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ETHICS, COMMUNICATION, RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN GLOBAL WORLD

Summary

In our global world again religious beliefs play a fundamental role in the make-up of a cultural group and of a society. This is due to the fact that religious beliefs give definition to a society as a whole, or better, to the specific social group existing within it. This 'definition' consists in the shaping of behavior, of one's way of thinking, and of common values, both in terms of the relationship between the human being and the Divine sphere, and that which regards the relationships between the human being and the world, others, and himself. In the first case, that is, the relationship between the individual and the One, we can consider religion in a strict sense, while, in the second case, the individual's relationships with the world, others, and himself have to do with the inherent ethical aspects of these religious beliefs. Finally, in globalization we have to move in the direction of acknowledging the fact that there are some ethical aspects that are shared by various religious groups. In order to carry out this task, we must be aware that through the way itself, in which the possible comparison between religions, and through the manner of communication, can we open up a common space: a space that works because specific ethical principles are carried out. Only in this way, is it possible to open paths to the achievement of universal sharing among religions in the time of globalization.

Keywords: religion, culture, globalization, ethics, common good, dialogue, communication, dignity of person, plurality, values.

General introduction

In my paper I will try to analyze the particular situation in which we are living today; today: in our contemporary global world. In this world cultural and, above all, religious conflicts are in fact more and more widespread. It is a common experience. But it is not only a matter of fact. We cannot only describe and explain today's globalization of conflicts, for example, from a sociological, historical, or political point of view. In my opinion it is more important to discuss the mentality by which these

conflicts are supported. It is necessary to understand the *logic* of conflict: the hidden reason by which conflicts can arise and can be argued.

This will be the aim of my paper. I will try to describe this logic. I will try to discuss some elements that can help us to understand our contemporary situation in time of globalization. I will try to outline another perspective which can show other solutions, other pattern of relationship: in which conflicts are not unavoidable.

Today's religious and cultural tensions. In our world again religious beliefs play a fundamental role in the make-up of a cultural group and of a society. This is due to the fact that religious beliefs give definition to a society as a whole, or better, to the specific social group existing within it. This 'definition' consists in the shaping of behavior, of one's way of thinking, and of common values, both in terms of the relationship between the human being and the Divine sphere, and that which regards the relationships between the human being and the world, others, and himself. In the first case, that is, the relationship between the individual and the One, we can consider religion – this will be dealt with more thoroughly later – in a strict sense, while, in the second case, the individual's relationships with the world, others, and himself have to do with the inherent ethical aspects of these religious beliefs.

However, it is not only in the spheres of religion and ethics that religious beliefs deeply influence a cultural group. One must take into consideration the *political* aspect that bears influence on culture. Religious beliefs, in fact, not only influence the cultural make-up of a society, but also interact with social institutions. Moreover, these beliefs usually lead to the creation of more specific institutions, which operate autonomously in society.

1. What is religion in the sphere of globalization?

However, before discussing this topic, we have to clarify what is religion, what is religion in its proper meaning, and what religions are and can be in our contemporary world. In order to answer the first question – What is religion? – it is necessary to start with a brief etymological digression. In fact: what is the origin of the term 'religion'? The Latin *religio* – hence 'religion' as it is termed in various European languages – particularly suggests two etymological meanings. Cicero's definition in *De natura deorum*,¹ where the term '*religio*' is related to the verb *relegere* which means diligently putting into practice that which is necessary to worship

¹ Marcus Tullius CICERO, *De natura deorum*, pars II, Francis BROOKS (ur.), *Marci Tullii Ciceronis, De nature deorum* (London: Methuen, 1896.), 72.

the gods, defining as religious those who carry out these deeds. In other words, this etymology highlights the constant repetition that marks certain types of deeds, emphasising the fact that religion is always tied to specific cultural and ritualistic practices. Ritualistic and ethical practices adequately develop in the political dimension of human beings.

The other etymology, that is even more engraved in our concept of religion is offered by Lactantius, a Christian writer in the *Divinae institutiones* three centuries after Cicero. In Lactantius's work the term 'religio' is made to derive from the verb *religare*.² In other words, religion is shown as the attitude creating a specific bond – *religamen* – which connects human beings to God. Lactantius describes this bond as connected to *pietas*, as similar to the respect and the obedience that are due to the God of the Holy Scriptures. This way the aspect of public practice is left in the background, while acceptance and preservation of the bond with God become very important.

