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The “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”: A Confessional Basis of a Universal Religion?

It was a completely new way of thinking about the question of religion’s universality, given by religious thinkers of the Enlightenment, and their attention to inalienable human dignity illustrates the point. These thinkers took a position in relation to religion and church from which they placed religion and church into a critical process of transformation: to enforce the universally human character of religion in its historical forms of realization. Without a doubt, it often happened that they understood Christianity as the absolute religion, claiming the highest value. They believed that religion found its fullest realization in Christianity. Today we look back critically at this conclusion. However, that should in no way imply the Enlightenment’s transformation of the study of religion made no important contributions. In particular, the Human Rights discourse is one such contribution. This discourse has had an enormous impact on the self-understanding of religions. But in fact, this impact should be examined carefully in each of the different religions for one finds that it happens in very different and even contradictory ways. I myself am only able to discuss it with regard to Christianity. It is important to say right at the beginning, that churches and formal church theology denied much of the Enlightenment’s analysis of religion and resisted acknowledgement of Human Rights for a long time. In regard to Christianity it will furthermore be important to pay attention to those transformations which triggered the Enlightenment’s Human-Rights-thinking and which keep it dynamically going until today. These pre-conditions make secularization theory untenable and show rather a religion of humanity through the historical persistence and ongoing transformation of empirical religions.

In showing that the historical movement towards a religion of humanity has not passed by concrete religions and churches but passes through them, I want to present the example of South Africa and its Human Rights discourse with references to the continuing debate concerning the history of Apartheid.

A South-African Example

Desmond Tutu's book *God is not a Christian* is a collection of sermons, speeches and statements from the former Anglican bishop of Cape Town.¹ "God is clearly not a Christian. His concern is for all his children" insisted Tutu in a sermon in the church of St. Martin in The Fields near Trafalgar-Square in London, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and at the end of Apartheid in South Africa.²

For Tutu, there is no conflict between human rights' universal validity and the obligation of Christians to speak up for human rights out of their Christian belief. This is not because Christianity might have invented human rights and their worldwide distribution would be more successful under the Christian prefix. Such a cultural imperialistic interpretation of the relationship between human rights and Christianity was far from what Tutu had in mind. It was rather his deep concern to win all religions for a universal enforcement of human rights in all his sermons and speeches, which he has delivered since the 1980's all over the globe.

Tutu confesses his Christian faith in strong terms. He often underlines that it is essential to take his own faith seriously. But taking his own religion seriously does not mean to devalue other religions or to refuse the idea of a natural universal religion that is inherent in nature of human beings from the beginning. Religions are different, the Gods in whom they believe are different. Despite all that they have something in common: they reveal a transcendent element in humanity.

God is not a Christian. "God is clearly not a Christian. His concern is for all his children." Christians do not have an exclusive relationship to God, and God has no exclusive relationship to Christians. He is the God of all human beings and they have their different relations to him. This also is important to Tutu: religions are not identical, "the" God can be understood in many different ways. As God is never without the individual relation, "we must hold to our particular and peculiar beliefs tenaciously."³ Tutu combines these confessions to a religious individuality lead by the opinion that God generally could only be thought and believed in the different relationships people have with him. God is only God in the plurality of the individual religious perspectives on him. For relations among religions, Tutu stresses, this means that "we must be ready to learn from another,

1 Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *God is not a Christian*, ed. John Allen (New York: Harper One, 2012).

2 *Ibid.*, 12.

3 *Ibid.*, 6.

not claiming that we alone possess all truth and that somehow we have a corner on God."⁴

By acting in this way we will discover many things we have in common. What we actually have in common depends on what we are searching for. For Tutu the direction is clear. All religions he mentions have a transcendent referent that is compassionate and concerned; all see human beings as "creatures of this supreme, supra-mundane reality, with a high destiny that hopes for an everlasting life lived in close association with the divine."⁵ This distinction of human beings as "creatures" of a higher holy reality and them being like this in "close association with the divine" is what Tutu hopes to find as the common thing of the different religions. Each human being is holy, a taboo for everyone who is willing to hurt him.

