

REPORT ABOUT THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN STUDY GROUP

At the Jewish-Christian consultation at Lugano, two main themes were recommended for further study:

1. The Quest for World Community: Jewish and Christian Perspectives
2. Jewish and Christian Perspectives on the Relationship to each other and the Relation with Men of Other Faiths.

Obviously, this programme was too ambitious. It will not be possible to deal with both themes. Priority needs to be given to the first. It has a great advantage in that it directs our attention to the present situation of the world. It does not start from an analysis of our traditions, but rather looks at a problem mankind is facing today. This theme may provide the possibility and opportunity for cooperation.

The following six points will need to be developed in the paper we plan to work out together:

1. World Community

What do we understand by this term?

We are faced with the phenomenon of an increasing inter-dependence. This constitutes a challenge to Jews and Christians alike. We need to remember that this growing inter-dependence is ambivalent. It presents us with new possibilities of relationships but also with new conflicts and threats; there is the danger of selfdestruction of humanity. Therefore, this ambivalence of the growing inter-dependence should be stated.

The meaning of the different terms should be made clear. Should we distinguish between "world order" or "-society" as a maximum to be hoped for in this world and thus reserve the word 'community' for the eschatological fulfilment? Discussion of the terms would be required.

2. The Common Specificity of the Jewish-Christian Tradition

Jews and Christians share a common tradition. Is it correct to say that we share an understanding of man and his role in history - of man created in the image of God? Freedom and dignity, justice, etc. are important factors for a world community. These concepts must be spelled out. On the one hand our situation is the result of human activity; on the other hand we experience today all the limitations which characterize the human responsibility in history, and the dangers of an over-emphasis of the activities of homo faber. Thus there is a need to recognize other elements in human existence. Do we not need to stress anew the communal aspect of human existence?

3. Universality and Particularity

Basic differences must be faced here between the two groups as well as within them. There is a common conviction about the oneness of mankind. How on the basis of biblical evidence do we understand this oneness?

4. We feel that it would be important to discuss the subject of 'People of God and the Nations'. How do we understand nationhood?

From our side we would stress the ambivalence of nations. They play a positive role, but if they do not transcend their limitation they become an obstacle to world community.

5. There is the wider context which needs to be taken into account. Jews and Christians are not alone in their concern for world community. Religions and ideologies all have their own way of understanding the oneness of mankind. Especially Islam should be kept in mind in this respect.

6. The Contribution Jews and Christians can make to Building a World Society
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Here the question of a common struggle for justice, the struggle of the oppressed and the struggle for human rights needs to be dealt with.

Geneva, May 1972.