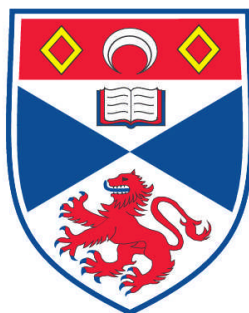


**A THEOLOGY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:  
A BUDDHIST APPROACH TO RELIGION AND POLITICS IN AN  
INTERDEPENDENT WORLD**

**Alejandro Chavez Segura**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St. Andrews**



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University of St. Andrews

**A THEOLOGY OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:  
A Buddhist Approach to Religion and Politics  
in An Interdependent World**

---

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity  
in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of PhD

ALEJANDRO CHAVEZ SEGURA

St. Mary's College  
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2011

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For many decades, Buddhism in the West has been conceived as an ‘other-worldly’ religion with very little or –at least—limited authority in the public arena. This partial view of the Buddhist path overlooks the potential of Buddhism to interpret reality and help establish new causes and conditions to improve it. This thesis is rooted in Buddhism and seeks to develop a Buddhist theology in order to understand how international relations, as part of the contingent reality, are subject to change. Thus there is the possibility of reconstructing reality through the sum of individual will expressed in social groups, institutions and states.

This *Theology of International Relations* follows a methodology of causality rooted in the dependent origination found in Buddhist theology. Thus, relative reality is conceived as the result of the interaction of different causes and conditions; individuals, through their thoughts and actions, provide new conditions which will be crystallized in particular social arrangements through an intersubjective consensus. This arrangement is highly influenced by the individual’s allegiance with the sacred, however this is conceived, and thus establishes an ethical guideline in the individual’s relationship with other sentient beings and the ultimate level of existence.

This dependent construction of reality goes from the individual level of analysis to the social, state, interstate and global levels in a chain of contingent reality. Therefore I suggest that states, institutions and society are the reflection of shared ideas, beliefs, goals and perceptions of reality between individuals. The human capacity to shape reality is rooted in the premise that they face a relative reality, one that is contingent on several causes and conditions. In Buddhism, all sentient beings play a key role in shaping reality but human beings play a unique role because they can overcome suffering when they recognize the interdependent relation of causes and conditions in a relative reality. If this is achieved, then absolute reality can be experienced, wherein the

individual goes beyond all conceptions and senses in a state of emptiness of the self. These core ideas of a contingent reality, its construction through an intersubjective consensus and the need to experience an absolute reality are premises which Buddhist theology developed and which this thesis explores.

In chapter one this thesis considers the basis of Buddhist theology and how it explains the experience of the sacred, the role of religion and the potential for the construction of a relative reality. This thesis argues that religion is at the core of human existence as a vessel of faith which follows a particular theological path toward a communion with the divine. The Buddhist path, aware of the interaction of different levels of reality—relative and absolute—also conceives inner development and social change as key elements of an interdependent transformation. The idea of ‘world peace through inner peace’ is one advocated by ‘engaged Buddhists’ and found in the ethical code of Buddha’s message.

Chapter two examines how international relations became the arena where individuals, institutions and states converge and reflect the basic premises of their world-views, whether rooted in anger, hatred and ignorance of the interdependent nature of all phenomena, or based in compassion and awareness of a shared common good. In addition, it addresses the issue of the resurgence of religion in international relations and how it is present or absent from political science theories and policy making. Through this analysis, several established elements such as the concept of the state, secularism and religion as a source of war, are challenged in a new era of multiagency and mutual influence through religious ideas, groups and communities.

Following this intersubjective construction of the world, the thesis presents two case studies which argue that religious leaders exercise political influence through their actions, ideas and beliefs. The first is the life and works of Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in chapter three and the second is the life of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in chapter four. The former having suffered the violent occupation of Tibet and the continuous attacks on Tibetan culture that led him into exile, and the latter having faced the policies of hatred under apartheid, the Dalai Lama and Tutu managed to suggest a world where forgiveness is rooted in compassion and where human beings share the responsibility of creating a compassionate reality.

The final chapter develops a new approach to the study of religion and politics providing new variables of study and new categories to understand how international relations are influenced by religious ideas and movements. This thesis argues that there is a need to study and understand this interdependent relation between religious and secular actors through theoretical approaches in international relations and opens the discipline to new paradigms such as the Buddhist theological approach. The outcome of this partnership depends on the individual's decision to engage, whether in negative causation that leads to violence, fear, terror and the perpetuation of suffering or in a positive one which opens the possibility of peace and liberation from suffering through compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation, recognizing our common humanity and shared universal responsibility.

# I

## NTRODUCTION

Thus I have heard: when *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara was in profound meditative state, mindfully abiding in the *Prajna Paramita*—Perfection of Wisdom—, he told the venerable Shariputra,

Form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness; whatever is form, that is emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form, the same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

The contingent nature of all existent and non-existent forms and phenomena is at the core of Buddhist thought and theology, and it can be applied to the different levels of reality, relative and absolute, as taught by the Buddha. This understanding of reality is particularly relevant for this thesis in order to realize how individuals along with other causes and conditions, can influence, the kind of world they make. Relative reality, that which can be understood by the intellect and experienced by sentient beings through the senses, is contingent on multiple causes and conditions and thus not independently existent. Therefore, while absolute reality is beyond all conceptual explanation and above interpretation in conventional terms, the relative reality takes into account the provisional or illusory existence of all *dharmas*—or manifested phenomena.

Therefore, the method of causality will be used throughout the thesis. This method is rooted in a Buddhist understanding of the empty nature of all phenomena and thus the interdependent reality of everything in existence. Everything, from human existence to relations between states and institutions is a consequence of particular arrangements of causes and conditions. This implies a constant flux of emotions,

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Heart Sutra' in *Buddhist Wisdom Books: The Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra*, Edward Conze trans. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958), 81.

thoughts, actions and interests in play, driven by different emotions such as anger, hatred and delusion or compassion, generosity and mindfulness. The Buddha clearly established this dependent nature of all phenomena, and thus its emptiness of independent arising,<sup>2</sup> in the formula: when there is this, there is that (*imasmim sati idam hoti*); when this arises, that arises (*imassuppada idam uppajjati*); when this is not, the other is not (*imasmim asati idam na hoti*); ceasing this, that ceases (*imassa nirodha idam nirujjati*).

In this methodology, where everything is taken as interdependent, the levels of analysis are intertwined but primacy had been given to the individual level. This is not to overlook or dismiss the social, institutional, state, interstate or global levels but, to the contrary, this methodology argues that these levels are the projection of the sum of individual will and ways of thinking, which are institutionalized through the process of intersubjective consensus. Therefore, this *Theology of International Relations* is the result of the sum of a Buddhist theological root, an international validity, case studies which ratify its basic premises and, finally, the construction of variables and causal explanatory arguments to guide further study of the role of individuals in re-creating their own relative reality and the possibility of making this reality a compassionate and satisfactory existence.

The overall research questions are derived from this approach to reality and the role of individuals. In the first chapter I will try to answer the following questions: Is it possible to talk about a Buddhist theology? If so, what are its core assumptions and methods of study? Moreover, can Buddhism speak about social issues such as religion and politics? What is the role of Buddhist leaders regarding this social engagement and under which ethical guidelines do they act? These guiding questions will help us to develop a coherent argument regarding the validity of this theological approach and how Buddhism interprets the nature of the sacred, the role of religions and the social engagement of Buddhist doctrine in the *Theology of International Relations*.

Further questions will be addressed throughout the chapters such as: Is it possible to change the intersubjective consensus of fear into one of compassion? How does history reflect an egotistic view of reality? What is the role of individuals, states

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2 See 'Mahanidana Sutta', in *Digha Nikaya* 15; *Majjhima Nikaya* III; *Samyutta Nikaya* II.

and religion in this regard? Does secularism provide the answer to violence and war? What is the current relevance of the Peace of Westphalia and the role of states? Is religion a private matter with no public influence at all? Can we speak about a resurgence of religion after three hundred years of 'secular arrangements'? Finally, can we identify a particular allegiance of religion and politics in current affairs? If so, is this allegiance guided by compassion for individuals, or is it just a political tool of egotistic agents? In light of these questions, major emphasis will be placed on the capacity of individuals to re-construct their own relative reality and the potential to do this in harmony with the sacred and thus envision to a long lasting peace and happiness.

This reconstruction of reality in allegiance with the sacred, both the sacred within us and the sacred recognized in all phenomena, is particularly relevant for the case studies presented here. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are two religious peacemakers who influence others' thoughts and actions toward a compassionate construction of the world. Some of the guiding questions are: How can we speak of religious peacemakers when many social conflicts have been ignited by the flame of religious hatred? Is the ambivalence of the sacred a way to find the compassionate force of religion in constructing a better reality? Can we dream about a more humane global governance, as Richard Falk suggests? If so, how might Buddhism contribute to it?

Finally, how might the theology of international relations contribute to a more humane global government? How can we integrate the role of theology, religion and politics in a new understanding of foreign affairs and sacred matters? Is it possible to study religious variables and explain religiously motivated movements? Moreover, is it possible to change a negative cycle of causal relationships rooted in anger, fear and delusion, into a positive one of mutual benefit and happiness? These are the guiding questions which will be addressed in this thesis, which aim to provide satisfactory answers in order to construct a better understanding of reality as well as a realization of the powerful potential of human minds to create the world they want to live in.

This particular Buddhist way of understanding the world opens the way to affirm that individuals can and do change their relative reality as the result of their ideas, beliefs, intentions and actions, all of which interact with a particular set of causes and conditions such as time and place. There is no independent entity or force which can

deliberately alter the consequences of actions, because actions are ultimately in harmony with the *Karmatic law* of cause and effect. *Karmatic law* involves no sense of punishment but rather a logical and dependent outcome resulting from a certain intention behind an action. Accordingly, a positive outcome is the result of previous ideas and actions embedded with compassionate intentions. It is within this vision that this thesis is contained and developed.

We must be aware that the veil of ignorance<sup>3</sup> has created a gap between individuals, societies and states by taking them as independent entities instead of recognizing their interdependence. Thus, the egotistic conception of the self as independent from the community has posited particular causes and conditions to perpetuate suffering through violence and war. The Buddha established in the Mahanidana Sutta that the dependent origination of violence is the following causal chain:

‘And so, Ananda, feeling conditions craving, craving conditions seeking, seeking conditions acquisition, acquisition conditions decision-making, decision-making conditions lustful desire, lustful desire conditions attachment, attachment conditions appropriation, appropriation conditions avarice, avarice conditions guarding of possessions, and because of the guarding of possessions there arise the taking up of stick and sword, quarrels, disputes, arguments, strife, abuse, lying and other evil unskilled states.’<sup>4</sup>

The antidote for this illusion of the separateness of the self and its negative consequences is to recognize the self’s emptiness of independent existence and thus to be aware of the interdependence of everyone and everything, existent and non-existent, that may lead to the overcoming of suffering and the achievement of collective peace and happiness. This spiritual awareness can be more easily developed in the one who follows a religious or spiritual tradition because, despite material development, inner transformation comes from a deep communion with the sacred. As the Dalai Lama affirms,

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3 Ignorance or *avidya* is defined as the root of everything unwholesome in the world and unawareness of the interdependent nature of all phenomena. This leads to the belief of separate units or beings that tend to use violence that, consequently, reinforces the idea of separation and produce anger, hatred and more delusion.

4 *Digha Nikaya* 15.9

Although materialistic knowledge in the form of science and technology has contributed enormously to human welfare, it is not capable of creating lasting happiness...This is because materialistic knowledge can only provide a type of happiness that is dependent upon physical conditions. It cannot provide happiness that springs from inner development.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, in order to understand the importance of the sacred or divine in human beings' beliefs, religion was developed as the vessel of faith in which individuals' minds sail the sea of life and connect with the inner causes and conditions of their divine nature. The discourse about how and why humans can accomplish this is developed by theology and, thus theology provides the best framework for understanding the deeper essence of religious truths and the conception of the divine that leads individuals to conform to religious communities, thereby affecting their reality. The Buddhist theological approach which will be used in this thesis will explain the reasons why individuals suffer, how they continue to inflict suffering on others and, ultimately, how all these factors construct a relative reality.

Understanding suffering as a projection of illusory states of mind which are blinded of their non-independent existence, which is ultimately empty of self-origination, one can understand that all interdependent and provisional 'selves' are part of Emptiness or *Sunyata*, which can be considered sacred or divine. Thus, 'theology' will be understood as the study of or discourse about the sacred or divine however it is conceived, whether theistically or non-theistically, by a community of religious practitioners within a particular tradition. In addition, this study of the divine is not constrained to a private sphere within individuals but, to the contrary, it has implications for relations between individuals, institutions and states as a reflection of the interdependent relation between causes and conditions.

Consequently, I develop in this thesis a theological approach to international relations<sup>6</sup> from a Buddhist perspective. This Buddhist theology, rooted in the premises of the emptiness of independent origination, interdependence, and the capacity to

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5 Dalai Lama, 'A New Approach to Global Problems,' in *Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide to Making The World A Better Place*, ed. Melvin MacLeod (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 27.

6 This approach is intended both as academic discipline and as practice in the political arena. In this thesis I will capitalize International Relations when referring to the academic discipline and use lower case when referring to international relations as a set of political practices between individuals, institutions and states.



modify our own reality (individually and collectively), will set the overall framework for understanding religion and international relations. Therefore, this thesis has been developed within a Buddhist theological framework along with a constructivist approach in this *Theology of International Relations*.

The relevance of this approach is four fold. First, there is an increasing role of religious ideas as legitimizing factors for individual, institutional and state actions and policies, and this needs to be properly analysed. Although it is not a new phenomenon, its relevance transcends the private sphere to which the secular-modernist project wanted to relegate religious beliefs and their impact on current affairs, and gives it an actual relevance in a relative reality that does not simply fall within a postmodern extreme relativism. Religions, as vessels of faith and divine power, have a prominent role in individuals' understanding of themselves, their reality and how they will face that relative reality in order to overcome suffering and achieve long-lasting peace.

Second, religion has been neglected in classical International Relations theories only recently has it been taken into account as a result of the study of religiously motivated conflicts. There is a need to develop a systematic method to analyse the religious factor in domestic and international affairs, one that addresses the theological basis of religious groups, their actors, aims and political interests in order to enable a more accurate approach to the issues and provide useful advice in policy-making. Third, there is the need to recognize the ambivalent power of religion to move individuals and institutions toward peace or war.

Finally, the neglect of religion in International Relations theories together with a limited perception of religion as a negative and violent factor are mutually constitutive and dominant in current politics and academia. The role of religious peacemakers and peaceful religious movements has been overlooked and much attention has been paid to expressions of religious hatred. This leads to a partial view of the nature of religion, and thus does not promote awareness of its ambivalence or of the chance to work with the compassionate nature of religious traditions toward the construction of a more peaceful existence. There is a need to fill a theoretical and empirical gap in the study of international relations for the proper development of policies toward understanding, reconciliation and peace, I am convinced that this Buddhist theological framework can provide the means to fill that gap.

These four elements will be addressed throughout this thesis by first establishing the theological framework and indicating how individuals, reality, religion and the sacred will be understood throughout the thesis. This will be accomplished by showing the relevance of religion as it provides a particular world-view in relative reality that guides individuals' efforts to overcome suffering through a Buddhist theological analysis. Here, individuals will be considered not as separate entities (as different 'selves') but as interdependent beings who are still subject to veils of ignorance regarding their common nature that ultimately each is a provisional relative self intrinsically related to and interdependent on the different causes and conditions of the rest of sentient and non-sentient beings. Thus, individuals are not considered as independent elements of society but as an integral interdependent part that, through intersubjective consensus, constructs a shared relative reality.

In addition, I will present the active social engagement of Buddhist ethics and how 'engaged Buddhists' are working toward the re-construction of a more compassionate reality. This process is possible due to the causal relation of inner peace and world peace. Thus, the responsibility lies on individuals to construct their institutions, states and relations, whether by hatred or by compassion.

Following this idea of the interdependent construction of reality, I will present the ways in which international relations are the reflection of the shared ideas, beliefs and actions of individuals in a particular place and time. This is only the consequence of the sum of causes and conditions where elements such as religion, nationalism or political gains play an important role. The theory of international relations which supports this idea is constructivism particularly the work of Alexander Wendt which stresses the capacity of the interaction of ideas and beliefs to construct the world system and explores the ways in which ideas and beliefs influence individual and institutional behaviour. Thus, shared ideas when combined with particular causes and conditions shape the relative reality we experience.

Wendt's approach is a 'via media' between extreme reflectivist approaches where no agency is recognized and those realist approaches where the ineffability of the violent nature of human beings is also seen in interstate relations. It is in this way that the constructivist approach integrates with the broader Buddhist theological approach to politics and it sets the condition to further the explanation and give even more relevance

to individuals' minds in their construction of their relative reality in international relations.

Thus, international relations are not understood only as relations between sovereign states, but also as interpersonal-interinstitutional-interstate dependent outcomes in domestic and international affairs that shape current relative reality. After presenting traditional approaches of International Relations, I will present the so-called 'resurgence of religion' and how the political and religious spheres are currently interacting. This interaction has been dominated by mutual egotistical interests which are presented as *divine politics* and *politicized faith* thus the need to transform this allegiance in a compassionate one. This is because 'human conflicts do not arise out of the blue. They occur as a result of causes and conditions, many of which are within the protagonists' control.'<sup>7</sup> Therefore, as Scott Thomas affirmed, 'religion will also likely alter relations in the traditional nation-state system. At a basic level, religion will be an important factor in understanding the general foreign policy orientations of many countries.'<sup>8</sup>

In order to show this interaction of religion and politics from a theological perspective, I will present two case studies which will show how religion can provide the spiritual, ethical and moral support for non-violent campaigns. This compassionate approach will be presented through the lives of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Both exemplify the ways in which religious leadership helps to shape the intersubjective consensus toward a peaceful transition or advocacy of non-violence even in the midst of great despair and suffering. I will not argue that they solved all the problems and eradicated violence, but I will affirm that their actions were a major cause of less violent outcomes in their respective contexts, facing and producing particular causes and conditions.

Their struggles for peace and justice, rooted in their own religious commitments show a shared-compassionate view of humanity and demonstrate the possibility of constructing a better world if individuals and institutions become ambassadors of those values of common humanity, universal responsibility and unity in diversity. While the

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7 Dalai Lama, 'Non-Violence: the Appropriate and Effective Response to Human Conflicts,' *Concilium*, no. 5 (December 2003): 49.

8 Scott Thomas, 'A Globalized God,' *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 89 no. 6 (November/December 2010): 99.

Fourteenth Dalai Lama follows a Buddhist interpretation of the world, of the two truths and the role of *Karma* and interdependence, Archbishop Tutu affirms the commitment to realizing God's dream through compassion, justice and forgiveness. I will refer to 'God' in the second and fourth chapter as a contextual element rooted in western religious heritage; therefore this is not an explicative element but rather a descriptive one, reflecting a particular time and place, which is necessary to understand the issues presented in those chapters.

Overall, both leaders agree on an interdependent vision of reality, one that depends on how individuals relate to each other and to the divine. It is this religious commitment that is shared with their followers and respected by others who recognize their value as agents of change through a non-violent and compassionate path in consonance with the divine. It is vital to remember that in order to have major influence, these leaders need a group of committed individuals to follow the path they represent. This is where all individuals become agents of change, socially-engaged religious practitioners who recognize the capacity to bring change through harmonizing the relationship between the individual and the divine.

Finally, I will present how a systematic study of religion in International Relations can be done, stating the basis for the *Theology of International Relations (TIR)*. Theological, religious and political elements will be taken into account as part of the chart of analysis in order to understand more profoundly the nature of the conflict one wants to analyse and its operational characteristics. This will help to identify the root of the problem and change a negative causal cycle of suffering into a positive one rooted in and sustained by compassionate actions among individuals, institutions and states. Thus, I will not only explore why religion is important but also how we can study it as variable of study in International Relations theory. This is highly relevant because, as Scott Thomas affirms,

Understanding religions worldwide—their beliefs, values, and practices and the way they influence the political goals, actions, and motivations of states and religious communities—will be an important task for U.S. and international foreign-policy makers in the coming decades.<sup>9</sup>

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9 S. Thomas, 'A Globalized God,' 101.

Hence, using these elements, the argument will be focused on four basic claims. First, religion, as the interdependent individual-social construction of a way to be in contact with the sacred is a major factor that determines the way individuals, societies and institutions behave. Second, I argue that institutions –such as states—are interdependent on new causes and conditions. This is because institutions will be understood as the projection of shared ideas, beliefs and goals among individuals that are codified through an intersubjective consensus. Therefore a change can be made, whether by compassionate or by selfish-driven interests. When actions are guided by selfish interests the violent outcomes are a logical consequence, because ‘if we allow our human intelligence to be guided and controlled by negative emotions like hatred, the consequences are disastrous’<sup>10</sup> and the dehumanization of the ‘other’ is the first consequence of the politics of fear and selfishness. Thus, the goal is to recognize and be aware that ‘human conflicts should be resolved with compassion. The key is non-violence.’<sup>11</sup>

Third, the potential of religion to become a force for peace is not only a utopic idea but also a logical consequence of a change in individuals’ behaviour toward a common humanity and harmonic relations. Tapio Kanninen argues that

In the field of conflict resolution, there is a tendency to overlook religious convictions as belonging to the realm of spiritual and persona. But this view might not give us a deep understanding of the multi-dimensional root causes of conflict if we want to develop a truly multidisciplinary approach to conflict prevention.<sup>12</sup>

The relevance of religion in international relations was stressed in a lecture given by Kofi Annan while he was the Secretary General of the United Nations. Despite some secular-extremists still pledging the elimination of religion from secular institutions, he argued that there is a need to integrate both spheres—sacred and secular—in order to build a better society rooted in compassion and protection of human wellbeing. Annan affirmed the following:

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10Dalai Lama, ‘Non-Violence: the Appropriate and Effective Response to Human Conflicts,’ 49.

11 Dalai Lama, ‘Non-Violence: the Appropriate and Effective Response to Human Conflicts,’ 49.

12Tapio Kanninen, ‘Prevention and Reconciliation in a World of Conflicts: the United Nations Perspective,’ *Concilium*, no. 5 (December 2003): 94.

You may be wondering what a Secretary General of the United Nations is doing in a synagogue, speaking about religion. You may think that the United Nations, an inter-governmental organization, must abide by the same separation between Church and State found in the United States and in many other countries. You may be trying to imagine how spirituality can coexist with the world of diplomacy, national security and hard-edged negotiations.