Tutu is delighted that he finds this holiness of human beings in the Christian tradition as well. "Surely, it is good to know that God (in the Christian tradition) created us all (not just Christians) in his image, thus investing us all with infinite worth."⁶ It is equally important for Tutu to emphasize that just like Christianity other religious traditions regard human beings with holiness as well:

Surely we can rejoice that the eternal word, the Logos of God, enlightens everyone – not just Christians, but everyone who comes into the world; that what we call the Spirit of God is not a Christian preserve, for the Spirit of God existed long before there were Christians, inspiring and nurturing women and men in the ways of holiness, bringing them to fruition, bringing them to fruition what was best in all. We do scant justice and honor to our God if we want, for instance, to deny that Mahatma Gandhi was a truly great soul, a holy man who walks closely with God. Our God would be too small if he was not also the God of Gandhi.⁷

Christianity is neither allowed to claim to be the religion that discovered holiness of human beings (which would be a historical mistake in any case) nor is it allowed to claim that Christianity alone is the best and only condition for the enforcement of human's holiness. The access to the sanctuary of human beings and work towards the preservation of this sanctuary can be found in other religious convictions as well.

To clarify that he recognizes motifs of a universal religion of humanity in his own Christian belief, Tutu now avoids consciously the usage of Christian and uniquely biblical language while speaking about religion. This can be seen in particular when he describes his participation in the *Truth and Reconciliation*

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 7.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

Commission. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was actually founded after the end of Apartheid as a compromise between those who plead for a general amnesty and those who advocated a process, similar to the Nuremberg trials, in which the offenders should be brought before court to get their just punishment. In contrast to this, Tutu recommended a concept not of retributive but of restorative justice. This was also the proposal which the parliament, after detailed consultations between the old and the new government, agreed on. The victims should have the opportunity to tell their stories and the offenders should have the possibility to admit their guilt. This path of restorative justice symbolized and expressed Tutu's Christian belief in reconciliation. In the divine justification of the sinner and the human force to reconciliation that results out of the belief in God's righteousness, he saw a decisive contribution of the Christian religion to South Africa's democratic reconstruction. Nevertheless, Tutu avoids the usage of language that is influenced by Christian belief. He often speaks about an outer perspective and about the Christian belief as one religious worldview among others.

It is obvious that Tutu tries to point out that religion—and with this the relation between a human to something transcendent—are expressed in various ways within different religions. Each religion has its own specific way to express this relation. Religions even respond to secular people and people who have no specific relation to any religion at all.

Religion is something that belongs to the human being. This can be seen in the way that religion resists all determining associations of individual human beings with their particular circumstances. Religion provocatively insists that one has dignity simply because one is a human being, regardless of one's characteristics or affiliations, independent from one's deeds or misdeeds. Religion shifts one's being into an unconditioned horizon. One's right to exist derives from conditions that are independent of oneself. A human being is not able to and does not have to earn this right. One's right to exist is derived from something that is beyond oneself, it derives from God. In Christian discourse this means that a person is God's creature, his beloved child, and a justified sinner. But Tutu only speaks rarely and cautiously in this biblical language. Tutu counts on a transversal religious reason to which all humans with good will are responding. This transversal religious reason is the truly religious matter in all religions: that is, religion sees the individual human being from the perspective of a self-transcended humanity founded in the Unconditioned. Religion is a transcendent determination of human existence that, then in a twist, revokes itself and gives humanity back to itself.

Tutu used such common religious language, compelling even for secular people, in referring to the "essential humanity of the perpetrator of even the

most gruesome atrocity"⁸ in his plead for a path of reconciliation. He could have spoken about the public-political force of Christian belief in reconciliation. But instead he makes recourse to "essential humanity" also that of "the perpetrator". He mentions the fact that no one could deny the human dignity of a person, however heinous his deed. This is a reformulation of a religious interpretation of human rights discourse from Tutu's Christian orientation. Tutu emphasizes that the evidences of what religion generally contributes to human life and society show religion indispensable in the realization of humanity.