These etymologies therefore identify two sides which are present in the religious practice: the public dimension of ethic and liturgical practice, that is emphasized by Cicero, and the inner character of that bond which through the experience of *pietas* unites human beings to God. Both, however, reveal and emphasize the specific character of a religious attitude: 'Religion' involves particular forms of relationship: relationship between God and human beings; relationship among human beings. I shall argue that there are two challenges for Christianity from globalization. First, theology has long engaged with political thought in the West, especially in terms of Luther's "two kingdoms" theory. There is also the relationship of Christianity to the great nineteenth-century ideologies of socialism and neo-liberalism. However, the impact of globalization is such that there is little certainty any more about the future of politics.³ Once there were political theories of justice, which were rationalist, utilitarian, and dependent on classical theories of the citizen in the nation-state. In their place today comes a much greater reliance on ad hoc theories, which are pragmatic in a fast changing world. For example, Martha Nussbaum⁴ and *Amartya Sen*⁵ speak of "multiple identities" as a basis for a theory of justice which can

² LACTANTIUS, *Divinae institutiones*, pars IV, Samuel BRANDT – Gerogius LAUBMANN (ur.), *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, 19/2 (Pragae-Vindobonae-Lipsiae: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1890.), 28.

³ Jones LLOYD, „Blessed Are the Pure in Heart”: *New Statesman* 23 April (2001), 8-10.

⁴ Martha NUSSBAUM, *Women and Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34-38.

⁵ Amartya SEN, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 158-175

enable a response to poverty. Even if globalization as a phenomenon has been, over interpreted,⁶ such a philosophical shift is of great significance, and has led many political scientists to rethink much of their analysis of political life.

The second challenge is the practice of mission. Local churches in large cities are the future for much of Christianity across the world. As these become less and less Western in their understanding of authority, tradition, and beliefs, the practice of Christianity will become more diffuse and harder to fit within a conventional doctrinal framework. The issue of mission is central to the global future of Christianity. There has been a great deal of writing in contemporary theology on the future of mission, arising from the idea of "the church as counterculture".⁷ David Bosch, Murray Demster, and others have all highlighted the importance of urban mission, as have Laurie Green and Andrew Davey. Their writing is important because it mediates the praxis of non-Western, yet urban, Christianity into England. The challenge is to contextualize the practice of mission in a way that is sensitive to the local culture.

What is interesting is how the discussion of justice and multiple identities combines with reflection on mission. The theories of justice found in Nussbaum and Sen are important because they generate in communities a vision of what is possible. Such a vision in turn has the power to create social change, and to prevent catastrophic poverty and famine. The agents in developing countries are local – often faith – communities. In the case of the churches, it is clear that the local Christian communities which Sen and Nussbaum see as fundamental are both engaging with theories of justice in a way very different from traditional political theories, and also seeking to practice new forms of mission. The tension is very creative: in the expanding global cities the crucial factor is to hold together both a mission strategy and a justice strategy. The fascinating question is whether the alliance of Christians with secular bodies against poverty is affected by the growth of local forms of Christianity: whether, in fact, the question of justice and identity is related to the issue of mission. In my view, the question of the understanding of mission and justice by local churches across the globe will introduce a new factor into the debate about the future of Christianity.

⁶ Colin HAY – David MARSH, *Demystifying Globalization* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 201-257.

⁷ Michael BUDDE – Robert BRIMLOW (ur.), *The Church as Counterculture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 25-40.

In other words, I think that the future of non-Western Christianity will be on the one hand a struggle, in alliance with secular bodies and environmental and feminist movements, against poverty and violence. On the other, it will be about the mission of local Christian groups („churches“) in predominantly urban areas. The alliance with secular bodies raises the complex philosophical issue of which theory of justice unites Christian groups with these bodies. The issue of mission and inculturation raises a different question: that of the identity of Christianity in the movement of the Spirit.

2. What is Meant by Speaking of Globalization and the meaning of religion and culture in time of globalization?

It is no longer the view of international theorists that globalization is a single process. Rather, several changes have taken place. First, there is a return to the pre-1914 situation of global trade, capital mobility, and immigration. It is not exactly the same, but the trends point to a rough similarity. In particular the mobility of capital is now very great, as it was before 1914, but on a much vaster scale. Second, there is a series of processes, including flows of information, capital, etc., which exacerbate many local political, social, cultural, and economic tendencies to breaking point. These flows do not amount to a “global process” – globalization is not a demonic external force – but they do produce a crisis for political life in many regions of the world. Putting it another way, what has happened is that political forces in many societies have devalued the legitimacy of the modern state. Globalization has helped that, but the process was underway in any case. Much of the political legitimacy built up between 1945 and 1980 in non-Western nations that had gained political independence during these years was very fragile at best, and in Western democracies in this period the power of the state overreached itself. The secular ideologies of socialism were very strong in the period 1945-60: Ben Gurion in Israel built a secular.

Israeli state, with kibbutzim as the great vision of the future; there were similar commitments in India with Nehru, Nasser in Egypt, and Nyerere in Tanzania. Most of these saw little relevance in religion except as a private matter (Nyerere was an exception here). These political movements were overambitious and by 1990 were shattered, both economically and in terms of ideology. Third, there is an awareness that cultural patterns and flows now reach across the globe, even if again it is a mistake to speak of global culture. This spread is combined with enormous and desperate poverty for some people who live in the growing sprawl of

cities across the developing world. However, here again there has been to my mind persuasive criticism by Hay and Marsh⁸ of the unwarranted determinism of a neo-Marxist reading of what is in fact contingent, local culture, even if it is affected by patterns which are replicated across the globe. There is no determinism in the development of nations, nor of their citizens.

3. Forms of Discourse about Globalization

Globalization has been discussed at length in the last decade, within academic, political, and business circles. It is hardly surprising that theologians, church members, and church leaders have also commented on it.⁹ The churches are seen as the defenders of local culture, welfare states, and sustainable economics against the imperialism of global forces, harsh multinationals, and the trivializing of culture. However, within the secular debate there are distinct discourses, which have particular forms of dialogue.

Economists discuss the extent to which the market approximates to perfect competition, as in neoclassical theory, by the perfect, global mobility of goods, labor, and capital. Capital in turn can be created by both financial and social, or institutional, investment. A global market has been created by deregulation, financial liberalization, and the changes created by information and telecommunications technology. It is sometimes called a „technological revolution“, although it should be noted that the time between a technological advance and its full implementation in business and society may be considerable.

In a similar, related, but nevertheless distinct area, political economists debate whether these economic processes contribute to the diminution of the power of the state. In one way it is clearly true. In my own quite short lifetime, the British government has ceased to ration mortgages through indirect controls on lending by financial companies, withdrawn to a large extent from its management of the export of capital, and ceded the setting of interest rates to the national Bank of England. Capital mobility and the power of the markets may weaken the authority of national governments in fiscal and monetary policy.

Sociologists have also argued about whether there is a global civil society, especially in the growing number of nongovernmental organiza-

⁸ Colin HAY – David MARSH, *Demystifying Globalization*, 133-145.

⁹ Max STACKHOUSE – Peter PARIS (ur.), „God and Globalization“, *Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*, sv. I. (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000), 200-212.

tions (NGOs). A similar debate occurs about the increased urbanization of our world, and how far such cities share common features. Finally, cultural theorists, and urban theorists, seek to explain how vast (essentially trivializing) cultural forces may overwhelm tradition and local communities. Even before any theological reflection on these realities begins, it is worth noticing that this literature analyses flows of people and information. These flows might be of capital, people, culture, technology, or images. Such dynamic realities have different textures and shapes, and changing identities. Any response, including that of theology, must be complex and multidisciplinary. However, even this caution is not enough. An interdisciplinary approach might suggest either that there is one process of globalization, or that globalization is itself a discrete, identifiable process. Political scientists since the late 1990s have come to be critical of this way of describing globalization, as though it were a thing, or an irresistible force. Instead, it is better to envisage multiple global processes, interacting in contingent ways, which are unevenly developed in different places and times.

The reason for caution lies in the way in which, again and again, history gives examples of economic transformation coming to a stop and instead turning into a slow, inexorable process of decline, for a variety of cultural and political reasons.¹⁰ The first example comes from the fact that the European economy, and especially that of Russia, went into reverse after 1914, initiating a series of protectionist economic policies, civil wars, and ultimately a total breakdown of economic relations, which finally created the global catastrophe of World War II. It took many years to recover from the catastrophe, so that only since the 1990s have politicians and academics begun to use the language of world trade and international relations common before 1914. A second example is that of fifteenth-century China, where the state controlled technical progress. The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) prohibited overseas trade for over a century. The country's lead, built up over several centuries, in the skills of ironmaking, printing, and other industries declined. Existing knowledge fell into disuse. Since there was no private enterprise to challenge the state, as happened in medieval Europe where the guilds supplanted the power of the monarchy and feudal aristocracy by means of civic political representation, China regressed for centuries in technology, economics, and eventually national and international political power.¹¹ These examples show cogently, if proof were needed, that there is nothing inevitable about economic progress or cultural change.

¹⁰ David LANDES, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (New York: Little Brown, 1998), 388-389.

¹¹ Diane COYLE, *Governing the World Economy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), 277.

4. Theological Conclusion

In the global reality of social and political change the secular, left-wing ideologies of the post-1945 era have withered and died in virtually every nation that received its independence from European empires in those years. In their place have come a series of cultural and social changes, sometimes described as flows. The modern city is not a secular, planned, and socialist settlement but a chaotic growth of ethnic, religious, and cultural migrants. Davey is critical of Castells for failing to give due weight to the vibrancy of religion in the modern city.¹² Many migrants in pentecostal and other churches have a deep commitment to mission. At the same time there is an exploration of new patterns of worship, authority, and dialogue with other faiths. It is not always a comfortable agenda for Western Christians, and the emphasis on the supernatural can be disturbing. However, there is also a constant struggle for economic and social justice, with the need to build alliances between churches and secular bodies.

At the same time the reformulation of political theory into a more pragmatic approach requires an account which can justify alliances between churches and governments. The key issue here is how NGOs and faith communities can listen to one another without each losing its integrity. Liberation theology in Latin America can be reformulated into a capability approach, deeply indebted to Sen. Such socioeconomic factors provide minimum requirements for personhood. Thus, while one should not overlook other spheres of life, there is justification for particular attention to socioeconomic goods in discussion of an equality of basic capability.¹³ If one moves back to England, then it is clear that churches will survive in urban areas only if they create partnerships with secular agencies, thus raising again Sen's account of multiple identities and persons belonging to different agencies, all concerned with justice.¹⁴ How Christian communities can contribute to the formulation and enforcement of democratic contracts by alliance with secular bodies and NGOs is a constant refrain in this argument. Nussbaum shows, as does South African Joyce Seroke,¹⁵ that

¹² Andrew DAVEY, *Urban Christianity and Global Order* (London: SPCK, 2001), 291.

¹³ Douglas HICKS, *Inequality and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 344-357.

¹⁴ John ATHERTON, *Public Theology in Changing Times* (London: SPCIC, 2000), 12-33.

¹⁵ Joyce SEROKE, "The Church - Advocate of Democracy", DEMOCRATIC CONTRACTS FOR SUSTAINABLE AND CARING SOCIETIES, *What Can Churches and Christian Communities Do?*, Lewis Seymour Mudge - Thomas Weiser (ur.), (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2000), 344.

religion cannot be regarded simply as a hindrance in achieving a secular, democratic society. What is needed is an alliance between religious bodies, political groups, and NGOs to develop human capabilities in a way that removes obstacles to their expression. In particular, Nussbaum's combination of classical philosophy and an attention to the needs of women is an innovating approach that allows local religious traditions to contribute to the enhancement of human capabilities. Sen equally argues that a theory of justice, which responds to poverty, cannot simply be universalist in the utilitarian or Kantian traditions, but must be fashioned out of local identities.

The global world of the twenty-first century is beginning to take shape. The most appropriate political theology is local, contextual, and found in the cities of the developing world. It will be made up of the interaction of theological and philosophical discourses. Christian communities are caught up in the massive changes created by technology and capitalism. They need to link their commitment to mission to awareness that oppression can be challenged. There are signs that this is beginning to happen. At the same time the philosophical approach pioneered by Sen and Nussbaum needs to be taken further. Churches are as much involved with the nurturing of human capabilities as any other agency.

The solidarities which support justice-making in the global cities of the future draw on ecclesiologies of complex, multiple identities. That is the most important point to make at the end of this essay. Many writers have overemphasized globalization as a force, and the reality is far more subtle and complex than is often allowed for. Nevertheless, the search for such identities will be the crucial task of this century. Churches can often be too accepting of the cultural and national relations in which they are set. They become too easily prisoners of their own culture.¹⁶ The task which faces churches in many of the new, dynamic cities of the globe allows no such easy resolution, of the issue.

There are two challenges for Christianity. One is the change in political thought, which is a shift to pragmatic, ad hoc theories of „what works”, allowing no room for theories of human nature, but only appeals to the skills of technical experts in a particular area. This can isolate Christianity as, in the view of its critics, a religion which is insufficiently pragmatic, and too bound up with theories of justice which are dependent on past understandings of the relationship of citizen and nation-state. The second challenge is about the redefinition of mission, in terms of its contextualiza-

¹⁶ Rowan WILLIAMS, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 314-318.

tion. This article has resisted strongly the idea that globalization is a single, unitary process. Instead, there are a series of changes interacting with these challenges to Christianity. There is rapid urbanization across the globe alongside a decline in the power of nation-states to plan in the manner espoused by Western socialists after 1945. In these chaotic, fast growing cities churches and other faith groups seek to evangelize, but they are repeatedly challenged as to their identity as the cultural identity of their city itself changes. They are also caught up in the struggle for justice. I have suggested that Nussbaum and Sen offer a way through this confused situation with their two key ideas. One is that of capabilities, whereby the struggle for justice allows for capabilities to be developed, without prescribing how these capabilities will be used. This means that there does not have to be a tight definition of what it means to be a person, but rather only an agreement as to what is necessary if one is to achieve one's personal identity, whatever that might be. In this way pluralism is built into the debate. The second idea is that of multiple identities, which again means that a theory of justice can be many sided. Both these ideas relate to the complex reality of the struggle to survive, and be a person, in the modern city.

Finally, global capitalism needs to be reformed. Hicks puts the point well: If the debt of many nations could be written off, much good would be achieved.¹⁷ The complexity of globalization stems from its reality as a series of local flows of information, capital, and human beings, which place many local cultures under a pressure to change that leads to breaking point. Only 50 years ago political theorists thought of the power of the state as being harnessed to produce a new society: planned economies interconnecting with social development. This was a worthy vision, but it is now dead. In its place is the energy of the global market, which churches struggle to contain so that it does not create yet more victims in its path. At the same time this energy is a challenge to the churches to find again the dynamic of the Gospel, which can speak through the challenges of globalization.

5. Meaning of the Dialog in the time of globalization

5.1. The Paths to Inter-religious Communication

It is important to understand the 'logic' of fundamentalism if dialogue between religions is to be discussed as a necessary solution for overcoming conflicts. But, how is it possible to achieve this form of com-

¹⁷ Douglas HICKS, *Inequality and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 167-169.

munication in a serious and effective way? First of all, in my opinion, it is necessary to act *from within* each specific religious situation. It is necessary to appreciate all the elements present in each religion, that could help to overcome tensions and open up dialogue. It is necessary to regain the proper meaning of ‘religion’, the idea of relationship, and emphasize this aspect as the true core of the religious attitude. In other words, fundamentalism *cannot* be eliminated *from the outside*, but rather, *from within* the religious dimension: When one chooses to underline, on the part of the religious individual of various creeds, the common elements rather than the differences.

The second step is to support concretely these common elements. It is necessary to build together a common space, to make universality, to share our identity. Communication can help us. But what is the meaning of ‘communication’? What normally do we do in our practice of communication? What are we doing now, in the communicative interaction we are experiencing in this room?

Usually, in semiotics manuals and in linguistic treatises, communication as such is defined as the conveyance of a message (or information) by the ‘addresser/sender’ to the ‘addressee’ (or ‘receiver’). Communication understood as such, clearly requires elaboration by both the ‘sender’ and the ‘receiver’. The former, in order to be understood, must give the message a form that is accessible to those who will receive it. The latter, wishing to understand, always tends to reconstruct the sender’s intention, interpreting and contextualizing the message.

It is in fact believed that this communication pattern can work in managing processes that not only pertain to human beings, but extend to the different spheres in which information is conveyed, transmitted, and where it constitutes research grounds for specific disciplines, from sociology to biology, from politics to information technology. In this way, inter-human communication is in danger of being restored to quantifiable standards, thereby sacrificing all which can, unlikely, be predetermined, such as creative ability and the capability of adapting to a set context.

This concept of communicating is certainly very common. But, we must insist, this is *not the only pattern* we should refer to when thinking of communicative processes. Something very different is at stake in these processes, verifying which is quite difficult; it has to do with adequately understanding what it means to implement the intermediation of a message or information. This is what the model of ‘data transmission’ takes for granted when interpreting what occurs amongst human beings, as simple interaction that can be measured in terms of efficiency and efficacy.

Instead, it is the specific *mediation* which is at work in the communicative processes that must be investigated.

At this aim, we may be guided by a brief etymological analysis of the term 'communication'. As it is known, 'communication' derives from the Latin word '*communicatio*' which stands for 'to acquaint' others with what is in our possession. The clear metaphor in this notion is that of 'participation' which, not by chance, is explicitly offered by the German language: the word '*Mitteilung*' may be translated literally, rather than with the term 'communication', as it normally is, precisely with 'sharing jointly'.

Besides this, Latin offers something more. The reference of the term '*communicatio*' to the concept of '*munus*', as 'gift' is obvious. What is shared is, in the end, something which is given so that it can truly be common to all, so that everyone may take part. '*Communicatio*', therefore, originally means 'putting in common', 'creating a common space'. What does all of this mean? It means that communication is not only transmitting messages. Communication is *creating a common space*, a shared space, within which the interlocutors can reach a true understanding. This type of understanding cannot be pre-determined, since it is the result, unforeseen and unforeseeably, of the ability to mediate that characterises the participants in the communicative process and that is applied, from time to time, to various contexts. In other terms, here interaction cannot be conceived as merely mechanical, because it requires the ability of human beings to select the most suitable way to produce an agreement, the ability to identify with a certain context, the vocation to mediate between universal and particular: the interest to realizing relations.

5.2. *Communication and Dialogue*

Certainly all of this opens an array of possibilities: the possibility of considering an interlocutor as the interlocutor of a dialogue, or simply as a target, even within the sphere of relationships among followers of different religions. This again means that communicating is always a risk. Precisely, its success is always at risk *either* because the speaker may not be clear or enticing, *or* the listeners may not understand or not want to understand. Dialogue is not possible if two or more interlocutors are not present to carry it out. But if this does occur, communication reveals itself as a *creative act* in the precise sense that it aims at the creation of a common space between two or more interlocutors.

I have spoken of *dialogue* several times. What does 'dialogue', in the true sense, mean? How can it be achieved? The answer to this ques-

tion means setting the conditions for which even inter-religious dialogue is possible and conflicts can be managed.

In order for it to effectively take place, dialogue suggests the recognition, by each the interlocutors, of the other's 'good will'. This means: Each participant in the dialogue recognizes that his/her position is not absolute, final and unmodifiable. On the other hand, a dialogue in which the speaker - who in addressing others, recognizes their right, and the 'space' due to them - acted only for narcissistic reasons, using the interlocutor as a 'mirror' to reflect him/herself, would not be a dialogue in the true sense. In dialogue the motives of the interlocutor are not at all simply functional to confirming one's position, but may induce a change in ideas. In effect what is basic to the successful outcome of dialogue is.

The willingness to stake one's all, the ability of exposing oneself from the beginning and without calculation to the words of another, without the guarantee that one's positions will be confirmed, even granting the interlocutor. If this fails, there will not be an authentic dialogue but only the pretence of it, more or less concealed by politeness. The successful outcome previously mentioned, must apply, if speaking about dialogue, to inter-religious dialogue. This, rather, is what is difficult about inter-religious dialogue.

6. Ethics in communication in global world

The final questions are: *why*, then, must we engage in dialogue? Why must we create common space for communication and not simply use language to impose our ideas on and convince our interlocutor of their goodness? In a word: why must we prefer dialogue instead of conflict? We outline the decisive question of moral *involvement*.

A response to such questions could come from an in-depth look at the basis of language and communication, intended as structural conditions of the human being. A German philosopher, Karl-Otto Apel, has elaborated a theory in which a specific moral uniformity is found within the use of the language itself. From the moment in which, according to Apel, all of us, as speakers, belong to the "community of communication", *we find ourselves putting into practice, through the use of language itself, specific moral principles*. These are: the principle of *justice* (respecting the right of every interlocutor to speak); the principle of *solidarity* (the acknowledgement that others have the same communicative capacity that I acknowledge for myself and the intention to support their use of it); and the principle of *co-responsibility* (the interlocutors assume common re-

sponsibility and make sure that the communicative space remains open). By starting from the structure of language itself, it is possible to highlight the conditions of valid universal ethics: Ethics *in* communication.