I would ask you to think differently; I would ask you to take another look. The United Nations is a tapestry, not only of suits and saris but of clerics' collars, nuns' habits and lamas' robes; of mitres, skullcaps and yarmulkes.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, this project is a different look at theology and International Relations, one that will demonstrate the fourth claim, which is that the religious factor can and must be integrated in International Relations theories and policy-making. The *Theology of International Relations* will provide tools to demonstrate the relevance of religion to individuals and how it had changed the world through religious leaders and communities, not only with violent outcomes but also with actions leading toward freedom, tolerance, justice and compassion. As Kanninen affirms, 'religion can be a foundation for the resolution of tensions and disputes by emphasizing our common spiritual ground and providing guiding principles for peaceful resolution of conflicts.'<sup>14</sup>

Following Alexander Wendt's affirmation that 'anarchy is what states make of it', I claim that current domestic and international affairs are what individuals through institutions including the state, make of them. This is because the individual is the actor/agent, the believer, the one who is motivated and persuaded, the one who is mobilized and affected in the different ways of life.

Therefore, the sum of individuals' agency produces social religious movements which affect domestic and international spheres and need to be studied and understood in order to enable us to work for the construction of a better relative reality. Thus, an interdependent understanding of international relations implies a universal responsibility of recognizing a common humanity in order to build bridges of understanding between

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13 Kofi Annan, 'The Challenge of Diversity,' Tanenbaum Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, <http://www.tanenbaum.org/Annan1998.pdf> (accessed 10 June, 2009).

14 Kanninen, 'Prevention and Reconciliation in a World of Conflicts: the United Nations Perspective,' 97.

human beings, state actors, institutions and the environment in the interest of a mutual constitutive peace.



## THE BUDDHIST THEOLOGICAL APPROACH: A SOCIALLY ENGAGED METHOD

All relative reality is impermanent and subject to modifications in accordance with several causes and conditions. These are the result of the thoughts and actions of sentient beings; the role of human beings is particularly relevant. The individual level of analysis is the starting point in trying to understand both past and current social arrangements, institutional behaviour and state policies. Moreover, this individual level is also contingent upon new conditions posited by the previous set of causes and thus is also facing new challenges which should be resolved through its own rational process and emotional guidance.

Therefore, the individual is not isolated but rather integrated in a complex intersubjective consensus which constructs specific social arrangements and institutional bodies. This mutual influence is thus the basis of the construction of reality, based on the individual level with a constant influence over social, state and interstate levels of analysis which, in turn, will also influence the individual level and subsequent social consensus among individuals.

Following this causal construction of reality and the role of individuals' minds and actions which are core assumptions of Buddhist thoughts, further questions arise: is it possible to talk about a Buddhist Theology? If so, which are its core assumptions and method of study? Even more, can Buddhism speak about social issues such as religion and politics? What is the role of Buddhist leaders regarding this social engagement and under which ethical guidelines do they act? These are some of the guiding questions advocated in this chapter which seeks to establish the causal explanation of the role of individuals in constructing their own relative reality while motivated by their religious tradition and faith. Particularly, Buddhist theological elements which rest on core assumptions such as interdependence or dependent origination, relative and absolute



truth, the emptiness of all phenomena and individual and collective *Karma*, will help us to answer the questions listed above.

In this chapter I will address the overall characteristics of Buddhist theology, how it is justified as a valid theological approach and how it explains religious and sacred phenomena. Although ‘theology’ is mainly used with reference to Christianity, Islam and other theist religions, it can also be applied to non-theist traditions which conceive the existence of a divine-sacred force. Furthermore, I will present socially-engaged Buddhism which rests on the idea of achieving world peace through individual peaceful thoughts and actions. Although much stress had been placed on the individualistic side of Buddhist doctrine, the overlooked social dimension deserves much more attention if one is to grasp the wider meaning of Buddha’s teaching. The causal-*karmatic* construction of reality is based on Buddhist ethics which are embedded in Buddha’s message despite some misconceptions about this tradition as ‘other-worldly’ and unconcerned with social matters. This will shed new light in how to understand Buddhism and, particularly, why this thesis is based on a Buddhist theological framework to develop a *Theology of International Relations*.

### **The Buddhist Theological Approach**

In order to understand how religion should be regarded in this thesis, it is necessary to present the perspective I am using to describe it. I have chosen a Buddhist theology because it provides a convenient framework to understand the reasons why individuals suffer, how they continue to inflict suffering on others and, ultimately, how all these factors construct a world full of pain and resentment in relationships between individuals and/or institutions including states.

The term ‘Buddhist theology’ has been labelled as an oxymoron by some scholars, for three main reasons: in Buddhism there is not a belief in an Almighty God; ‘theology’ is mainly a Christian-oriented study; and there is still the discussion of whether Buddhism can be taken as a religion or only as a philosophy. From a Buddhist perspective I can answer that I understand ‘theology’ as study of or discourse about the

sacred<sup>15</sup> and not exclusively as the study of God or gods. Second, despite the more prolific study of Christian theology, the study of the sacred is not restricted to any tradition in particular but is open to any religion that wishes to explain and study its nature and elements as well as to develop a new approach to understanding reality in light of a particular set of elements within the religious tradition. Finally, Buddhism can be taken both as a religion (so it can be studied theologically) and as a philosophy without undermining its basic premises. To expand my answer to the first two sceptical ideas about the use of a Buddhist theology, I here present current arguments of Buddhist scholars who support its use. I will then proceed to expand my answer to the third question of whether Buddhism can be taken as religion and therefore 'eligible' to have a proper theology and not merely as a philosophical body of ethical premises.

As stated above, the controversy raised about the correct use of the term 'Buddhist theology' has also been taken up by several scholars who support the use of this term, such as John Makransky, who states,

The term, 'theology', then, in 'Buddhist Theology' is used in a broad sense. It includes critical reflection upon Buddhist experience in light of contemporary understanding and critical reflection upon contemporary understanding in light of Buddhist experience. Like that of Christian theologians, it is the work of scholars who stand normatively within their tradition, who look to traditional sources of authority (in sacred text and previous forms of social practice and experience), who re-evaluate prior Buddhist understandings in light of contemporary findings and who seek thereby to contribute to the continuing development of their tradition in its relevance to new times and places.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, Buddhist theology seeks to develop a new understanding within the tradition through the re-evaluation of explanations of Buddhist doctrine and, at the same time, it aims to explain world affairs in light of Buddhist principles and beliefs. John D. Dunne defines this as 'the self-conscious attempt to present reasoned arguments from

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15 'Sacred' will be understood here as something that is beyond earthly existential phenomena. At the same time nothing is outside of its nature; it has a distinctive, unattainable characteristic in that it is hard to know it using any of the five senses. It needs to be understood through images, rituals and myths that give us a hint of what we are trying to describe, a process that happens using the sixth sense mentioned in Buddhism: the mind.

16 John Makransky, 'Contemporary Academic Buddhist Theology: Its Emergence and Rationale,' in *Buddhist Theology*, 19.

within the tradition on issues of importance to Buddhists in order to correct, critique, clarify or expand upon the tradition.’<sup>17</sup> Through this normative approach, encompassing the explanation (*logia*) of the sacred (*theos*), the scholar is able to understand current affairs that affect the tradition from which this study begins as well as the world outside. By doing so, one can make both a new compassionate interpretation of the world from a Buddhist perspective and new proposals to solve urgent problems that affect individuals and society which, in consequence, continue to feed the seed of suffering in the world.

Consequently, Mahinda Deegalle affirms that Buddhist theology is part of an academic enterprise that should be recognized as valid on its own merits of reflection and praxis. She puts it as follows:

In general, ‘theological’ is broadly defined as a ‘secondary form of praxis and culture consisting in more or less critical reflection on a particular religion’. Buddhist Theology as a secondary form of praxis and as a critical reflection on Buddhist thought is a valid academic enterprise. A culture-specific engagement with Buddhist practices and a critical reflection on them from doctrinal, philosophical and analytical perspectives becomes a Buddhist Theology<sup>18</sup>.

Accordingly, José Ignacio Cabezón defines theology as ‘to be roughly, a form of normative discourse, self-avowedly rooted in tradition, with certain formal properties. But for now, suffice it to say that I take theology not to be restricted to discourse on God, nor to presuppose the notion of an omnipotent creator God’.<sup>19</sup> Following this idea he argues that

critical discourse that unapologetically locates itself within the Buddhist tradition (i.e., Buddhist theology) should be considered on a par with Christian theology as far as the academy is concerned; Christian theology should not be privileged over Buddhist theology; and indeed all such forms of discourse, regardless of their religious affiliation, should be given a proportionately equal void in the academy so long as they can subscribe to the norms of operational inquiry.<sup>20</sup>

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17 John D. Dunne, ‘On Essences, Goals and Social Justice: an Exercise in Buddhist Theology,’ in *Buddhist Theology*, 276.

18 Mahinda Deegalle, ‘From Buddhology to Buddhist Theology: An Orientation to Sinhala Buddhism’, in *Buddhist Theology*, 339.

19 José Ignacio Cabezón, ‘Buddhist Theology in the Academy’, in *Buddhist Theology*, 25.

20 Cabezón, ‘Buddhist Theology in the Academy’, in *Buddhist Theology*, 26.

Thus, Buddhist theology implies a normative explanation of concepts, ideas and practices within the Buddhist religion that need to be revised in order to clarify its meaning in modern times and, at the same time, that help to build an analytical framework which explains the way the world is changing as a result of the karmic retributions of all sentient beings so we can develop strategies based on the idea of the elimination of suffering through compassion. This is why the Buddhist theology is a very important method that enables the Buddhist scholar to use this religious tradition to understand, explain and devise solutions to world dynamics, stressing the importance of individuals' actions and consequences that may lead to their suffering or to their liberation and happiness.

### **Justification and Aims of the Buddhist Theological Approach**

The reasons to apply the term Buddhist theology to this enterprise have been highlighted by Buddhist scholars such as J. Cabezón who recognizes three main aspects: 1) practical, implying that there is not a practical equivalent to the word 'theology'; 2) theoretical, stressing the idea that the term 'Buddhist theology' is functionally equivalent for a Buddhist in a way similar to its counterparts in other religions; 3) political, using this term to say that Buddhist theology deserves the same recognition in the academic world as other theologies such, as Christian, Jewish or Islamic theologies.<sup>21</sup> Offering another set of reasons, Rita M. Gross notes two advantages of the use of the term 'Buddhist theology'. The first is that it is well understood by the audiences to which the work is presented, mostly theologians and religious scholars, so they can relate more easily to the nature of the research. Second, the term connotes the idea of affiliation to a religious belief, which is the foundation of the arguments presented in this project.<sup>22</sup>

Accordingly, I suggest there are three main reasons to use the term 'Buddhist theology'. The first is that the study is developed within a religious tradition (Buddhist), which is the departure point of analysis. This differs from other kinds of study, such as philosophy, sociology or anthropology, in which the scholar does not take a position

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21 Cabezón, 'Buddhist Theology in the Academy', in *Buddhist Theology*, 25-26.

22 Rita M. Gross, 'Buddhist Theology?' in *Buddhist Theology*, 57.

within any religious tradition. Therefore, this first reason is regarded as the *reason of affiliation*. Second, the Buddhist argumentation, explanation and understanding of issues within and outside the tradition will be sustained by its own religious scriptural sources, the *sutras*, and by basic Buddhist teachings such as the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Nidanas, the *Sunyata* (Emptiness), *Nirvana* (extinction or liberation), interdependence and the ever changing quality of existence. This constitutes the *reason of teachings*. Finally, the term ‘theology’ is useful in bringing a common denominator between theologies and theologians, enabling a first-level dialogue among equals in the academy, giving enough space for different approaches in the study of the sacred in several religious traditions. This is called the *reason of equality*.

Buddhist theologians have a big challenge ahead which is to reach high levels of argumentation and applicability in the modern world, so the project of a ‘Buddhist theology’ can be prosperous. As John Makransky points out,

Their hope [for Buddhists scholars] is, as in the past, such new reflection rooted in long community experience may contribute to authentic new understanding: by critiquing past elements of tradition inappropriate to a new time, recovering or re-emphasizing other elements, critiquing Western models inadequate for a fuller understanding of Buddhism, and exploring the potential of Buddhist experience to shine new light upon a host of contemporary culture and religious concerns. This is the broad project of contemporary ‘Buddhist theology.’<sup>23</sup>

In this matter, the aim of this thesis is to shed light on a new understanding of the Buddhist tradition in relation to religion and politics, and its relevance in explaining social and political relations among individuals and states. Hence, scholars and decision-makers may be able to forge a new approach to deal with current issues affecting the world. By proposing such an approach, I do not intend to diminish the importance of current theological explanations of the world made from other religious traditions; on the contrary, it is very important to have an inter-religious dialogue so we can focus on our similarities and work through them in order to play a key role in a new configuration of society based on the morality, ethics, responsibility and interdependence that our relation with the sacred confers.

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23 Makransky, ‘Contemporary Academic Buddhist Theology: Its Emergence and Rationale,’ in *Buddhist Theology*, 18-19.

As a result, we can have a true theological dialogue that leads to a public discourse benefitting society, transcending the academic border and giving people a new way to live their lives religiously. In this respect, Luis O. Gómez argues that

a greater commonality with Christian theological discourse would suggest that the discipline of theology, Christian or Buddhist, provides us with some of the necessary tools to go beyond apologetics into the terrain of dialogue and rational, truly public discourse.<sup>24</sup>

In order to have this dialogue among equals, it is necessary to explain the reasons why Buddhism can be regarded as a religion and not only as a philosophy, so it has the right to have its particular theology to develop and discuss. Regarding the implications of taking Buddhism as a religion and then calling yourself a Buddhist, Roger Jackson argues,

If, on the other hand, Buddhism is understood as not just an ideology but a religion, then it is not enough simply to subscribe to certain general ideas or values of Buddhist provenance, and declare oneself a Buddhist; rather, one must, to quote Borges again, ‘feel the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path’, tell the Buddha’s story, do the things that Buddhists always have done; one must, in short, form one’s life through the myths, symbols, metaphors and ritual acts of Buddhist tradition.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, this thesis will understand Buddhism as a religion—with its belief in the sacred and transcendent, its rituals and myths supported by original sources—in order to develop its theology from a Buddhist point of view. Ian Markham argues that the main sources of a theology are: scripture, community, reason and experience,<sup>26</sup> all of which Buddhism accomplishes. The first source, scripture, can be found for both of the two major divisions in Buddhist thought, *Theravada* and *Mahayana*. The main sources for *Theravada*, which covers the first teachings of the Buddha Shakyamuni in the sixth century BCE, can be found in the Pali Canon. This was settled at a council held in the city of Rajagaha after Shakyamuni Buddha’s last rebirth in this world. It stresses the

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24 Luis O. Gómez, ‘Measuring the Immeasurable: Reflections on Unreasonable Reasoning’, in *Buddhist Theology*, 370.

25 Roger R. Jackson, ‘In Search of a Postmodern Middle’, in *Buddhist Theology*, 219.

26 Markham, ‘Theology’, in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, 198.

importance of reaching the ultimate liberation, *Parinirvana*, through the practice of the Four Noble Truths<sup>27</sup>, understanding the Twelve Links of the Chain of Dependent Origination<sup>28</sup>, the Three Marks of Being<sup>29</sup>, *Karma* and *Nirvana*.

These teachings are compiled in three sections called *Tipitaka*—the Three Baskets—which are: *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Sutta Pitaka* and *Abhidharma Pitaka*. Also, the basic teachings are compiled in the *Dhammapada* and the *Udana*. In addition, we have the *Mahayana* sources beginning from the second century CE, which integrates the teaching of the *Theravada* tradition but reinterpreted them in light of the latest teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha.

The main goal is now Enlightenment and becoming a *Bodhisattva*—a being with a promise to gain enlightenment for the benefit of others—knowing the nature of reality, emptiness, the use of *skillful means*—to adapt the teachings according to the conscious development of others—and finally the accomplishment of the *Parinirvana*, the ultimate state that implies the complete manifestation of the *Sunyata* (Void or Emptiness). Within this tradition we can find many *sutras*—written teachings of the Buddha—such as *The Threefold Lotus Sutra* which is mentioned as the ultimate body of teaching of the Buddha before his *Parinirvana*. Thus, the scriptural condition for constructing a theology is obviously present.

The second source, community, refers to the group of people who gather to discuss, study and perform rituals according to the tradition. This community of Buddhist followers, whether monks or lay people, formed one of the Three Jewels<sup>30</sup> to which a Buddhist looks for refuge; it is called the *Sangha*. Therefore, the second source for a theology is also present in Buddhism.

The third source, reason, is based on a coherent presentation of arguments and the avoidance of contradictory ideas within the religious tradition that may diminish its

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27 These were taught after the Enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama, after which he was known as Shakyamuni Buddha, during his first sermon at Benares. This is also known as the First Turning of the Dharma Wheel. The Noble Truths are: The Truth of Suffering; the Truth of the Origin of Suffering; the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering; and the Truth of the Path that leads to the cessation of suffering.

28 Ignorance conditions the ‘*Karma*-formations’; the *Karma*-formations condition consciousness; consciousness conditions mind and body; mind and body condition the six senses; the six sense condition contact; contact conditions feeling; feeling conditions craving; craving conditions clinging; clinging conditions becoming; becoming conditions birth; birth conditions ageing and death.

29 The three things are: impermanence (*anicca*), dissatisfaction (suffering or *dukkha*) and non-self (*anatman*).

30 The Three Jewels are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

validity. The Buddha always stressed the importance of accepting a new teaching only after submitting it to a slow and reasoned process; if after that process the teaching was still valid, then a Buddhist could receive it.

Finally, the source of experience, which is related with the experience of the sacred, is accomplished first as a result of faith in what you believe and second through practice. This practice in Buddhism includes meditating, reciting *sutras* and, most of all, following the teachings of the Buddha in relation to other sentient beings. The experience of the Buddha's teachings is based on wisdom and compassion. Wisdom is understood as knowing the basic principles of Buddhism such as the Noble Truths, how *Karma* manifests, the interdependence of causes and conditions and Emptiness, among others. Compassion is understood as an action derived from that cognitive process which now manifests to others in a compassionate manner. This is how the last source for a theology is accomplished in Buddhism, making it possible for Buddhism develop its own theology which I will use to explain religion and its influence over individuals, society and institutions.

### Understanding Religion

Peter Berger states that 'religion is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. Put it differently, religion is cosmization in a sacred mode.'<sup>31</sup> As a consequence of this cosmization, individuals can feel in communion with the sacred more directly through religion than with any other form of social community. Hence, 'the cosmos posted by religion thus both transcends and includes man. The sacred cosmos is confronted by man as an immensely powerful other than himself. Yet this reality addresses itself to him and locates his life in an ultimately meaningful order.'<sup>32</sup> As a result, the power of the sacred manifests itself in individuals and reassures them that they are not alone in this existence and that their lives are in consonance with a higher power. Carl G. Jung believes that this manifestation of belonging to the sacred is part of an attitude of the human mind that seeks an outer powerful 'other' to be followed or, in some cases, feared. He states,

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31 Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (United States: Doubleday, 1967), 25.

32 Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, p. 26



Religion appears to me to be a peculiar attitude of the human mind, which could be formulated in accordance with the original use of the term 'religio', that is, a careful consideration and observation of certain dynamic factors, understood to be 'powers', spirits, demons, gods, laws, ideas, ideals, or whatever name man has given to such factors as he has found in his world powerful, dangerous or helpful enough to be taken into careful consideration, or grand, beautiful and meaningful enough to be devoutly adored and loved.<sup>33</sup>

By stating that religion is an attitude of the human mind, Jung is implying that it is a human creation that attempts to answer the mysteries of life and the manifestation of what he called 'powers' outside of human capabilities. Thus, in Buddhist terms, religion has been created as a consequence of particular causes and conditions which have their roots in the suffering inherent in any sensorial guided existence. This is part of the teachings of the 'Four Noble Truths', the cornerstone of Buddha's message.

The first of these Truths is the 'Truth of Suffering', implying that as a consequence of our continued existence within the *Samsara*<sup>34</sup>, we are reborn in a realm where everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory and of non-self, which ultimately, leads to suffering. The second is the 'Truth of Origin of Suffering', which is desire, understood as an individual need or selfish attachment to something guided by the belief of an independent self that wants to be satisfied in every sensual aspect. Following the characteristics of existence stated above, the complete satisfaction of sensual desires is unattainable, so desire leads to frustration and suffering.

The third is the 'Truth of the Cessation of Suffering' which emerges as a bright light in the dark tunnel of suffering, giving us a chance to eliminate suffering. In a broad sense, the cessation of suffering appears with the elimination of egotistic desires. Finally, the Buddha also taught the path to eliminate desire and thus, suffering, which is the Fourth Noble Truth known as the 'Eightfold Path' summarized in the *Mahali Sutta* wherein Shakyamuni Buddha gives to Mahali the method for the realization of a true holy life:

- 'Lord, is there a path, is there a method for the realization of these things?'

- There is a path, Mahali, there is a method.

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33 Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1961), 5.

34 Cycle of rebirths where the afflicted mind suffers as the result of the ignorance about the empty nature of all phenomena including the 'self'.

- ‘And Lord, what is this path, what is this method?

-It is the Noble Eightfold Path, namely Right View, Right Thought; Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood; Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. This is the path, this is the way to the realization of these things.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, regarding the first three Noble Truths we find in the *White Lotus Sutra* a reference to them by Shakyamuni Buddha, proclaiming in verse:

If there are any of little wit  
who are deeply attached to desires and passions,  
[The Buddha] for their sake  
preaches the truth of suffering.  
All the living with joyful hearts  
attain the unprecedented.  
The truth of suffering preached by the Buddha  
is real without differentiation.  
If there are any living beings  
who do not know the source of suffering,  
deeply attached to the cause of suffering,  
and unable to forsake it even for a moment,  
[The Buddha] for the sake of them  
preaches the way by tactful methods, [saying]:  
‘The cause of all suffering  
is rooted in desire.’  
If desire be extinguished,  
[Suffering] has no foothold.  
To annihilate all suffering  
is called the third truth.  
For the sake of the truth of extinction  
to observe and walk in the Way,  
forsaking all bonds of suffering,  
this is called the attaining of emancipation.<sup>36</sup>

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35 ‘Mahali Sutta: About Mahali’, in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: a Translation of the Digha Nikaya*, trans. Maurice Walshe (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 146.

36 Bunno Kato, Yoshiro Tamura and Kojiro Miyasaka trans. *The Threefold Lotus Sutra: Innumerable Meanings, The Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law and Meditation of the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue* (New York/Tokyo: Weatherhill/Kosei, 1984), 101.