In this way the path of restorative justice should become passable for people who come from other non-Christian, religious worldviews too. Tutu specifically points towards the African worldview of the 'Ubuntu'. Ubuntu is a Xhosa-word that expresses the essential individual's affiliation to a community. Ubuntu, as well, stands for the transcending of each individual human being in a larger, infinite reaching entirety. For the community of Ubuntu that qualifies the being of an individual is not only the visible tribal community but also the chain that links to the ancestors. The African worldview of Ubuntu together with the idea that human beings are made in God's image found in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian understanding of the unconditioned justification of the sinner altogether represent for Tutu an integral and universal religion of human rights. At the same time it is important for him to point out that these three ideas are, on the one hand, indispensable elements in the construction of this universal religion of human rights while, on the other hand, that religion cannot be identified with them.⁹

Tutu is not interested in a historic independence of different religious traditions and worldviews. He is rather interested in "the religion" as the plurality of religions, that is in an aspect that is undeniable in human beings. "Don't we have to be reminded too that the faith to which we belong is far more often a matter of the accidents of history and geography than personal choice?"¹⁰ This is an allusion to Rousseau, who also had the opinion that the question to which religion we belong is a question of geography. But it is also a suggestion that religious belief belongs to the *conditio humana*. Tutu then advances ideas of natural law and natural religion by referring to Paul's argument of a natural theology, and to Kant and the Enlightenment.

Everyone of God's human creatures has the capacity to know something about God from the evidence God leaves in his handiworks (Romans 1:18–20); this is the basis for natural

⁸ Ibid., 42.

⁹ Ibid., 21–24.

¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

theology and natural law. Immanuel Kant spoke about categorical imperative. All human creatures have a sense that some things ought to be done just as others not to be done. This is a universal phenomenon - what varies is the content of natural law. [...] In his speech before the Areopagus, Paul speaks about how God created all human beings from one stock and given everyone the urge, the hunger, for divine things so that all will seek after God and perhaps find him, adding that God is not far from us since all (not just Christians) live and move and have their being in him (Act. 17: 22–31). Talking to pagans, Paul declares that all are God's offspring.¹¹

The “universal phenomenon” is the phenomenon of a religious consciousness that was given initially to the human being. This religious consciousness becomes concrete in an openness to transcendence: searching for and questioning something that is beyond oneself. The particular religions build themselves up on this natural religion. But they also presuppose this natural religion as the universal resonance chamber that outlives their own history. Natural religion exists in the particular religions. But not exclusively; pointing out this fact is very important for me. There is one universal religion in all concrete religions that acts through and beyond them, a religion which we should by all means call: the religion of human rights.

Although Tutu has not articulated it in such an explicit way, it is in my opinion implied by his argumentation in the way he describes the particular, concrete religions—and not only Christianity—by interrogating their contribution to the enforcement of human rights. Doing this he tries to see the best in each of them as something that serves the humanity of human beings.

We must not make the mistake of judging other faiths by their least attractive features and adherents: It is possible to demolish the case for Christianity by, for instance, quoting the Crusades, or the atrocities of the Holocaust, or the excess of apartheid. But we know that that would be unfair in the extreme, since we claim them to be aberrations, distortions and deviations. What about Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa, Albert Schweitzer, and all the wonderful and beautiful people and things that belong to Christianity? We should want to deal with other faiths and their best and highest, as they define themselves, and not shoot down the caricatures that we want to put up.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., 10.

¹² Ibid., 16.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a confessional basis of a universal religion

Human rights were initially formulated in the political revolutions of the 18th century. They can be traced back to the American *Declaration of Independence* as well as to the French Revolution. Finally they found their approval under international law in the UN-Charter with *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Let us take a brief look at the three preambles of those three declarations of human rights: in each three of them there is no reference to a particular, concrete religion, not even to Christianity. There can be no talk of any explicit theological basis of human rights. Nevertheless one has to admit that religion is a topic in those declarations. One even can speak decidedly of a confessional basis, that explicitly characterizes the American and French *Declaration of Human Rights* and that religious implication was maintained in the UN-Charter of 1948. The American *Declaration of Independence* from 1776 insists that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights” and the French National Assembly explicitly claims that it “recognizes and declares” human- and civil rights “in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being.” In *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* from 1948 the explicit reference to God is absent. That the human being has inalienable rights is no longer directly connected to the authority and will of a God anymore. Instead of this there is talk about an “inherent dignity” which belongs to every human being. Because it belongs to “all members of the human family”, all of them have “equal and inalienable rights”¹³. It is obvious that talk of the “inherent dignity”, which first can be found in *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* from 1948, is functionally equivalent with the reference to God from the *Declaration of Human Rights* of the 18th century.¹⁴

That nations with different cultural and religious backgrounds would sign the *Declaration of Human Rights* from 1948 makes the omission of the reference to God more evident. But already the American and French human rights declaration claim a universal approach. Both of them combined this universal approach with a confessional base: Because it is God who makes all human beings, apart from what differentiates them, as beings standing under God, the Supreme Being and their Creator, human beings should have equal rights. This religious

13 Cf. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf (13.02.2013).

14 Cf. The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/char-ters/declaration_transcript.html; The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, August, 1789: <http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/declaration.html> (13.02.2013).

meaning also becomes obvious in talk of “inherent dignity”. The language of inherent dignity places human rights under conditions that are ineluctably given to every human being and which cannot be the subject of negotiation in the specific communities to which human beings belong. Human dignity belongs to every human being in an unconditioned way. This is precisely what it means to see someone through the eyes of faith. At the end of the 18th century this faith could be easily pronounced as faith in God, the Creator. In the UN-Charter the confessional foundation of the universal approach of human rights had to change, even though only semantically. Only with such a change it was possible for so many different cultural and religious traditions to accept and adopt the Declaration.

This cultural transformation and adaption is in fact what happened at the beginning and merged in the process of placing the Declaration of Human Rights in different cultural and religious traditions. The process is not at all completed and is, with regard to religion, often controversially discussed because the role of religion in human rights discourse often becomes closely related to specific religions. And then one often sees oneself, of course, quickly involved in a very ambivalent history. One has to confess that Christian churches accepted the idea of human rights quite late and even today often accused of not advocating for human rights very strongly. Religions have their own legal orders that can lead to conflicts with national law and even with human rights, especially in cases where human rights have entered into state legal orders. But that religion is necessary for the realization of humanity, that religion constitutively belongs to human being: this is something that was registered in the declarations of human rights from their beginning and finally makes *The Declaration of Human Rights* from 1948 the confessional base of a universal religion.

Although there were already attempts during the French Revolution to found a practice of a new humanitarian Christianity on the basis of the Declaration of Independence, contrary to this universal approach there is the approach of particularization of the general in specific religions, churches, and denominations. Consider the theophilanthropists, a humanistic religious orientation that held their services from 1794 to 1810 in France. Often these services took place in catholic churches which partly were used for theophilanthropic and partly for catholic services. One of these churches was Saint-Merri in the center of Paris. The services of the theophilanthropists were well attended but then became prohibited by Napoleon.

In our days it is very rarely the case that religions, let alone states and their legal apparatuses, can prohibit such free human-rights-based religious organization or even desire to. In contrast we are seeing the universal norms of human rights appear in traditional religious forms and cultures all over the world. How-

ever, the negotiation of a universal religion of humanity in particularized forms of concrete religious traditions proves challenging. Wherever the idea of human rights enters, it changes the constituted religions. And more as that happens: The idea of human rights even can become a religious movement or organization. It articulates itself as it is in reality: a belief in the human being, in the transcendent divine determination of the human, in an inventive creativity and hence in man's inviolable dignity.

How traditional religious cultures transformed under the impact of the human rights campaign can very well be seen in the fact that the theology of the second part of the 20th century understood human dignity as an expression, if not almost as a consequence, of man's likeness of God. This shows how, for theology, the human-religious understanding of human-dignity was enriched by the religion of human rights.

Like all other particular human living conditions, the particular, concrete religions by no means become unimportant in the universal approach of human rights. The concrete religions face the challenge and opportunity of sharpening their particularity in a way that connects to a common religious dimension. This can take place through re-examination of religious traditions' practices and self-understandings. I am talking about a synchronization of people's concrete religious practices with humanity's actual, existential condition. The religions ought to further the universal humanity-religion of human rights by means of their historical, ritual and ideological resources. People long to feel at home in the religion into which they are born and grow in the way that human beings always already feel at home in the universal transcendence of their humanity.

The world is growing more and more together. We call this phenomenon globalization. Globalization is driven by information technologies and economy with high speed. But more than a billion people *do not* benefit from this technological and economical globalization. They do not have access to internet. They do not get a chance to participate in the wealth of their countries and regions. Their human rights to life, freedom, self-development and security are refused. Particular differences in sex and race, skin-color and language, religion and nation place hard limits on the global realization of human rights. Especially the concrete religions are strict border guards against the enforcement of equal rights to freedom, justice and security for all human beings. They often prevent that people "act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."¹⁵ In South Af-

¹⁵ UN-Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 1.

Cf. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf. (13.02.2013).

rica, for example, there is no other hour during the week in which the racial segregation can be felt in such a strong way as each Sunday morning between nine and eleven o'clock, while the white, the black, the colored or the Indian community hold their services, each alone, apart from the others.

On the way to an universal religion of human rights

The Declaration of Human Rights did not emerge from any concrete religion, not even from Christianity and its church. Its starting point was the experience of pain and harm, the experience of brutal non-recognition, “barbarous acts”¹⁶, as it is called in the UN-Charter’s preamble from 1948. The screams of those deprived of their right to live by the totalitarian regimes of National Socialism and Stalinism, of those tormented, tortured, and killed because of racial, national, political or religious reasons or because of their sexuality, can still be heard in the declaration. Until today, it is the experience of violations of human rights that provide the appeal to keep and enforce them. Yet, this is only possible because they have a global status as a universal valid norm under international law and were turned into enforceable rights in the constitutions of many countries. If a blatant violation becomes public anywhere in the world, one will immediately appeal to human rights. Recent examples include the brutal rape and murder of young Indian women and the restrictions of same-sex relationships in Russia, to name only two. Such violations clearly point out that human rights must prevail upon (and at times be protected from) cultural traditions and the symbolic systems of religions—both of which are often associated with the political powers that use them for its needs.

For this reason the defense and enforcement of human rights is often suspected of acting in a cultural-imperialistic way. When, in addition, wars are declared under the pretext that they have an interest in supporting human rights, although in reality the main interest is rights to oil production, these suspicions are clearly supported. Hence, human rights are often understood as a continuation of western colonialism. Nevertheless, it must be said that only through an intervention, legitimated by international law, in the affairs of a state that either threatens the security of its citizens or is not able to ensure it, it is possible to prevent further violations (as for example currently in Mali).

¹⁶ UN-Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble.

Cf. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf (13.02.2013).

The question is whether international interventions for the enforcement of human rights, especially if they induce a military conflict that creates additional more harm, have cultural-imperialistic features, even if the intention was good. This question actually opens up a quite difficult issue in the end. Because the intention behind these interventions to enforce the human rights is their claim of a universal normativity and thus finally also of a universal religion of the human. The idea of human rights is not something that someone invented at his work desk. They exist in a concrete manner in the heads and hearts of numerous people, who stand up for them as they constitute their value orientation and religious belief.

Thus, it must be generally accepted that on the one hand the human rights require self-determined values and on the other they support certain values that are not equally appreciated and practiced in all cultures and religions around the world. Next to this universal religion of human rights cultural and also religious differences will indeed continue to exist. Religious ties and belongings supply these values with a strong potential of motivation for daily living. All religious cultures are different in what they consider law and rights and in how they appreciate individual choice with regard to sexual orientation and the choice of partnership, profession and residence. You can find many different cultural opinions about the relation between the individual and community, about the idea of physical integrity, about who takes precedence in the relation of individual and community and hierarchy of individual and community (e. g. family, clan, and nation). They might all be different but at the same time, they all have a religious foundation. Likewise, you will find different but always religiously founded opinions about the idea of equality of men and women, about religious tolerance or about the estimation of democratic participation.

The UN-Commission already knew that there is a high tension between a universal normativity of human rights and the pluralism of all the different religious cultures in the constituting phase of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In his book on human right's genealogy Hans Joas offers a good insight into the work of the UN-commission, in which delegates from 18 nations participated.¹⁷ He especially points to two particular delegates namely Charles Malik, the Lebanese representative, and Peng-Chun Chang, the Chinese representative. Charles Malik, speaker for the Arabian world, was an orthodox Christian whereas, according to Joas, Pen-Chun Chang often referred to his Confucian

¹⁷ Hans Joas, *Die Sakralität der Person: Eine neue Genealogie der Menschenrechte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 251–281, 273f. English translation: *The Sacredness of the Person. A New Genealogy of Human Rights* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2013).

