consultation was adjourned with the charge of distributing this statement to the participants of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and of actively working to actualize the resolutions of the statement.

## Final Statement

### Preamble

We, members of several of the religions of the world, have met at Kyoto, October 13-15, 1970, under the sponsorship of the Oriens Institute for Religious Research, the International Institute for the Study of Religions, the Study Committee on "The Role of Religion in the 1970's," and the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, to seek agreement in our understanding of the world, and, in particular, of our role toward the promotion of peace.

We are aware of the inevitable difficulties which beset all dialogue and cooperation between religions, nations and people: a sense of superiority, a lack of humility, a defensive attitude of self-righteousness. Yet we remain convinced that, in full loyalty to our respective beliefs and religious commitments, we can and should work together toward a better, more peaceful world.

To us peace is not an abstraction; it is a reality craved by all mankind. True peace is rooted in a social order which respects equality, liberty and justice among men; it thrives in an atmosphere which assigns priority to living man over traditions, ideologies, wealth and comfort.

We share the conviction that religions can and must play a creative role in imparting meaning and purpose to man in our changing world.

We believe that religions are a significant force for cultural integration and moral progress among their peoples insofar as they actively participate in a changing world, while maintaining

their heritage of moral and spiritual values.

### **Basis for Religious Dialogue**

Religious dialogue should not be limited to mere academic discussion. It may begin among small groups of people and later spread into wider circles. Living together in dialogue should help communities to shed their fear and distrust of each other and to build up mutual trust and confidence.

Religious dialogue will aim not at doctrinal agreement or organizational unity, but at a common commitment to our fellow men; it will be aided, therefore, not so much by confrontation of the religions with one another as by their common confrontation with the pressing problems of the world.

### **Suggestions**

We suggest that religions should play a prophetic and constructive role in the interpretation of the use of power, of technological advance and of many social movements which shape the future of the world.

We suggest that religions, in an effort to create the conditions for world peace and eliminate the causes of war, should attend to the problems faced by developing countries and by minorities in search for a new identity, for human dignity and for a legitimate share in the material spiritual goods of the world.

We suggest that, in the interests of justice and peace, religions should come out more positively on behalf of the poor, the powerless and the oppressed. Religious dialogue should promote deliberation and action on these and similar concerns.

We suggest that all religions should pay serious attention to

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present social change and examine their respective contributions to that change, particularly in the matter of peace.

We suggest that there is need for cooperation among religions in their approach to the many problems which beset the world today and particularly for a study of the meaning of man and of the factors which contribute to his happiness and progress.

We suggest that all religions should encourage their members to study religions other than their own, to engage in dialogue and cooperation, and to exchange specialists in their institutions of higher learning.

We urge the religious leaders to take appropriate steps to form a liaison body to give concrete expression to the above suggestions.

## List of Participants

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U. S. A. (C)

*Key:*

(B)—Buddhist

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(J)—Jewish

(M)—Moslem

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Study Committee on "The Role of Religions in the Nineteen Seventies"

NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions