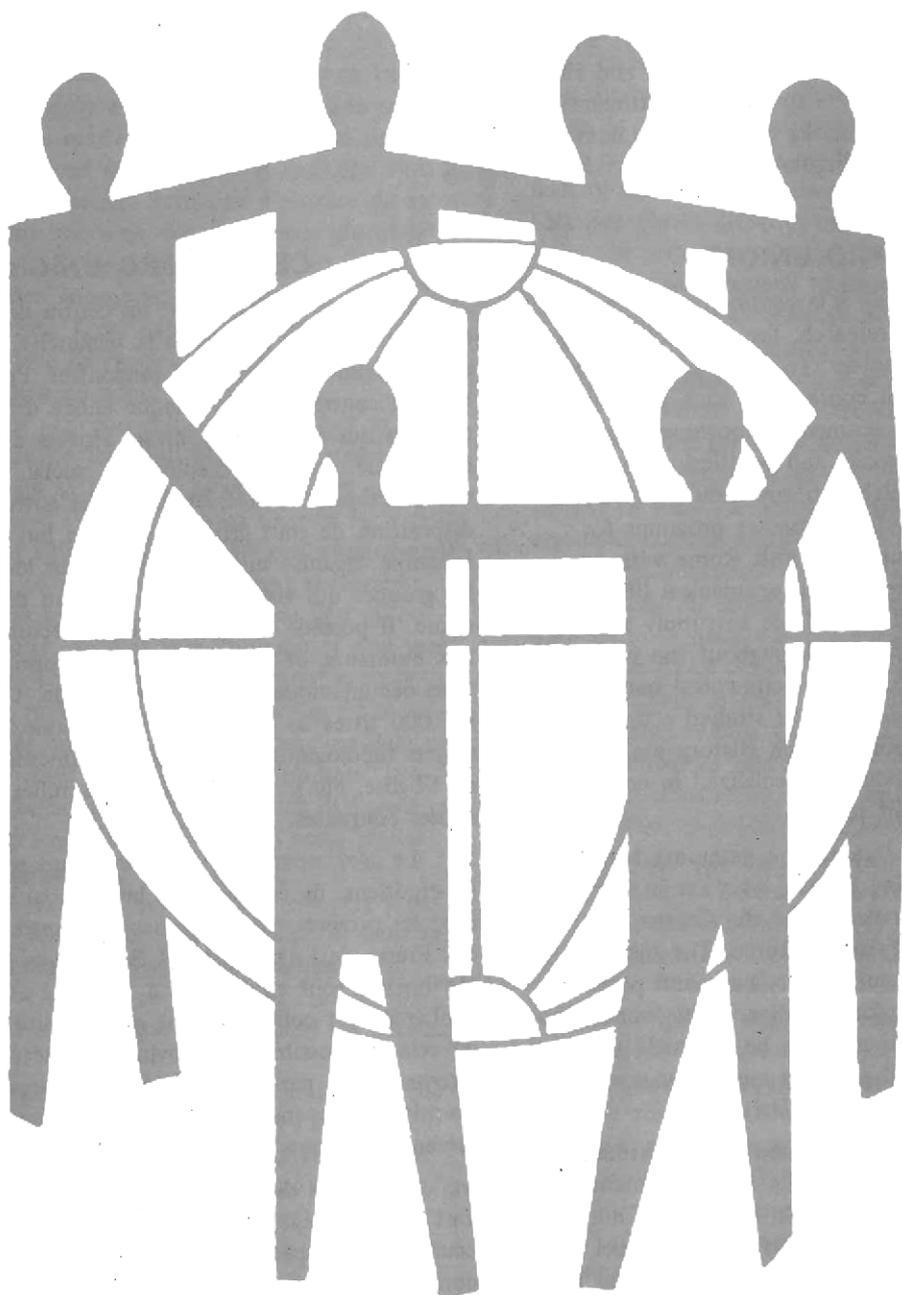


CENTRO  
PRO  
UNIONE

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### CENTRO PRO UNIONE

The *Centro Pro Unione* is a center for ecumenical formation: for study and research, for the exchange of information, and for encounter. To achieve these ends, the Centro runs a series of conferences each year studying various aspects of the ecumenical movement from the pastoral, theological, social and practical points of view. Its facilities are available to any group with an ecumenical concern. The staff organizes programs for individuals as well as groups who visit Rome with an ecumenical purpose. It provides an ecumenical library for students in Rome and is available to supply information on ecumenical activities throughout the world. The library has 7,000 titles of an ecumenical nature in 5 languages (e.g. theological subjects studied ecumenically, dialogues, documentation, Church History etc.) as well as 1,200 bound periodicals (specialized in ecumenics) and more than 100 current reviews.

The *Movimento Pro Unione* is a gathering together of Christians, clergy and lay people, who are in sympathy with the ecumenical outreach of the *Centro Pro Unione* of the Atonement Friars in Rome. The members of the Movimento are encouraged to work and pray individually and corporately for Christian Unity where this is possible. The Movimento seeks to be a vehicle to share ecumenical experiences and provides means for ecumenical formation on the local level in Italy.

The *Centro Pro Unione* is staffed by the Atonement Friars who are a religious community in the Franciscan tradition, existing specifically to help fulfill the Church's mission of Christian Unity, to witness to the Gospel among Christians and non-Christians and to bring all men to the fullness of unity with the People of God.

### CENTRO PRO UNIONE

*Centro Pro Unione* est un centre de formation oecuménique: pour l'étude et la recherche, pour l'échange d'informations, et pour les rencontres. Pour réaliser ces buts, le centre organise chaque année des séries de conférences qui étudient les divers aspects du mouvement oecuménique: pastoral, théologique, social, et les points de vue pratiques. Il met ses locaux et autres facilités à la disposition de tout groupe ayant un but oecuménique. L'équipe organise un programme pour les particuliers ou les groupes qui visitent Rome dans un dessein oecuménique. Il possède une bibliothèque oecuménique ouverte aux étudiants, et il est à même d'informer sur les activités oecuméniques à travers le monde. La bibliothèque a 7.000 titres de caractère oecuménique, en 5 langues (sujets théologiques, dialogues, documentation, histoire de l'Eglise, etc.), 1.200 périodiques reliés et plus de 100 revues courantes.

Le *Movimento Pro Unione* est un rassemblement de chrétiens, de clergé et de laïques qui sont d'accords avec les projets oecuméniques du *Centro Pro Unione* des Frères de l'Atonement à Rome. Les membres du Movimento sont encouragés à travailler et prier individuellement et collectivement pour l'unité des chrétiens, où cela est possible. Ce Movimento cherche à être un instrument de partage des expériences oecuméniques et fournit les moyens pour une formation oecuménique au niveau 'grass-roots' en Italie.

Les Frères de l'Atonement (l'équipe du centre) sont une congrégation religieuse de tradition franciscaine. Leur vocation spécifique est d'aider l'Eglise en sa mission de rétablir l'unité chrétienne, de témoigner de l'Evangile parmi les chrétiens et les non-chrétiens, de conduire tous les hommes à la plénitude d'unité avec le peuple de Dieu.

## L'HOMME: UN APERCU

James F. Puglisi, S.A.\*

Nous nous commençons cette série de conversation avec une perspective. Pour moi l'homme doit être considéré plongé dans l'histoire: personnelle et collective.

En tant que chrétiens nous croyons que Dieu nous a parlé et qu'Il s'est révélé à travers l'histoire. La Bible c'est le compte-rendu de l'offrande du salut, de Dieu à l'homme. Cette offrande a été faite à travers une série d'événements que successivement ont provoqué des différentes prises de positions de l'homme en face des mouvements de sa propre histoire. Pour cela l'histoire du salut n'est pas seulement une série des faits, mais plutôt la réponse de l'homme à ces sollicitations. C'est le développement de son libre engagement par lequel il répond à la révélation de Dieu. C'est dans ce contexte lui-même que Dieu a prononcé sa Parole; elle est devenue chair et elle habite au milieu de nous.

Il a établi un dialogue et ce dialogue c'est le déroulement de l'histoire du salut. Dans ce processus l'homme peut s'ouvrir ou se fermer à la communion commencée par Dieu. Quand l'homme s'ouvre l'Esprit est vivant. Quand il se ferme l'Esprit meurt. Mais malheureusement les activités de la religion ont été souvent renversées; elles sont devenues seulement verticales au lieu qu'horizontales, c'est à dire, dirigées vers l'homme et non vers Dieu. Avec cela je ne veux pas parler d'une nouvelle forme d'idolâtrie, mais je veux plutôt dire que l'Incarnation veut donner un nouveau rôle à l'homme dans sa propre histoire en tant que "le Fils de l'homme" est venu pour que "les hommes aient la vie et ils l'aient en abondance". Trop souvent nous oublions cette réalité dans l'activité religieuse.

Pour cela, le montage qui va suivre essaiera d'explorer le lien de l'Incarnation dans l'homme et dans sa vie. Cette documentation s'inspire aux paroles de St. Irénée de Lyon: "La gloire de Dieu c'est l'homme pleinement vivant" et elle souligne spécialement les paroles de l'Évangile de St. Jean.

Cette image nous présente l'homme d'un point de vue un peu différent, car nous pensons à l'activité religieuse comme à quelque chose dirigé vers Dieu plutôt que vers l'homme. Nous croyons plus dans le divin qu'en nous-mêmes. Peut-être avons-nous renversé la religion! Les premiers chrétiens avaient, eux, une grande facilité à utiliser chaque chose pour célébrer les mystères du salut. Ils étaient des "personnes" dans le plein sens du mot, en harmonie avec la nature et avec eux-mêmes et par conséquent avec Dieu. Leur identité d'homme et de femme venait de la capacité d'être pleinement vivant et de voir Dieu en toute chose. Ils ressemblaient beaucoup à ce sculpteur japonais qui déconcerta les directeurs d'une galerie d'art américaine où étaient exposées ses œuvres. Sous chacune de ses œuvres il avait placé ces

mots: TOUCHEZ, S'IL VOUS PLAÎT! Pouvons-nous retourner le fait de toucher pour trouver l'homme et ... Dieu?

Toucher c'est une chose merveilleuse. Pensons au geste d'allonger une main pour connaître, pour croire, pour explorer, pour aimer, pour croire. Mais il y a aussi l'acte "d'allonger une main vers l'intérieur de nous-mêmes"; et ceci avant tout.

"Satori" c'est la méthode Zen pour acquérir un nouveau mode de vivre et d'observer. Non en créant quelque chose de nouveau mais en regardant et en touchant d'une façon différente. Cette méthode aborde la religion du dedans, en lui donnant la possibilité de la faire jaillir de l'homme plutôt qu'en la lui imposant. Elle trouve la révélation du divin dans l'expérience humaine, dans la vie elle-même. Les gens veulent vraiment croire en eux-mêmes et dans les autres. La "Révélation" c'est: une forme, un modèle, une voix puissante qui parle à l'intérieur du marbre brut de l'expérience humaine. LA GLOIRE DE DIEU C'EST L'HOMME PLEINEMENT VIVANT! (St. Irénée de Lyon) Qu'est-ce qu'il y a de nécessaire pour atteindre la vitalité humaine en ce qu'elle est vraiment? Croire suffisamment en nous-mêmes pour risquer de toucher le Dieu-avec-nous comme expérience de l'effort de vivre une vie pleinement humaine? Nous n'arrivons pas à croire en nous-mêmes jusqu'au moment où quelqu'un nous révèle qu'au fond de nous-mêmes il y a quelques choses de valable, qui méritent d'être écoutés, qui méritent notre confiance et qui au toucher se révèlent sacrés. L'Esprit est vivant quand nous sommes rendus vivants par l'amour. L'Esprit meurt quand l'amour se meurt.