background during the drafting process of the Declaration. Yet Pen-Chun Chang was also the person who warned on the one hand against a foundation for the human rights that is limited to reason and on the other against a special emphasis of one single religious tradition. He was interested in a synthesis of all the different religious traditions of vindication into one common value system. This is consistent with the fact that there is no reference to a universal *ratio* of humans but to a universal “faith”¹⁸ in a human religious conviction in the preamble of the documents of the constitution: “the faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person.”¹⁹ It proclaims the human rights movement as a religious movement, as a movement that is based on a faith, faith in the possibility of creating conditions around the world that gives every human being access to certain rights, as Hanna Arendt interpreted *The Declaration of Human Rights’* fundamental claim.

The faith that is apparent in the United Nation’s founding documents as well as in their declaration of human rights was a result of the work of people coming from different cultures, religions and parts of the world. What becomes evident is that this faith never would have gained such popularity if it was not to a large extent compatible with the concrete, positive religious faith that is practiced in the different religions and cultures in so many different ways. Still, what remains important is the question who will take charge when the concrete religions and cultural traditions merge to one universal religion of human rights. Is it the normative universality of human rights with its attempt to find recognition as official rights? Or will it be the particular religious traditions who only want to assign human rights to own fellow believers as they think them to be maintained according to their own norms of faith this way?²⁰

Conclusions

There is no doubt, that the validity of universal human rights has to be transmitted in accordance with the self-understanding of particular and regional reli-

18 UN-Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble.

19 UN-Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble.

20 The person, who was responsible for the drafting of the United-Nations Charter’s preamble, was Jan Smuts. He wrote the impressive words of “the faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person” that I just quoted (Preamble, UN-Declaration of Human Rights). Smuts was head of the South-African government several times in the 1930s and the early 1940s although he was not responsible directly for the policy of racial Apartheid, enacted in 1948, the same year *The Declaration of Human Rights* was enacted.

gious cultures. To a certain extent, human rights have to incarnate in the minds and hearts of people during their acquisition process in the different cultures and religions. Therefore, one talks about a necessary cultural synthesis and value generalization in human rights discourse. But in this process of synthesis and generalization it has to be ensured that human rights remain intact and inviolable and that states and societies follow their requirements. Cultural synthesis and value generalization will only be of any help if they support the enforcement of human religion within historical religions, if the universal religion of human rights finds recognition in the particular religions and in the cultures that are merged with them. This will have practical consequences for religious as well as for judicial practice in the countries in which human rights claim validity.

First of all this means that religious cultures have to legitimize themselves to human rights and not vice versa. Religions, their practices and legal interpretations have to prove themselves to be compatible with human rights. Secondly, this means that one has to insist on the validity of human rights, in particular on the right to self-determination, even if they are opposed to religious ideas of morality. When the human right for self-determination, for justice and security is valid in a state, these rights have to be valid for all people, independently from their religious denomination or ethnicity, even if this right might contradict the norms of a religious community, for instance freedom of sexual orientation.

Therefore, the universal religion of human rights can hardly be enforced without conflicts with religious and political powers. Hence this religion will be all the more vigorous the more states implement human rights into their constitutions and the more people are committed to human rights. People might come from concrete religions, they might stay in contact with them or just pass them by, but they are all connected in a worldwide community with the same spirit of universal religion of human rights. But it is also clear that faith in the holiness of every human being, confessed by the universal religion of human rights, will gradually change the religions. It is a faith in the holiness of the human being—not a human being formed and acting in thus and such a way, but of the human being just the way it already exists. This faith alone will change the world. It changes the world through the way that love, mercy and forgiveness are practiced, that there will be help where people are victimized by violence and state terror, where hungry people suffer from starvation and have to escape from their home countries.

Indeed, a lot of things need to be done in this line. Without the implementation of human rights into the constitutions of states and the enforcement of their validity under international law, much less would have been achieved towards a more human world. Yet, all this effort is based on the faith in the holi-

ness of the human being. It is this faith, in the end, that encourages people to fight for adherence to and enforcement of human rights, whether they are members of a religious community or not.

However, it should be highlighted that people with religious background, just like Desmond Tutu, do fight for human rights worldwide, that religious moral values lead to an active cooperation in NGO's and that churches and parishes offer room and financial help to human right groups.

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