Thus, there has been an ever-present need in the human mind to connect with the source of life and death, the everlasting divine power which can be accessed by a strong commitment of self-control, by meditation and by recognizing oneself as an emanation of that divine power that is covered with the veils of ignorance—which claims separation instead of interdependence—thus liberating oneself from this suffering existence. Due to the difficulty of this task, and knowing that this liberation is necessary for every human being, religion was conceived as the best spiritual vessel leading individuals to the other shore of existence where suffering is extinct. This constitutes the main cause for the origin of religion.

Following this argument regarding human ignorance of knowing what we really are—as part of that we consider sacred—and clinging to the ‘needs’ of our mind and body, we can add more explanations to the origin of religion that are a consequence of this clouded sight of our true nature. In this regard, Robert Segal says that ‘humans do not happen to seek contact with God. They *need* to do so. Just as they come into the world with a need for food and for love, so they come into the world with a need for God. That need, like the need for food or love, is innate. Religion arises and serves to fulfil it.’<sup>37</sup> Here, religion is conceived as a natural need of every human being as a consequence of feeling separated from that ‘powerful other’ that we refer to as sacred or divine despite the differences in how we represent it. Durkheim proclaims the validity of all religions in regard to the same need that they fulfil by saying,

In reality, then, there are no religions which are false. All are true in their own fashion; all answer, though in different ways, to the given conditions of human existence ... All are religions equally, just as all living beings are equally alive, from the most humble plastid up to man ... They respond to the same needs, they play the same role, they depend upon the same causes; they can also well serve to show the nature of the religious life.<sup>38</sup>

The same needs in individuals are an inherent part of the life that comes with birth, one of the four main causes of suffering, along with disease, ageing and death. The fear of death is so strong that it is a fundamental source of suffering every time a person confronts a disease, which tends to happen more frequently as one gets older.

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<sup>37</sup> Robert A. Segal, *Introduction to The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, xiv.

<sup>38</sup> Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 3.

The mystery of the unknown or, rather, of what we do not remember, is frightening for many individuals who believe death is the end of everything or, on the other hand, that it is the beginning of an eternal punishment in a horrible place guarded by demons and other creatures. That is why Peter Berger argues that ‘the power of religion depends, in the last resort, upon the credibility of the banners it puts in the hands of men as they stand before death, or more accurately, as they walk inevitable, toward it’<sup>39</sup>. I will not refer in detail to the differences among religions regarding conceptions of death, but only point out that all religions have a particular approach to what comes after life in the human form, and it constitutes a basic tenet of the validity of their own doctrine among individual believers.

From a Buddhist perspective, death is the opportunity to face the consequences of individual *Karma* and look for its cleaning so we can liberate ourselves from the continuation of the *Samsara* and, consequently, from the perpetuation of suffering. The results of human actions will be both their consequences during life and also after existence as a sentient being, which can lead to rebirth in better or worse conditions in the next life. This will set up a particular group of causes and conditions that will help us to clean completely our negative *Karmatic* residues and lead us to reach the ultimate state of awakening: the Enlightenment. This state of consciousness can lead us to understand, beyond all metaphysics, what we truly are. As Huston Smith exemplifies:

How many people have provoked this question: not ‘who are you?’ with respect of name, origin, or ancestry, but ‘what are you?—what order of being do you belong to, what species do you represent?’ Not Caesar, certainly. Not Napoleon, nor even Socrates. Only two, Jesus and Buddha. When the people carried their puzzlement to the Buddha himself, the answer he gave provided a handle of his entire message. ‘Are you God?’ they asked. ‘No’. ‘An angel?’ ‘No’. ‘A Saint?’ ‘No’. ‘Then what are you?’. Buddha answered, ‘I am awake.’<sup>40</sup>

In order to overcome the fear of the unknown and reach that state of awakening, individuals have followed the paths given by exceptional spiritual masters in history: Zarathustra, Lao-Tse, Moses, Shakyamuni Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed, among others who showed how to reach new heights of spiritual development by being in

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39 Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 51.

40 Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1958), 80.

communion with the sacred, as they explained in different forms according to their times, places and ancient traditions. The followers of these masters compiled their respective teachings to form a body of beliefs that aims to bring the compassionate message to all beings so they can follow the path given by those also known as prophets. Then, these beliefs were surrounded by myths and rituals, which suddenly formed a social institution that is called 'religion'. This new institution 'dignifies and sanctifies the whole life; it nourishes the whole man, and must be in harmony with all thought and practice'<sup>41</sup> so it can really lead individuals to a true communion with the sacred.

In Buddhism, the sacred refers to a condition where the emptiness (*Sunyata*) of all phenomena is evident and thus, the veil of ignorance which believes in illusory independent reality is extinguished. This extinction of the self as an independent entity is what *Nirvana* means, and thus one achieves the elimination of suffering. Therefore, the state of consciousness-not consciousness derived from a cessation of suffering is described in chapter three of the *Udanas* called 'Pataligama', when Shakyamuni Buddha explains as follows:

Monks, there exists that condition wherein is neither earth nor water nor fire nor air: wherein is neither the sphere of infinite space nor of infinite consciousness nor of nothingness nor of neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness; where there is neither this world nor a world beyond nor both together nor moon-and-sun. Thence, monks, I declare is no coming to birth; thither is no going (from life); therein is no duration; thence is no falling; there is no arising. It is not something fixed, it moves not on, it is not based on anything. That indeed is the end of Ill.<sup>42</sup>

Accordingly, the ultimate state of Emptiness, or *Sunyata*, was also explained by the Buddha:

Monks, there is a not-born, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. Monks, if that unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded were not, there would be apparent no escape from this here that is born, become, made, compounded. But since, monks, there is an unborn, [an un-become, an un-made, an-uncompounded]

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41 Cook, *The Foundations of Religion*, 87.

42 F.L. Woodward, trans. 'Udana: Verses of Uplift,' in *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon* (London, Humphrey Milford), p. 97.

therefore the escape from this here is born, [become, made and compounded] is apparent.<sup>43</sup>

## Understanding the Sacred

The study of the divine or the sacred has been a recurrent issue that has been problematic and, in many cases, dangerous. Different approaches have been made from several disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology and theology. The approach that interests us in this thesis is theology. Being associated mainly with theistic religions and particularly Christianity, the systematic and normative study of other religions has often left out of the sphere of theology. Nevertheless, as Robert Jackson affirms, theological study was ‘originally referred not to talk about the one god, but, rather, to discourse (*logia*) about the divine (*theo*), however that might be conceived’.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, David Tracy argues,

Theology need not even imply belief in gods of any sort: as long as a tradition conceives some notion of ultimate reality, by whatever name, and however provisionally, ‘insofar as...explicitly intellectual reflection occurs [with respect to that ultimate reality] within a religious tradition, one may speak of theology in the broad sense’.<sup>45</sup>

In accordance with these views, this study will follow a broad definition of theology in order to apply it to the non-theist belief of Buddhism. This study recognizes that, as Ian Markham states,

Most religious traditions have certain beliefs about the nature of ultimate reality and about the way that ultimate reality impinges on our world. These beliefs are the domain of theology. The task of theology is not only to articulate those beliefs but also explain and justify them.<sup>46</sup>

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43 ‘Udana: Verses of Uplift’, p. 98.

44 Robert Jackson, ‘Buddhist Theology: Its Historical Context’, in *Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars*, eds. Roger Jackson and John Mackransky (London: Routledge Curzon, 2000), 1.

45 Jackson, ‘Buddhist Theology: Its Historical Context’, 1.

46 Ian Markham, ‘Theology’ in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert Segal (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 194.

Therefore, this theological-not theist approach is justified by the recognition of a relative reality where material elements and other phenomena interact (*dharma*s) and an absolute reality, one beyond mundane elements and free of judgments. The human mind is unable to fully comprehend absolute reality, hence it is represented through symbols, theologies and religious traditions which refer to it as 'the sacred'.

The sacredness of religious belief gives hope to those who seek a way out of a suffering existence and gives power to the few who understand the path of liberation. This is because the experience of the sacred in any form will help individuals in the first instance to rely on an utterly powerful entity or force which will support them against the forces of ignorance and suffering; and in the second instance, to find our own 'sacred centre' within themselves, a light of spiritual wisdom developed to enlighten the path to liberation without the need of an outer force to accomplish it. About the experience of the sacred, Eliade argues that,

through the experience of the sacred, the human mind grasped the difference between that which reveals itself as real, powerful, rich, and meaningful, and that which does not—i.e., the chaotic and dangerous flux of things, their fortuitous, meaningless appearances and disappearances.<sup>47</sup>

All major religions, namely Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam share the belief that the experience of the sacred is the only way to find peace and happiness. Thus, there is a shared commitment to the sacred which needs to be stressed so that the differences in how one accomplishes the ultimate goal cannot continue to diminish that compassionate idea of experiencing the sacred through religious life. Focusing on these differences turns a transcendental goal into a short-term ideal of the uniqueness of the truth of one particular religion which only leads to exclusion, violence and war. About the misguided practice of religion, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama states,

Far from applying the teachings of their religion in our personal lives, we have a tendency to use them to reinforce our self-centred attitudes. We relate to our religion as something we own or as a label that separates us from others. Surely this is misguided? Instead of using the nectar of religion to purify the poisonous

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47 Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning of Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 1.

elements of our hearts and minds, there is a danger when we think like this of using these negative elements to poison the nectar of religion.<sup>48</sup>

The nectar of religion is that element of sacredness that leads to our understanding of our own nature, it is the boat that takes us to the shore of the ultimate state of realization, an eternal communion with the sacred, an all-encompassing *hierophany*<sup>49</sup> where the distinction between the sacred and the profane disappears in order to let us become one with the Ultimate Reality represented in every religion, each with a different form but all of the same nature. In light of this, ‘the sacred’ is that part of our existence that reminds us that we are connected with a power beyond our physical body, senses and thoughts; it is the representation of our true nature that we have forgotten: a formless, immortal and transcendent non-self.

Thus, religions enshrine like no other social institution the communion with the sacred. Here lies the sacredness of religion, the departure point from which to understand the role of religion for humanity and its power to build bridges of understanding among human beings, bridges that lead to peace, justice and, ultimately, happiness in the sacred. In the following sections, I will present the basis for a Buddhist theological approach and will further discuss how such an approach conceives the relevance of religions for individuals’ spiritual development, which can then lead them into reconstructing reality according to the compassionate roots of their traditions.

Thus, religions are the external manifestations of the need of human beings to be in communion with the sacred, giving it names, rituals, dogmas and myths that help them understand its nature and, ultimately, becoming one with the Ultimate Truth. His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama refers to the common ground of all religious traditions, stating that

the various techniques and methods for developing love and attaining salvation or liberation differ widely between the traditions. I don’t think there could ever be just one single philosophy or one single religion. Since there are so many different types of people, with a range of tendencies and inclinations, it is quite fitting that

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48 Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999), 225.

49 Eliade stated, ‘To designate the act of manifestation of the sacred, we have proposed the term Hierophany ... it expresses that something sacred shows itself to us’. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Florida: Harcourt, 1959), 11.



there are differences between religions. And the fact that there are so many different descriptions of the religious path shows how rich religion is<sup>50</sup>.

This is why despite the differences between religions, one can analyse ‘religion’ as a conceptual variable by defining it in terms of their shared conceptions that made religion the most important ‘vehicle’ to reach the shore of happiness and peace that all beings seek.

In Buddhism, the commitment to fulfil the role of a true practitioner—a *homo religiosus*—whether as a monk, nun, layman or laywoman, resides in following the ethics contained in Buddha’s message. In the following sections of this chapter, I will provide a general framework for understanding these ethical guidelines. I will then explain the concept of ‘*Engaged Buddhism*’, which is the expression of the individual efforts of religious leaders together with the sum of the wills of followers who have found in their religions a way to be in touch with the sacred manifested in every sentient being and phenomena of relative reality, thus finding the way to the ultimate truth.

### Buddhist Ethics

In order to understand the rationale of the Buddhist theological approach and more specifically the social engagement of Buddhism in the world, it is necessary to present the basis for Buddhist ethics. This will illuminate the key doctrinal values for the understanding of *Engaged Buddhism* as part of the Path given by the Buddha and thus make the reader be aware of the social side of Buddhism, which completes the partial view of this religion as ‘other-worldly’ or focused on individual development without social concern. As Peter Harvey affirms, an ethical system ‘gives a particular kind of rationale, and provides particular forms of motivation for acting in accord with it’<sup>51</sup>; this is the case with Buddhism and is the basis for the argument which will be used throughout this thesis.

In this section I will explain how the Buddha taught an ethical code of practice which sustains and nurtures the quest for Enlightenment, one that is based on morality, meditation and wisdom. This is said to be the teachings of the Enlightened in the *Subha Sutta* (in Pali, *Sutra* in Sanskrit):

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50 Dalai Lama, *The Dalai Lama’s Little Book of Inner Peace* (London: Harper Element, 2002), 178-179.

51 Peter Harvey, *Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

Subha, there were three divisions of things which the Lord praised, and with which he aroused, exhorted and established people. Which three? The division of Ariyan morality, the division of Ariyan concentration, and the division of Ariyan wisdom. These were the three divisions of things which the Lord praised.<sup>52</sup>

While the meditative character of Buddhism is widely accepted, and while I am aware that wisdom is the Buddhist basis for all further understanding of reality and the role of individuals and societies in the construction of the world, for the purposes of this thesis I will focus on the explanation of the ethical aspect of *sila* (or morality) in Buddhist terms. The social involvement of the Buddha is evident when, after attaining Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, he decided not to enter the *Parinirvana* and, instead, teach the Path which leads sentient beings to overcome suffering and attain the Supreme Enlightenment. Therefore, as Kenneth Kraft points out,

(we find in Buddhism) a creative tension between withdrawal and involvement, an underlying synonymity between work on oneself and work on behalf of others. Evidence supporting this view is found in doctrine, in practice, in legend, and in history. Thus the preeminent virtues in Theravada Buddhists are self-restraint *and* generosity; in Mahayana Buddhism, the highest goals are wisdom *and* compassion.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, the Buddha set the example of teaching others the Enlightened Path by preaching for over forty years and adapting the Law<sup>54</sup> to the qualities and characteristics of the listeners in order to help them to understand the incommensurable meanings of the Dharma. The Buddha declared,

Good sons! After six years' right sitting under the Bodhi tree of the wisdom throne, I could accomplish Perfect Enlightenment. With the Buddha's eye I saw all the laws and understood that they were inexpressible. Wherefore? I knew that the natures and desires of all living beings were not equal. As their natures and desire of all living beings were not equal, I preached the Law variously.<sup>55</sup>

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52 *Digha Nikaya* 10.1.6

53 Kenneth Kraft, 'Introduction,' in *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence*, K. Kraft ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992) 3.

54 This capacity to adapt the teachings are called *upaya kaulsaya* or skilful means.

55 'Innumerable Meanings Sutra,' in *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, 14.

The preaching of the Law, or the ‘turning of the Wheel of Dharma,’ began with the explanations of the Four Noble Truths and the doctrine of dependent origination. As part of the Fourth Noble Truth, the way of the cessation of suffering, the Buddha delivered the teaching of the Eightfold Path, one that represents the interdependence in Buddhist practice between individual transformation and inter-personal and social engagement.<sup>56</sup> In general, the path refers to three categories: wisdom, ethics and concentration.

For the category of wisdom, the Buddha established the practice of right view, which is the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and right intention or right thought, the renunciation of ill-will and the development of harmlessness. For the ethical category he prescribed right speech as abstinence from false, divisive, harsh and idle chatter; right action as the protection of the precepts; and right livelihood as earning a compassionate way of living without harming other sentient beings. For the category of concentration, the *Tathagata* mentioned right mindfulness as contemplating the body as body, feelings as feelings, mind as mind and mental formations as mental formations; right effort to avoid the arising of unwholesome states of mind and actions; and right concentration as attaining the four *jhanas*<sup>57</sup> of inner-mental development.

Following this compassionate code of behaviour, the foundations of Buddhist ethics are based on the commitment to achieve personal enlightenment while helping others to achieve it as well. The purpose is to recognize our interdependence as sentient beings who suffer due to the three qualities of existence: impermanence, dissatisfaction (suffering) and no-self. After realizing that we share the same existence and that this relative reality is contingent on our thoughts and actions, the Buddha taught ways to change unwholesome states of mind and actions to wholesome ones which will lead us to the Supreme Enlightenment.

Thus, by taking vows to develop a compassionate mindful intention (*bodhicitta*), one enters the path of the *Bodhisattva*. This Buddhist-hero figure, which is found most recurrently in the *Mahayana sutras* is also present in the Theravada Buddhism while addressing the previous life of Shakyamuni Buddha in the stories called *Jatakas*. As

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<sup>56</sup> References of the Eightfold Path can be found in *Samyutta Nikaya* 45.8, *Digha Nikaya* 6.14, 8.13, 22.21

<sup>57</sup> *Jhana* can be defined as a state of mind which is absorbed into the object of meditation in order to attain full concentration.

Nagarjuna explains in his commentary to the ‘Perfection of Wisdom’, the *Bodhisattva* is someone certain to become a Buddha, a sentient being who has first enlightened himself and will thereafter enlighten others.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it is not about the quest for individual Enlightenment only to save oneself from the *samsaric* existence but is rather about an individual and social commitment to reach the shores of *Nirvana* through compassionate actions rooted in the belief in interdependence and the mutual right to overcome suffering.

Therefore, a *Bodhisattva* will be understood here as any sentient being established in the compassionate intention (*bodhicitta*) of achieving Buddhahood and also willing to help others to attain Enlightenment as a result of their wholesome actions. Thus, the differentiation between the *arhat* of *Theravadins* and the *bodhisattvas* of *Mahayana* is overridden by their shared commitment to attain the ultimate state of bliss which can only be attained by compassion for oneself and others, thus earning them the title of *bodhisattvas*.

In the previous birth stories of the Buddha, we find different expressions of the *bodhisattvas*’ will to help others. For example, while living under the name of Megha he took the vow to become an Enlightened One out of compassion for himself and others. Megha affirmed,

May I too at some future period become a Tathagata, with all the attributes of a perfect Buddha, as this Lord Dipankara is just now! May I too turn the wheel of the highest Dharma, as this Lord Dipankara does just now! Having crossed, may I lead others cross; set free, may I free others; comforted, may I comfort others—as does this Lord Dipankara! May I become like him, for the weal and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the sake of a great multitude of living beings, for their weal and happiness, be they gods or men!<sup>59</sup>

After taking this vow of the compassionate being, the *bodhisattva* continued to live out the compassionate ethics. For example, in another previous life as a prince called Mahasattva, he decided to deliver his body for the sake of a hungry tigress and her cubs. One day he found the tigress so weak that she was unable hunt and had only

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58 ‘Outline of a *Bodhisattva*’s Progress’ in *Buddhist Scriptures*, Edward Conze trans. (London: Penguin Books, 1959), 30.

59 ‘Shakyamuni’s Meeting with Dipankara’, in *Buddhist Scriptures*, Edward Conze trans., 23.

two choices: to eat her newly born cubs or die. Out of compassion, the prince decided to be eaten by the tigress and thus reflected,

For the weal of the world I wish to win enlightenment, incomparably wonderful.  
From deep compassion I now give away my body, so hard to quit, unshaken in my  
mind. That enlightenment I shall now gain, in which nothing hurts and nothing  
harms, and which the Jina's sons have praised. Thus shall I cross to the Beyond of  
the fearful ocean of becoming which fills the triple world!<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, the Buddhist Path is followed through wisdom and compassion, which means the follower must develop both inner mindful spiritual insight and active social engagement. One cannot achieve enlightenment only by adhering to one practice or the other; they are interdependent and mutually inclusive. This is why the process of rebirths takes a logical stance, providing countless possibilities to develop compassionate, wholesome actions which are the consequential expressions of a compassionate mind. Thus, the ethical code of conduct given by the Buddha is found in several *suttas* (*sutras*) from the Pali Canon and the Mahayana tradition. In particular, the *Sampasadaniya Sutta* re-establishes it as follows:

Also unsurpassed is the Blessed Lord's way of teaching Dhamma in regard to a person's proper ethical conduct. One should be truthful and faithful, not using deception, pater, hinting or belittling, not always on the make for further gains, but with sense-doors guarded, abstemious, a peace-maker, given to watchfulness, active, strenuous in effort, a meditator, mindful, of fitting conversation, steady-going, resolute and sensible, not hankering after sense-pleasures but mindful and prudent. This is the unsurpassed teaching in regard to a person's proper ethical conduct.<sup>61</sup>

All Buddhist ethics are based on that premise of the interdependent causality of compassionate mind and compassionate action, which are rooted in the two levels of existence, the relative and the absolute. While the relative—*samsaric* or sensual existence—is impermanent, unsatisfactory and void, the ultimate truth is the manifestation of the true nature of all phenomena beyond all conceptualizations and physical qualities. Thus, the *Bodhisattva* is aware of the causal relationship between

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60 'The *Bodhisattva* and the Hungry Tigress', in *Buddhist Scriptures*, E. Conze trans., 26.

61 *Digha Nikaya* 28.12

both truths and although he/she recognizes the ultimate level of existence, at the same time relative reality becomes a way to help others achieve the vision and experience the ultimate truth. In the *Ratnakuta Sutra*, the Buddha explains this dual awareness of the *bodhisattvas* to Kasyapa:

These four, Kasyapa, are the genuine *bodhisattva* good qualities of any *bodhisattva*. Which four? (1) he is firmly convinced of emptiness, yet he has faith in the law of the fruition of acts; (2) he tolerantly accepts non-self, and yet has great compassion towards all beings; (3) his intention is already abiding in nirvana, and yet his active application abides in *samsara*; (4) he gives gifts in order to mature beings, and yet he has no expectation of any fruition of the act of giving for himself.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, the ‘other-worldly’ concern is not disassociated from ‘this-worldly’ phenomena; rather, this awareness is a key element in the attainment of Buddhahood. This is why we find at the core of Buddhist ethics five major classifications directed toward helping one engage with oneself and others in a compassionate way: the five precepts, the six perfections (*six paramitas*), the four divine abidings (*Brahma viharas*), wholesome actions and unwholesome mind states and actions.

In order to set up the precepts to follow, the Buddha explained that one should refrain from the four defilements of action in the *Sigalaka Sutta* as follows:

‘What are the four defilements of action that are abandoned? Taking life is one, taking what is not given is one, sexual misconduct is one, lying speech is one. These are the four defilements of action that he abandons’. Thus the Lord spoke. And the Well-Farer having spoken, the Teacher added: ‘taking life and stealing, lying, adultery, the wise reprove’.<sup>63</sup>

Accordingly, the Buddha explained to Nigrodha the fourfold restraint of a right-minded person in the *Udumbarika-Sinahanda Sutta* as follows: the person does not harm a living being, does not cause a living being to be harmed and does not approve of such harming; he or she does not take what is not given, or cause it to be taken, or approve of such taking; he or she does not tell a lie, or cause a lie to be told or approve of such lying; he or she does not crave sensual pleasures, cause others to do so or

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62 ‘Ratnakuta Sutra’, in *Buddhist Scriptures*, Donald S. Lopez ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2004, 352.

63 *Digha Nikaya* 31.3-4

approve of such craving. Thus through making this his austerity, he takes an upward course and does not fall back into lower things.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to these four defilements of action, the Buddha added in the *Sigalaka Sutta* that several dangers are attached to addiction to strong drink and sloth-producing drugs such as ‘present waste of money, increased quarrelling, liability to sickness, loss of good name, indecent exposure of one’s person, and weakening of the intellect’.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the five precepts which are the basis of Buddhist ethics and of all individual actions toward the world are taken mindfully as follows:

I undertake to observe the rule  
To abstain from taking life;  
To abstain from taking what is not given;  
To abstain from sensuous misconduct;  
To abstain from false speech;  
To abstain from intoxicants as tending to cloud the mind.<sup>66</sup>

These precepts are the behavioural guidelines for Buddhists of the fourfold assembly,<sup>67</sup> and thus became the cornerstone of Buddhist social engagement along with other specific guidelines for ethical conduct. One of the latter is the group of six perfections (*six paramitas*) or virtues which are developed by the *bodhisattvas* as part of their quest for enlightenment through serving others and themselves. These are: generosity or giving (*dana*); ethical conduct (*sila*); forbearance or patience (*kshanti*); assiduity (*virya*); meditation (*dhyana*); and wisdom (*prajna*). The first four *paramitas* are referred to as the social action of *bodhisattvas*, while the last two are the inner qualities needed to develop compassionate actions. Following the nature of this section, I will briefly point out some of the characteristics of the first four.

The *paramita* of generosity or *dana*, refers to the beneficence of giving in a spiritual and material sense in order to help others without waiting for a reward, although the reward is gained by *karmatic* consequence. It means ‘to give timely gifts,

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64 *Digha Nikaya* 25.16

65 *Digha Nikaya* 31.8

66 ‘Morality: the Five Precepts’, in *Buddhist Scriptures*, Edward Conze trans., 70.

67 Monks, nuns, laymen and laywoman

to give without contempt or arrogance, to give cheerfully and to expect no reward'.<sup>68</sup> Ethical conduct or *sila* refers to keeping the five precepts and thus to maintaining proper behaviour which leads to the eradication of unwholesome actions. This will help a person to have an adequate rebirth in order to be able to continue working throughout their lives for the sake of all sentient beings. Ethical conduct should follow the eight guidelines of kind behaviour given by the Buddha while admonishing Kasyapa as follows:

- To benefit sentient beings
- To gladden sentient beings
- Not to hate sentient beings
- To be straightforward
- Not to discriminate among sentient beings
- To be compliant with sentient beings
- To contemplate all dharmas
- To be pure as space.<sup>69</sup>

The third *paramita* of patience or *kshanti* refers to the quality of being patient and tolerant of any situation by acknowledging that everything is the result of different causes and conditions. Thus, recognizing that everything is impermanent there is no need to fall into despair or anger. This *paramita* is exemplified in an extreme situation of a previous life of the Buddha, when an angry and intoxicated king named Kalabu, fuelled by pride and jealousy, dismembered the body of the young man Kundaka when the latter was practicing his virtue of forbearance. Even in extreme pain and suffering Kundaka, a previous rebirth of the Buddha, never despised the king but continued to practice the perfection of *kshanti*. The story declares:

He (the King) went up to the *Bodhisattva* and stood by him. 'So what do you teach, ascetic?' 'I teach the doctrine of forbearance', he replied. 'And what is forbearance?' he asked. 'It is not being angry with others who are abusive, violent

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<sup>68</sup> 'Sumati's Questions', in *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*, 258.

<sup>69</sup> 'Abiding in Good and Noble Deportment', in *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*, 300.



and slanderous’, he replied. ‘I’ll see now just how real this forbearance of yours is!’ And he called for his executioner of thieves.<sup>70</sup>

After the king flogged him, he then cut off his hands, feet, nose and ears; he then struck the *Bodhisattva* in the heart with his foot. He was waiting for an angry response by the ascetic so he could prove that one cannot practice the perfection of forbearance. However, due to great compassion and commitment, Kundaka said, ‘The one who cut my hands and feet and nose and ears is the king. May he live for a long time. Men such as I do not get angry’.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the *paramita* of forbearance is to remain calm, serene and patient even while facing violence and danger because the law of *Karma* will bring compassionate results to those who perform wholesome actions and negative outcomes for those who like the king who are driven by hatred, anger and delusion. The purpose is not to victimize oneself but rather to accept the situation without falling into despair, even in such an extreme situation as the *jataka* tale recounts.

The fourth and final *paramita* of action, which should also be rooted in the last two perfections of meditation and wisdom, is *virya*. It refers to the resolute effort not to be shattered by any negative or positive emotion but to remain firm and steady in order to be more helpful while listening to others’ suffering and assisting them in overcoming it. In the *Jatakanidana* is established the moment when in a previous life of the Shakyamuni Buddha, the *bodhisattva* was inspired by *Dipankara* Buddha and decided to fulfil the *paramitas*. Regarding *virya*, the *bodhisattva* established:

163. Just as a mountain, a rock, unwavering, is well established, and does not tremble in rough winds but remains in its own place,

164. So you too, be unwavering at all times in your resolve, and, going to the perfection of resolve, you will attain full awakening.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, the Buddha declared, ‘observing rightly like this, should raise the mind of compassion, display the great mercy desiring to relieve others of suffering, and once

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70 ‘Khantivadi Jataka’ in *The Jatakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta*, Sarah Shaw trans. (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2006), 110.

71 ‘Khantivadi Jataka’ in *The Jatakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta*, 112.

72 ‘Jatakanidana’ in *The Jatakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta*, 4.

again penetrate deeply into all laws'.<sup>73</sup> This compassionate vow is developed by a peaceful mind and thus expressed in peaceful actions. Once again, the interdependent nature of both spheres of action, mental and social, is highlighted by the Buddha.

Accordingly, the Buddha established four 'divine abidings' or *Brahma Viharas* which are the means to reach the shore of the supramundane through earthly-bound actions benefitting oneself and others. These four are loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*uppekha*). The Buddha explains the possibility of reaching the Brahma realm while developing these qualities in the *Tevijja Sutta* as follows:

Then, with his heart filled with loving-kindness, he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second the third, the fourth ... then with his heart filled with compassion, with sympathetic joy, with equanimity he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with equanimity, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill-will.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, the way to Brahma or the divine abiding is through social action rooted in four virtues. The first, loving-kindness, refers to action fuelled by the will to share our love with everyone and everything without prejudices or dualism. This love is for friends, family, enemies or unknown sentient beings; it does not make any distinction because it is the expression of the loving nature of all phenomena. The second, compassion, is the physical expression of a mind rooted in loving-kindness and wisdom regarding the true nature of all the *dhammas*, which are free from intrinsic independent reality and thus are interdependent. By being aware of this interdependence, one is able to see 'my-self' and 'others' as illusory and temporal entities which are ultimately of the same nature and beyond differentiations.

The third *Brahma Vihara*, sympathetic joy, refers to unselfish happiness for the successful development of others' lives. This is not only remaining calm for others' wellbeing but actually being part of their happiness without letting unwholesome feelings such as envy, anger or hatred arise in one's mind. Finally, equanimity refers to

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73 'Innumerable Meanings Sutra', in *The Threefold Lotus Sutra: Innumerable Meanings, The Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law and Meditation of the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue*, Bunno Kato, Yoshiro Tamura and Kojiro Miyasaka trans. (New York/Tokyo: Weatherhill/Kosei, 1984), 12.

74 *Digha Nikaya* 13.76,78

the capacity of the mind to remain calm whether in happiness or suffering. This does not mean being indifferent toward reality but rather being mindful enough to distinguish the impermanent nature of all phenomena and thus the useless feeling of becoming attached whether to success or failure. This will let us live in peace, working for our own transformation and others wellbeing without getting attached even to that wholesome ideal.

As we can see, in Buddhist ethics we refer constantly to wholesome and unwholesome actions rather than to good or evil. Wholesome action is defined as ‘any activity based on the wholesome roots, i.e., the absence of passion, aggression, and delusion’<sup>75</sup>, while unwholesome actions (*akusala*) are those rooted in these three poisons of the mind from which wholesome actions are absent. More specifically, the Buddha explained how to recognize these actions and which identify their roots in the *Sammaditthi Sutta*. What is considered unwholesome is killing a living being, taking what is not given, misconduct in sensual pleasures, false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, gossip, covetousness, ill will and wrong view. Wholesome actions, then, require abstention from these unwholesome actions and the development of virtuous ones, thus purifying one’s actions, words and will. Accordingly, the Buddha establishes in the *Sammaditthi Sutta* the roots of both types of actions:

And what is, bhikkhus, the root of the wholesome? Non-greed is a root of the wholesome; non-hate is a root of the wholesome; non-delusion is a root of the wholesome. This is called the root of the wholesome.

And what is the root of the unwholesome? Greed is a root of the unwholesome; hate is a root of the unwholesome; delusion is a root of the unwholesome, this is called the root of the unwholesome.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, all actions are born from individual mental processes which are developed either by compassionate intentions or selfish interests, leading to happiness or suffering respectively. This is how individual insight helps us to recognize the kind of thoughts we are producing for particular actions, which have a social and environmental impact. Thus, the interdependent nature of mindfulness and action is as

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75 ‘Kushala’, *A Concise Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen*, Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber, Franz-Karl Ehrhard and Michael s. Diener, Michael H. Khon trans., (Boston: Shambala, 2010), 122.

76 *Majjhima Nikaya* 9.4-7

follows: there cannot be a wholesome action if it is rooted in hatred, anger or delusion; accordingly, there cannot be an unwholesome action if it is rooted in a compassionate mind free from selfishness and ignorance of our common nature. As the Chinese monk Ciyun Zunshi affirmed,

The Buddhist scriptures place sole esteem in the values of loving-kindness and compassion; if one takes life or does harm to others, one will suffer retribution in the three muddled destinies. By practicing loving-kindness and compassion myriad virtues are ultimately realized. By persuading them to renounce evil for good and leading them from the shallow to the profound—this is how the Buddha delivers living beings. At no point have things ever been different from this. Having now become a faithful adherent of the Buddha's teaching, it is proper that one practice the Buddha's loving-kindness.<sup>77</sup>

Being aware of this *Karmatic* relationship the *bodhisattvas* choose to develop wholesome actions for the benefit of all beings, including themselves. By doing so, the Buddha affirmed, 'they will deliver beings from the life and death of delusions, and make them overcome all suffering, by preaching the Law for them'.<sup>78</sup> Ultimately, the *bodhisattvas* lead sentient beings in the path of the Enlightened but each individual is responsible in taking the first step along that path. This is why there is a strong commitment to teach sentient beings the way to the shores of *Nirvana* and overcome the suffering nature of *samsara* through wholesome merits. Regarding those individuals who practice wholesome actions, the *Tathagata* affirmed,

They will realize the great compassion, thoroughly abolish all sufferings, gather many good roots, and bring benefit to all. They will explain the favor of the Law and greatly enliven the withered; give all living beings the medicine of the Law, and set all at ease; gradually elevate their view to live in the state of the Law-cloud. They will spread favor extensively, grant mercy to all suffering living beings, and lead them in to the [Buddha]-way. Thereupon these persons will accomplish Perfect Enlightenment before long.<sup>79</sup>

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77 Ciyun Zunshi 'Verses for Resolving Doubts about Replacing Sacrifice with Vegetarian Feasts and Fasts', in *Buddhist Scriptures*, Donald S. Lopez ed, 407.

78 'Innumerable Meanings Sutra', in *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, 22.

79 'Innumerable Meanings Sutra', in *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, 24-25.

In sum, we can find in the doctrinal sources a focus on the social engagement of Buddhist ethics and on how the Path of Enlightenment is composed of an interdependent relationship between individual inner spirituality and social action. In general, Westerners have placed greater emphasis on the first characteristic, stressing only concentration and meditational techniques and arguing that Buddhism is not overtly concerned with social action and public life. However, this view overlooks the dimension of Buddhist ethics which engaged Buddhists have been trying to explain as essential to a full understanding of the Path of Enlightenment. One must work toward the benefit of all sentient beings in this relative reality and, at the same time, be fully aware of the ultimate level of existence. In the next section, I will explain the basis for *Engaged Buddhism* and its relevance for social action which influences all levels, from the individual to the global.

### *Engaged Buddhism*

For many years, scholars from the West followed Max Weber's description of Buddhism as an 'other-worldly' religion which has little to say or do regarding social problems. This vision is perhaps the result of a particular attitude of some members of the *Sangha* (Buddhist community) in a particular time and place, causing them to focus more on study and meditation rather than being active in the political arena. However, this can hardly be regarded as the generalized commitment of Buddhists. Moreover, it should not be used to denigrate the social relevance of Buddha's message in order to claim the religious superiority of other traditions, a position which can only be regarded as an unwholesome intention and action rooted in ignorance of the social activism embedded in the Fourth Noble Truth and the Eightfold Path.

This partial view and explanation of the Buddhist path seemed to be right or, at least, was not contested until the mid-twentieth century when Buddhist monks, nuns and lay people began to restore the socially engaged nature of Buddha's message. It is within this effort that Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese monk who worked to alleviate the suffering of those involved in the atrocities of the Vietnam War (1955-1975), coined the term '*Engaged Buddhism*' to highlight the social activism embedded in the Enlightened Path. This does not mean to ignore the importance of meditative processes and personal development but is rather an expression of inner-spiritual development. In

consequence, ‘Max Weber’s influential observation that Buddhism is a fundamentally other-worldly religion must be, at best, partially true’.<sup>80</sup> Thus, at the heart of this *Engaged Buddhism* lies the interdependent nature of all phenomena and, particularly, that of the realm of meditation and social activism.

It is from within a Buddhist theological framework and a religiously motivated commitment that engaged Buddhists interpret the world and try to persuade others to recognize the common suffering of human beings. In order to promote this recognition, there is an envisioned collaboration between individual actions, collective bodies, associations and states. With this vision, the political sphere becomes the most practical arena where social policy can be implemented to large-scale effect. As Charles R. Johnson puts it, ‘politics, therefore, offers the opportunity to use samsaric means for nirvanic ends’,<sup>81</sup> identifying a bond between both levels of reality as they interact in an ever-changing existence.

Following this vision, individuals can work toward the construction of new conditions to relieve suffering and achieve peace. A key idea portrayed by engaged Buddhists and stressed in this thesis is that ‘if we can change our daily lives, we can change our governments and we can change the world. Our presidents and our governments are us. They reflect our lifestyle and our way of thinking’.<sup>82</sup> This implies that peace is not something one wishes to achieve but rather the actual path to overcoming suffering. For engaged Buddhists, peace is an everyday practice where one becomes peace in every thought and action, an embodiment of peace within ourselves and towards all sentient beings. In his first sermon, the Buddha explained the Fourth Noble Truth as the Eightfold Path toward Enlightenment, one that implies an inward look at our thoughts-intentions and their outcomes as actions.

Therefore, after we have recognized the existence of suffering in the world, as well as its causes and the possibility of overcoming it, we can follow the path and thus help ourselves while helping others. This is when wisdom (acknowledgment of those Truths) and compassion (the action of body and mind nurtured by wisdom) become the

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80 Ian Harris, ‘Introduction: Buddhism, Power and Politics in Theravada Buddhist Lands’, in *Power and Political Order*, Ian Harris ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 1.

81 Charles R. Johnson, ‘Be Peace Embodied’, in *Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide to Making the World a Better Place*, Melvin McLeod ed. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 34.

82 Thich Nhat Hanh, ‘Call Me by My True Names’, in *Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide to Making the World a Better Place*, 41.

antidote for greed, hatred and delusion. This is how ignorance is overcome, by achieving the awakening of all on both personal and a societal level. As David Kaczynski affirms, 'as Buddhists, we also understand that there is no truth or wisdom without compassion. Engaged Buddhism represents an antidote to the politics of fear, hate, violence and separation'.<sup>83</sup> Thus, 'the change has to come from within. Love, caring, compassion, respect, universal responsibility—these are the keys'.<sup>84</sup>

### Individual Awakening for Social Awakening

The awakening is, according to the *Sarvodaya Movement*, a six fold interdependent process:<sup>85</sup> personal, family, village/community, urban, national and global awakening. This process of transformation where economic, social and political changes will take place should be supported by moral, cultural and spiritual elements rooted in compassion and loving-kindness. It is within this interdependent process that the departure point is the individual level. This is why individual commitment represented at first by leaders and then by followers who share the same vision as their leaders is a key element for *Engaged Buddhism*, which seeks true awakening from individual effort to communal tasks.

Some of the distinct elements of major exponents of *Engaged Buddhism* are: a prominent leader who provides a new model of social integration sustained by his or her reputation as true role model of Buddha's social message; an evident and coherent application of basic Buddhist tenets to social change and achievable compassionate goals through individual, social and institutional efforts; the rationalization of religious life by discarding ritual particularities and focusing on universal values of all sentient beings, particularly our common suffering and shared right to overcome it. Most of the leading voices in *Engaged Buddhism* have succeeded in building bridges from East to West, thus presenting an interdependent world through cultural activities, books, poems and international conferences where politicians, economists, scientists and other

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83 David Kaczynski, 'Why Democracy needs Dharma', in *Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide to Making the World a Better Place*, 107.

84 Gehlek Rinpoche, 'Giving and taking: a practice to develop compassion', in *Mindful Politics*, 150.

85 George D. Bond, 'A.T. Ariyaratne and the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka', in *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King eds. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 130.

religious leaders have participated and discussed the re-construction of the world toward a peaceful co-existence.

Among those leading voices we can identify Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhadasa, Maha Goshananda, Pema Chödrön, Sulak Sivaraksa, Aung San Suu Kyi and H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, among many others. While they each speak from their own cultural and political context, we can identify three common core ideas: internal peace as a prerequisite for social peace; interdependence; and the need to build bridges of understanding among different religions and ideologies based on wholesome actions.

In order to achieve peace, one should follow the peace path through thought and action within oneself and, consequently, the individual will be able to share this attitude in the social arena and influence his or her context in a positive-peaceful way. Thich Nhat Hanh affirms that ‘peace work means, first of all, being peace’,<sup>86</sup> because ‘if we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can smile and blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society, will benefit from our peace’.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche affirms that ‘unless we can discover that ground of goodness in our own lives, we cannot hope to improve the lives of others’.<sup>88</sup> This means that we need to plant the seed of compassion and peace in our conscience in order to let peace blossom. If we stop feeding our minds with seeds of negative emotions such as anger, hatred and delusion, then violence and war cannot find any fertile soil in which to grow. Through mindfulness we can see the true reality of all *dharma*s or phenomena and thus act with conscious attention regarding what we think, do and say. This is where the meditative process embedded in mindfulness as the ‘quality and power of mind that is aware of what’s happening without judgment and without interference, is a key element for social action’.<sup>89</sup> This is because social action should not be guided by emotional bursts, but rather by deep, conscious and deep responses to a particular situation with a compassionate heart and mind. To put it simply, ‘if we want to understand the world, we need to understand ourselves’.<sup>90</sup> This is why Pema Chödrön affirms that ‘war and

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86 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace* (New Delhi: Full Circle, 1997), 80.

87 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*, 3.

88 Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, ‘The Discovery of Basic Goodness’, in *Mindful Politics*, 101.

89 Joseph Goldstein, ‘Three Means to Peace’, in *Mindful Politics*, 122.

90 J. Goldstein, ‘Three Means to Peace’, in *Mindful Politics*, 121.



peace start in the human heart. Whether that heart is open or whether that heart closes has global implications'.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, she states,

To the degree that each of us is dedicated to wanting there to be peace in the world, then we have to take responsibility when our own hearts and minds harden and close. We have to be brave enough to soften what is rigid, to find the soft spot and stay with it. We have to have that kind of courage and take that kind of responsibility. That's true spiritual warriorship. That's true practice of peace.<sup>92</sup>

This affirmation of responsibility is what engaged Buddhists want to teach. It is an invitation to recognize our capacity to construct our reality, to realize that in fact we have created our society and institutions through a particular set of thoughts and actions. This does not mean that we have to bear full responsibility for the world we live in, but we are nevertheless key agents in the construction of the relative reality we experience. For Maha Goshananda this idea is easily understood when we accept that

The most important action for a peacemaker is to be peaceful, because without this all other actions are inconsistent, unethical, and therefore cannot lead to real peace. An angry peacemaker is not a peacemaker at all. In contrast, a peaceful person is inherently a peacemaker, because their being peaceful has a positive effect in others.<sup>93</sup>

This idea of being peace in order to achieve peace is the result of a process of interdependence between all individual and collective thoughts and actions. Following the idea of responsibility, interdependence brings out the fact that all action and inaction has consequences because each establishes a particular condition in this relative reality. Moreover, the consequence will be in accordance with the intention behind the action; thus a compassionate action will bring positive outcomes while a selfish action will have a negative result for oneself and others. This means that 'not only must we 'think globally and act locally', but we must also think locally and act globally'.<sup>94</sup>

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91 Pema Chödrön, *Practicing Peace in Times of War* (Boston: Shambala, 2007), 26.

92 Pema Chödrön, *Practicing Peace in Times of War*, 36.

93 Matthew Weiner, 'Maha Ghosananda as a contemplative social activist' in *Action Dharma: New Studies in Engaged Buddhism*, Christopher Queen and Damien Keown eds. (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 122-123.

94 Alan Senauke, 'Nowhere to Spit,' in *Mindful Politics*, 114.

### Developing the ‘Interbeing’ Awareness

This interdependent relation between the local and the global is in accordance with the Buddhist concept of interdependent harmony between the relative and the absolute, the inner and the outer spiritual development enshrined in engaged Buddhist thought. This is what Thich Nhat Hanh defined as ‘interbeing’: ‘I am, therefore you are. You are, therefore I am. That is the meaning of the word interbeing. We inter-are’.<sup>95</sup> Thus, this recognition of mutual effect and co-existence means that there is no point in harming others because I would be harming myself and, as a consequence, if I help the other I am helping myself and vice-versa. As David Loy asserts, ‘this kind of self-less universalism—or, better, nondiscrimination that does not place *us* over *them*—provides the basis for Buddhist social action’.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, interdependence calls for thoughts and actions rooted in compassion and loving-kindness toward others and ourselves. Thich Nhat Hanh summarizes this view as follows:

We have to wake up to the fact that everything is connected to everything else. Our safety and well-being cannot be individual matters any more. If they are not safe there is no way that we can be safe. Taking care of other people’s safety is, at the same time, taking care of our own safety. To take care of their well-being is to take care of our own well-being. It is the mind of discrimination and separation that is at the foundation of all violence and hate.<sup>97</sup>

That compassionate relation binds us with people who despite cultural, religious and national differences share the same *samsaric* existence and the mutual need to overcome suffering and achieve happiness.

Thus, *Engaged Buddhism* seeks to build bridges of understanding among individuals and societies in order to work toward an enlightened society, one that respects the differences and celebrates the commonalities. This connection should be constructed with wholesome actions—virtuous and ethical volitional thoughts and actions—which will eventually lead to the healing of the world through the healing of individual and social relationships. The idea of achieving mutual benefit by having

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<sup>95</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*, 87.

<sup>96</sup> David Loy, ‘Wego: the Social Roots of Suffering,’ in *Mindful Politics*, 46.

<sup>97</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, ‘We have the Compassion and Understanding Necessary to Heal the Nation,’ in *Mindful Politics*, 133.

harmonic relationships with all sentient beings is affirmed by another exemplar of *Engaged Buddhism*, Acharn Buddhadasa, as follows:

Our ancestors knew this. Thus they taught that we should do what we can to promote the coexistence of all beings, and that we should be kind to one another according to the law of nature. All living beings are able to exist to the degree that they form a society, a mutually beneficial cooperative.<sup>98</sup>

The recognition of engaged Buddhists as proponents of a dialogue between different religions, ideologies and human beings is a key aspect in building bridges of understanding toward peace. Their work focuses on respect of others' beliefs and culture while strengthening our faith in our own traditions. By doing this, we can build a stronger society by recognizing our similarities and differences. More bluntly, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama affirms, 'despite doctrinal differences, we are all simply human. If you believe in God, see others as god's children. If you are a nontheist, see all beings as your mother. When you do this, there will be no room for prejudice, intolerance, or exclusivity'.<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, *Engaged Buddhism* is a social movement aiming to provide the proper conditions or seeds of peace which could blossom in reality if more people were aware of their interdependence and common humanity. Sulak Siravaksa states,

Twenty-five centuries ago the Buddha taught people to face and surmount the reality of human existence—the essential problems of pain, loss, suffering, sickness, and death. Isn't that still our task today? By building up communities of people with inner spiritual strength, moral courage, and concerned awareness of the world, Buddhists and non-Buddhists have already begun to restructure consciousness and reconstitute society for the future benefit of humanity.<sup>100</sup>

This capacity and shared responsibility of an individual-social construction of relative reality is a key element of this approach and one of the basic tenets of the Buddhist theology that this thesis develops. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama affirms,

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98 Acharn Buddhadasa in Donald K. Swearer, 'Exemplars of Nonviolence in Theravada Buddhism', in *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence*, Kenneth Kraft ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 72.

99 Dalai Lama, *Toward a True Kinship of Faiths: How the World's Religions Can Come Together* (New York: Doubleday), 181.

100 Sulak Siravaksa, 'Buddhism and Contemporary International Trends', in *Inner Peace, World Peace*, 137.

On a practical level, without inter-religious dialogue understanding, and without peace between secularists and adherents of religion, we cannot build a genuinely compassionate and happier humanity. So it is in the interests of those with a secular disposition not only to care for peaceful coexistence among the religions but also to actively work for tolerant acceptance of the religious world.<sup>101</sup>

In the next chapter I will apply this idea to explaining international relations from a Buddhist perspective. This, in turn, will provide the framework for understanding the role of two exemplars of religious-spiritual engaged movements, which are in accordance with the ideas of truth, compassion and loving-kindness needed to transform our world and which are shared by all major religious traditions and in particular by Buddhism and Christianity. Finally, this exploration will set the basis for the construction and development of a *Theology of International Relations* as a theoretical embodiment of the Buddhist tenets of interdependence, impermanence and the role of individuals in shaping their own relative reality. In sum, the role of the sacred and the homo religious in the world is summarized for the purposes of this thesis in an engaged Buddhist causal relationship: ‘The method is mindfulness, the expression is compassion, and the essence is wisdom’.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, meditative practice is necessary to be consciously aware of the nature of all phenomena and thus be able to express it in the world through social actions which, in turn, will represent the interdependence and balance between ‘other worldly’ and ‘this worldly’ spheres embedded in the Buddhist Path.

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101 Dalai Lama, *Toward a True Kinship of Faiths*, 176-177.

102 Joseph Goldstein, ‘Three Means to Peace’, in *Mindful Politics*, 126.

# II

## INTERNATIONAL

## RELATIONS:

### CONSTRUCTING OUR RELATIVE REALITY

Since individuals first got together in communities and developed tools to work and produce their own food, they began to develop a new conception of how they relate to the land they are living in. This was reflected in the types of social organization they developed, from clans or tribes to strong and complex forms of social conglomerates, which would soon discover the fact that other groups had also been formed in other latitudes. This led individuals to specify new roles within society and in relation to other groups from whom they began to learn. It was an encounter with different sets of ideas, beliefs, behaviour and a whole new array of goods. More importantly, it was the beginning of a relationship between different groups of individuals who now needed to learn how to deal with the idea of ‘the other’.

This ‘otherness’ can be seen as a positive chance to interact with the one we don’t know and learn something that we are missing and, conversely, as a threat to our own traditions and sets of beliefs as well as to the land itself. This ambivalence of the ‘me’ and the ‘other’ created an intersubjective rooted in fear and the need for survival. Thus, some questions are necessary to address: Is it possible to change this intersubjective consensus of fear into one of compassion? How does history reflect an egotistic view of reality? What is the role of individuals, states and religion in this regard? Does secularism provide the answer to violence and war? What is the current relevance of the Peace of Westphalia and the role of states? Is religion a private matter with no public influence at all? Can we speak about a resurgence of religion after three hundred years of ‘secular arrangements’? Finally, can we identify a particular allegiance

of religion and politics in current affairs? If so, is it guided by compassion for individuals or is it just a political tool of egotistic agents?

Following the overall idea of the possibility of re-creating our own relative reality as the logical outcome of the sum of individuals' wills through social and institutional arrangements, this chapter will explain how International Relations as an academic discipline and as a description of a particular interaction among agents had been developed. In the first part I will refer to the historical perspective before the Peace of Westphalia which marks the birth of the nation-state as an independent, sovereign entity. The dominance of the Pope and the Roman Emperor was broken by a new 'secular' re-interpretation of reality wherein religion has nothing to say. Thus, in this chapter I will use the term 'God' as a particular reference to the sacred as derived from the Western-Christian context I am explaining, and thus it should not be confused with the theological use in this thesis which is Buddhist and non-theist.

The second part will address the discipline of International Relations and particularly the constructivist approach, its basic assumptions and how it helps to explain the relative reality. This will open the discussion for the use of constructivism as the best theory to go along with the Buddhist approach in terms of the possibility of creating our own relative reality through the sum of individuals' wills, particular social arrangements and the international system.

Finally, I will explain the role of religion in those main theories and the phenomenon called 'resurgence of religion'. This will provide the framework with which to study two particular arrangements between religion and politics which are not driven by compassionate intention but rather by egotistic aims: *divine politics* and *politicized faith*. By establishing the relevance of religion in international relations, and the capacity for finding a true compassionate allegiance of religion and politics, we will be able to understand the subsequent chapters of the thesis and the main goals of the *Theology of International Relations*.

## **International Relations: A Historical Perspective**

### **From the 'Two-Swords' Model to the Reformation**

Before the concept of sovereignty and the further political entity of the state were developed, European society was regulated by a complex duality of feudal lords and

religious leaders together with their ‘superiors’ namely the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope. This double-edged power represented the ‘two swords’ that defended the *corpus mysticum*—the metaphorical body of Christ formed by all believers, scattered geographically but joined under common identity, purpose and moral law<sup>103</sup>. This was the base of the *Respublica Christiana* where every person was under obedience to the law of God within one faith and paid respect to Him through paying homage to the Pope and recognizing the power invested in the Holy Roman Emperor for all ‘worldly affairs’.

This empowerment of the church lasted until a new theological revolution began to happen in Europe and was strengthened by Martin Luther in Germany. His reluctance to accept some practices of the church such as the sale of indulgences and that his emphasis on the church as a community of believers and not a hierarchy of priests taking advantage of their position to retain power, advanced the process known as the ‘Reformation’. This term includes four elements to consider: Lutheranism, the Reformed Church, the radical Reformation (Anabaptism) and the Counter Reformation. Protestant reformers, as diverse as they were, all rejected the Roman Church’s authority over local civil and ecclesiastical matters.<sup>104</sup> Daniel Philpott stresses the importance of Luther’s ideas as pivotal to the Reformation movement around Europe:

It was first through the monasteries—Luther himself was a member of the Augustinian order—and then through the clergy that Luther’s ideas quickly and alarmingly circulated. Through the clergy, Luther’s ideas then spread to congregations. Elsewhere, the Reformation proceeded similarly, beginning with theologians, spreading through missionaries and church pastors, then outward.<sup>105</sup>

Philpott gives important clues for the understanding of every process we can study in International Relations: the role of ideas. Everything that happens has its origins in the minds of individuals who, by a shared code of values and interests, fight together to achieve their goals and change the *status quo*. This author identifies two

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103 John D. Carlson and Eric C. Owens, ‘Reconsidering Westphalia’s Legacy for Religion and International Politics’, in *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics*, ed. John D. Carlson and E. Owens (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 12-13.

104 Carlson and Owens, ‘Reconsidering Westphalia’s Legacy for Religion and International Politics’, 14.

105 Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, c2001), 123.

main roles of ideas: shaping identities and changing the social order. For example, one way to shape identities is through the word, whether in speeches or in printed documents. Throughout the Reformation period, Luther and his followers gave sermons to many people and, at the same time, the written word was distributed through pamphlets. Thus,

both modes of communication, sermon and pamphlet, were received by peasants, proletariat, nobles, magistrates, and princes, but most widely and predominantly by the middle classes, that is, by merchants and artisans, who made up the majority of Protestants. All of these features of conversion, though varying in emphasis, can be found all across the Reformation. They are the couriers and contexts involved in the shaping of identities.<sup>106</sup>

People started to attend churches and learn Protestant theology, to take the sacraments according to the 'new faith' and sometimes even to destroy icons and attack Roman Catholic churches. Here is where the social power of ideas manifested; a new society was born with different rites to celebrate its own religion, one that would no longer be constrained by the mandates of a hierarchy, whether religious mandates from the Pope or, civil from the Emperor.

### **Wars of Religion in Europe and the Peace of Augsburg**

As a result of the direct challenge against the power of the Pope, a new chapter in the history of humanity was about to begin, one that would witness again violence and death in the name of religion. What distinguishes this period is that, contrary to what happened in the Crusades, both sides in this conflict were Christian. The European wars of religion between Roman Catholics and Protestants happened in the period between 1530 and 1648. Protestants took up arms and allied with the princes in order to fight against the Emperor. The main motivation for the princes, magistrates or any other political figure was that they could fight with the Protestants and take for themselves total control of the lands which were in the hands of the Emperor and the Pope. If they succeeded, then they would exercise even more strongly the social power of ideas.

After more than a decade of destructive battles between the German princes, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V agreed to cease hostilities and look for a peaceful

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<sup>106</sup> Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 124.



resolution. The result was the Peace of Augsburg Treaty of 1555 which allowed almost three hundred German territories to choose between Lutheranism and Catholicism as the official religion and to claim freedom to enforce that faith according to their own interests. The ruling principle of the treaty is known as *cujus region, ejus religio* ('whose rule, his religion'). This principle, say Carlson and Owens,

was a critical element of the broader emergence of state sovereignty expressed in the treaty as *Rex est imperator in regno suo* ('the king is emperor in his own realm'). As the first political settlement to confer sovereignty upon states, Augsburg represented a milestone in international relations theory, though in practice the agreement was never fully honoured by its signatories.<sup>107</sup>

The Peace of Augsburg was the first institutionalized attempt to bring peace to a region, although battles continued due to the lack of enforcement capability of the terms of the treaty by any of the parties. The Emperor, the Pope and many princes continued to intervene in political and religious affairs in other territories, which set the scene for the infamous Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Philpott argues that over the generations following *the* Peace of Augsburg,

religious war raged between a continually spreading of Protestantism and the Counter Reformation, a revival of Catholicism across Europe whose most fervid participants fought for the eradication of the Protestant heresy and a restored Christendom. Battles and skirmishes arose in the 1580s and continued on and off, expanding eventually into the holy cataclysm of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>108</sup>

### The Thirty Years' War

The escalation of the religious conflict that resulted in massive confrontation over thirty years was the result of the particular interests of the Habsburg dynasty and the emerging powers which tried to replace it. There are two main explanatory, and often contradictory, arguments about these happenings. The first, which is the most accepted version of events, is that the Thirty Years' War was between two main parties: the 'universalist' and the 'particularist'. The first were represented by the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and the Spanish king, both members of the Habsburg dynasty and

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107 Carlson and Owens, 'Reconsidering Westphalia's Legacy for Religion and International Politics', 15.

108 Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 82.

faithful members of Christendom. They claimed their right, along with the Pope, to control Christendom in its entirety and so expand their dominion. The second party, 'particularists' rejected the idea of imperial overlordship and the authority of the Pope, claiming the right of independence and sovereignty for all of the states. These included Denmark, the Dutch Republic, France, Sweden and the German princes.

The second argument about the origins of the Thirty Years' War relies on the idea that 'the war not fought because the Habsburgs were straining to expand their role, but because other actors were seeking to diminish it'.<sup>109</sup> According to this view, the Habsburgs were not trying to expand their dominion over Europe but to reassure the territories that already belonged to the Empire. Furthermore, they were the object of aggression from other actors' expansionist campaigns. It is argued that 'the Danish, Swedish, and French crowns all entered, and prolonged, the conflict through deliberate planning, absent any immediate threat, and in order to aggrandize themselves'.<sup>110</sup>

Both arguments coincide in the idea that the reason behind the War was the expansionist campaign of one of the sides involved in the conflict. Knutsen argues that the 'war was driven by the dynamics of growing military machineries'.<sup>111</sup> These armies were hired and equipped by the princes who wanted to build a strong arm for the Crown but soon lost control of their own armies. As a result,

the armies became vast, predatory formation which roamed the central parts of Europe in pursuit of the basic necessities of life. They crowded into cities and villages, devoured the resources and continued their march, the villagers were left destitute behind. Many of them chose to join that predatory society, living off its wake like vultures after lions.<sup>112</sup>

Whether it was the Habsburgs or other European crowns that provoked the other side thorough expansionist interests, the idea behind the conflict was to accomplish particular interests in terms of territorial and political power. The devastation of villages and cities and the high number of deaths during this period showed the need for well-defined political units which can claim independence in relation to other political units

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109 Andreas Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations and the Westphalian Myth', *International Organization* 55, no. 2 (April 2001): 260.

110 Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations and the Westphalian Myth', 260.

111 Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 69.

112 Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 69.

and authority within their own boundaries, thus opening the door for new peace treaties and the possibility of building a new configuration of the world.

### The Peace of Westphalia

The ceasefire after thirty years of devastating war was agreed through a series of treaties which are collectively known just the Peace of Westphalia. This consists mainly of two treaties: the Treaty of Münster and the Treaty of Osnabrück. The first was settled between the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand III and the King of France Louis XIV, while the second was between the Holy Roman Empire and the Queen of Sweden. Although there was another treaty between Spain and the Netherlands, it is not considered as relevant as the two mentioned above, due to the participation of the Holy Roman Emperor in the first two treaties.

The Peace of Westphalia reaffirmed the principle *cujus region, ejus religio*, as a fundamental idea to prevent external influence over a particular territory. Thus, the idea of ‘sovereignty’ was stressed in order to find a new configuration of equal political units that each had one recognized authority inside its own territory. This idea of sovereignty was introduced by Bodin and later expanded by Hobbes, and it was to do with the capability of a particular political unit to exercise power within particular boundaries and in equal circumstances among other ‘sovereign’ units outside the territory of the unit in question.

It can be said that the Peace of Westphalia did not emerge spontaneously, nor did it provide a truly original configuration of the world; nevertheless, it codified the idea of ‘sovereignty’ and religious diversity within and among political units called ‘states’. Here lies the importance of the Peace of Westphalia: the codification of a principle which was introduced in Augsburg more than a century before; an ideal of independence among units which constituted a great effort to codify such a difficult concept as ‘sovereignty’; and the establishment of these units as separate political entities which had the authority to rule a territory and the people within it.

In addition, the Peace of Westphalia was an effort to bring tolerance to a Christian pluralism and, despite the fact that it did not succeed in enforcing religious freedom, it caused authorities across Europe—many but not all—to accept Augsburg’s

underlying commitment to (limited) toleration and to live with public expressions of Christian beliefs other than their own.<sup>113</sup>

As a result of these treaty outcomes, Daniel Philpott summarizes the judgment of Westphalia as a turning point in international relations due to three ideas it accomplished: text, intentions and practice.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, he argues:

International relations, [set as] a system of sovereign states, religious toleration across borders, religious toleration within borders. Machiavellianism—all of these new notions rose together and were linked. Their ascent, though, required a prior theological shift, which was to Protestantism[...] Both of these prongs of Protestantism—toleration and separation of powers—led to a system of sovereign states at Westphalia, a solution of pluralism to a crisis of pluralism.<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, the Peace of Westphalia can be considered the cornerstone for further understanding of the political sovereign units now called ‘states’ and how they can relate to each other, whether in times of war or peace. The reconfiguration of the European states after Westphalia and their influence over the rest of the world in establishing states as main units of analysis and religion as peripheral to public decisions are proofs of its legacy.

### **Secularization: Desacralizing Reality**

The exile of religion from the public sphere was the result of the ‘desacralizing process.’ This phrase refers to the decline in the role of religion in defining the social world, the process of structural differentiation by which religious and secular social institutions become distinct and autonomous; and the transference of religious knowledge and activities to the secular domain.<sup>116</sup>

However, the idea of secularization as the guarantor of modernity and development for the benefit of all society fell into a category of a dogmatic belief which all the believers of state should follow in order to achieve happiness. Thus the political, social and ideological powers were only transferred from religious institutions to political, and now secular, actors. Nevertheless, these political actors have been unable

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<sup>113</sup> Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 147.

<sup>114</sup> Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 83.

<sup>115</sup> Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 147-148.

<sup>116</sup> Bennetta Jules-Rossette, ‘The Sacred and the Third World Societies’, in *The Sacred in a Secular Age*, 222.

to provide what religion can: a sense of commitment to, integration in and love for a higher divine order in any of its religious conceptions for individuals and consequently for society and its institutions, including states in domestic and international relations.

## **Constructing International Relations and Its Theories: Reflections of Relative Truth**

### **Understanding International Relations**

The academic discipline of International Relations was developed by the two main premises analysed above—state and secularism—under certain conditions of reality, namely war and insecurity. The most traditional way to understand the scope of International Relations is to stress the idea that the discipline studies relations between states in an anarchical context where each unit must fight for its own survival. However, we can also find definitions that open the scope to include the idea of social interactions and other institutions. Joseph Frankel argues that after Jeremy Bentham coined the term ‘International Relations’ to describe the discipline derived from the growing popular interest in the relations between states, this new discipline became ‘more than a combination of the studies of the foreign affairs of the various countries and of international history; it includes also the study of international society as a whole and of its institutions and processes’.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, International Relations will deal with interactions between different actors and the terms in which the processes between them take place when there is no regulatory authority above them. Those interactions are not exclusively limited to states but also for other institutions and certainly include individuals.

Therefore, the study of international relations resulted from the social anxiety derived from witnessing a devastating First World War (1914-1918), a deep economic crisis in 1929 and the traumatic events of the Second World War (1939-1945). Humanity needed, and still seeks, an answer to this cycle of suffering and death. The idealist goals derived from the First World War and their institutionalization in the creation of the League of Nations were painfully discredited when the Second World War started. How can we explain this failure? What went wrong? How can we

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<sup>117</sup> Joseph Frankel, *International Relations in a Changing World*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 8.

understand past mistakes in order to prevent the extinction of the human race? These questions were taken up by internationalists as they began to develop new theories in their attempts to answer at least one of these important questions.

### Theorizing Relative Reality

The need for a theory or theories of International Relations relies on the need to understand how actors behave in domestic and international spheres; only through a conceptual and theoretical framework could internationalists bring light to this dark and unexplored field of political science. Torbjörn Knutsen argues that theories enlighten reality by giving a set of related propositions that help explain why events occur the way they do. He defines a theory as an 'abstract, conjectural or speculative representation of reality. To theorize is to speculate with an intention to understand and explain'.<sup>118</sup> In addition, Pfaltzgraff and Dougherty explained the process of developing a theory as follows:

Theories have to be invented by a creative intellectual process that takes a number of disparate laws and generalizations, simplifies them by isolating a few key factors, abstracting them from what is not relevant, aggregating them in a previously unknown way, and synthesizing them in a new, ideal, quasi-perfect explanatory system.<sup>119</sup>

Therefore, theories are a very important part of the discipline of International Relations and they should be understood as a methodological and conceptual guide to understanding the object of study, a guide which derives from a complex individual intellectual process where preferences, perceptions and ideas are deeply involved. Their importance relies on the fact that 'by simplifying reality, theory helps us organize our beliefs about an ever-changing world and offers an intellectual foundation for policies. Bad theory inevitably means bad policies'.<sup>120</sup>

It is important to highlight three key elements given in this definition in light of the Buddhist theological framework. First, theories deal with beliefs that an individual

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118 Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 1.

119 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 28.

120 Yale H. Ferguson and Richard W. Mansback, 'The Past as Prelude to the Future? Identities and Loyalties in Global Politics', in *The Return of Culture and Identity in International Relations Theory*, ed. Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 21.

or a group of individuals share about a common object of study. This is not to say that they work on an idiomatic level without any empirical validity or influence, but to recognize that the theoretical approach is guided by the beliefs, interests and ideas the researcher has about the object of study. This implies a subjective approach that, in order to find a wider applicability, tends to generalize certain factors and elements of the object of study.

