



Life in a Global Village

Introduction

When I was on the Arizona regional board of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (now the National Conference for Community and Justice), I received a book entitled *People* written and illustrated by Peter Spier. I have treasured it, for it displays in both words and pictures what I believe is part of the excitement of being human. It ends with these words:

Four billion human beings . . . young and old, sick and well, happy and unhappy, kind and unkind, strong and weak. People everywhere. And all different. It is strange: Some people even hate others because they are unlike themselves. Because they are different. They forget that they too would seem different if they could only see

themselves through other people's eyes. But imagine how dreadfully dull this world of ours would be if everybody would look, think, eat, dress, and act the same! Now, isn't it wonderful that each and every one of us is unlike any other?¹

The world is a marvelously diverse collage of God's children. They come in all sizes, shapes, colors, cultures, and religions. All seek meaning in life. All seek to explain the common human experiences of life—*e.g.*, birth, death, old age, hunger, sexual urges, marriage, wealth, poverty, and disease. Sometimes those explanations are similar. Sometimes they are different, but each explanation, no matter how different it may seem from our own, gives order, meaning, and purpose to people's lives. No one believes anything "stupid," for human beings are rational, logical creatures most of the time.

We look at the disparities of life. Why are some born rich, some poor, some deformed, and some barely take their first breaths before dying? The great Eastern faiths would answer by saying "karma." People are reaping what they have sown. Some are wealthy, because through their past lives they created the karma that made them wealthy in this life. Others created karma that led to suffering, an early death, or deformity. Another might speak of the providence of God, essentially inscrutable, which explains all differences between peoples, but which in the end is beyond human understanding.

No Events