Certainly, it is about conditions that must be actually achieved: this is the product of our free will. But our fundamental ethical capacity that is inherent to our language could guide this choice. So, then, in the structure of language itself the possibility of a real ethical communication conduct and a real experience of sharing is inherent. Therefore, the condition of sharing is that each person, separately, is able to say his own, and is acknowledged, right from the beginning, as having the capacity to do it: just as the one who can be helped and urged to do it.

Conclusion: Ethics, Communication, Religious Dialogue in Global World

If we want to make sure that dialogue among religions is possible, it is necessary to start from two ideas: the idea of the particularity of every religion, which must be respected; and the idea of the common aim of every religion: both the relationship between human being and divine sphere; and, starting from this point of view, the relationship among human beings. In this setting, the structure of communicating, seen as a creation of common space among the interlocutors, may possibly enable, not only the respectful consideration of various needs originating from numerous local contexts – including those that offer resistance and can even react violently to the effects of globalization processes –, but also, and above all, the adequate reformulation of the relationship between the universal and the particular.

I repeat: we have to reject the fundamentalistic idea of religion. According to this idea, only *a particular idea* of the universal – of the particular pattern of the relationship between human beings and divine sphere – must be imposed all over the world. Fundamentalists forget the particularity of their approach. They connect directly, they muddle up particularity and universality. We have seen that this, all in all, is the logic behind fundamentalism.

Instead, it is the reference itself to the idea of language and of communication that we have previously developed, that shows that the universal – which is expressed and carried out by the use of the word as a medium of an ever-growing sharing among human beings – is that which, on the one hand, proves to be applied, contextualized, and embodied from time to time in various spheres and, on the other hand, becomes the product of an authentic meeting between human beings,

capable of creating new horizons. We can think about not only a static universality – expression of pride and arrogance which, in its conquests, Europe often showed – but also, about one that offers a process, never to be taken for granted, of continuous creation, among all interlocutors, of a possible dimension of universality, in which the sharing of that common space among the diverse spheres increases.

All of this, once again, is made possible and is guided by *the spirit of language whose ethical features are of primary importance, and whose test-bed is the dialogue among religions*. But not, as mentioned earlier, by assuming an external outlook toward the religions themselves and from here, by trying to make them engage in dialogue. Instead, it is necessary to make the common elements pertinent to collaboration, emerge from within religions, from life and from the individual's religious experience.

Finally, in globalization we have to move in the direction of acknowledging the fact that there are some ethical aspects that are shared by various religious groups. In order to carry out this task, we must be aware that through the way itself, in which the possible comparison between religions, and through the manner of communication, can we open up a common space: a space that works because specific ethical principles are carried out. Only in this way, is it possible to open paths to the achievement of universal sharing among religions in the time of globalization.

ETIKA, KOMUNIKACIJE, RELIGIJSKI DIJALOG U GLOBALNOM SVIJETU

Sažetak

U našem globalnom svijetu religijska uvjerenja opet igraju temeljnu ulogu u stvaranju kulturne skupine i društva. To je zbog činjenice jer religijska uvjerenja daju definiciju društvu u cjelini, ili bolje rečeno, određenoj društvenoj skupini koja postoji u njemu. Ta se “definicija” sastoji u oblikovanju ponašanja, nečijeg načina razmišljanja i zajedničkih vrijednosti, kako u pogledu odnosa između čovjeka i božanske sfere, tako i u pogledu odnosa između čovjeka i svijeta, čovjeka i drugih ljudi, i njega samoga. U prvom slučaju, to jest kad govorimo o odnosu između pojedinca i Jednog, religiju možemo smatrati u strogoj smislu, dok, u drugom slučaju, kad govorimo o odnosu pojedinca sa svijetom, drugima i samim sobom, religija ima veze s svojstvenim etičkim aspektima tih religijskih uvjerenja. Konačno, u globalizaciji moramo krenuti u smjeru priznavanja činjenice da postoje pojedini etički aspekti koji su zajednički različitim religijskim skupinama. Da bismo izoršili tu zadaću, moramo biti svjesni da putem samog načina, na kojem je moguća usporedba između religija i kroz način komunikacije, možemo otvoriti zajednički prostor: prostor koji djeluje jer su ostvareni specifični etički principi. Samo na taj način moguće je otvoriti putove ka postizanju univerzalnog dijeljenja među religijama u vrijeme globalizacije.

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Ključne riječi: *religija, kultura, globalizacija, etika, opće dobro, dijalog, komunikacija, dostojanstvo osobe, pluralnost, vrijednosti.*

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