Second, the ever-changing quality of existence is also manifested in the multiplicity of theories that we find in International Relations. There is no point in looking for the ‘only’ theory to explain everything that happens, because what was once true about individuals or state systems and could be explained using a specific approach, has now changed, and one should therefore look for a new theory or another approach within that theory in order to better explain the ‘new reality’. Third, the importance of theories not only relies on the academic field but also in the political realm, with direct consequences for individuals in society; therefore, theories are socially engaged because they influence policy-making in the relative reality of a particular time and place.

By taking these three elements of belief, ever-changing reality and applicability into account I will explain the most important theories of international relations and how they deal with a reality that is relative. This is because, in Buddhist terms, all phenomena that we perceive through our senses and intellect are part of a relative world which changes every moment. In contrast, there is the ‘ultimate or absolute Truth’ which is the ‘true nature of things’, the ‘emptiness’ in everyone and everything that exists, a truth that is revealed to the beings who have gotten rid of all ignorance in their minds and have purified their perception with a clear, peaceful and enlightened mind. The master piece of Shantideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, refers to these truths in the first verses of chapter nine ‘Wisdom’, as follows:

1. All these branches of the Doctrine the Enlightened expounded for the sake of wisdom. Therefore they must cultivate this wisdom to have an end of suffering.
2. Relative and ultimate, these the two truths are declared to be. The ultimate is not within the reach of intellect, for intellect is said to be the relative.<sup>121</sup>

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121 Shantideva, *The Bodhicharyavatara*, Padmakara Translation Group trans. (Massachusetts: Shambala Publications, 2006), 137.

Knowing that interdependence also relies on the assumption that we are all integrated in a complex relation to everything that exists, every individual causes change, whether through ideas, actions or both, in his or her reality. According to the *Madhyamaka School*, relative reality is dependent upon the interaction of all constituent factors, including individuals' thoughts and behaviour; therefore this reality can be seen, explained and, most importantly, changed in the way we would like it to be. Therefore, what theories want to explain and understand is this constructed reality in a certain period of time and place. Ngaire Woods suggests, 'before taking up categories, perspective, and assumptions we should be sure to examine the contexts within which they have been created and the interests and purposes which lie behind them'.<sup>122</sup>

Theories use generalizations in order to enhance their explanatory validity throughout this ever-changing quality of existence, and they should be understood from this point of view, rather than as determinant, infallible explanations of a world which never changes. Pfaltzgraff and Dougherty argue that 'no single generalization, principle, or hypothesis has yet been demonstrated with sufficient force to serve as the foundation for a universally accepted comprehensive theory of international relations'.<sup>123</sup> In addition, they concluded,

The essential function of international theory is to enable us to improve our knowledge concerning international reality, whether for the sake of pure understanding or for the more active purpose of changing that reality. Theory helps us to order our existing knowledge and to discover new knowledge more efficiently. It provides a framework of thought in which we define research priorities and select the most appropriate available tools for the gathering and analysis of data about phenomena... At its best, theory serves as a proof that the powers of the human mind have been applied to a problem at hand with foresight, imagination, and profundity, and this proof inspires others to further efforts for purposes either of agreeing or disagreeing.<sup>124</sup>

In sum, theories deal with the empirical, feasible and 'real-relative' world through an intellectual body of premises. This relative truth is in relation to a specific

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122 Ngaire Woods, 'The Uses of History in the Study of International Relations', in *Explaining International Relations since 1945*, ed. Ngaire Woods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 27.

123 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 22.

124 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 49.



context and how it is experienced by individuals; therefore, there is a multiplicity of theories to explain international behaviour. The major theories presented below will be understood within the theological framework of this thesis, in order to understand how they deal in a particular way with feelings, passions, and, ultimately, with human nature within the *Samsara* that is projected toward institutions such as the state. This interdependent chain will consequently change international relations among the actors involved, from individuals to states.

From a theoretical perspective, we can identify four great debates in International Relations which present contending theories, each seeking preponderance in the way world politics must be interpreted. In brief, in the 1930s the first debate took place between the idealists, who envisioned cooperation and regulation in order to achieve peace, and the realists, who stressed the idea of focusing in the world as it is and not as it ought to be, recognizing the egotistic behaviour of states in order to gain power. The second debate emerged in the 1960s between the traditionalists who defended the classical approach of humanistic methodology and the new behaviourists who defended the idea of a more positivist epistemology. The third debate took place during the 1970s and 1980s and is also called the ‘interparadigm’ debate between the realist, pluralist and Marxist perspectives. Kurki and Wight argue that ‘despite the consensus of science, however, issue surrounding the nature of scientific inquiry quickly resurfaced; in particular, the problem of theory choice and the alleged incommensurability of differing theoretical perspectives’.<sup>125</sup>

The current debate, arguably called ‘rationalist-reflectivist’, emerged at the end of the 1980s when new theories attempted to diminish the importance of the rationalist-guided theories that had dominated the discipline for decades. Robert Keohane referred to this debate at a presidential debate of the International Studies Association in 1988, and he pointed out the new ‘reflectivist’ approaches such as postmodernism and feminism, in contrast to rationalist ones such as neorealism and neoliberalism. Steve Smith explains the difference between these approaches as follows:

The key difference between rationalists and reflectivist approaches is that, broadly speaking, rationalist accounts are positivist, whereas reflectivist approaches oppose

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125 Kurki Milja and Colin Wight, ‘International Relations and Social Science’, in *International Relation Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 18.

positivism ... For now it is enough to note that the central difference between rationalists and reflectivist account is thus an epistemological and methodological one, rather than one about what the world is like (ontology). That is to say that the fourth debate is one about how we know what we claim to know.<sup>126</sup>

Therefore, the contrast of theoretical approaches resides on the way they understand, explain and interact with the relative reality. The relevance of perception in human beings is fundamental because it sets the codes by which they interpret the world they live in, whether a peaceful one or a violent and selfish reality as exposed by this theory. The Buddha expressed the importance of perception as stated in the first chapter of *The Dhammapada*, 'The Pairs', verses 1 and 2:

Preceded by perception are mental states,  
For them is perception supreme,  
From perception have they sprung.  
If, with perception polluted, one speaks or acts,  
Thence suffering follows  
as a wheel the draught ox's foot.  
Preceded by perception are mental states,  
For them is perception supreme,  
From perception have they sprung.  
If, with tranquil perception, one speaks or acts,  
Thence ease follows  
As a shadow that never departs.<sup>127</sup>

## Constructivism

In recent decades, particularly in the 1980s a new theoretical approach was developed and it stresses the importance of ideas, beliefs and interests in the social construction of reality. This new approach was constructivism, which relies on the idea of the capacity to construct the world system through the interaction of individuals' perceptions and actions and their relation with others' which influence individual and institutional

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126 Steve Smith, 'Diversity and Disciplinarity in International Relations Theory', in *International Relation Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 5.

127 John Ross Carter and Mahinda Palihawadana, trans., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

behaviour. Particularly important for this thesis is Alexander Wendt's concept of 'intersubjective consensus', which is the capability of individuals and institutions to cause change in domestic and international spheres through social interactions. Accordingly, Nicholas Onuf, one of the proponents of constructivism, affirms,

By our social relations we construct ourselves into the persons we are, and 'we make the world what it is, from the raw materials that nature provides, by doing what we do with each other and saying what we say to each other. What we have, Onuf asserts, is a continuous 'two-way-process' in which 'people make society, and society makes people'. In and from such interaction, we develop rules of behaviour between institutions.<sup>128</sup>

International relations is conceived as a 'social construction rather than existing independent of human meaning and action. States and other actors do not merely react as rational individuals but interact in a meaningful world'.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, international relations are in constant flux due to the interaction of actors who share their interests, ideas and perceptions of the world they are living in. Institutions, commonly defined as a set of rules and norms, are the result of this intersubjective understanding of which ideas should be protected and what mechanisms should be established in order to do so. Pfaltzgraff and Dougherty argue that

to the constructivist-reflectivist, regimes and other institutions are more than the aggregate of rules and norms. Arising out of shared need, knowledge, and interest, as suggested in the constructivist-reflectivist literature, existing institutional arrangement themselves may contribute to a learning process that enhances the prospects for convergent state policies.<sup>130</sup>

One of the most important aspects of this approach is the idea of not taking an action 'for-granted' just because the 'common knowledge' says it is so. It is important to study the origins and causes of certain behaviour so one can determine its nature and, if it is necessary, prevent it from happening again or be ready to face the consequences of that particular set of causes and conditions. As Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner put it, the innovative element in constructivist analysis is that 'constructivists seek to

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128 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 149.

129 K.M. Fierke, 'Constructivism', in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 169.

130 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 167.

understand how preferences are formed and knowledge is generated, prior to the exercise of instrumental rationality. Constructivism analyses discourses and practices that continuously recreate what rationalists refer to as common knowledge'.<sup>131</sup>

Dale C. Copeland gives three core elements of constructivism in international relations. First, 'global politics is said to be guided by the intersubjectively shared ideas, norms, and values held by actors; [second] the ideational structure has a constitutive and not just regulative effect on actors; [third] ideational structures and actors co-constitute and co-determine each other'.<sup>132</sup> The mutual constituency of actors and structure is a constant process and constitutes the basis for understanding the changes in all levels of society. Alexander Wendt in his book *Social Theory of International Politics*<sup>133</sup> characterizes three periods in the history of human society that can be explained through perceptions of 'the other' among various societal units in a particular time and place. He states that there are 'three cultures of anarchy' where states behaved in a particular way due to these perceptions.

Wendt characterizes the 'Hobessian culture' as the perception of the other as 'the enemy', which lead to violent confrontation until the seventeenth century. The violence was seen as a tool for survival. The 'Lockean culture', which held sway after the Treaty of Westphalia, implies a perception of the other as rival; so one can use violence to gain power but does not consider eliminating the rival as the ultimate goal of foreign policy. Finally, in the 'Kantian culture' that has been recently developed through the perception of the other as a friend, states are no longer choosing to use violence as the first option but rather to settle disputes through dialogue, often using institutions as mediators.

Therefore, 'the international society is based on intersubjective structures that themselves are the result of ideas or beliefs that produce behaviour based on commonly accepted rules and values embodied in institutions and practices'.<sup>134</sup> Thus, the idea of a subjective construction of the world incorporates new elements into the study of all social phenomena on domestic and international levels. Departing from this

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131 Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner, 'International Organization and the Study of World Politics', 41.

132 Dale C. Copeland, 'The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: a Review Essay,' in *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics*, ed. Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

133 See bibliography for full reference.

134 Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 168.

constructivist idea, I argue that the character, intention and nature of those intersubjective structures which come from shared rules and values are primarily rooted in individuals' minds and their interactions which, consequently, lead them to project their intersubjective consensus through rules, norms and institutions, including the state.

The assumption that the world is socially constructed means that what individuals think, do and share with others has an effect on the external environment. In consonance, the new socially constructed reality will influence individuals because they will interpret the new causes and conditions presented to their senses. This is why the concept of 'relative truth' is so important to bear in mind while interpreted theoretical approaches and the world that will be interpreted through them. Both are the result of subjective understanding of what is perceived through a cognitive process that involves the consciousness mentioned in the previous chapter. In general terms, the first five aspects of consciousness derive from the action of the five sensory organs: eyes, nose, skin, ears and mouth. The respective sensory information is codified first in the six organs, then in the mind, and then the '*klesha* mind' (afflicted mind) interprets the information of all the previous consciousness in order to keep the impressions in the eighth consciousness or '*alaya* mind' (storage mind). This process is important because individuals act and react in consonance with this process and the outcome of this will define what they will do.

Therefore, when individuals share a basic outcome, that is, have the same anxiety or interpretation of the world they begin to build a web of intersubjective consensus that will shape the world they perceive. As a consequence of the continuous change in the perception of the world, new variations within the core theories of international relations are developed as well as new theories that deal with a new or unexplored aspect in previous theories. Different approaches such as critical theory, functionalism, colonialism, feminism and green theory are some examples of this multiplicity of 'theoretical lenses' used to understand our ever-changing reality.

The main goal of this chapter is to recognize this diversity, bearing in mind that we are dealing with a relative truth which accepts all other relative truths, and the strongest truths are ones that can explain more accurately the origin of the constructed world we are trying to understand. Hopefully, the intention behind this understanding is the need to learn from previous perceptions of the world that led to violence and

suffering in order to create a new world founded on ideas of tolerance, pluralism and respect among all beings, something that the *Theology of International Relations*, which will be explained below, will try to achieve.

In sum, the nature and history of international relations as well as the future of the international system rely not only on the study of states. It is fundamental to always remember that the internationalist also faces the challenge of understanding the passions and characteristics of human beings who are in the *Samsara* and still have not found liberation from suffering. This condition continues as they suffer because they fear too much, and this fear causes them to suffer more. Therefore, they will try to find any means to alleviate their suffering and they are often driven by the ignorant idea that all others who are looking for the same alleviation of suffering will stop at nothing to achieve it. Thus, the 'other' becomes the enemy or, at most, a 'partner' who can help to momentarily satisfy the need to have more power whether in terms of money, political power or even armed power.

## **Janus-Faced Perception of Religion in International Relations**

### **Religion in International Relations Theories**

As an inheritor of the modernist secular project, the discipline of International Relations had been very resistant to integrating religion into its theories. Why was religion neglected in the discipline of International Relations? The reasons for the exile of the religious variable from International Relations studies can be summarized in four major points. First, the discipline was created under the premise that International Relations should not include issues such as ethnicity and religion because both are characteristics from the past. Therefore, modernization can only be accomplished if society lives in a secular order.

Second, International Relations may be considered the most 'Western' of the social sciences, due to its continuous method of analysis that seeks to understand the new world order rationally and with empirical data. Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler state that 'to a great extent, this tendency to ignore religion is rooted in the Western centrism of the social sciences ... [and] can be explained by the fact that in many ways it

is the most Western of the social sciences'.<sup>135</sup> This is highly relevant because despite the 'secular' tradition of the West, there are millions of people, both non-Westerners and people living in the West, who do not share these secularist assumptions about the place of religion in society.<sup>136</sup>

Third, the study of international relations is highly influenced by the use of quantitative methodology. The attempt to develop reliable research based on objectivity and quantitative data has left aside some issues that cannot be measured easily. Due to the fact that ideas, beliefs and values are factors that require more complex methods in order to be measured, they are some of the issues typically ignored in the discipline of International Relations.

Fourth, studies of international relations are based on theories and premises which, in general, overlook the religious dimension either partially or totally. The realists focus on interest and power and are not concerned with ideas or feelings regarding the sacred or with their engagement in public life to exercise power and maximize security in an arena where the key players are the states. Although neorealists open the discussion to other actors, they are still more concerned with states and how they interact in the structure of power of the international system which will shape the character of the political order. Therefore, they are not particularly keen to study and take into account religious groups or movements if these are not articulated by the state and, at most, they take religion as another element in the system toward which states should make particular policies according to their national interest and the balance of power within the system. For both of these perspectives, analysis is based on an interstate level which still enshrines the Westphalian conception of sovereign states without any role for religion in the public sphere.

In contrast, the liberals integrate new types of transnational actors which can change the international order such as non-governmental organizations or supranational entities and international institutions. Although the 'balance of power' is replaced by a set of agreements of norms, values and laws between international actors, the study is developed on a global level where although it recognizes the relevance of religious

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135 Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004), 32.

136 Scott R. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 3.

institutions and bodies such as the World Conference of Religions, the Mennonite Central Committee or the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, it does not incorporate the role of values and ethical conduct shared by individuals or religious communities.

Therefore, constructivism provides the necessary linkage of ideas, beliefs and interests which will be projected in relative reality through an intersubjective consensus. This social construction of reality, which is formed by the sum of individual's wills and ideas, provides a bridge of understanding between constructivism as a theoretical approach to international relations and Buddhist theology, based on the possibility of reconstructing our world as a consequence of individuals' thoughts and actions. Being aware of the relevance of the sacred and its vessel—religion—this constructivist-Buddhist approach of the *Theology of International Relations* acknowledges the relevance of religion in international relations.

### **The Resurgence of Religion**

The exile of the religious variable from studies in International Relations is no longer possible if we want to have a better understanding of domestic and international dynamics, and thus scholars have been urged to study what has been called the 'resurgence of religions'. Jelen and Wilcox argue that 'this reinvigoration means that religion is today a source of political mobilizations in many nations, and also the source of policy disputes over the relationship between church and state'.<sup>137</sup> Obviously, it cannot be inferred that religious phenomena disappeared a long time ago and has suddenly come back; rather, what re-emerges from its own ashes is the importance of religion as a force of social mobilization. Thus, religion can no longer be neglected in international studies, and some scholars have begun to deal with this phenomenon, because 'international politics cannot be fully or properly fathomed without addressing its embedded religious and moral dimensions'.<sup>138</sup>

The resurgence of religious studies in the 'Western world' is also a consequence of the weakening of the nation-state as the ultimate social-provider at the end of the

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137 Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, 'Religion: The One, the Few, and the Many', in *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, The Few, and The Many*, ed. Jelen and Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

138 John D. Carlson and Erik C. Owens, 'Reconsidering Westphalia's Legacy for Religion and International Politics', in *The Sacred and the Sovereign* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 5.



twentieth century. This status was challenged by a diverse range of agencies and actors outside the state's control, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), supranational entities and the rapid growth of commerce in a vast world market, blurring the constraining boundaries of states.

Therefore, the religious factor has been a recurrent topic in recent years because of its impact on domestic and international conflicts. Social movements, new terrorist organizations and state policies legitimized by the use of religious beliefs and mandates, have forced the discipline of International Relations to deal with a new issue: the resurgence of religion. Thus, as Casanova points out, we can study this issue by identifying the new role of religions in politics and in public life:

Religions throughout the world are entering the public sphere and the arena of political contestation not only to defend their traditional turf, as they have done in the past, but also to participate in the very struggle to define and set the modern boundaries between the private and public spheres, between system and life-world, between legality and morality, between individual and society, between family, civil society, and state, between nations, states, civilizations, and the world system.<sup>139</sup>

The result of this dialogue between the state and religion was the creation of new approaches in the study of world leaders and the way they deal with religious issues, whether they use religion to justify a policy or to impose their religious beliefs through political strategies. This is where *politicized faith* and *divine politics* appeared as two strategies of power that bind common interests between the two forces of religion and politics, an ambiguous relationship that has a feasible influence in world politics and social arrangements.

### **Interaction among Forces of the State and Religion**

Religion and state have been struggling for decades in an apparently irreconcilable dialogue that reinforces the idea of a never-ending dichotomy between them. These competing powers that seem to clash based on their interests within society are the most relevant actors in influencing people's development as individuals and as a collective

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139 José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 6.

body. Their structure and the institutions derived from them have helped to organize individuals and led them to a common goal by stressing the importance of living in community, whether in terms of faith or statist-nationalism. This *sui generis* relation of being partners or rivals in the societal arena is identified by Juergensmeyer, who sees it as a potentially disruptive factor:

The conflict between the two levels of reality is what both religion and secular nationalism are about: the language of both contains images of grave disorder as well as tranquil order, holding out the hope that, despite appearances to the contrary, order will eventually triumph and disorder will be contained ... Because both religion and secular nationalism are ideologies of order, they are potential rivals. Either can claim to be the guarantor of orderliness within a society; either can claim to be the ultimate authority for social order. Such claims carry with them an extraordinary degree of power, for contained within them is the right to give moral sanction for life and death decisions. When either secular nationalism or religion assumes that role by itself, it reduces the other to a peripheral social role.<sup>140</sup>

This common goal of achieving social order has been the core of differentiation between religion and politics, because the role that each power should take regarding that shared goal is undefined and as yet unaccomplished by either. The state reclaims its sovereignty to deal with its own components, namely territory, government and population; therefore, no other force, either from outside or from within the state's boundaries, has a legitimate claim to contest its power. On the other hand, the religion which has been administered by the church in Western societies appeals to the past in order to bring back its role as the ultimate social administrator, which claims to have a divine mandate over 'the Lord's creation'.

This general claim of superiority has been summarized by Paul Griffiths, who identified the factors in an irreconcilable tension between these two powers:

States lay claim to sovereignty; indeed, they are in large part to be understood precisely as entities whose defining characteristic is that they make such a claim. The claim they make has two key elements. The first is to the unsurpassable allegiance of its citizens with respect to the state's core interest—a claim that is

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140 Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism confronts the Secular State* (California: University of California Press, 1993), 33.

evident in the state's monopoly on the use of police power within its boundaries to enforce this allegiance. The second is the state's claim to freedom from external interference in its control of its core interests, whether this interference comes from other states or multinational entities'... Religious allegiance, by contrast, is an unsurpassable allegiance of a comprehensive sort. If your allegiance is unsurpassable, its claims cannot be trumped. If it is comprehensive, nothing falls outside its embrace: all other allegiances are subsidiary to it, embraced by it rather than existing alongside or in competitions with it; when subsidiary allegiances conflict with it, they must be rejected in some fashion, usually by being ignored or actively opposed. Religious allegiance recognizes no trump of any kind. This is why it is such a problem for post-Westphalian nation-states: They were founded principally to tame and domesticate religious allegiance—a more difficult task than it seemed to be at first.<sup>141</sup>

Despite the constant rivalry between them, church and state have found a way to benefit each other's interests without giving up too much of their power; they have accomplished this through negotiation but have left aside the chance for dialogue. By dialogue I mean an effort to find common goals and strategies for a harmonic development of both institutions and, most of all, for the benefit of all individuals. Negotiation is a political strategy wherein one party seeks to win more than the other as a result of an agreement; it is characterized as a relation of win-lose rather than win-win among the parties. At best, the negotiation will seek a marginal gain for each party without taking into account the benefit of the agreement to actors outside the agreement. Therefore, religion and politics have developed certain ways to negotiate with each other, whether or not such negotiations are publicly accepted.

By using of the state's institutional power along with the power of faith over individuals, both forces get together to mobilize certain groups within society in order to gain control over what they consider common enemies. As a result, there are two major tendencies of negotiation between religion and politics which were successfully developed in the second half of the twentieth century. So long as they do not contribute to dialogue between the parties, they can be considered only as an unholy alliance for the purpose of obtaining more power or achieving particular interests. This does not

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141 Paul Griffiths, 'Religious Allegiance and Political Sovereignty: An Irreconcilable Tension', in *The Sacred and the Sovereign*, 248.

mean that these are evil practices, but rather that they are hidden strategies of power that lack commitment to the welfare of all humanity. I will refer to these strategies as *divine politics* and *politicized faith*.

