

Strategies of Dialogue

I. Three strategies – No solution

1. The fortress strategy

“Only one’s own religion is true!” All other religions are untrue. Religious ‘peace’ will best be achieved by subordinating all other religions to this one true (state-)religion.

→ intolerance, absolutism of the truth, self-righteousness

2. The strategy of playing down differences

“All religions are equally true.” The existential problem of ‘truth’ does not really exist since each religion is equally true in its own way, in its essence. Religious ‘peace’ will best be achieved by ignoring the differences and contradictions.

→ indifferentism, anything-goes pluralism, lack of commitment

3. The strategy of embrace

Only one religion is the true one, but all religions, which have grown up in history, have a part in the truth of this one religion. Religious ‘peace’ will best be achieved by the integration of the other religions.

→ subjection through embrace and domestication, integration at the cost of loss of identity

II. A fourth, ecumenical strategy

In all religions there exist elements of truth and untruth. The universal criterion of ‘true’ religion is, on the one hand, measurement according to a religion’s own normative sources (its founder, its holy scriptures), but also, on the other hand, commitment to what is truly ‘human’ and ‘humane’.

From: Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility. In Search of a New World Ethic*, London SCM Press Ltd. 1991, pp. 78–81 and 85–88.