

Religion and World Order

Guideline Questions

Religion and World Order Documents

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1. Working Toward a Shared Global Ethic

The creation of a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future is, at its heart, as much an ethical and spiritual matter as it is a matter for economic and social policy and legal systems. In today's interdependent world, there is a need for strong ethical foundations for policies and systems at global as well as local and national levels. The new global-scale challenges that are accompanying the rapid growth of global economic and ecological interdependence require that we now move toward a shared ethic that, while respecting national, cultural, and religious differences, provides a common framework for responding to global challenges. What values and principles can your sacred texts, ethical systems, teachings, traditions, history, and lived experience contribute to the development of such a shared global ethic? Specifically, how can these values and principles address the following issues?

a. Peace and Security

b. Economic and Social Justice

c. Human Rights

d. Ecological Sustainability

e. Cultural Identity and Integrity

2. Working Toward Global Governance

The question before the human community is not whether there will be a new world order. Rather, it is what kind of world order? On what values will it be based? Who will be its designers and decision-makers? Will it be a fragmented order of economic, ethnic, religious, and armed conflict? Will it be controlled by the economically and militarily powerful? Or will it be a genuinely participatory order, governed by effective international law and based on equity and economic and ecological sustainability?

Global governance is not world government. As articulated in the report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood*, it is "the sum of ways in which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs." The concept of global governance is based on three factors: (a) Government structures have limited capacities to meet the multiple needs of citizens and communities; (b) Many transboundary problems and opportunities surpass the competencies of national institutions and policy makers; (c) An emerging civil society of non-governmental and citizens' organizations, professional and trade associations, economic enterprises, mass media, and educational and religion networks provide essential services and leadership at local, national and global levels.

Governments will remain primary actors in global governance. United Nations agencies will play a pivotal role. But the aforementioned components of civil society are becoming important actors in managing our common affairs. Religious networks of schools, universities, alumni, research institutes, health and medical institutions, and community-based social and economic programs have unique potential for becoming effective partners in the task of global governance.

Building upon the values and principles of your religious and faith tradition, what recommendations would you make in the following areas:

a. Global Civic Society

Without a core set of values that respect individual human dignity and cultural diversity and participatory decision-making process, local communities and ecological systems become expendable. From the perspective of your values, what should be the criteria for a global civic society? For global citizenship?

b. Global Structures and Systems

It is necessary to develop global policies and systems to manage our common affairs. What global policies, systems and instruments would be consistent with your values and principles? Specifically, how could the policies, systems and instruments of your preferred world order address the above five issues?

c. Local Initiatives

The local and global are deeply interrelated. What "bottom-up" initiatives can be combined with transnational initiatives to create policies and systems capable of fulfilling your desired world order and forms of global governance?

d. Balancing Tensions

The achievement of a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future depends upon values and systems of governance that can balance the following tensions. What insights can your religious tradition give on balance in these areas of tension?

individual good and common good

rights and responsibilities

private sector and public sector

long-term and short-term objectives

economic and environmental needs

local, national and global sovereignties

e. Religious Resources for Global Governance

What particular expertise, institutions, networks and other resources can your religious community utilize to participate in the building of a just world order? Think laterally, considering your affiliates, such as:

schools and institutions of higher education

research institutions

media and communication networks

publications and media materials

community-based networks and programs

professional associations

3. Collaborating with the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies

a. What do you judge to be the strengths and weaknesses of the current UN system in relationship to your ethical concern for a just world order? What are your recommendations to make the UN and its specialized agencies more effective instruments for a just world order? (Specify program areas and agencies.)

b. In what ways have members and organizations of your religious community been cooperating with United Nations organizations and programs? In what additional ways could your religious community collaborate with the UN and its agencies to make them more effective instruments for a just world order?

c. What materials, services and processes might empower your religious community and its programs and institutions to become more active partners with the UN in concrete initiatives and projects at local, national and international levels?

4. Developing Multi-Religious Initiatives

a. What kind of multi-religious initiatives do you recommend for advancing systems of global governance that hear and respect the diversity that religions represent?

b. In what ways can your religious community incorporate world systems thinking into its educational programs?

c. What kind of multi-religious initiatives do you recommend for advancing effective systems of governance that are more just, humane and ecologically sustainable?