### *Divine Politics*

This strategy is based on what Paul Kennedy characterized as the rise and fall of the Great Powers as well as on a new set of strategies used by the states to sustain their power and, ultimately, to survive. After 1945, as soon as World War Two ended, society began to struggle with the idea of whether to uphold the *status quo* with regard to public institutions or to ask for a change and get more efficient accountability from their politicians. States' elites had to find a new way to legitimate their existence and continue to exercise control over societal issues such as social care, security and local governments. The question was not what to do, but with whom?

The best answer was to rely on the power of an ancient institution which, in the past, had the same or even more power than the state, and which had been maintaining a low profile in politics since the birth of the modern state: the church. The power of social cohesion that the church still exercised was restricted to a private level on an individual basis, but religious values among the believers were still capable of leading a strong social mobilization.

The first step to take was to include more institutional religious leaders among states' elites. Several religious lobbies in the most powerful states began to exercise a strong influence over public policies, and suddenly religion was once again related to political power, although now under state control. Despite this, the 'secular' states' claims derived from modernist thought, which still prevailed as a way to reduce the danger of an 'unpleasant' religious revival.

The second step toward a *divine politics* was to obtain social legitimacy for certain public policies by addressing some religious ideas, ideals and commitments. Politicians noticed that even though religious communities were represented in power spheres, there was a need to get closer to their societies and the best strategy was to make constant references to individuals' beliefs and intersubjective understanding regarding God and the quest for humanity's redemption in public discourses.

Thus, by combining a strong presence of leaders of religious institutions among the state's elites and a constant and direct reference to religious commitments in public policies, *divine politics* were developed. As Richard Owen Griffiths recognizes, 'government ministers who quote the Bible are not engaging in a biblical interpretation that has no consequences. Their interpretations influence policy decisions, which in turn may affect millions of people on a daily basis'.<sup>142</sup> Thus, there are identifiable characteristics in this strategy of power: first, strong presence of religious institutions on the State by having key actors on public places such as education, social welfare and even economics; second, continuous reference to religious ideas and values in public speeches. The recurrence of expressions such as 'thank God', 'Lord's message', 'God's will', 'commended mission', 'chosen nation' or 'liberation from evil' in public addresses while explaining a public policy, is another key feature of this strategy. Finally, the state appears as the 'Redeemer' of the world by giving 'others' the message of peace, justice and freedom. Of course, in order to accomplish this, the state has the legitimate use of force as another means to 'save' those condemned under 'evil' regimes.

Thus, *divine politics* is about religious power used to legitimate state behaviour and not about the true religiosity of individuals. The main goal is to obtain social legitimation and approval for certain policies, including so-called 'just wars'. Religion is the only force that can provide this kind of social legitimation. This is because, as Peter Berger argues, 'religion legitimates social institutions by bestowing upon them an ultimately valid ontological status, that is, by *locating* them within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference'.<sup>143</sup>

### **Politicized Faith.**

This strategy encompasses political activism enforced and guided by religious leadership. It is useful for those religious leaders who represent a major institution with political aims. By this I do not mean that the main actors are not committed to their religious values, but that they have learned how to use them in order to obtain positive

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142 Richard Owen Griffiths, 'The Politics of the Good Samaritan', *Political Theology* 1, no.1 (November 1999), 88.

143 Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (United States: Doubleday, 1967), 33.

political results that will result in the strengthening of the institution they represent. There are three characteristics which identify this strategy of power: first, a strong religious institution legitimized by society and state; second, a congregational leader with political abilities to persuade others; third, a commitment to the institutional goals that will seek benefits through political gains.

This kind of political activism has been inherently linked with the institutional behaviour of major churches around the world. As we have seen, religious leaders have been integrated into states' elites and it is easy to highlight the influence that they have over political leaders, whether they have true religious intentions or merely an interest in using religion as an instrument for political gains. These churches not only affect public policies in a wider sense, but also help to develop a set of laws and policies regarding education and human rights.

In sum, *divine politics* is about the constant use of religion (its ideas, ideals, prophets and promises of heaven) in public speeches, in order to foster a deeper connection with individuals on a personal religious level which helps consolidate political power and legitimate new policies. By *politicized faith* I mean a political activism disguised as a religious leadership, which functions like a 'wolf in sheep's clothing' within the state boundaries. Both strategies had been used by politicians and religious leaders such as George W. Bush, who won a second presidential term by using *divine politics* or Pope John Paul II who used a *politicized faith* against communist influence in Eastern Europe and particularly in Poland while supporting Walesa and the Solidarity Movement.

Along with this relationship between politics and religion, a key aspect to analyse is whether religion serves the purpose of peace or war, toleration or hatred, reconciliation or revenge. This 'ambivalence of the sacred', as Scott Appleby suggests, is what makes it necessary to look not only at the violent history of religiously motivated movements or policies of hatred, but also at the religious peace building and the use of the sacred, through religions and compassionate theological approaches, to build bridges of understanding and reconciliation in both domestic and international arenas. This is what I will present in the case studies.

In particular, the next chapter will present the life of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, in light of this interdependent relationship of causes and

conditions that encompass everything, including religion and politics. He has been the ambassador of the idea of 'common humanity' and, since the Chinese occupation of Tibet, he has taken on new tasks such as teaching and bringing peace, toleration and freedom not only for Tibet but for the whole world. His commitment to the idea that the human race can construct a better world by following the 'nectar of religion' embedded in all major religious traditions is a good example of how a religious leader has changed the international arena.

His ideas are related to the argument in this thesis that states are part of relative reality because they are abstractions of individuals' minds, and only when this projection changes into a clear image of mutual understanding and compassion will, individuals, institutions, societies and states cooperate to alleviate their common suffering. Thus, it will be possible to achieve liberation from that condition by recognizing their common humanity and, ultimately, their true interdependent nature. With his commitment to change the perception of the world from a violent and intolerant one into one of compassion, tolerance and peace, the Dalai Lama has achieved an almost unthinkable goal within his time: to change political arrangements on domestic and international levels through the power of religion.

Thus, through his actions as a religious leader who has changed the political arrangement, new questions have arisen: Is humanity facing a change of paradigm? Can religion provide the basis for a new understanding toward tolerance and peace? Is humanity ready to change its perception of the world? His Holiness the Dalai Lama throughout his life and work has answered these questions positively, and now I will proceed to explain why and how he has done it.

# III THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA:

## COMMON HUMANITY AND UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY

Through the intersubjective consensus and the Buddhist theological explanation of this relationship I have stated that all individuals have the capacity to shape their own world and, therefore, the responsibility of making a better reality for the benefit of all beings. This task requires an unbreakable commitment to and faith in a life of compassion where the relationship between the individual and the divine as well as the relationships among all beings become sacred.

The commitment to shape a new reality relies on all individuals and thus we need committed leaders and followers. Each person is part of the social web needed to change the structure of relative reality. As examples of two committed leaders who have inspired thousands of other individuals to work non-violently toward a more compassionate world, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have prove their capacity to bring hope through peaceful resolutions of conflicts and non-violent resistance even against a powerful state.

In this chapter, I will present the life of Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who is still working with a commitment to achieving peace and harmony through the true practice of wisdom and compassion. He is a religious peacemaker who, from his own Buddhist religion, has been able to integrate harmonically the theological ethos of being the Dalai Lama, his religious leadership of thousands of Buddhists and non-Buddhists around the world, and his political role as the spiritual leader of the Tibetan government in exile.

The life of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is the culmination of a series of causes and conditions that have converged in Tibet along with its cultural identity and Buddhist tradition. Therefore, in order to understand the life and work of the



Fourteenth Dalai Lama it is necessary to refer to history, theology and politics in an interdependent relation of continuous change. After having met with hundreds of world leaders, visited more than sixty countries and received many honorary degrees and distinctions, such as the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and the US Congressional Gold Medal in 2007, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama still works for the benefit of all beings. His commitment to spread the *Dharma* and an ecumenical message of world peace through compassion has made him a reliable world leader who embodies the nature of the *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara, the divine manifestation of Buddha's compassion.

This chapter is divided in five major sections: historical background, theological framework, the biography of Tenzin Gyatso, the 'Middle Way' and the threefold mission of the Dalai Lama. The first part of the chapter will address the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet through the efforts of the 'Three Great Kings' and the Tibetan preference for the Indian Tantric Buddhism from Nalanda. The second part will deal with key theological terms that will help the reader to understand the nature and relevance of the Dalai Lama, such as the meaning of *tülku*, the doctrine of rebirth and the role and meaning of the *Bodhisattva*. The third part refers to the biography of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, how he was recognized as *Kundun*—the presence—and how from an early age he had to deal with the selfishness and unethical conduct of both domestic and international politics, facing the power of Communist China and the lack of support from the international community.

The last two sections will show the compassionate approach developed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama regarding Tibet and the world. His 'Middle Way' of resolving the conflict to the benefit of both Tibetans and Chinese, as well as his call for a 'Universal Responsibility' is an example of *Engaged Buddhism* and a compassionate approach to world peace. In addition, his threefold mission as a human being, as a Buddhist monk and as the Dalai Lama shows his complexity and commendable will to work toward peace on all levels. These constitute a new revolution, one that is not 'a political, an economic, or even a technical revolution. We have had enough experience of these during the past century to know that a purely external approach will not suffice. What I propose is a spiritual revolution'.<sup>144</sup>

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144 Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium* (New York: Riverhead, 1999), 17.

## Historical Background

In this first part of the chapter I will briefly set the context regarding the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet and the relevance of the *Gelugpa School* for the institution of the Dalai Lamas. Following this, I will explain key theological terms and concepts that will help us to understand the basis for the reverence and respect for the Dalai Lamas which are rooted in mainstream Buddhist doctrine. The importance of explaining these elements will be evident while analysing the role of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as a human being, as a religious practitioner and as the religious-political leader of Tibet. As Hugh Richardson affirms, ‘the one aspect of the national character that has most influenced their past and their present is the devotion to religion which dominates the thoughts and actions of every Tibetan’.<sup>145</sup>

### Buddhism in the ‘Land of Snows’ and the ‘Three Great Religious Kings’

According to the Indian archaeologist V.N. Mistra, the first inhabitants of the Tibetan Plateau, which covers 2.5 million square kilometres, can be traced as far as twenty thousand years ago. However, the Tibetan people have their own myth of origin where the most important religious figure in Tibet appears for the first time, the manifestation of the eternal compassion of the Buddha: *Bodhisattva Chenrezi* (*Avalokiteshvara* in Sanskrit). The Fifth Dalai Lama explained how the Buddha, while lying down in the ‘lion posture’ before His entrance to *Parinirvana*, the complete experience of the Emptiness (*Shunyata*), said to Avalokiteshvara:

‘The kingdom of snows in the north is, at present, a kingdom of animals,’ the Buddha replied. ‘There is not even the name of human beings there...in the future O *Bodhisattva*, it will be converted by you. At first, having been reincarnated as a *bodhisattva*, protect the human world of our disciples...then gather them together by religion’.<sup>146</sup>

This gives the doctrinal basis for the conception the Tibetan people have of themselves as protected by Chenrezi which has both religious and political implications. Buddhism entered Tibet around the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE and its impact and political influence was due in

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145 Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 11.

146 Thomas Laird, *The Story of Tibet: Conversations with the Dalai Lama* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007), 12.

part to ‘the reverence and devotion of Tibet’s greatest kings toward the teaching and principles of Buddhism’.<sup>147</sup>

The legacy of the kings of Tibet is mainly the story of Songtsen Gampo, Trison Detsen and Ralpachen, known by the Tibetans as ‘the Three Religious Kings, Men of Power’.<sup>148</sup> These kings incorporated the Buddhist tradition from China and India, the latter being the type of Buddhism that spread in Tibet after the Second Great Dharma King supported the study of Buddhism in Tibet by inviting great Indian scholars such as Padmasambava who was also a *tantric* master to come to Tibet. In addition, the king built two temples, the *Jo-khang*, which still is the most revered temple in Lhasa, and the *Ramoche*. The Last Great Dharma King is remembered for his systematization of the study of Buddhism, which he worked on until he was murdered by his ministers.

### The Adamantine Path

Tibetan Buddhism was established mainly due to the efforts of the kings previously presented as well as the way Buddhism presented a path of individual and social development through practical guidance and tantric techniques. This particular approach is known as *Vajrayana*, the ‘Adamantine Path’ toward liberation. The Sanskrit word *Vajra* (translated in Tibetan as *Do-rje*) means diamond or thunderbolt, and it represents the everlasting power of the truth of *Dharma* which destroys the veils of ignorance. In the end, what ignorance covers is the true reality beyond every phenomena, action and thought, something that cannot be reached or escaped, represented in the term *Sunyata*, or ‘Emptiness.’

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama argues that the ‘absence of independent existence is ultimate nature—*shunyata*<sup>149</sup>. Shunyata is there. Phenomena that exist in dependence on other factors are devoid of an independent self’.<sup>150</sup> Here we can see one way to explain what *Sunyata* means: interdependence or dependent origination. It is the conditioned arising of everything and everyone, where one cannot identify an independent quality that arises out of no previous causes and conditions. This is not to say that everything is

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147 Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, *Buddhist Civilization in Tibet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 26.

148 Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present*, 29.

149 Alternate spelling of *Sunyata*.

150 Rajiv Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More* (London: Hay House, 2009), 94- 95.

non-existent (an idea which can fall into nihilism) but to understand that while all phenomena do exist, their existence is the consequence of a complex relationship of causes and conditions. The Dalai Lama explains,

Emptiness is not like being a seed, not like space as a basis for all the planets and stars—not that kind. Emptiness in the sense of *shunyata* is explained on the basis of something that exists that has a connection with reality. Any phenomenon has emptiness as its own nature, and any phenomenon is pervaded by its own nature, emptiness, which is the absence of its true existence.<sup>151</sup>

Furthermore, in the sutra *Kasyapaparivarta Sutra*, *Bodhisattva* Manjushri explains this nature of emptiness which cannot be taken as an object by itself, as follows:

It is not Kasyapa, that emptiness leads to the annihilation of personhood; persons themselves are empty and emptiness itself is empty, absolutely empty, empty in the past, empty in the future, empty in the present. You must rely, Kasyapa, on emptiness, not on the person. However, those, Kasyapa, who rely on emptiness with an objectification of emptiness I speak of as lost and vanished from this teaching.<sup>152</sup>

In sum, the truth of emptiness dispels and destroys the illusory world and the continuous cycle of suffering (*Samsara*). Accordingly, Sangarakshita explains that ‘*vajra*, literally the thunderbolt or diamond, is the most widely current –Tantric synonym for *sunyata*’.<sup>153</sup> During meditation, the *Vajra* is used as an instrument, along with the bell, and represents ‘the active principle, the means toward enlightenment and the means of conversion, thus the actual Buddha manifestation, while the bell represent the Perfection of Wisdom known as the Void (*sunyata*)’.<sup>154</sup> Thus, Tibetan Buddhism developed many rituals that lead to the understanding of the intrinsic nature of reality so that emotions such as craving, hatred and anger could be controlled, conquered and finally transcended. The most notable feature is the use of *tantric* techniques which

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151 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 120.

152 ‘Kasyapaparivarta Sutra’ in *Buddhist Scriptures*, Donald López, ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 353.

153 Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism: Its Doctrines and Methods Through the Ages*, 7th. Ed. (Glasgow: Windhorse Publications, 1993), 418.

154 David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors* (London: Serindia Publications, 1987), 133.

came from India and, more specifically, with the Indian *tantric* master Padmasambhava. Sangharakshita argues that ‘the Tantra represents, among the Mahayana schools, the Faculty of Vigour, traditionally defined as consisting in the maintenance and production of wholesome, states of mind’.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, the practice of meditation is stressed in Tibetan Buddhism a bit more than the study of doctrine, although this is the basis of all meditation. Thus, the practice of visualizations and recitations of sacred syllables that invoke or express the divine manifestations of Buddha’s nature—called *mantras*—are very important for Tibetan Buddhists.

### The Gelugpa School and the Rise of the Dalai Lamas

The most influential schools of Buddhism developed in Tibet were the *Nyingma*, *Kadam*, *Kagyü*, *Sakya*, and *Gelugpa*. These schools were founded by Indian masters who were invited to Tibet during the first spreading of the *Dharma* with the Great Kings as well as by other Indian teachers who were followed by Tibetan in some regions. As a consequence, ‘these religious orders grew to dominate Tibetan society as the country assumed the essential form that it would retain for a millennium: an inward-looking religious state’.<sup>156</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, I will concentrate in explaining the characteristics of the *Gelugpa School* from which the Dalai Lamas lineage arose.

The *Gelugpa School* was founded by the celebrated scholar Tsongkhapa Lobzang Trapga under the premise that further development in the monastic rule and new stress on the *vinaya* had to be implemented. Tsonkhapa’s interests in the monastic discipline and the doctrine of *Sunyata* in Mahayana treatises led him to synthesize the mainstream Buddhist ideas with the tantric tradition. He received instruction on the *Madhyamika* and *Abhidharma* teachings with Redawa Zhonnu Lodro of the *Sakya School* and *tantric* instruction from Kyungpo Lhepa. Therefore, ‘Tsongkhapa followed the Prasangika Madhyamaka teachings and the New Translation Tantras. The type of practice he emphasized was also deeply influenced by the style of the old Kadam school founded by Atisa in Tibet’.<sup>157</sup>

Thus, Tsongkhapa revitalized monastic Buddhism in Tibet and founded the Ganden monastery in 1409 which, along with the Drepung and Sera monasteries,

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155 Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 407.

156 Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 73.

157 Thondup Rinpoche, *Buddhist Civilization in Tibet*, 61.

became one of the three most important monasteries in Tibet, known as the ‘Three Seats’, when the Gelugpas became the dominant school. In these centres of study, the monks continued to receive the basic teachings of Tsonkhapa that, ‘according to his vision, the doctrine of emptiness, if properly understood, did not invalidate ethical norms, logic, or the doctrine of dependent co-arising’.<sup>158</sup> Tülku Thondup Rinpoche summarizes this view as follows:

The Gelugpas stress the teaching on interdependent arising to prove that all things are empty and free for conceptualization. According to the doctrine of interdependent arising, all phenomena are without self-nature and arise because of mutually interdependent causes and conditions. Thus phenomena are empty in that they lack self-nature and do not function independently of one another.<sup>159</sup>

This further development of Tibetan Buddhism was about to have another major revolution: the rise of the Dalai Lamas. The honorific name ‘Dalai Lama’ was given by the Mongolian Emperor Altan Khan in 1578 to Sonyam Gyatso. In fact, rather than a title, the ‘Dalai Lama’ is a translation of ‘Sonam’ (merit) and ‘Gyatso’ (ocean) from Tibetan to Mongolian. The most common meaning given to the name ‘Dalai Lama’ is ‘Ocean of Wisdom’, although the full Mongolian name is ‘the wonderful Vajradhara, good splendid meritorious Ocean’.<sup>160</sup>

The term ‘Lama’ refers to a reincarnated teacher, so the Dalai Lama refers to a being who has achieved such a great amount of meritorious *Karma*, as wide as the ocean, that he is able to choose to be reborn again to teach the *Dharma* and help others to overcome suffering. Sonam Gyatso is considered the Third Dalai Lama because he and his followers ‘gave the name posthumously to Dge ‘dun (Gendun) rgya mtsho and Dge ‘dungrup, a student of the great scholar Tshong khapa, saying that each later Dalai Lama was the reincarnation of the earlier’.<sup>161</sup>

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158 Cush, *Buddhism*, 284.

159 Thondup Rinpoche, *Buddhist Civilization in Tibet*, 62.

160 Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 142.

161 *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (New York, Thomson & Gale, vol.1, 2004), s.v. ‘Dalai Lama’

## Under the Arms of *Avalokiteshvara*: A Theological Framework

In order to understand more fully this institution of the Dalai Lamas, it is necessary to have a closer look at the theological basis of its existence. Although the relevance of this institution in the political and religious spheres had been analysed in multiple studies, the theological implications are not always clear, an oversight which gives an incomplete assessment of its relevance. For the purposes of this chapter, an understanding of theological implications is necessary to fully understand the figure of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. I will explain several elements that constitute the essence of the Dalai Lamas, such as the *tülku*, the *Trikaya* doctrine and the characteristics of a *tülku*, the concept of rebirth, the explanation of the nature of the *Bodhisattva* and the relevance of the most cherished *Bodhisattva* in Tibet, *Chenrizi* (*Avalokiteshvara* in Sanskrit).

### Tülku and the *Trikaya* Doctrine

The first element, the concept of *tülku*, is fundamental for the proper understanding of the lineage of teachers in Tibet and should be explained through the doctrine of *Trikaya*. ‘Tülku’ is the Tibetan representation of the *Nirmanakaya*, or ‘emanation body’ of the Buddha. This *Nirmanakaya* is part of the *Trikaya* doctrine, mostly developed by the *Yogacara School*, wherein three aspects of Buddhahood are recognized: the *Dharmakaya* (true nature), the *Sambhogakaya* (glorious body), and the *Nirmanakaya* (manifested body).

The first of these refers to the essential and enlightened purified consciousness which sees reality for what it is. It cannot be described using ordinary language. The second refers to the heavenly Buddhas which, according to the *Mahayana* tradition, are still preaching the *Dharma* in their holy lands giving support to all sentient beings which, through meditation, can receive their teachings. The third, the *Nirmanakaya*, is the earthly manifestation of the *Dharmakaya*, which help sentient beings to dispel the veils of ignorance through the teaching of *Dharma* as in the case of Shakyamuni Buddha when he came to this world (*Saha*). The *Nirmanakaya* is the main sphere of action of *bodhisattvas* who rebirth as sentient beings guided by compassion, to guide others in the path toward enlightenment.

