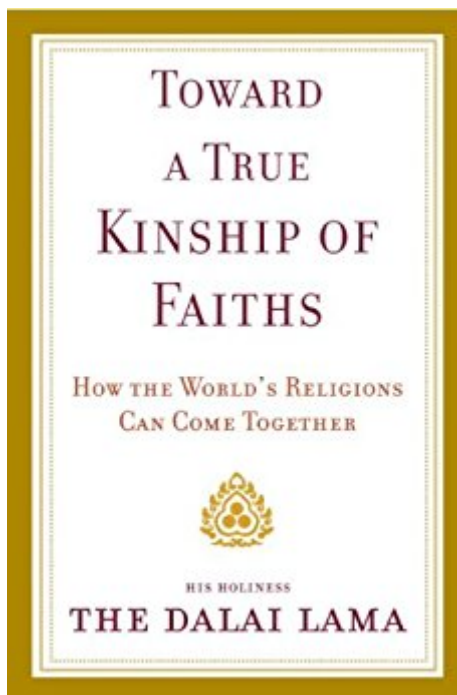




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Toward A True Kinship Of Faiths: How The World's Religions Can Come Together



Synopsis

“No country, no culture, no person today is untouched by what happens in the rest of the world. Technological innovation, environmental degradation, economic gain & loss, nuclear weapons, instant communication have all created unprecedented familiarity among the world’s many cultures. With this historic development, the Dalai Lama understands that the essential task of humanity in the 21st Century is to cultivate peaceful coexistence. Many believe in the inevitability of an escalating “clash of civilizations.” Peaceful coexistence has long been problematic with religion, and while previous conflicts over religious differences may have been significant and regrettable, they did not threaten the very survival of humanity. Now, when extremists can persuade followers with the immense emotional power of faith and have access to powerful technological resources, a single spark could ignite a powder keg of frightening proportions. Yet the Dalai Lama shows how the challenges of globalization can also move us in another direction, to a deeper plane where nations, cultures, and individuals connect through their shared human nature. All major religions confront the same perennial questions; each have distinct forms of expression. But this marvelous diversity of insight has the potential for inspiring dialogue which can enrich everyone’s pursuit of wisdom. All faith traditions turn to compassion as a guiding principle for living a good life. It is the task of all people with an aspiration to spiritual perfection to affirm the fundamental value of the compassion. In this way we can truly develop a deep recognition of the value of other faiths, and on that basis, we can cultivate genuine respect. In Toward a True Kinship of Faiths, the Dalai Lama also explores where differences between religions can be genuinely appreciated without serving as a source of conflict. The establishment of genuine harmony is not dependent upon accepting that all religions are fundamentally the same or that they lead to the same place. Many fear that recognizing the value of another faith is incompatible with having devotion to the truth of one’s own. Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama profoundly shows how a sincere believer can, with integrity, be a pluralist in relation to other religions without compromising commitment to the essence of the doctrinal teachings of their own faith. An issue of central importance for the Dalai Lama personally and for the entire world in general, Toward a True Kinship of Faiths offers a hopeful yet realistic look at how humanity must step into the future. From the Hardcover edition.

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History

Customer Reviews

Intelligent, profound and practical, this wonderful book by the Dalai Lama gives us a practical plan and possibility for perhaps the greatest prayer of human existence: peace on earth. He describes a consistent similarity between religions as a belief in compassion, and the purpose for having good lives. Based on his personal, life-long visits with leaders of other faiths all over the world, speaking and praying from the same pulpits, talking about scriptures, doctrines and practices both similar and dissimilar, he presents the world's religions in easily understood ways, not soft soaping by any means, but by analyzing and comparing with a view toward the practical possibility that all of us can peacefully co-exist. Toward the end, he presents an intelligent, do-able plan that if considered and implemented, could actually allow us to create peaceful religious co-existence. He draws upon the great example of his huge adoptive nation, India, which like the United States, has religious freedom, and in which multiple religions have lived side by side as neighbors for over a thousand years. These include many religions, among them the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faith traditions. This magnificent book is a highly recommended buy for anyone desiring respectful cooperation between religions, as well as between the religious and the secular.

Toward a True Kinship of Faiths was chosen as a book to be read and discussed in our local interreligious council. It was a very good fit for the council because it was well received by many in the group and it generated several excellent discussions. The author lays out a case for the capacity of a religious person to be connected and devout to one's own particular religion and yet approach the tenets of another faith, or non-faith, with respect. The middle of the book contains interesting chapters about various of the larger religious groups, but for me, the central part of the book is the beginning and the end of the book, in which the Dalai Lama talks about religious understanding. Based on the discussions in our interreligious council, I would guess that a reader might disagree with various particular assertions of the book, but most readers will be attracted to the genuine tone and tenor of the book.

This is, of course, a very fine book and contains a message that is essential to the survival of the planet. However, the Dalai Lama has written other books that are more intricate and might be more resonant to ears that are already turned in that direction. Although it is written for those that are beginning to pay attention, I still use, instead, the Beatitudes of St. Rodney: "Can't we all just get along?" It covers the same territory.

What makes this work a worthwhile read is that it works on two levels: First it works on the shared level of encouraging a dialogue of respect and investigation between different religious communities, it also works on a personal level for us to view how all religions have shared values and that for religion to carry any benefit into the future how we must work from our commonalities. This is the same in all dialogue, that we can be respectful of our differences and work from our common ground. This is sensible, and while it will manifest in many ways depending on the people in dialogue the core remains the same: working from our compassion and wisdom.

Although I have never met him personally, I have attended his teachings in person. HH The Dalai Lama exemplifies a high ideal in individual spiritual achievement. The key to that achievement comes through serving others. Some writers have criticized the idea of uniting the world's religious traditions, saying it is naive and impossible. From an academic view, that is certainly true. From a practical view, it's probably true. But from one individual human to another, it can be done. The concept of this book is one man's vision. After reading the book, I have come to share that vision.

I highly and enthusiastically recommend this book by the Dalai Lama. It's amazing how such a wise person can be so humble and honest at the same time. This book is truly necessary in our world, when religions have such a difficult time getting along with each other. For a leader of one of the largest faiths in the world to write a book about the positive aspects of other faiths is sorely lacking in this world and is a welcome endeavor to help ease tensions around the world due to religious strife. I hope people in power pick up this book and read it to truly get an understanding of how similar we all really are.

It is was gift for my mother, so I didn't actually read it, but she liked it.

I chose this book as a part of a book group. I found it to be a wonderful look at the way in which we need to live our lives in the global world of today. The time for thinking that my faith is the only truth needs to peacefully end so that all people can live in freedom and self worth. One God, many paths.

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