

## ACHIEVING PEACE BY THE YEAR 2000

**Author:** John Huddleston

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This is a modest book with ideas that are anything but modest. Just ninety-four pages long, not counting the appendices and notes, it proposes a series of sweeping changes in the international order—and in humanity's collective consciousness—that its author views as necessary to establishing a lasting peace by the year 2000.

Writing with an authority that clearly comes from years of reflection upon and experience with international affairs, John Huddleston provides a concise and readable assessment of why humanity still faces the scourge of war and what can be done about it.

Formerly Chief of the Budget and Planning Division of the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Huddleston first recounts the failure of international diplomacy and past peace movements to establish a warless world. Then, in what may be the book's most valuable section, he offers a fresh look at the root causes of war. Finally, he offers an ambitious, yet—given the drift of recent world events—not unimaginable, twelve-point plan for reforming the world system.

Mr. Huddleston makes clear from the start that his thinking is influenced greatly by his Bahá'í belief and practice. Although the book keeps to a non-sensical, secular style of analysis and writing, Mr. Huddleston nevertheless says that the book is a personal reaction and "footnote" to *The Promise of World Peace*, a statement on peace and the world situation issued in 1985 by the Universal House of Justice, the international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith.

To end war, Mr. Huddleston believes that we must first understand and eliminate its root causes. He lists the following attitudes as key barriers to peace: nationalism, racism, extremes of wealth and poverty, religious strife, the domination of public affairs by men, and competitive arms races. Although each has been identified before by various authors, Mr. Huddleston's contribution rests in neatly tying them together and, then, offering several key "principles" that if widely understood and adopted might serve to dismantle the various barriers outlined above.

First among these all-important principles, writes Mr. Huddleston, is a new understanding of human nature. The question of man's nature has not often been examined in the arena of international affairs, and where it has, that examination has frequently been faulty. Mr. Huddleston suggests, however, that it is on the question of human nature that barriers to peace will rise or fall. He writes:

To eliminate these general causes of war there have to be some fundamental changes in the way we think. The first such change concerns the prevalent view of human nature—which regards man as innately selfish, uncaring and violent. Such a view has a crippling effect on efforts to achieve peace because it suggests that nothing will ever change and that therefore it is a waste of time to try to alter the way governments think or behave: all that can be done is to 'carry a big stick' and hope that this will deter would-be aggressors. (27-28)

Mr. Huddleston suggests a more realistic approach, viewing human nature as having two sides. One side is our animal nature, which springs from our physical needs and serves us in our effort to survive. The other side of our nature, he writes, is spiritual and springs from our urge to "seek the transcendental through religion or art, to love and to give to others, and to cultivate the nobler qualities of character" (30).

This spiritual side has for too long been ignored in the equation, he writes. "When the animal side of our nature dominates, society sinks into barbarism; when the spiritual side is cultivated, civilization soars to heights not attainable at other times" (30).

Mr. Huddleston believes that a new understanding of this duality is beginning to emerge in the feminist movement. It is also an integral teaching, he notes, of the Bahá'í Faith. If widely understood, he believes, it would open the door to genuine peace by, among other things, making it "possible to respond positively to friendly moves by other nations without being obsessed with the fear that everything must be a trick to gain an advantage" (30).

Mr. Huddleston also lists understanding the unity of humankind as fundamental to peace. He finds this concept a potentially powerful force in promoting the "growing understanding that all people have the same human spirit and that none of us can be free so long as any are oppressed or deprived of the basic necessities of life" (40).

At the end of the book, Mr. Huddleston offers a point-by-point "blueprint" for peace. It includes:

- Building a world peace constituency through global education and observances like the United Nations International Year of Peace;
- Adoption of a treaty to abolish all offensive weapons;
- Creation of a World Peace Council as an independent body to determine when a state of war exists and who is the aggressor and the requirement for compulsory arbitration of international disputes;
- Expansion of the United Nations peacekeeping forces, or something like them, with funding from a tax on all mineral exploitation worldwide;
- Efforts to give women an equal role with men in the peace process.

Although this list might appear overly idealistic at first glance, the rationale for each step is well considered and worth examining. Certainly, in a world where calls for new thinking and new approaches to peace are increasing, this book stands as a clear, concise, and, at times, bold annunciation.

BRAD POKORNY

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