Nous nous efforçons de croire en un Dieu invisible-personnel en cherchant seulement avec notre intelligence, en ne sachant pas comment faire pour que notre moi entier touche le Dieu-avec-nous incarné. "Nous projetons" Dieu dans nos expériences pour les rendre prière. Au lieu de nous demander: "Comment devrais-je prier?", demandons-nous: "Comment puis-je croire?" Comment puis-je toucher ce qu'il y a de plus réel en moi-même et dans les autres; ce quelque chose qui nous lie au monde et à la vie? Comment pouvons-nous nous ouvrir à une possibilité de voir et de toucher, à une joie qui prend toute notre personne, portant tout ceci dans notre expérience de foi du Dieu-avec-nous? Pourquoi ne pas laisser que la vie elle-même nous apprenne à prier? Développer un "savouer la vie" c'est développer le "savouer Dieu". C'est beau d'écouter la bonne Nouvelle. "...afin qu'ils cherchent Dieu, pour le trouver comme en tâtonnant, bien qu'il ne soit pas loin de chacun de nous. C'est en lui en effet que nous avons la vie, le mouvement et l'être." (Actes 17: 27-28)

"...chercher Dieu et peut-être le toucher, le trouver..."  
Laisser que la forêt entre sans penser à ce qui est en train d'arriver. Laisser aller libre l'intelligence en se reposant dans un silence puissant: immergés, pénétrés, envahis, jusqu'au moment où le parfum des aiguilles de pin, de la

terre humide, le bruit d'une pomme de pin qui tombe ou le bourdonnement d'un insecte dans un rayon de lumière vous parlent de la profondeur de vous-mêmes. Appelés par les grands espaces avec la sensation d'être pris dans la spirale des lignes montantes, provoqués, attirés: exposés aux parfums délicats, modelés par la fraîcheur du matin. Laissez que vos yeux vous guident tandis que vous vous glissez et grimpez le long de branches inconnues. Aspirez profondément le son, le parfum, le bruit de l'eau.... Ne plus être à jamais les mêmes au dedans.

Nous ne pouvons ni toucher, ni nommer le Dieu-avec-nous comme quelque chose de détaché de notre expérience d'un monde qui est "rempli de la grandeur de Dieu". Car à tout moment de chaque jour il incarne la présence divine. Ce Dieu nous touche de la même manière que le monde et les autres nous touchent: en nous appelant, en nous invitant à devenir plus ouverts, plus humains. Si nous répondons avec tout ce que nous sommes, (et espérons d'être), alors vivre c'est vivre dans la foi que nous avons trouvée et nous sommes un avec le Dieu de l'incarnation. La prairie n'est pas Dieu; vous mêmes, vous n'êtes pas Dieu; la fraîcheur du matin n'est pas Dieu. Mais vous ouvrir à la prairie et au matin, à tout ce qui est devant vous, c'est trouver l'Emmanuel, c'est connaître le Dieu-avec-nous comme vie du moment présent. "En Lui était la vie et la vie était la lumière des hommes". (Jean 1:4) Ceci nous le savons dans les moments de beauté: mais malgré cela l'isolement et la solitude, l'avidité, la suspicion, la haine, sont des expériences autour de nous et au dedans de nous, partout le mal est mélangé avec la beauté. Pouvons-nous laisser que le désir humain profond de surmonter le mal devienne nôtre? comme une invitation? comme une lumière? comme un son? Les besoins des autres nous exhortent à être une source de vie qui cherche la lumière dans les ténèbres, dans les étincelles de la bonté humaine, vivante, sous une surface endurcie. Pouvons-nous communiquer la Foi dans la bonté de fond des personnes afin qu'elles croient en elles-mêmes? En découvrant que "la lumière resplendit dans les ténèbres...." "...et le ténèbres ne l'ont point reçue". (Jean 1:5)

"Je suis venu pour que les hommes aient la vie et l'aient en abondance" (Jean 10:10) "...car je vis et vous aussi vous vivrez". (Jean 14:19) Nous devons apprendre à rendre hommage à la vie, là où nous la trouvons: en croyant en nous même pour célébrer le Dieu-avec-nous: en croyant assez pour dire "oui" au fait de devenir de plus en plus "une personne", car LA GLOIRE DE DIEU C'EST L'HOMME PLEINEMENT VIVANT. En agissant de telle façon que les énergies de la chair et de l'esprit expriment ce qu'il y a de bon et de sacré pour nous. Être vraiment "soi-même" d'une façon qui libère et rende plus humain. Tout moment de découverte fait partie de notre mode d'être vivant de la vie qui toujours nous

pousse à aller de l'avant en continuant notre évolution. Moments complètement pleins, pris, jaillissants de nous-mêmes, recrées.... face à face avec une présence qui opère en nous et dont souvent nous n'avons pas compris la signification cachée.

Le Dieu-avec-nous c'est la libération intérieure; c'est l'événement dans lequel on comprend que quelque chose est juste. Nous sommes humains au maximum (et divins au maximum) quand nous sommes sur un seuil, insatisfait.... quand nous sommes *nous-mêmes* un point de départ, absorbés dans la créativité qui est le Dieu-avec-nous. Célébrons Dieu avec nos mains; touchons le Dieu-avec-nous dans un amour créatif "car Dieu est amour...." (1 Jean 4:8) Partageons le don que nous avons reçu.... Plongeons-nous dans la vie pour être plus vivants. Dieu est d'autant plus près de nous que nous savons risquer d'être plus près de notre vrai moi.

La Bible nous parle de l'homme fait à l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu avant de nous révéler que Dieu est une communauté - un en trois personnes - et la vie de Dieu est une vie communautaire, une vie de personne à personne. Nul ne devient une personne tout seule. Nous sommes tous une présence communautaire, une extension de la communauté d'amour ouverte ou de la communauté fermée du refus qui nous a fait ce que nous sommes. DIEU EST UNE COMMUNAUTÉ D'AMOUR.

Le Dieu-avec-nous c'est "une présence communautaire" personnelle. Nous atteignons ce Dieu plus profondément en nous découvrant nous-mêmes comme des personnes qui vivent dans une communauté d'amour. Le Dieu-avec-nous peut-être une expérience personnelle comme notre expérience d'aimer et d'être aimés - d'être "pleinement vivants" dans une communauté humaine. Voici pourquoi Dieu nous est d'autant plus proche que nous savons risquer d'être plus près de notre vrai moi. "Si quelqu'un m'aime il observera ma parole, et mon Père l'aimera et nous viendrons et nous ferons chez lui notre demeure...." (Jean 14:23) L'amour c'est la communauté de Dieu se prolongeant dans le monde et au dedans de nous. C'est la vie qui nous rend plus humains, incarnée dans notre coeur où demeure le sens d'une identité positive en croissance. La révélation nous apparaît par le dedans, c'est à dire par l'expérience de nous mêmes comme expression communautaire de l'amour qui est humain et divin. "Demeurez dans mon amour. Si vous observez mes commandements vous demeurerez dans mon amour, comme j'ai observé les commandements de mon Père et je demeure dans son amour...." (Jean 15: 9-10)

Dieu n'est pas avec nous comme une personne invisible qui demeure en ceux que nous connaissons et que nous aimons.... ....mais comme vie que nous partageons l'un avec l'autre. Nous touchons Dieu-avec-nous quand nous créons une communauté humaine.... Dans des moments consacrés, sacrés au touche.... ...."le monde est rempli de la grandeur de Dieu" et la grandeur de Dieu

c'est l'homme pleinement vivant!

Comme la recherche du sens de l'histoire humaine continue à se développer, ainsi la recherche de Dieu de la part de l'homme proclamera la bonne Nouvelle... attirance, créativité, avancer plus loin, réussir là où toutes les probabilités sont contre nous, quête de réponses à tous les problèmes que la vie nous présente. Les hommes comprendront qu'ils sont profondément engagés avec Dieu quand ils touchent le monde autour d'eux comme une invitation et qu'ils répondent avec confiance: "Amen"!

Croire en le Dieu-avec-nous c'est trouver la présence divine au sein de notre engagement conscient et libre de devenir plus humains. La Foi signifie quelque chose d'aussi clair et beau que de vivre selon notre potentiel d'amour et de créativité, elle signifie la transmission joyeuse de tout cela dans le monde autour de nous, la certitude que cela c'est Dieu-avec-nous. Nous mêmes sommes une source de vie qui augmente "la plénitude de Celui qui remplit tout en tous". (Ephésiens 1:23) "Le Verbe s'est fait chair et il est venu habiter parmi nous" (Jean 1:14) Le Verbe désirait plus que nous devenir chair.... Le Verbe désirait plus que nous devenir vie.... Le Verbe désirait plus que nous devenir amour.... CHAIR, VIE, AMOUR, non des dons de Dieu, mais Dieu-avec-nous. Nous devons apprendre du dedans à toucher la chair, la vie, l'amour, en les acceptant pour ce qu'ils sont.

"...tous les efforts de l'homme, tous ses calculs, toutes les nuits passées à travailler sur des dessins et des projets, aboutissent invariablement à la production d'une chose dont l'unique et plus important but c'est le but de la simplicité.... C'est comme s'il y avait une loi naturelle qui établissait que pour atteindre ce but, pour mettre la dernière main à la courbe d'un meuble, ou à la quille d'un navire, au fuselage d'un avion, pour trouver graduellement la pureté élémentaire de la courbe d'un sein ou d'une épaule humaine, il faut l'expérience de plusieurs générations d'artisans. En chaque chose la perfection est réalisée non au moment où il n'y a plus rien à y mettre, mais au moment où il n'y a plus rien à enlever, quand un corps est réduit à sa nudité.... Il y a un vieux mythe sur l'image endormie au dedans du marbre jusqu'au moment où elle est délivrée par le sculpteur. L'artiste lui-même doit sentir que lui n'est pas en train d'inventer ou de modeler la courbe du sein ou de l'épaule mais il est en train de délivrer l'image de sa prison." (A. de Saint-Exupéry)

Rien n'est changé.... La courbe de l'épaule humaine est la même. La ligne de côte s'allonge encore devant nos yeux et malgré tout, le Royaume de Dieu est à notre portée.... TOUCHEZ, S'IL VOUS PLAÎT!

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## L'IMAGE DE FEMME

Gabriella Fallacara\*

Ce petit court-métrage nous a montré la naissance - il y a trente ans - d'une communauté chrétienne. Elle nous montre que plus on vit l'Evangile et plus s'écroulent les barrières, les différences entre catégories, races, etc.

L'image de femme - dont nous parlerons aujourd'hui, vécue dans cette expérience - est Marie, telle qu'on l'a comprise pendant ces trente années, depuis la naissance du Mouvement des Focolari.

Le sujet revêt une grande importance, pour différents motifs: parce qu'il semble qu'aujourd'hui Dieu ait, sur la femme, un dessein particulier, à tel point que la mise en relief de son visage fut considéré par Jean XXIII comme un "signe des temps". Et aussi parce que la contribution de la femme à la vie d'aujourd'hui est urgente.

Revoyons un peu sa recherche dans l'histoire.

La femme dans la physionomie de la vie patriarcale avait un rôle propre, dans la famille "atomisée" (la famille atomisée décrite par Marx) la femme cherche son rôle dans la société, parce qu'elle ne l'a plus en famille.

Le cherchant dans la société, elle le cherche d'abord avec le droit civil, avec la possibilité de voter qui lui est reconnue, puis avec le droit à pouvoir exercer tous les métiers qui lui est aussi reconnu.

A ce point, les femmes (féministes) disent: "Mais cela ne suffit pas! Parce que la société - telle qu'on continue à la penser et à la construire - est une société masculine, "masculiniste". Nous voulons une société dans laquelle nous ayons un rôle qui nous soit propre, dont nous ne savons pas encore ce qu'il est, et que cette société soit créée compte-tenu de notre contribution. Actuellement vous nous avez donné ceci et cela - mais comme alibi: vous nous faites peut-être ministre, mais encore comme alibi, afin de pouvoir continuer à faire une société patriarcale; et ceci est ce qui doit être changé".

L'Evangile nous indique explicitement quel est la contribution que nous pouvons donner à chacun de nos frères. C'est à dire qu'il nous enseigne à voir dans les frères qui nous côtoient leur devoir être "En vérité je vous le dis, dans la mesure où vous l'avez fait à l'un de ces plus petits de mes frères, c'est à moi que vous l'avez fait". (Mt. 25, 45) Donc chacun doit être traité comme s'il était Jésus.

Cette attitude envers les autres fait tomber les divisions, préjugés, antipathies, sympathies et le frère se sent à son aise vis à vis de nous, et le cas n'est pas rare que l'on puisse établir avec lui, par la suite, un rapport basé sur la même vérité: sur l'Evangile.

Ce fait de voir Jésus dans le frère est si l'on peut dire une certaine façon d'engendrer Christ en lui, en mettant en action la grâce qui est en nous et qui est déjà ou pourra être dans les autres.

Voir dans les autres leur devoir être est ce qui, même

sur un plan humain, est demandé afin que chaque personne puisse s'exprimer ou exercer son rôle, en se manifestant telle qu'elle est. Par exemple: afin qu'un homme puisse faire sa part en tant que père dans sa famille, les enfants doivent le considérer comme tel. Sinon il ne peut pas agir selon son devoir, et ainsi de suite.

Voir Jésus dans les autres suppose que chacun "soit" Jésus. Donc tous le monde, même les hommes sont appelés à être Jésus pour pouvoir le voir en tous, même dans la femme. La personnalité, l'"être" de Marie est l'être de Jésus. C'est Lui qui met Marie dans sa vraie identité humaine et divine. Dans une communauté, dans une société dans laquelle tout le monde acquiera cette sensibilité évangélique, l'homme et la femme trouveront, comme Marie, comme Jésus et en eux, leur identité véritable.

C'est notre rôle aussi vis à vis de la femme, la condition préalable pour que son devoir être se réalise, le levier qui met en évidence en elle ce que Dieu attend d'elle: voir Jésus en elle, donc "y voir Marie" modèle suprême, parce que "Mère de Jésus".

Essayons de comprendre le dessein de Dieu sur elle, en d'autres termes, voyons un peu comment Dieu l'a pensée.

"Lorsque dans les plans de la Providence il s'est agit de composer l'unité entre Dieu et le genre humain, Lui, Dieu, s'est adressé à une femme et Il a lié le destin de l'humanité à sa liberté". (1)

Il a "inventé" Marie, une créature, une femme, comme si Dieu, sachant que le Verbe se serait incarné en assumant dans le sexe masculin la nature humaine, ait pensé que sans Marie un vide abyssal se serait creusé entre les créatures, au point de faire apparaître comme substantielle peut-être la différence entre hommes et femmes.

Il a donc inventé une femme si grande que, ne pouvant la faire Dieu, Il l'a faite mère de Dieu. (2)

Les mouvements féministes accusent toutes les institutions, non qu'ils sachent exactement ce qu'il faudrait faire, mais parce qu'ils sentent que les femmes - comme ils disent - sont mal à l'aise.

Ils accusent toutes les institutions religieuses parce qu'elles sont typiquement masculines. Le seul élément féminin - disent ils - est Marie: mais le mouvement féministe renie la figure de Marie qu'il considère vraiment comme la sublimation (dans le sens freudien) de toutes les caractéristiques féminines négatives. Il renie l'image de la femme exemple de passivité et d'obéissance, tracée justement par la société masculine pour servir de modèle à l'obéissance de toutes les femmes.

Il est certain que la puissance révolutionnaire du *Magnificat* n'a pas été comprise à travers l'exposé populaire qui en a été fait. Quelques grands saints seulement (Ste Thérèse d'Avila, Ste Catherine, Ste Jeanne d'Arc) ont démontré et personnifié la plénitude et la liberté qu'il contient. C'est donc à cause de cela qu'aujourd'hui

Marie doit être redécouverte.

Giordani dans son ouvrage intitulé *Il messaggio sociale del cristianesimo* écrit: "Historiquement parlant, c'est Elle (Marie) qui, dans l'Evangile, au début du cycle de l'incarnation, annonce pour la première fois le caractère social du royaume du Christ, et elle le fait avec énergie et clarté". L'hymne du *Magnificat* est la révolution qu'accomplit la justice de Dieu; révolution évangélique dont les résultats s'obtiennent plus souvent dans l'éternité que dans le temps, mais non moins pour autant révolution. "Et le bouleversement qu'il suggère est d'autant plus puissant que cet hymne jaillit du coeur d'une jeune fille qui n'était pour beaucoup qu'une prolétaire destinée à s'installer dans une cahute de Nazareth". Pourtant elle exprime "le sentiment d'innombrables générations travailleuses, opprimées, méprisées par les envahisseurs, agents du fisc, magnats de la richesse, pharisiens, docteurs, anciens et prêtres.... Face à ce cumul d'abus, dont les écritures et récits populaires racontaient les phases sanglantes, elle (Marie) proclame la révolte, non humaine mais divine révolte, celle qui compte et demeure". "Plus explicite que le Baptiste, Marie prévoit l'oeuvre telle que déjà accomplie par Dieu: 'Il a renversé les puissants de leurs trônes et exalté les humbles'. Voilà pour l'orgueil. 'Il a comblé de biens les affamés et renvoyé les riches les mains vides'. Et voilà pour l'injustice sociale.

Marie était trop pénétrée de sens religieux pour faire allusion à des révoltes militaires ou à de violents renversements; elle fait intervenir Dieu; ....mais c'est clairement qu'elle affirme la justice et la revanche du bien sur le mal". "Conformément à la situation sociale de l'époque et au langage biblique, elle opère une répartition sociale des hommes, mettant d'une part les puissants, c'est à dire les tyrans, et les riches, c'est à dire les rapaces qui accumulent les biens; et de l'autre elle met les bons et les justes, c'est à dire les victimes de la spéculation. Dans cette mise au point, elle se place de ce côté, celui des pauvres; mais sa considération tranquille et forte, fait comprendre qu'elle y est vraiment terrible comme une armée en bataille; car elle-même, "la pauvre mère du pauvre Jésus" (comme l'appelle St Bonaventure) est la première en qui le renversement s'opère pour une économie nouvelle.

Avec sa charte, Marie se lève, non seulement symbole de pureté, mais aussi image même de la femme forte. Le droit assyrien, sumérien, hittite, égyptien, consacrait la minorité civile et sociale de la femme; le droit romain traitait aussi la femme *sui iuris* comme sujette sous tutelle perpétuelle, trouvant la justification de pareil traitement en sa faiblesse de femme, mais dissimulant en réalité un égoïsme de mâles que Gaio démasquera. En Marie, la femme assume la dignité que Dieu entendit lui conférer quand Il la créa, compagne, et non esclave, de l'homme". (3)

Dans l'Eglise naissante en trouve Pierre, les Douze, les femmes et Marie.

Après elle, au long de l'histoire de l'Eglise, Dieu a

semé les dons de l'esprit indifféremment dans les hommes et les femmes, au point que l'on pourrait penser que si la présence de Marie dans l'Eglise n'avait pas été d'une autre manière évidente, elle l'aurait été précisément par cette abondance charismatique que l'on trouve à côté de la hiérarchie, et qui rappelle la sainte par excellence, la Médiatrice de toutes les grâces en action (4). Et parmi les femmes, il en est qui sont Docteurs de l'Eglise: Ste Thérèse d'Avila et Ste Catherine de Sienne.

Dans l'Eglise actuelle nous trouvons encore ceux qui ont succédé à Pierre et aux apôtres, alors que la présence de la femme et donc de Marie, sont devenues assez imprécises. Ne devra-t-il pas y avoir dans l'Eglise une fonction proprement féminine qui puisse rendre visible Marie?

Il existe actuellement dans l'Eglise, c'est vrai, des exemples de femmes exceptionnelles comme Mère Thérèse de Calcutta, la petite Soeur Madeleine, fondatrice des petites soeurs de Jésus. D'autres personnalités de femme font encore irruption ici et là, mais peu encore. Jusqu'à maintenant la femme, dans l'Eglise, en est rendu tout au plus à l'humilité par laquelle tant de saints ont attiré sur la terre d'innombrables grâces. Mais cette humilité même dans l'ensemble des femmes de l'Eglise n'en est pas encore arrivée à produire en elles une plénitude de Dieu telle qu'elles puissent se distinguer elles-mêmes du Dieu qui vit en elles et en Son Nom dire aujourd'hui avec Marie: "Toutes les générations m'appelleront bienheureuse" (Lc 1, 48). Ce n'est qu'en favorisant une communauté chrétienne mûre (où se réalisent la fraternité et l'égalité, où les femmes avec les hommes participent à la vie de la cité dans des rôles divers mais d'importance égale) que la femme trouvera sa pleine expression.

C'est la communauté chrétienne dans son ensemble qui doit croître et mûrir. "Et son image - au moyen de grâces particulières qui ne sont pas les mêmes que celles dont bénéficie la hiérarchie - doit se dessiner nettement, de sorte qu'elle puisse dire d'elle-même: 'mon âme glorifie le Seigneur' (Lc 1, 46) mon âme exhalte le Seigneur (5)!"

C'est le destin de la femme dans l'Eglise: être une redite de Marie, de façon à ce que Marie en soit glorifiée (6).

Mais quel est le moyen le plus authentique pour rejoindre un tel but?

Prier Marie, lui demander son aide dans les nécessités de la vie, les maladies, les tentations? Oui, c'est un moyen.

La remercier des grâces que nous recevons de Dieu et dont elle est toujours médiatrice? Oui, aussi.

L'imiter dans sa vie, son humilité, sa simplicité qui en fait le miroir de Dieu, dans l'obéissance totale qu'elle Lui a manifestée? Oui.

Mais y a-t-il un moyen pour y parvenir qui dépasse tous les autres? Elle-même nous le souligne par son être propre.

Quel est l'être de Marie?

Marie est tout entière revêtue de la Parole de Dieu (7).

"Que la Vierge soit toute entière Parole de Dieu, le *Magnificat*, par exemple, nous le démontre, par son originalité même qui consiste à n'être qu'une succession de phrases de l'Ecriture". Il ne s'agit pas d'ailleurs d'une question d'expression, mais de vie. En 1948 Chiara Lubich écrivait:

"...Nous avons compris que le monde a besoin de faire une cure... d'Evangile parce que seule la Bonne Nouvelle peut lui rendre la vie dont il manque. Voilà pourquoi nous vivons la Parole de vie..."

"Nous l'incarnons jusqu'à être cette parole vivante..."

"Nous sommes des Evangiles en vie, paroles de vie, Jésus! Et nous l'aimerons pour de bon, et nous imiterons la très Ste Vierge Marie, mère de la Lumière, du Verbe: parole vivante".

"Le Seigneur nous a fait voir Marie comme la chrétienne par excellence, toute revêtue de la parole de Dieu, et même parole de Dieu personnifiée". (8)

Voilà ce que nous sommes tous appelés à être: Marie - la Parole vécue. "Alors le monde en voyant les femmes dans l'Eglise pourra dire: "Oui, aujourd'hui aussi Marie est présente dans l'Eglise"! (9).

"Et si le Verbe, la Parole est la beauté du Père, Marie dont la Parole de Dieu est devenue la substance est d'une beauté incomparable" (10).

L'originalité de Marie par ailleurs est celle là même qui devrait caractériser chaque chrétien (bien qu'elle soit parfaite): répéter le Christ, la vérité, la Parole, incarné dans la personnalité que Dieu a donnée à chacun de nous (11).

"La femme d'aujourd'hui - dit Paul VI - désireuse de prendre part au pouvoir de décision et aux choix de la communauté, contempera avec une joie intime Marie qui, dans son dialogue avec Dieu, donne son consentement actif et libre"...

"On se rendra compte que le choix par Marie de l'état virginal, qui dans le plan de Dieu la préparait au mystère de l'Incarnation, ne fut point fait de fermeture aux valeurs de l'état conjugal, mais constitua un choix courageux.... On constatera avec une joyeuse surprise que Marie de Nazareth, tout en étant totalement abandonnée à la volonté du Seigneur, ne fut pas du tout une femme passivement soumise ou d'une religiosité aliénante.... On reconnaîtra en Marie.... une femme forte qui connut la pauvreté et la souffrance, la fuite et l'exil..."

Ainsi Marie n'apparaîtra pas comme une Mère jalousement repliée sur son divin Fils, mais comme la femme qui, par son action, favorisa la foi au Christ de la communauté apostolique, et dont le rôle maternel s'étendit en prenant au Calvaire des dimensions universelles." (12)

Pour mieux comprendre la profondeur de sa souffrance, suivons-la dans sa vie.

"Petite fille elle s'offre à Dieu vierge alors que toutes les fillettes de son époque avaient pour ambition la maternité. Elle est seule dans cette offrande, seule au monde.

Plus tard, elle présente Jésus au temple où lui est faite l'annonce de son propre chemin de croix, de sorte qu'elle marchera toute la vie avec en elle l'écho de ces paroles....

Quand Jésus a douze ans, elle le perd.

Quand il a trente ans, elle le suit dans la vie publique

que nous connaissons, trois années de dures batailles riches de fruits. Et au pied du calvaire elle prononce le oui final de la "désolation" dans un abîme de douleurs plus grand que toute capacité humaine; elle se tient debout par un grâce singulière, qu'elle s'est meritée à la longue en se préparant à ce moment-là....

Elle est la mansuétude par excellence, la douceur, la pauvreté, une pauvreté qui l'a conduite jusqu'à la perte de son Fils qui est Dieu; elle est la juste qui ne se plaint pas d'être privée de ce qui lui appartenait par une élection, la pure dans le détachement affectif, à toute épreuve, de son fils....

Et c'est ainsi que Marie, en se préparant à être seule toute la vie, est devenue la Mère de chacun de nous, de tous au monde". (13)

De la femme, "aujourd'hui, on attend une grande manifestation dans la Société. Cette carence de Dieu, cette habitude de s'en passer, voire cette lutte contre Lui, peut demain se transformer en l'attente d'une ère où Dieu serait sur les lèvres de chacun, dans tous les coeurs, au point de dire qu'Il est vraiment chez Lui parmi les hommes et qu'eux, puisqu'ils sont ses fils, sont avec Lui chez eux.

Et si les femmes jouent leur rôle, on pourra dire "Quand la femme est une autre Marie, c'est-à-dire vierge, mère, épouse, pleurs, paradis, mais surtout "porteuse de Dieu", elle peut beaucoup pour tous, parce que la femme, si elle est femme, est le coeur de l'humanité". (14)

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## MAN AND HIS WORLD

Louis M. Savary, S.J.\*

### PRENOTES

The title of my talk today is Man and His World. In the U.S.A. where women's liberation is strong I would not be able to use the words of this title without provoking strong reaction. While in Latin the word *homo* can refer to a human being, male or female, or to the human species, we have no such versatile word in English nowadays. In America, to avoid appearing chauvanistic, I would have to title my talk "Humans and Their World." I do not want to appear chauvanistic here either since I believe women equally share this world and its meaning with men. Therefore, during my talk I will try to remember, as much as possible - to say "human" rather than "man".

In my talk I will share some ideas around three focal points: the first point, *man* - or humanity, what it means to be a human being; the second point, the *world*, the universe in which people are born and live, and how they perceive it; and the third point, *human effort*, or work, the activity that binds humans inseparably to each other and to their world. So, three simple themes: man the human, the world, and human work. I will show how many current, popular images or beliefs we have about these three points are limiting and need to be made radically less limiting.

At the end of my talk, I would like to highlight three areas of fundamental ecumenical agreement about these three points - humans, their world and their work that I believe Christians share with atheists, at least with many Marxist atheists, what you in Italy would call the "pure Marxists."

In fact, I would like to keep the atheist in mind throughout our discussion. Even more, I would like to keep the atheist as part of our audience.

It is also a deep desire of mine that in our churches the atheists could be kept as part of the congregation, even in their absence - and perhaps for that very reason.

Atheists, too, have the right to have their say even about the sermon, and I believe they should be included in its message, not as dark shadows or enemies of the light, but as those with whom believers are united in sin and in hope through Jesus Christ.

For, Christ's church is not a ghetto in any sense; nobody needs a special ticket to get connected into the Christ Body. The premise of everything I say here today as a human believer is that the church is a community of *all life*. The Church is a fellowship that works, loves, suffers, and hopes together. I also believe that this community of all life needs not only every believer in it but also every nonbeliever estranged from the church, in order to bring the church to its fullest vitality and awareness.

The glory of God manifests itself especially in the fact that "Abba", the loving Father stands by his covenant, even when his people break it. The Father wants to be called "Abba", "dear Father" by the unbeliever as well as the believer. The arms of Jesus' cross reach out to receive *all life* - believers and atheists - into an unconditional solidarity.

And so, whenever anyone speaks on behalf of Jesus and his church, as I do today, I must remember never to limit the Father's universal covenant, never to forget Jesus' prayer for unconditional solidarity, never to close off my concern for any portion of life. So, I picture among my audience believers and non-believers alike. I extend my hand and my heart to each of you. Let us meet each other as humans at the personal level, in a spirit of freedom and in a spirit of solidarity: in a spirit of freedom, so that we think and talk and meet together in openness and equality, not as adversaries, not as "good guys" and "bad guys", but as beings who share in all life. We gather also in a spirit of solidarity, not in an attitude of self-righteousness, not with the feeling of "I'm right - you're wrong." Instead, in a spirit of solidarity, let us be for others, let us be pro-existence, let us, believers and atheists alike, be *for each other*.

Protestant theologian Jan Lochman suggests that perhaps in the Western world both Christians and pure Marxists are really two small active groups alone in a sea of indifference. "Christians and Marxists are two sects of people", he wrote, "urged by the deepest motives of their convictions to challenge the fatalism and indifference all around them, and concerned about historical and social responsibility." (Jan Milic Lochman, *Church in a Marxist Society*, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1970, p. 192).

But let us not make that sea of indifferent people into a group of "bad guys" either, for the indifferent people, too, are a part of our audience. They, too, have their right to have their say in the sermon. With them, too, we are united on our planet. With them, too, we

are united in sin and in hope through Jesus Christ.

So today among us are believers, unbelievers, and the indifferent. And if you look closely, you may discover, as I do when I look inside myself, that together within me lives a believer-me, an unbeliever-me, and an indifferent-me.

## I

But let us get to the first theme, man, the human individual and the human collectivity.

Here the challenge is to discover what it means to be human, to discover who we are as humans. For our humanness is the first thing we bring to each other, the fundamental thing we bring to God, and the natural thing we bring to our work and to the rest of the world.

In order to be ourselves, in order to act out of our fullest self, we need to know who we are. We cannot settle for a superficial understanding of who we are. It is very easy to define ourselves in a shallow, empty, unimportant kind of way. I asked a busy man on the street the other day what it meant for him to be a human. He said, "Eh, I am born, I live, I work, I get sick, I die." Then he looked at his watch, breathed a sad sigh, and continued, "I grow up, and nobody cares. I work, and nobody is impressed. I die and nobody notices. I am unimportant." Then he waved his hand in a sweeping gesture at the whole world and said, "The world got along without me before I was born, the world will get along without me when I die." And he looked at his watch again and ran off. "I'm busy", he said. How limited this view is. How NOT-OK he feels. How easy it is to excuse himself from living up to his true humanity.

But then I heard a story of a wise old guru who spent his life wandering along a riverbank. One day while out walking, the guru noticed that a poisonous scorpion had gotten caught in a tree, in an empty spider web. No matter how hard the insect tried, it couldn't get out. Moved by the plight of the scorpion, the old man shinnied up the tree and climbed out precariously on the branch, and reached over to set the scorpion free. But as the man's hand came near, the insect bit him with a poisonous bite. Naturally, the old man pulled his hand back in pain, but when he realized that the scorpion was still helplessly captive in the web, he reached out again to set the scorpion free, and again he was bitten. Over and over the scorpion bit the man as over and over the man tried to help the insect, until finally he set the scorpion free. Barely able to get back to the safety of the ground, the old man's body was so puffed up with deadly poison that he could hardly move. A friend came along and found the old man dying of the scorpion's bites. When the old man told the friend what had happened, the friend said: "Don't you know that it is the nature of a scorpion to

bite? So why did you do what you did? ” The old man nodded his head, “Yes”, he said, “I know that it is the nature of the scorpion to bite, but did you know that it is the nature of a human to help? ” The guru had a much deeper understanding of who he was than the busy man.

A television-drama writer gives another view of what it means to be human. Perhaps a few of you here have heard of the American television science-fiction series called *Star Trek*. One episode of *Star Trek* tells the story of a group of humanoids living on a dying planet. In order to prevent extinction of their species, they are building space ships to escape, but there would be enough ships to evacuate only a few of their people. Since everyone can't be saved, the problem is “*whom* to save? ” Who are the people worth saving? Who are the most highly evolved? That is the problem given to the wise men of the planet.

And what is their answer? The primary sign of high evolution, the wise men say, is a person's ability to *empathize* - to feel what others are feeling. That's what makes a human *most* human, so the wise men decide to save those who can empathize with others.

But many, too many people on this dying planet are empathic, more than will fit on the few space ships. So the wise men must judge again - among the empathizers, who are the most evolved? This time their answer is: those who can empathize with *strangers*. “Many can establish deep emotional contact with those people they know and love”, the wise men explain, “but the highest form of empathy is the ability to *feel what a stranger is feeling*. That is the quality in the human most worth saving - those who are so sensitive to life and feelings that they can immediately connect emotionally with someone they have never met.” This television writer is deeply in touch with a most important aspect of what it means to be human.

It is so sad to hear the reports of psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who interviewed young people in the United States, in Europe, and in Africa, and discovered that over 75 percent of these young people found life *meaningless*. They did not think being human had much significance at all - even young people in the Third World were bored with life! So there is truly a sea of indifference all around. And its waters are with us, perhaps even in our own hearts, drowning our spirits. Many of these young men and women whom Frankl interviewed will go through life with the philosophy of the busy man I met, who constantly looks at his watch - saying, “I am unimportant, I make no difference.”

How many of these indifferent young men and women will meet patient people like the old guru who are willing to try again and again to set them free, despite many poisonous bites of rejection?

How many of these young men and women will meet people like the *Star Trek* survivors who can empa-

thize with strangers - who can read the deep feelings behind the eyes of boredom and indifference, and evoke from them the desire to find a meaning in life - the desire to be fully human?

### *Two Trends in Social Sciences*

When I survey the current social science literature about the meaning of human, I am struck by two distinct trends.

The first trend is paradoxical, because it emerges from people who are generally futuristic evolutionary thinkers. However instead of emphasizing human evolutionary future, they are emphasizing the past.

Instead of focusing on what new things the future holds, they are pointing out some of the old things we have forgotten and need to re-learn. For this reason, research into the primitive, archaic, and ancient roots of mankind are revealing capacities that humans once had and have lost.

According to researcher Joseph Chilton Pearce, there are skills we as humans possess that have been genetically coded into our organism, perhaps millions of years ago, that we never bother to develop anymore.

You'll remember a few years ago everyone was talking about Uri Geller, the man who with his mind could bend keys, or twist spoons, or make metals appear and disappear. When they showed Uri Geller doing his act on television, people called into the television stations saying that their children could do the same things that Uri Geller could do. Certain children had watched Uri do his metal-bending, they tried to imitate him, and they succeeded. Scientists have been tracking down such “Geller” children. In England, Germany, Japan, there are Geller Institutes in the university physics departments. The children they found are actually bending things, making metals appear and disappear. These children are manipulating matter in ways that physicists say are impossible, but physicists - including Nobel prize-winner David Bohm, Einstein's protégé at Blackstock College in England - are seeing and believing.

The theory is that these Geller children, who can make metal move by just willing it, are demonstrating powers that all of us possess but have lost through cultural conditioning. In other words, the capacity to move matter at will is not some new space age phenomenon but a very old and important human capacity. The Geller children were able to do these miraculous things because nobody ever told them they couldn't do them.

Telepathy, that is direct mind-to-mind communication, seems to be another of these innate human capacities that we have lost. In Uganda, according to the research of Marcelle Gebber, Ugandan mothers, as a matter of course, telepathically communicate with their infants and very young children in ways that few if any European or American mothers would claim to be able to duplicate.

The ability to enter various nonordinary states of

consciousness-trance, ecstasy, creativity - are only a few more of the many capacities that seem already to be programmed in the human genetic structure. So, when we define what it means to be human we must include capacities such as telekenesis, telepathy, ecstasy, and the rest. You and I sitting here today are marvelous creatures, the result of some three billion years of genetic development. We have as part of ourselves an organism that is continually retooling itself, genetically re-coding itself, to adapt itself to the demands of the environment and to cooperate with our ever-expanding minds and ever-transcending spirits.

### *A Second Social Science Trend*

Fascinating as it is to return to rediscover the lost capacities, there is another trend emerging most strongly today in the social and psychological sciences. That is the trend toward seeing the human as a *social reality*. That humans are social creatures is no new revelation to anyone.

Hundreds of years ago, John Donne expressed the interconnectedness of human individuals when he wrote, "No man is an island." No man can ever think of himself as an island separate from the mainland. We are all connected together.

Twentieth century psychologists in their new language affirm the social reality of every human by reminding us that personal identity, personal self-esteem, a sense of belonging are all inner experiences that are defined for us *by other people* before we can define these qualities for ourselves.

To this social identity awareness, the anthropologist adds another link in the chain of social interconnectedness. The anthropologist shows that humans become civilized and learn a culture only in a network of family and community.

The sociologist, whose basic function is to study people in groups, reasserts how individuals often define themselves by the groups to which they belong.

The biologist, too, reminds us that *on* our bodies and *in* our bodies live many forms of organic life, and that we as organisms live continually dependent on other forms of life for the oxygen we breathe, the protein we eat, the colors we see, the warmth we need to stay alive, and so on. To the biologist, we are not only socially interconnected but also totally interdependent *on all life*. So, it is nothing new to hear that we are social beings. But there is much more to our social reality. For example, during the past 80 years or so, depth psychology has revealed much about the individual and social nature of the personality. For concreteness, let us choose one psychological tradition and talk about it.

Probably the Freudian tradition will be most familiar to us. In his research the individual psyche, Sigmund Freud clearly labeled the *unconscious*. A person is like an iceberg,

he said, only the very tip of him shows as ordinary waking consciousness, the rest of him - perhaps 75 or more percent of him, is hidden unseen in the dark depths of the unconscious sea.

Carl Jung, Freud's pupil, discovered that, so to speak, "below" the individual unconscious lay a multitude of deeper strata which seem to be shared by all humanity. This realm Jung called the *collective unconscious*. Notice how you and I and all our neighbors are interconnected deep in the sea. Jung asserts that this collective unconscious operates within and beyond the boundaries of time and space. Only on the surface of the conscious sea does the calendar of time and the road map of space have primary significance. Down in the depths, we are connected to all humanity - all life, really - past, present, and future.

Another branch of the Freudian tradition gave birth to the Italian Roberto Assagioli, the father of Psychosynthesis. While Freud was interested in the basement of the human psyche, Assagioli focused on the upper floors, what he called the supraconscious, the place where many marvelous nonordinary experiences were often happening - like meditative states, creative states, ecstatic states, telepathic experiences, psychic healing experiences, astral travel, higher dreams, union with God, a sense of oceanic unity, and so on. The list of possibilities in the supraconscious is only beginning to be drawn up.

Just as the collective unconscious was discovered below the surface, so there is also a collective supraconscious above. All the area above the surface is the subject matter of a very new branch of psychology called transpersonal psychology. The possible connections between transpersonal psychology and spiritual theology are delightfully many.

But, look again at the diagram, and *see who you are*. The self you're used to seeing - the part of you that sits on the surface of things, a part which is very complex and fascinating, to be sure - is but the first floor of a skyscraper of consciousness that waits to be explored - within time and space, and outside of it.

When we talk about Man and His World, *this* is the man we need to talk about if we want to grasp what it means to be human, not just the little here-and-now-on-the-surface me, but the vast network of conscious, unconscious reality of which I as an individual partake.

I am the owner - or co-owner - of this many-storied reality. How few of us have explored the many floors and rooms and corridors that are *me*, in the fullest sense of the word. This adventure is waiting for us. Although much can be said about the meaning of being a human, I wanted to point out today these two strands of social science research, first, the rediscovery of lost capacities like telepathy and telekenesis that have already been programmed in our 3-billion-year-old genetic code, and second, the staggering awareness of human social inter-

connectedness in the transpersonal realms pointed out to us by the psychologists of consciousness. We can no longer even talk about ourselves - about being human - in a shallow, superficial way.

## II

Now, to talk about *world* is another vast subject. More precisely, I want to focus on the many different beliefs that people have, or create, to explain the meaning of this marvelous planet we walk on and fly around.

As we eat and play and work and live our lives each person - you and I included - creates a relationship with the world. We shape our fundamental beliefs about what the world is and how it works. Your beliefs about the world may be very different from mine - for example, you may consider the world a hostile place, while the person next to you pictures it friendly. The point is that, around such a basic belief, each person builds a network of attitudes, customs, feelings, prejudices, reactions and rituals that influence everything that person does. For example people who view the world as hostile may seldom leave the security of their room. Others who view the world as friendly may spend all day curiously exploring everything they meet.

The meaning you give to the world will affect your ethical viewpoint, your theology, your value system. For example, if you view the world as a big machine, like a clock or a computer, set in motion by God, then your moral life might be centered on *obedience to authority*. You would want to find your permanent vocation - the cog or wheel that God wants you to be in the big machine - and remain obediently faithful to it. Values such as obedience, duty, tradition, and law are important to you.

To take another sample, if you view the world as the setting for a *task* that God assigned to mankind, for example, bringing about the kingdom, then your moral life might be centered on *personal responsibility* and commitment to the *task*, so that your vocation in life might change periodically in the light of that part of the task that still remains to be carried out. Values such as personal responsibility, commitment, goals, means, projects, maturity, are important here. In either case, your world-view affects the way you believe theologically and the way you act morally.

Most of us have created a world-view for ourselves - consciously or unconsciously. At times during life we also change our world-views, giving up an inadequate one to assume a new, more adequate one. The network of beliefs about their world-view is sometimes woven so tightly and so protectively around the person that their beliefs cannot be changed.

My objective here today is to share a few very

common viewpoints on the world - and in this way to allow you to begin constructing for yourself a richer, more open view on the world. So, in our imagination, let us walk along and meet some people and ask them what the world means to them.

First, let us meet a *primitive man* and ask him what the world means. He will point to nature. To him, the world is equivalent to nature, the natural forces. When he speaks of his world, he will talk of wild dark forests, divine lightning, avenging thunder, the raging sea, impassable mountains, the eerie moon, the star-filled heaven. To the primitive man, nature is *divine*, it is his god - or his many gods. He will worship the sun, moon, fire, the earth itself. For him, the world is a collection of all-powerful divine forces. Are you like him? Do you sometimes view nature as divine?

Next on our road, imagine we meet a *pioneer* riding on a horse, with his axe and rifle by his side. (He is typically American.) We see him in the films called "westerns" - "cowboys". To him, the world means the wilderness, unexplored territory. He says, "I travel where no one yet has traveled. Danger lurks at every step - wild animals who would kill me, cold weather that would freeze me to death, stormy seas that would drown me, deserts that would burn me and starve me. For me", the pioneer continues, "the world - nature - is my *enemy*. Out here in the wilderness it's kill or be killed. Everyday for me is a fight to the death." The pioneer loves the challenge of nature, he thrives on the thrill of competition - where the stakes of the game are his own life. Are you like him? The pioneer still lives, certainly in America. For example, in the American space program, the theme has been the *conquest* of outer space. If for the spaceman nature is not strictly an *enemy*, it is at least an *opponent*. He is continually engaged in a contest with his world, and the stakes are often his own life.

Let us move onward, now, a bit further down the road and meet the *technologist*. He is unlike the primitive, for, to him, the world has no aura of the divine at all. He is also unlike the pioneer, for even if the earth only begrudgingly gives up its riches, he does not fear the earth as an enemy. For the technologist, the world is simply *raw material for people to use up*. So, the technologist is off drilling oil wells and selling petroleum, or he is digging mines to gather coal, iron, diamonds, or he is chopping down forests of trees to make lumber for house-building and furniture. Or, he is sweeping his fishing nets along the ocean floor, or polluting rivers and streams so that he can make the products that consumers will buy in the market place. For the technician, the world is a pile of *things to be used up*, things to be consumed by consumers. Are you part of his world?

Now, let us meet a fourth fellow, who is a *nature lover*, an ecologist. When we ask him what the world means, he will probably answer: "The world is a *friend*."

### III

It is not divine, not to be worshipped; but, on the other hand, the earth is not just a pile of things to be used up. The world has a personal feel - it is meant to be cared for and loved as a friend."

In the United States, we have a mythical animal named Smokey the Bear, who is always pictured wearing the hat of a forest ranger. Smokey is a protector of nature, he encourages people to extinguish cigarettes in the forests to prevent forest fires. "Smokey symbolizes nature", continues the ecologist "He is our friend, and so are all the other animals, plants, trees, brooks, and bushes." The ecologist asks you to treat the world with love and care, because it is your friend. You are responsible for it. Are you like the ecologist? Do you view the world around you as a friend?

Finally, let us meet a person we might call a *scientist-mystic*, and ask him to tell us what the world means to him. "The world", he answers, "is *yourself*. The entire planet is an extension of you - and you are an extension of it. Our planet," he continues, "is one huge totally interconnected organism - on the physical, chemical, and biological levels. Mentally and spiritually, too, we are totally bound up with each other."

The scientist-mystic looks at us and says, "No one of you can separate yourself from nature for one instant. On the other hand, to plunge into the incredible unity we all share is a mystical experience. To experience such planetary unity is to see yourself, not as a lonely spirit lost in a cruel alien territory, but as one individual in a community of unique identities, totally interdependent on each other for life, love, knowledge, growth." Do you feel akin to the scientist-mystic?

We have looked at five different viewpoints of the earth - the primitive, the pioneer, the technologist, the nature lover, and the scientist-mystic. Of course there are many more viewpoints that we have not even mentioned. Your personal meaning for the world may not be identically any of these five. Many of us have viewpoints that are a mixture of two or more of these five. You may be part consumer, part ecologist, part scientist-mystic. But whatever you are, you probably have a world-view that is affecting your growth as a human and as a believer - or as an unbeliever. Take some time to get in touch with your unique world-view and ask yourself if this view is open-ended or closed off, expansive or restricted, a good support of your theological beliefs or an inadequate one.

You can change your beliefs about the world if you find your present world-view too limiting. In fact, to be open to your fullest humanity, you may have to change your view. You may have to *unlimit* your beliefs, *remove* the boundaries. Learning to unlimit your view of the world can be just as personally exciting as expanding your understanding of yourself as a person - as we described earlier on the consciousness diagram.

We have talked about "man" and "his world". The third point I would like to discuss is *work*, human effort, activity with a purpose.

I want to talk about work in the broadest sense of the term - from the most creative mental kind of activity to the everyday sweat and toil of physical labor. I also include in the term "work" the *products* of human effort - whether the work is to clean a house or to sculpt a statue.

Very simply, my thesis is that *work is a primary way that humans relate to their world*. Through work, people shape their world, but also, at the same time, they shape themselves as individuals and as a community. Work is an activity that binds people inseparably to the world and to each other.

Although work has its own meaning, its own definition, its meaning is strongly colored and shaped by the meanings you have to describe being a human and to describe the world. For example, if you picture the world as a testing ground where you are on trial to see if you deserve to enter heaven, and if you picture yourself, a human being, as a sinful creature who is meant to sweat and worry wondering whether or not survival or salvation is possible, then the meaning you give to your work on the planet will be affected by the meanings you give to your humanity and to your world. Here perhaps, the work you do, the things you accomplish, are the test of your worth, of your salvation. If, on the other hand, you perceive the world as a great big automated machine, and you picture each human having a very specific part to play in the big machine, your meaning for work will have the flavor of duty and obedience. You will learn to practice your role and do your work obediently and with resignation.

Let's look at a third view. If you picture yourself as an image of God, and the world as somehow divine - like God hiding in trees and mountains - then you may describe your work upon the earth like polishing a mirror in order to see God's face - or your own face - in the work that you do.

Let's look at one more view. If you picture the world as a *freely-given gift* to humans, as a grownup gives a toy to a child to delight him, if the earth is like a toy to be thrown away when humans put away the things of childhood, then the meaning of human labor may be looked upon as no more valuable than playing with toys.

The point I'm trying to make is that your beliefs about what it means to be human, and what the world means, will color your meaning of work. It will also color the meaning you give to sin and your experience of it. It will also strongly affect the kind of hope or hopelessness you have. It will also affect your beliefs about the future.

But let's just think about how the meaning of human work is affected now, and see some of the ways this meaning can be affected. Here are some questions we can ask, questions that will be answered differently, depending on how you view yourself as a human and how you view the world. For example, does the work of the common laborer have dignity? People who view humans as ineradicably sinful, and the world as a great big machine, will say - common labor has no dignity of itself, sweat and boredom is our lot, it is a just punishment for our sinfulness. We work out our salvation in tiredness and anxiety. Common labor has dignity only insofar as it is God's will for us. Otherwise, it's meaningless.

But let us ask someone with a different world-view to answer the same question: does common labor work - like garbage collecting, and house-cleaning, and assembly-line work - have dignity? Let's imagine that we ask somebody who views the world as one big loving organism where all life is meant to live and grow together. And suppose this somebody, like our guru who saved the scorpion, believes that humans find their meaning in serving each other. For this person, all work, all human effort done out of a desire to serve will have dignity of itself. From his viewpoint, the garbage collector is serving the human community just as uniquely and just as essentially as the theological scholar.

As an interesting aside, some social science research has uncovered the fact that many people who have what are considered the most desirable and fascinating jobs are finding their work unsatisfying. Many of these dissatisfied people, when interviewed, felt the secret of a happy job was being able to *serve people*. As long as they could see their work as somehow being of service to others, they could be happy, but because of certain restrictions placed on these fascinating jobs, this sense of service could not happen. For example, the social scientist who loves to teach in the classroom is afraid he might lose his job because he does not spend all his free time writing scholarly articles to be published in scientific journals. For, the rule at the university - at least in America - is "Publish or Perish." Likewise, with the salespeople whose managers force them to overcharge people and cheat them, it is hard to see cheating as a service to a customer.

Similarly, with politically involved people who genuinely want to serve people but discover that no matter which political party they join they will be forced to pay graft money, or misrepresent budgets, or lie to taxpayers, if they want to survive and climb the political ladder.

The anguish of such people is that they want their work to be a service - in other words, they want to live within their beliefs about what it means to be human - but other people have beliefs that conflict with theirs.

It is in this arena of conflict that we live all of our lives: so many different views of what it means to be human, so many different meanings for the world, so many different meanings for work. Which views are better? Which are more effective? Can we even ask such questions? To ask which view is better or more effective than another suggests that there exists a measuring stick for comparing alternatives. But what authority will make such a measuring stick? You may have a measuring stick that suits you but perhaps it does not meet with my needs. What shall we do in that case?

I suggest that, for one thing, even in fundamental conflict, you and I are in a healthy mind-space. First, because we both realize that we are operating on premises that are personal and relative. Most people act on a belief in absolutes, as if there was only one possible meaning to give to humans, their world and their work. In fact, if there is any area where relativity is an extential fact, it is certainly around these three concepts: humans, their world, and their work.

If we were to pass out slips of paper and ask each one here to write down their meanings of these three concepts, no two people would completely agree. So, our conflict about measuring sticks is healthy because we realize that our feelings and attitudes towards service and serving people have deeper roots in beliefs about our world, our work, and ourselves.

Secondly, our conflict is healthy because we have matter for discussion, not merely for argument.

Because we realize our premises are relative - if only between you and me - we admit that our premises are open to change. So, by discussing our premises, we can grow together. For I now no longer can entertain only my own viewpoint. I must open myself to considering your viewpoint and this consideration will affect my own viewpoint, for now I must admit that there is more than one approach, more than one meaning to me, to being human, to the world, to my work.

We may not be able to solve our conflict, but at least the conflict is healthy because, by knowing our premises, we have the raw material for our minds to chew on and grow.

## CONCLUSION

Now, as we come to a close, you may be asking: What has all this discussion about relative beliefs come to? How does it help me to be a better believer? Or a better unbeliever? (Remember, we agreed to picture both believers and unbelievers in our audience.)

Well, to me the importance of this discussion about premises - concerning humans, their world, and their work - is that dialogue and much growth is possible on this level, for it is a level that is even more fundamental than doc-

trines and dogmas, whether they be teaching of the Christians or pure Marxists. On this fundamental level of premises, Christians and atheistic Marxists can encounter each other - as I said earlier - in a spirit of freedom, on the personal experiential level, in a spirit of solidarity. After all, the authentic spirit of both Christianity and pure Marxism is the spirit of *dialogue*. Both groups of people share an area of fundamental convergence within a persistent divergence. To sum up my three points, I might suggest that there are three fundamental theses shared - perhaps not identically - by everyone in our audience - present or absent.

First, regarding humanity, the thesis shared is that *the human being is a social creature*. People live in association with others, and need to be in actual solidarity with others, not bound up in concern for their own individuality alone. This social solidarity naturally includes a fellowship with the poor and oppressed, including concern for a more just society. Christians and atheistic Marxists can agree on this.

Second, regarding the world, the shared thesis is that *history is to be taken seriously*. This means that we humans are subjects and agents of history, and that history shapes the form of the world and the style of our business upon it. We are *within* time, and the earth's events happen within the one-directional, forward march of time. The world is the setting of our history, it records *our story* in its archeological layers, it grounds and centers our unique identities in time and space.

Third, regarding work, the shared thesis is that *work - whether it takes the form of thought or action - is directed toward the future*. Humanity is always *homo viator*, always "on the way." The human heart belongs to *that which will come*. People think about greater justice than is available now, closer unity than is available now. Human future always transcends its products. The ultimate is not sin or death, but grace and life.

Both the believer and the nonbeliever who have proclaimed their commitment to social reconstruction, agree fundamentally on these three theses: The social nature of being human, the importance of this historical planet on which we walk, and the need to transcend the present.

Both the believer and the nonbeliever who are involved in practical and political means of humanizing society know that they cannot remain doing with pipe and slippers in a self-sufficient ivory tower. Rather, they know that to remain faithful to their encounter with humans, their world, and their work, they must transcend themselves again and again. And as they transcend themselves, they see new horizons of meaning - their meaning of being a human grows and expands, their meaning of the world opens to ever-new realities, their meaning of work assumes more and more the dimension of an act

of loving service.

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## THE IMAGE OF GOD AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Jürgen Moltmann\*

### I

#### *Human Rights and the Tasks of the Church and Theology*

In many places and cultures throughout the world, the rise of insights into the basic rights and duties of human beings has coincided with the understanding of the humanity of persons. What is involved here is not an exclusively European or Christian idea, although at the time of the Enlightenment, human rights, not independent of Christian influence, entered into the processes of constitution-making in Europe and North America, and so attained a worldwide political significance. Today, however, it is particularly the peoples of the "Third World" who, through their struggle for freedom and self-determination, have impressed upon all human beings and states the urgent necessity of recognizing and realizing fundamental human rights.

The declarations of human rights, considered valid today in the *United Nations*, (even though they have not been ratified by all member states) are to be found in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948 and in the *International Covenants on Human Rights* (The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) of 1966. We have to be aware of the fact, however, that on the basis of their various political, economic, and social histories, the nations emphasize and seek to realize different aspects of human rights. For example, under the influence of the misery caused by fascist dictatorships, the North Atlantic states have formulated *individual human rights* over against the state and society. In their struggle against capitalism and class rule, the socialist states have given pre-eminence to *social human rights*. The nations of the "Third World" are demanding the *right to economic, social and political self-determination*. Human rights therefore cannot be viewed as abstract ideals, but must be looked at against the background of the suffering and of the present struggles of individuals, nations, and states.

The task of *Christian theology* is not that of trying

to present once more what thousands of experts, lawyers, legislators, and diplomats in the United Nations have already accomplished. But neither can Christian theology allow itself to dispense with the discussion of, and the struggle for, the realization of human rights. On the ground of the creation of man and woman in the image of God, on the ground of the incarnation of God for the reconciliation of the world, and on the ground of the coming of the kingdom of God as the consummation of history, the concern that is entrusted to Christian theology is one for the humanity of persons as well as for their ongoing rights and duties. The specific task of Christian theology in these matters is grounding fundamental human rights on *God's right to, i.e. his claim upon human beings*, their human dignity, their fellowship, their rule over the earth, and their future. It is the duty of the Christian faith beyond human rights and duties to stand for the *dignity of human beings* in their life with God and for God.

The Church, Christian congregations, and ecumenical organizations have the clear task and duty of identifying, promoting and realizing human rights. Since they are neither private associations nor statutory authorities, yet must exist and work in the public eye, those Christian organizations can be expected to be less influenced by their self-interests, and to be better able to enter the struggle for human rights with less prejudice than other institutions. This is why one can expect from them self-criticism as well as criticism of the egoism of the nations, states, classes, and races in which they find themselves; hence one can also expect their witness to a human solidarity with all those who bear the human countenance and, more particularly, their willingness to stand up for those robbed of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

## II

### *God's Claim upon Human Beings*

Christian theology, on the strength of biblical witnesses, is related to *God's dealing with people in history*. What is at issue here is the liberation and redemption of human beings from their sinful godlessness and their deadly inhumanity, and thus also the realization of their original destiny through having been created in the image of God.

According to the *Old Testament*, Christian theology reflects the *liberation* of Israel from slavery in Egypt, the *covenant* of the liberating God with the liberated community, and the *rights and duties* of the people of God which are implied in the covenant of freedom. Liberation, covenant, and the claim of God are the basic content of the biblical witness of the Old Testament and indeed they are found in this order. They have decisive direct-

ional power for Israel and Christianity in particular, and exemplary significance for all human beings and nations. The human rights to freedom, to community, to dominion, and to the future are inseparable constituents of God's claim upon human beings and the whole creation; they make up the inalienable dignity of human beings living in a covenant relation with God.

According to the *New Testament*, Christian theology reflects the liberation of human beings from sin, law and death through the coming, the sacrifice and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the lordship of the crucified Son of man, the vicious circle of evil, "which must bear ever greater evil", is broken through, and the freedom of the children of God begins to appear. *Liberation* through the vicarious death of Christ, the new *covenant* in his blood, and the new *rights and duties* of the fellowship which is composed of "slaves and freemen, Jews and gentiles, men and women" (*Gal. 3:28*) are the basic content of the biblical witness of the New Testament. Because in his coming, his sacrifice, and his resurrection, Christ is "the visible image of the invisible God", human beings in his fellowship become his brothers and sisters, and set out on the way towards the realization of their human destiny as the image of God in the world. Herein lie his grace and their dignity.

By *reflecting* the liberation, the covenant, and the claim of God according to biblical witnesses, Christian theology also discovers the freedom, the covenant, and the rights of human beings today, and therefore *brings out* the pain caused by their present inward and outward enslavements, as well as the struggle for their liberation from these enslavements, towards a life of dignity, rights, and duties in fellowship with God. In a world which is not yet the kingdom of God, Christians cannot leave any area of life without witness to the divine liberation, the covenant of God, and the dignity of human beings. The biblical witness to liberation, covenant, and God's claim leads to a corresponding Christian practice and theology.

The *universal presupposition* of the particular history of God's dealing with Israel and with Christianity is found in the reality that the God who liberates and redeems them is the *creator* of all human beings and things. Thus in God's liberating and redeeming action the original destiny of human beings is both experienced and fulfilled. In the "*image of God*" concept, the divine claim upon human beings is expressed. Human rights to life, freedom, community, and self-determination mirror God's claim upon persons, because in all their relationships in life - human beings with each other and creatures with the creation - they are destined to reflect the image of God.

The *universal purpose* of Israel's and Christianity's particular experience of God is found in the reality that the God who liberates and redeems them is the *fulfiller* of the history of the world, who will bring his claim

upon his creation to realization in his kingdom. Thus his liberating and redeeming action in history reveals *the true future of human beings*; the "image of God" is their real future. In all their relationships in life - human beings with each other and creatures with the creation - they therefore have a "*right*" to future. Human rights mirror the claim of the coming God and of his future upon human beings.

God's claim upon human beings was and is experienced in concrete events of the liberation of human beings, in their covenant with God, and in the rights and duties inherent in their freedom. *Image of God*, as destiny, points to God's indivisible claim upon human beings and therefore to their inalienable dignity.

### III

#### *Fundamental Human Rights*

By *fundamental* human rights we mean those rights and duties which belong essentially to what it means to be truly human, because without their being fully acknowledged and exercised, human beings cannot fulfil their original destiny of having been created in the image of God.

#### *1. The image of God is: human beings in all their relationships in life.*

Human beings in the fulness of their life and in all life's relationships - economic, social, political, and personal - are destined to live "before the face of God", to respond to the Word of God, and responsibly to carry out their task in the world implied in their being created in the image of God. They are persons before God and as such capable of acting on God's behalf and responsible to him. As a consequence of this, a Person's rights and duties as a human being are inalienable and indivisible.

Economy, society, and the state have to respect this dignity and responsibility of human beings, for their role as human beings, with rights and duties, comes before any constituting of society and government. Respect for freedom of conscience is the foundation of a free society. Often in monarchical folklore and in political ideologies the king alone is called "the image of God". "The shadow of God is the prince and the shadow of the prince is the people" (Babylonian Mirror of the Princes). Only the ruler can function as mediator between the gods and the people. When the Bible calls *human beings* the "image of God", this constitutes a fundamental criticism of the divinization of the rulers and their ideologies of rule. Not the king, but the individual human being alone is the mediator between God and the people. Human beings do not exist for the sake of rule; rule rather exists for the sake

of human beings.

From this follows the *democratization* in principle of every kind of rule by human beings over others. The rulers and the ruled must be recognizable in like manner, and in common as being human. This is possible only when there is an equality under the law for all citizens. A constitution (the covenant) must guarantee the fundamental human rights as basic rights of the citizens. It must bind together those who are ruling and those who are ruled. Only on the basis of equality under the law can expression be given to the common human identity of rulers and ruled alike. The human rights and duties, implied in the image of God concept, are honoured in history through the constant, open, and incessant process of democratizing the shaping of the people's political will. The control of the exercise of rule through the separation of powers, the limitation of the mandate to rule to a stipulated period of time, and the extensive self-rule and participation of the people are the historically developed means for honouring the image of God present in human being.

If human rights are based on God's claim upon human beings and if human freedoms are rooted in liberation by God, then we also have to formulate the fundamental *human duties* without which those rights and freedoms cannot exist. Freedom and rights by themselves mean virtually nothing. Just as it is crucial to formulate the dignity and the rights of human persons over against the state in order to limit and control power, and to cooperate in its exercise, so it is equally important to heed the duties which correspond to these rights and which human beings must exercise for the sake of others. Among these duties we should mention in our present discussion the *right to resistance* and the *duty to resistance* against illegal, illegitimate, and inhuman regimes, in favour of the right of the neighbour.

According to the Reformed confessional writings, one is required to obey the authorities "insofar as they do not command that which is contrary to God" (Zwingli, Zurich Disputation, 1523, Summatory Articles, No 38). "Therefore all their laws shall be in harmony with the divine will..." (39). "But if they are unfaithful and transgress the laws of Christ they may be deposed in the name of God" (42). As a consequence of the divine covenant of freedom, human beings are called "to save the lives of innocents, to repress tyranny, to defend the oppressed" (Scottish Confession, 1560, Article 14).

The rights which secure the freedom of the individual can only be observed if they are bound up with the corresponding duties of liberating those from whom these rights are withheld. Christian love honours the rights of the neighbour.

#### *2. The image of God is: human beings together with others.*

Only in human fellowship with other people is the human person truly image of God (*Gen. 1:28*). The history

of freedom in Europe and North America was onesided in emphasizing the individual rights of the human person over against economic, social, and political organizations of rule. It is the error of liberalism to overlook the social side of freedom, and it is the failure of individualism to overlook the social consciousness that must correspond to the human responsibility. It is not against his or her fellow human beings, nor apart from them, but only in human fellowship with them and for them, that the individual can correspond to his or her destiny as created in the image of God.

In fellowship before God and in covenant with others, the human being is capable of acting for God and being fully responsible to him. As a consequence of this, the *social rights and duties* of the human community are just as inalienable and indivisible as persons' individual rights and duties. Human beings have to heed the dignity and the responsibility of *community* in economy, society, and state, just as the latter has to heed those of the former. It does not follow from the "democratization" of the rule of human beings over others that every human being is his or her own absolute ruler. Just as according to Gen. 1:27 the image of God appears in the fellowship between husband and wife, so it is also represented in larger social contexts only through human fellowship. Thus the rights of human beings to life, freedom, and self-determination always arise together with the human community's claim upon people. In principle there is *no priority of individual rights* over social rights, just as conversely there is no priority of social rights over individual rights. Both stand in a genetic context of reciprocal conditioning just as historically the processes of the socialization and the individualization of people mutually condition each other.

The rights of persons can only be developed in a just society, and a just society can only be developed on the ground of the rights of the person. The freedom of the individual can only be constituted in a free society, and a free society can only be constituted on the ground of individual freedom. Human liberation is liberation for *community* and *human* community is community in freedom.

Individual societies and states, in their social rights and duties, are responsible not only to the people who live in them but also to humanity. Human rights thus also entail humanity's claim upon individual societies and people. If particular political and social communities are bound through their constitutions to the human rights of their citizens, they must also be bound, on the other hand, to the rights of humanity. *Collective egoism* threatens human rights just as much as individual egoism. Thus individual communities and states are only then really legitimized by human rights, when they respect not only the human rights of their own citizens, but also to the

same degree those of other nations and peoples. Human right is indivisible; it is no privilege. Therefore National foreign policy can only be legitimized as the world's domestic policy. International *solidarity* in overcoming the horror of starvation and the threat of world military crises has, therefore, because of the rights of humanity, a precedence over *loyalty* to one's own people, to one's own class, race, or nation. Individual communities and states have human duties in the face of the rights of the whole of humanity to life, freedom, and community. Therefore human rights point to a universal community in which alone they can be realized.

### 3. *Being created in the image of God is the basis of the right of human beings to rule over the earth and of their right to community with the non-human creation.*

In Gen. 1:28 ff. the creation of human beings as the image of God is followed by the blessing of God, and the human calling to be fruitful and rule over the non-human creation. Human rule over the earth is to correspond to the will and command of the creator who loves his creation. Human beings are to "till and keep" the earth (Gen. 2:15) and to rejoice in it. Only where human dominion over the earth corresponds to the creator's lordship over the world, do human beings fulfil their creation in the image of God. Plundering, exploitation, and the destruction of nature contradict their right and dignity. Therefore human dominion over the earth includes a sense of community with the earth. Human rule is only then made legitimate when it is exercised in cooperation and community with the environment, and leads to life-giving symbioses between human society and the natural environment. The right of human beings to rule over the non-human creation must therefore be balanced by their respecting the "rights" of the non-human creation.

If the right to the earth is given to *human beings*, it follows that each and every human being has the *basic economic right* to a just share in life, nourishment, work, shelter, and personal possessions. The concentration of the basic necessities of life and the means of production in the hands of a few should be seen as a distortion and perversion of the image of God in human beings. It is unworthy of human beings and contradicts God's claim upon them. The widespread withholding of basic economic rights, the impoverishing of whole peoples and population groups, and world-wide starvation caused by political and economic imperialism in our divided and strife-torn world, are a desecration of the image of God in people and of God's claim upon each and every person. Without the realization of the fundamental economic rights of human beings to life, nourishment, work, and shelter, neither their individual nor their social rights can be realized.

If, along with the right of human beings to the earth, "*rights*" of the earth over against human beings are recognized, then basic ecological duties are also bound up

with these basic economic rights. It is not possible to increase basic economic rights at will simply by responding to increased demands, because economic growth is determined by ecological limits. The human struggle for survival and world domination cannot be carried out at the expense of nature, since in that case "ecological death" would anyway prepare the way for the end of human life altogether. Economic human rights should therefore be brought into line with the basic cosmic conditions for the survival of humanity in its natural environment. These rights can no longer be realized through uncontrolled economic growth, but only through the growth of economic justice within the "limits of growth". *Economic justice* in the provision and distribution of food, natural resources, and the industrial means of production will have to be directed towards the survival and the common life of human beings and nations. This is the only way of attaining *ecological stability* in mutual survival as well as in a common life alongside the non-human creation. Today economic and ecological justice mutually condition each other and thus can only be realized together.

4. *Being created in the image of God is the basis of the right of human beings to their future and their responsibility for those who come after them.*

Human beings in all their relationships in life - with each other and in community with the non-human creation - have, as the image of God, a right to self-determination and responsibility for their future. Their true future lies in the fulfilment of their being destined to the glory of their fellowship with God, with other human beings, and with the whole creation. In human history, with the kingdom of glory not yet realized, human beings correspond to this dignity for which they were created through their openness for this future and through their responsibility for the present in the face of this future. By virtue of their "citizenship in the kingdom of God", through which they gain their dignity, human beings have a right to their true future as well as corresponding duties in the shaping of life in the present.

People can only make use of their right to this future and their responsibility to the present if they attain the freedom of *responsibility* and the right to *self-determination*. Self-determination and responsibility to the present in the face of the future relate 1. to human beings in all their relationships in life, 2. to human beings in community with others, and 3. to human beings in community with the non-human creation. This is an important dimension in the basic individual, social, economic, and ecological human rights and duties. There are no human rights in the present without the right to self-determination and one's own responsibility in the face of the future, for people live personally, collectively, economically, and ecologically

in time and history. Their eternal and their temporal future therefore also have a "claim" upon them. The political recognition and pursuit of human rights ultimately gain their significance in this perspective of the future. Human beings become free and affirm their rights and duties as their true and eternal future gains power over them in hope, and conditions their present. Thus, in accord with this future, they will stand up for the right to a temporal future and the right to life of those who come after them. They will struggle not only for justice in the world of their own generation, but also for the support and preservation of justice in generations that will follow. There exists not only a personal and a collective egoism, but also an *egoism of the generations*. Thus people should not exploit their present at the expense of the future, just as there is no obligation to sacrifice their present to the future. Rather, they will work for a just balance between the chances of life and freedom in the present and in the future generations. In a time of over-population and of the "limits of growth", this temporal perspective of human rights assumes particular significance. Economic politics, population politics, health politics and, under certain circumstances, genetic politics, should be directed towards the human rights of the present and coming generations.

#### IV

##### *The Justification and Renewal of Human Beings*

Human rights are only effective insofar as people are truly human and act humanly. Their inhumanity becomes manifest in the violations and abuse of human rights. This is why behind the practical question as to how human rights may be realized on earth, there is the more profound question as to where people can experience their true humanity and how they can overcome their actual inhumanity.

Ever since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, political violations of human rights have been brought to the awareness of world public opinion. This has brought to light how serious and widespread are the everyday violations of the fundamental rights of human beings through power politics and unjust authority, through hate and fratricide. The growing use of torture under dictatorships is a terrifying indication of the fact that the Declaration of Human Rights, and its public acceptance, have not in themselves created a new humanity among the nations. Nevertheless, the Declaration of Human Rights sharpens people's conscience and renders any inhumanity illegitimate.

Moreover, since the discussion on the International Covenants of 1966, it has become clear that human rights are not only violated but also abused. They are abused whenever they are used ideologically to justify private

interests over against the rights of other human beings. They are abused whenever they are divided up, and it is pretended that only part of them stand for human rights in their totality. It is then that we see the birth of individual egoism, national arrogance, humanity's imperialism over against nature, and the absolutism of the present generation over against future generations. The increasing ideological abuse of human rights is one further indication that declarations and ratifications alone do not create true humanity among human beings. Nevertheless, insight into the indivisible totality of human rights sharpens the consciences and sense of responsibility of people for each other.

Christian theology uses the word 'sin' to describe people's inhumanity, as it is made manifest in continued violations and abuse of human rights. According to the testimony of the Bible, human beings have themselves failed to come up to their original destiny to live as God's likeness on earth, and they still fail to do so today. They wanted to "be like God" and thereby lost their true humanness (*Gen. 3, Rom. 5*). Enmity therefore characterizes humanity's relationship to nature (*Gen. 3*), and with Cain's murder of his brother begins the history of a humanity that does not want to be "its brother's keeper" (*Gen. 4*). And so people's sin perverts their relationships with God, their creator; with their fellow humans, their neighbours; and with nature, their home. God to them becomes a judge, fellow human beings become their enemies, and they become estranged from nature. Today, fear and aggression dominate a divided and hostile humanity which is on the way totally to destroy itself and the earth. Human rights can only be realized when and insofar as the justification of unjust human beings and the renewal of their humanness take place.

The Christian faith recognizes and proclaims that God through *Jesus Christ* justifies unjust human beings and renews them to their true humanness. Through the incarnation of Christ, God restores to human beings who want to "be like God" their true humanity which they had abandoned. Through the death of Christ, God takes the judgment of people's sin on himself and reconciles them to himself (*2 Cor. 5:19*). Through the raising of Christ from the dead, God makes real his claim upon people in that He justifies them (*Rom. 4:25*). Through the outpouring of his Spirit on all flesh (*Acts 2*), God renews his likeness on earth, unites a divided humanity and liberates his creation from the shadow of evil. In the coming of his kingdom, God will ultimately glorify his right, justify human beings and transfigure creation.

God's claim upon human beings in this world of sin and inhumanity is revealed to Christians through the *Gospel* of Christ (*Rom. 1:16 - 17*). Because the divine right of grace is proclaimed to all people through this Gospel, the God-given dignity of each and every person

is proclaimed in conjunction with it. But where this human dignity is revealed, fundamental human rights are also made to come into force. Their realization is made possible and becomes therefore an undeniable commitment.

On the strength of the Gospel, human rights in a hostile and inhuman world are first and foremost made real through the *service of reconciliation* (*2 Cor. 5:18 ff.*). Faith separates the human person from inhuman sin. Love accepts the person and forgives the sin. Hope perceives the human future of the person and opens up new life. In this way, through faith, love and hope, humanity, once betrayed and lost, is restored to the people. Through the service of reconciliation, human dignity and right are restored in this inhuman world. Wherever people's dignity is recognized and their right restored, there this service of reconciliation takes place. Reconciliation is nothing less than justifying justice; it is the power of the new creation in this twisted world.

For the sake of reconciliation one can therefore forego one's own right. For the sake of the neighbour's right, one can suffer up to the point of giving one's life. Selflessness and sacrifice in the "service of reconciliation" of the world with God are always also selflessness and sacrifice in the service devoted to the true humanity of people. Christians have the divine calling to bring the *right of reconciliation* to bear on the worldwide struggle for privileges and power, in which they are witnesses to the future and agents of hope. For with the right to reconciliation there begins here and now a process in which the present unrecognizable world changes into a world that will be seen to be a human world loved by God. The experience of reconciliation turns enemies into friends. Working at reconciliation opens up the future of life to people who are threatened by death. Sacrifices in the service of reconciliation are the seeds of hope. Without reconciliation, the humanization of situations as they are is impossible. Without their humanization, reconciliation remains ineffective. Reconciliation and change belong together, and together they bring about humanness in this world.

It is the task of Christians in the existing world conflicts in which they live, to proclaim the Gospel of justification, to live the liberating faith, to exercise the ministry of reconciliation and to give in their congregations a demonstration of a reconciled humanity in the fellowship of men and women, Jews and gentiles, slaves and freemen (*Gal. 3:28*). It is especially when Christians fulfil these specifically Christian tasks, that they serve the realization of humanity of all people. By proclaiming God's justifying justice they proclaim the dignity of human beings. By practising the right of grace they practise basic human rights. The Christian faith therefore does not excuse us from the struggle for the recognition and realization of human rights, but leads us into this very

struggle. The community which calls Jesus "Son of man", suffers under the ongoing inhumanity and dehumanization of human beings and in its prayers turns this suffering into a painful awareness.

## V

### *Priorities and Balance in the Struggle for Human Rights*

Because human beings as individuals, in community and in humanity are meant to reflect the image of God, all human rights are bound up with, and related to one another. One can neither curtail them, separate them from each other, or differentiate between them. Furthermore, all human rights are bound up with specific human duties. Rights and duties cannot be separated from each other; privileges should not grow out of rights nor empty demands out of duties.

But in human history, people and nations, responding to the needs in which they find themselves, always set *priorities*. When the economic need stands in the foreground, they seek first to realize basic economic rights. Where political oppression is reigning, they seek first to realize political rights. Every *progress* in one area of life, however, causes the structure of life to get out of balance. The onesided, uncontrolled, and uncoordinated economic growth in some nations has pushed the political, social, and personal balance of human beings in these societies to the edge of destruction. The hegemony of the developed industrial nations has kept other nations in conditions of underdevelopment and has made them dependent. The sudden development and securing of personal freedoms and rights can weaken collective rights and duties, just as conversely the onesided extension of collective rights can lead to the weakening of personal rights. Thus partial progress in one area of life must be constantly accompanied by the redressing of the *balance* of human rights in other areas. Progress without balance is destructive just as balance without progress degenerates. The real history of the recognition and realization of human rights is accomplished in the constant *conflict* between progress and balance, a conflict which cannot be solved within time.

Whoever honours human beings as the image of God, must acknowledge all human rights in the same degree and therefore view them in their indissoluble relationship to each other. Whoever heeds the inalienable dignity of human beings, must, in the conflict between progress and balance, look to the unity of human rights, the human rights of people in all their relationships of life, and the rights of the whole human race. It follows that in the onesided progress in the development of human rights in one area, human rights in another area of life should never be fundamentally suspended. To bring this partial progress in harmony with human rights then becomes an

irrevocable demand, because otherwise the balance of the whole structure of life cannot be won back, nor can human dignity be wholly honoured.

In the conflict of human history, people always live with a disturbed balance in their human rights. Their human dignity appears in a somewhat distorted form; therefore it is necessary, in order to realize the totality of human rights, to develop strategies which eliminate the inequalities inevitably resulting from established priorities. In countries which purchase their sudden economic progress at the expense of political rights and individual freedom, one must press for the realization of political and individual human rights. In countries which secure the personal freedoms of their citizens at the expense of the social rights of the community, these collective rights and duties must be promoted. In societies which have established social rights at the expense of individual rights, individual human rights are to be promoted. In dependent and underdeveloped countries, the rights of independence and self-determination have priority. The acknowledgment of the inalienable dignity of human beings and the insight into the indivisible unity of their rights and duties can be regarded as *regulative ideas* and in various situations and societies can establish priorities and produce balance.

On the basis of their various histories, individuals, peoples and nations have given particular emphasis to differing aspects of human rights. They must establish their priorities in different ways in order to escape from inhuman conditions, from want, violence, and dependence; and so their concerns for human rights vary. However, the concept of the indivisibility and thus the unity of human rights, should act as a pointer to the future of a *universal established community* of all people and nations. The right to different concerns must be integrated into the higher right of the just *balance of concerns* because without such balance humanity will not survive its conflicts.

Accordingly, the following can be expected from Christianity, churches, congregations, and ecumenical organizations:

1. In the struggle for human rights and political priorities they will represent the unassailable *dignity of human beings* and thus also the indivisible *unity of their human rights and duties*. Both are constituted through the claim of the one God upon persons in all of their relationships of life.
2. In various situations of people and nations, they will press for the *restoration of those particular human rights* which through onesided progress and established priorities have become neglected, weakened, or repressed.
3. They will overcome their own egoism in order to *overcome the egoism* of individual, social, and human rights over against nature, and the egoism of the present generation over against the coming generations, and in order to serve the humanity of each and every person

in the interest of God their creator and redeemer.

4. Through public proclamation and education they will sharpen the duties of the individual which are inexorably bound up with the rights of human beings with regard to their God-given dignity, to other people, to nature, and to the future.

Christianity understands itself as witness to the three-in-one God who liberates human beings from inward and outward inhumanity, who allows them to live in his covenant, and leads them to the glory of

his kingdom. Christians therefore stand up for the dignity of human beings out of which emerge their rights and duties. For the sake of God they will stand up with all means at their disposal, acting as well as suffering, for the dignity of human beings and their rights as the image of God. For their service to the humanity of persons they need the right to religious freedom, the right to form a community, and the right to public speech and action.

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