Thus, the *Nirmanakaya* is an emanation body that helps sentient beings through the delivery of the word of Buddha. These bodies are considered a product of the infinite wisdom and compassion of the Buddha nature which, using skilful means represents the ultimate doctor who prescribes the exact medicine to cure the suffering of all sentient beings, adapting the teaching to the capacity of the being. These emanation bodies ‘may be human or animal forms, or may even be bridges or other physical objects that provide benefit. The most important type of emanation body is the physical form of a Buddha, such as Shakyamuni’.<sup>162</sup>

The first school to introduce this concept was the *Kagyü* with the figure of the *Karmapa*. Therefore, the Dalai Lamas are the most famous *tülkus*, although not the only ones or the first to be recognized as incarnate teachers in Tibet. What distinguishes them from the others is that ‘in the Theology of the Gelugpa sect the Dalai Lama incarnates as aspect of one of those *bodhisattvas*, the compassionate Avalokiteshvara, known in Tibet as Chenrezi’.<sup>163</sup> In short, the *tülkus* are ‘teachers who consciously choose to reincarnate as a human, out of compassion for the suffering of others, though they could have gone on to Nirvana at death’.<sup>164</sup> As the result of their *Karma* and meditative skills, they are able to control their next rebirth during the *Bardo*—the space between death and rebirth—and so choose the realm in which they want to be reborn which is generally the realm of human beings. Sangharakshita asserts that ‘“rebirth” into these worlds is the result of meritorious actions performed on earth: when the result of such actions is exhausted rebirth in a human body<sup>165</sup> again takes place’.<sup>166</sup>

## Rebirth

The rebirth process begins with the belief taught by Shakyamuni Buddha of *anatman* or non-self. This is contrasted with the theory of the *atman* (self) found in Hinduism that implies a continuous process of transmigration of a soul which never changes. The *anatman* implies that there is not a separate entity that never changes but instead an ever-changing aggregate of causes and conditions and *karmatic* relationships, which are

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<sup>162</sup> John Powers, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000), 152-153.

<sup>163</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, 54.

<sup>164</sup> Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 95.

<sup>165</sup> The Buddhist doctrine depicts six levels of existence within the ‘desire realm’ where one can choose to be reborn. These are: *devas* (gods), *asuras* (titans), human beings, animals, hungry ghosts (*pretas*) or hell-like worlds.

<sup>166</sup> Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 50.



‘kept’ in the *alaya* consciousness that was explained in the previous chapter. The Dalai Lama explains that by *anatman*,

we do not mean the total nonexistence of the nominal or conventional self; we very much accept the existence of such a conventional self. What we actually mean is the nonexistence of the self that is thought to be totally independent and has nothing whatsoever to do with the self of the physical aggregates; it is totally separate from the self of the physical aggregates, which is the kind of self that is being denied.<sup>167</sup>

Therefore, what ‘reincarnates’ is a conglomerate of causes and conditions with *karmatic* links with the previous life into a new body. Not even the conception of the ‘mind’ is regarded as something independent and permanent, but is also a formation of causes and conditions that led to its arising and to the subsequent process of receiving a bodily form depending on *karmatic* nature. The Buddha spoke about the mind to Kasyapa as follows:

It is formless, shapeless, incognizable, and unknowable; it relies on nothing and has no location. Such a mind was not, is not, and will be seen by any of the Buddhas of the ten directions and there three phases of time. If it is not seen by any of the past, present, or future Buddhas, how can it exist? It is due to wrong thinking that the mind arises, and along with all different dharmas. The mind is illusory, but through thought, fantasy and discrimination, it gives rise to all kinds of *Karmas* and consequently causes one to receive various bodily forms [as *Karmatic* results].<sup>168</sup>

This is how the Buddhist conception of rebirth (or reincarnation) differs from other religious traditions, supporting its argument with the idea of the emptiness of independent arising and, therefore, a continuous and ever-changing interdependent relationship of causes and conditions. Thus, ‘consciousness or mind is changing every moment. Therefore, it can be shown that causes and conditions will affect anything that undergoes change. As such, the mind is also a product of causes and conditions. That is

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167 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 90.

168 ‘Sutra of Assembled Treasures’ in *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras: Selections from the Maharatnakuta Sutra*, ed. Garma C.C. Chang (Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 399.

the basis of the rebirth theory'.<sup>169</sup> In relation to his own rebirth, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama affirms,

As far as my rebirth is concerned, until Buddhahood is reached, I firmly believe my rebirth is always there. Even after Buddhahood, I will continue somewhere in different manifestation. That is the Buddhist belief, the Buddhist thinking. I really feel that a teaching of this kind sustains one's optimism, will, and determination.<sup>170</sup>

This rebirth applies to the Dalai Lamas as *tülkus* who decided to follow the *bodhisattvas* to help other sentient beings to overcome suffering and attain enlightenment. The *Bodhisattva* ideal is part of the *Mahayana* tradition and it refers to the one who, driven by compassion, applies his incommensurable wisdom for the benefit of all beings. This differentiates it from the ideal of the *arhat* in *Theravada* Buddhism, which seeks enlightenment without committing to preach the *Dharma* to help other beings. The *arhat* applies the compassionate idea of not harming others while the *Bodhisattva* adds another idea: the importance of helping others. Sangharakshita uses the following analogy to explain what the *Bodhisattva* represents:

It may be said that the Buddha's transcendental realization is the root, his Original Doctrine the trunk, the distinctive Mahayana doctrines the branches, and the schools and sub-schools of the Mahayana the flowers ... the *Bodhisattva* ideal is the perfectly ripened fruit of the whole vast tree of Buddhism.<sup>171</sup>

The word *bodhisattva* derived from the Sanskrit *bodhi*, which means 'enlightenment' and *sattva*, which means 'being'. Therefore these are beings who work toward enlightenment not only for themselves but for others. This is possible by being fully aware of the emptiness of all phenomena and, at the same time, knowing the differences between absolute and relative truth; *bodhisattvas* do not abide permanently in any of these spheres but in both at the same time, due to compassion toward others. This is explained by the Buddha to Subhuti as follows:

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169 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 82.

170 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 84.

171 Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 431.

Furthermore, Subhuti, because all the elements of the five aggregates merge in the dharmadhatu, there are no realms. If there are no realms, there are no elements of earth, water, fire, or air; there is no ego, sentient being, or life; no Realm of Desire, Realm of Form, or Realm of Formlessness; no realm of the conditioned or realm of the unconditioned; no realm of samsara or realm of nirvana. When *Bodhisattvas* enter such a domain [free of distinctions], they do not abide in anything, though they remain in the midst of worldly beings. If they do not abide in anything, they transcend the mundane world.<sup>172</sup>

In sum, the *Bodhisattva*'s work is for all sentient beings without distinction of race, age, sex or even religious views, because he knows that ultimately everything is empty of conceptualizations and differences. Thus, just as the light of the rising sun simultaneously illuminates all directions and beings, so a *bodhisattva*'s light of wisdom simultaneously illuminates all sentient beings. This compassionate work is the consequence of the motivation to spread loving-kindness for the benefit of all beings called *bodhicitta*. It can also be understood as the rising of the thought of becoming enlightened through working for others' well-being; in other words, illuminate oneself through illuminating others.

### The Embodiment of Compassion: Chenrizi

The final theological element necessary to understand the relevance of the Dalai Lamas is their special *karmatic* relation with the compassionate *Bodhisattva* Chenrizi or Avalokiteshvara. *Bodhisattvas* are sometimes called deities, although it is very important to clarify how these are understood in Tibetan Buddhism, because they do not refer to the *devas* (gods) which are also considered in mainstream Buddhism as other kind of beings who live and die in *Samsara*. These deities in Tibetan Buddhism refer to the manifestation of the Buddha in the *Samboghakaya* or 'glorious' in the *Trikaya* doctrine explained earlier in this chapter. The Dalai Lama explains two kinds of understanding of these deities:

When we talk of these different aspects of the deities, there are two types of understanding. One is that these deities are different aspects of the different qualities of the Buddha. The other one arises when individuals take specific forms

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172 'Sutra of the Demonstration of the Inconceivable State of Buddhahood,' in *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*, 33.

of the Buddha as their main meditational deity, and they meditate and practice on that basis. When they become enlightened, they become that deity. In that case, Tara, Avalokiteshvara, or Manjushri are different beings from Buddha Shakyamuni. At the same time, there are deities that are manifestation of one Buddha.<sup>173</sup>

The first one is easier to grasp because those deities represent qualities taught by the Buddha: wisdom, compassion, discipline and loving-kindness, among many. In the second understanding, those deities (i.e. Avalokiteshvara and Manjushri) are part of the *Sambhogakaya* and thus ‘different’ from Buddha Shakyamuni—the manifested body or *Nirmanakaya*—but at the ultimate level of reality, both are a manifestation of what is called the ‘eternal Buddha’ or *Dharmakaya*, the true nature of all existent and non-existent things, the *Sunyata*. This *Mahayanist* interpretation of the *Trikaya* is what sustains Tibetan practices such as visualizations and the use of *mantras* related to specific ‘glorious bodies’ whether related to *bodhisattvas* or Buddhas and their respective Buddha-lands.

Thus, the Dalai Lama is not regarded just as a wise teacher, or lama, but as one who is in touch with the subtle qualities of the *Dharmakaya* through the *Sambhogakaya* manifested in his mind and body. This is not to say, as is frequently understood, that the Dalai Lama is a ‘living-Buddha’. This is a superficial and misguided interpretation of this deep theological basis for devotion toward the Dalai Lama. Therefore, the Dalai Lama is not a Buddha in the strict sense of the term, but a Buddhist monk with a special connection with the transcendent qualities of the Buddha. According to scriptures, the next Buddha is called *Maitreya* (*Metteyya* in Pali) and is now in one of the heavenly realms called *Tushita*, waiting for the right conditions to manifest his body on earth. Shakyamuni Buddha declared,

There will arise in the world a Blessed Lord, an Arahant fully-enlightened Buddha named Metteyya, endowed with wisdom and conduct, a Well-Farer, Knower of the worlds, incomparable Trainer of men to be tame, Teacher of gods and humans, enlightened and blessed, just as I am now ... He will teach the Dhamma, lovely in

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173 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 162.

its beginning, lovely in its middle, lovely in its ending, in the spirit and in the letter, and proclaim, just as I do now, the holy life in its fullness and purity.<sup>174</sup>

Therefore, to call the Dalai Lama a living Buddha is theologically flawed. However, in order to understand his relevance and that special connection with the transcendent qualities of the *Dharmakaya* through the deities of the *Sambogakaya* related to him, one must have a clear idea mainly of the characteristics of *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara (Chenrizi).

In turn, the *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara, known in Tibet as *Chenrizi*, is the *Bodhisattva* of compassion and is currently being manifested in the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. As mentioned earlier, the foundational myth of the Tibetan people is related to this *Bodhisattva* who, following the instructions given by Shakyamuni Buddha, became the protector of Tibet by manifesting repeatedly to guide them, especially through many Dalai Lamas. One must remember that Tibetans do not believe that the Dalai Lama is the Fourteenth incarnation of the human being who was the First Dalai Lama<sup>175</sup>; rather, he is considered as the current manifestation of Chenrizi who is leading Tibet now from the exile.

Due to the compassionate nature of the *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara, he is considered the most revered of *bodhisattvas*, being followed in different regions and with different names, but with the same devotion. For example, 'Avalokiteshvara is named Chenrezig in Tibet, the 'Goddess of Mercy' Guanyin in China, Quan Am in Vietnam, Kwanseum in Korea, and Kannon, Kanzeon, or Kanjizai in Japan'.<sup>176</sup> His multiple names also give him different translations such as 'Gazing Lord', the 'Regarder of the Cries of the World' or 'Lord of What is Seen'. Despite these different names, translations and, consequent multiple representations, he represents the compassion of the Buddha, the loving-kindness and everlasting love in the ultimate nature of emptiness.

His compassionate nature is represented in the famous *mantra*: *om mani padme hum*. During the recitation of the *mantra*, the practitioner should visualize how when saying each syllable, one of the different realms of existence is illuminated with rays of

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174 *Digha Nikaya*, 26:25

175 Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 10.

176 Leighton, *Faces of Compassion*, 167.

love and compassion. The *om* is visualized as a white light illuminating the *devas* (gods); the *ma* as green for the *asuras* (demigods); the *ni* in yellow for the humans; *pad* in blue for animals; *me* in red for *pretas* (hungry ghosts); and *hum* in black for the hell-beings.<sup>177</sup> This practice is related with the *metta* meditation, when the practitioner sends infinite love toward all beings in order to experience the joy of helping absolutely everyone.

Avalokiteshvara's infinite compassion is explained by Shakyamuni Buddha in 'The Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law', positing *Bodhisattva* as the one which any being can rely on to dispel suffering. The Buddha said that Avalokiteshvara can manifest in any form he chooses, using his wisdom and applying what is called *upaya kaulsaya* (skilful means) which refer to the adaptation of the doctrine and the capacity to help of the one in despair. If one needs to be saved in the body of Isvara, of Mahesvara, as a minor king, an elder, a wife, a husband or as any other form, due to the compassion of the *Bodhisattva*, one will get help and consolation. The Buddha, after explaining the varied forms which can be used by this *Bodhisattva* to help those who ask for it, states,

Such are the merits acquired by this *Bodhisattva* Regarder of the Cries of the World and the various forms in which he rambles through many lands to save the living. Therefore, do you with single mind pay homage to the *Bodhisattva* Regarder of the Cries of the World this *Bodhisattva*-Mahasattva Regarder of the Cries of the World is able to make fearless those in anxiety and distress. For this reason all this saha-world give him the title Bestower of Fearlessness.<sup>178</sup>

This capacity of Avalokiteshvara, embodied in the Dalai Lama, is the theological force that sustains faith in him not only as a religious leader for the monks or as a political leader of the Tibetan nation, but as the embodiment of the sacred and pure compassion of the divine protector of Tibet. The Buddha gives a clear description of the characteristics of this cherished *Bodhisattva* and how this relates to the devotion toward the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in Tibet and all around the world, which I will present in the next part of this chapter:

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177 Jonathan Landaw and Andy Weber, *Images of Enlightenment: Tibetan Art in Practice* (New York: Snow Lion, 2006), 55.

178 Bunno Kato, Tamura and Miyasaka trans., *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, 322-323.

His is the wondrous voice, voice of the world-regarder, Brahma-voice, voice of the rolling tide, voice all world-surpassing, therefore ever to be kept in mind, with never a doubting thought. Regarder of the World's Cries, pure and holy, in pain, distress, death, calamity, able to be a sure reliance, perfect in all merit, with compassionate eyes beholding all, boundless ocean of blessings! Prostrate let us revere him.<sup>179</sup>

## Tenzin Gyatso, the Rise of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

### Background and Early Years

The first half of the twentieth century in Tibet set a difficult situation for the Fourteenth Dalai Lama regarding the status of his territory in relation to China. His predecessor, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso (1876-1933) was more of a politician. He had to learn empirically about the modern world and how politics should be done; he was a leader who fought for Tibetan national independence, and before his death he left a testament that announced the Chinese invasion and the danger of the extinction of the Tibetan culture.

Eighteen years after the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in a village near Takster, northeast Tibet, the Fourteenth reincarnation of the Dalai Lamas was born under the name of Lhamo Dhondup. The son of horse trader Choekyong Tsering and his wife Kekyu Tsering, he lived in a common Tibetan family along with six other brothers and sisters who survived beyond infancy.<sup>180</sup> On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1935, several signs of a magnificent birth were seen: the healing of his father after a long illness, the appearance of a rainbow at the moment of his birth, the arrival of a pair of crows which were believed to be there to protect the child, and the fact that he did not cry during the birth process. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama was only waiting to be discovered by the new regent and pass all the tests to confirm his status.

Meanwhile in Lhasa, after the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the council (*kashag*) was in charge of the government and had appointed the new regent, Ample Yeti Tenpin Gyaltzen, an incarnate *lama* of the Reting Monastery. Once in office, he was in charge of the duty to begin searching for the next Dalai Lama. Following the

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179 Kato, Tamura and Miyasaka trans., *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, 326.

180 Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 261.

tradition, this task includes four major procedures involving the Regent, the major monasteries and the government of Tibet. First, the speech and omens of the latest Dalai Lama before death, his will and the omens after he died must be examined. Second, the Regent should go to Lake Lhamo Latso, the vision lake, and gaze into its depths during meditation where he will be guided by a goddess who grants him visions about the new reincarnation. Reting Rinpoche summoned the *kashag* in 1936 and stated ‘he had seen the Tibetan letter *Ah* in the lake and a few other details, which pointed toward a specific house in a specific village in Amdo’.<sup>181</sup>

This leads to the third procedure which is the searching teams that on this occasion went to the east; one of them followed the omens given by Reting Rinpoche. Finally, the last procedure is the test of recognition, where several objects belonging to the previous Dalai Lama, together with other objects, are put in front of the young boy who must recognize the correct ones as his. Mainly, he should recognize ‘the sacred thunderbolt, the bell and other religious implements of his predecessor—or rather, as one should say, of himself in his previous life.’<sup>182</sup>

After a dozen candidates were put to the test, only Lhamo Dondup selected more than one of the real objects belonging to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. He was then recognized as the next Dalai Lama, even without using the golden urn, which were another element of the process of recognition implemented after 1793 when the Chinese Emperor Qianlong presented the urn to the Tibetan government. This ceremony consisted of putting the names of the candidates in this urn, and the one picked out of it would be the next Dalai Lama. In this procedure, however, the name was always the same name as the one recognized during the complex process stated above, so the claims of the Chinese that they were in charge of recognizing the next reincarnation is historically unfounded and theologically nonexistent. The process of recognition has always been a spiritual quest for the new embodiment of *Chenrizi* and not a matter of luck and imperial titles. As M. Goldstein asserts,

The process of selecting a new Dalai Lama was critical to the legitimacy of the Tibetan polity. Its authority depended on a total transfer of charisma from the old to the new Dalai Lama, who was considered his incarnation. The selection process

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181 Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 265.

182 Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present*, 51.



therefore had to be accepted as infallible. Tibetans achieved this conviction by deflecting the main responsibility for selection onto the realm of the supernatural. Tibetans have well-developed methods of testing and selecting candidates for the position of Dalai Lama, but the difficult task of identifying such candidate is generally guided by prophecies, signs, and portents that focus attention on specific parts of the country and then, which these, on specific kinds of buildings, scenery and so forth.<sup>183</sup>

On July 21, 1939, Lhamo Dondup began his journey to Lhasa and he ‘was officially enthroned in the Potala on February 22, 1940, and given a new name *Japmel Ngawant Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso*. From now on, he will be called by the title Dalai Lama or rather as ‘*Kyam-gön Rim-po-che*, ‘The Precious Sovereign’; *Buk* ‘The Inmost One’; *Kyan-gön Buk*, ‘The Inmost Protector’; *Lama Pön-po*, ‘The Priest Officer’’,<sup>184</sup> or merely as *Kundun*, ‘the Presence’. Since his youth, he had been interested in the Western world and the developments of society outside Tibet and was highly influenced by the life of his predecessor and the gifts he had received from other countries, such as films, a car, watches and eyeglasses. Since then, he has been determined to modernize Tibet on material and social levels, although some of his reforms would never be applied due to the invasion that his nation was about to face from the east.

### The ‘Land of Snows’ under Chinese Occupation

The inauguration of the People’s Republic of China on 1 October 1949 marked the beginning of the policy of unity by force under the label of ‘peaceful liberation’ in several territories including Tibet and urged the Dalai Lama to take full powers. Tenzin Gyatso, at the age of 16, was about to put into practice his unbreakable commitment to the non-violent approach, using only the *Vajra* of truth that Chenrizi uses to dispel suffering and ignorance in the world. When the Chinese consolidated their forces in the east, the Dalai Lama decided to go to southern Tibet along with senior members of the government and left Lobsant Tashi in charge as the monk Prime Minister and Lukhangwa as lay administrator. This was a tactical move because if the situation

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183 Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951*, 310-311.

184 Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present*, 55.

deteriorated he could easily cross to India, and since he carried with him the government and, more importantly, the seals of state, the sovereignty of Tibet was safe.

While the Dalai Lama was still in southern Tibet, a delegation of Tibetan negotiators arrived in Peking in April 1951 to talk about the need to stop the invasion and the abuses of the Liberation Army. However, the Chinese presented a finished document and forced the Tibetan delegation to sign. This is the 'Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet', also known as the 'Seventeenth-Point Agreement', signed in Peking on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1951. In it, Tibet is recognized by both parties as being an integral part of the motherland and foreign forces are identified being a major cause of disruption, threatening the sovereignty of China. The first point states that 'the Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet; the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the Motherland—the People's Republic of China'.<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, the Agreement states that

the local government of Tibet did not oppose the imperialist deception and provocation and adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great Motherland. Under such conditions the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and suffering. In 1949 basic victory was achieved on a nation-wide scale in the Chinese people's war of liberation.<sup>186</sup>

Finally, China demanded the Tibetan representatives sign a document in which Tibet is regarded as an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China. Furthermore, other provisions such as the setup of a Military and Administrative Committee and a Military Area Headquarters in Tibet and the centralized handling Tibet's external affairs, was settled in points fifteen and fourteen, respectively.<sup>187</sup> This, however, was signed under duress and furthermore without the proper authorization or permission of the head of the Tibetan state, the Dalai Lama, who had the seals with him. Thus, his Chief Delegate had no authority to sign that agreement. Thomas Laird explains this as follows:

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185 Richardson, 'Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet' in *Tibet and Its History*, Appendix 18, 276.

186 Richardson, 'Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet,' in *Tibet and Its History*, Appendix 18, 275.

187 Richardson, 'Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet,' in *Tibet and Its History*, Appendix 18, 275.

Lhasa had never given the envoys permission to sign anything in the government, but nevertheless on May 23, 1951, the delegates were forced to sign the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The Dalai Lama says that the government's seal was forged and affixed to the document. With this document, Tibetans—for the first time in their history—publicly accepted China's vision of the nations' story.<sup>188</sup>

When the Dalai Lama heard by radio that there had been a signed agreement in Peking in which Tibet agreed to become part of the motherland, he felt physically ill and desperately disappointed. Mostly, there was a lot of confusion because, as the Dalai Lama affirms, 'Ngabo had not been empowered to sign anything on my behalf, only to negotiate. I had kept the seals of state with me at Dromo to ensure that he could not. So he must have been coerced'.<sup>189</sup> After the delegates came back from Peking they resigned in early spring of 1952. Then the Dalai Lama seized the opportunity to establish a Reform Committee that could implement some necessary reforms in Tibet, although he had to be careful to do it within the framework of the agreement in order to prevent further violent punishment by the Chinese. These reforms were applied to the judicial order, education and communications, among other areas. These last two reforms required a longer period of time, but the judicial reforms could be done immediately, beginning the abolition of inheritance debts and the elimination of all government loans that could not be repaid.<sup>190</sup> Other reforms concerning land and social welfare were blocked by the Chinese because they were about to develop their own measures to modernize Tibet through forced collectivization.

Thereafter, the agreement between the Chinese authorities and Tibetan delegation justifying the unconditional acceptance of the Tibetan people to become part of the motherland was systematically desecrated by those authorities beginning in 1954 as the refugees' statements corroborate. This was also recognized by the Dalai Lama when he fled into exile five years later, when he declared:

The Dalai Lama and his government tried their best to adhere to the 17-point agreement but interference by the Chinese authorities persisted. By the end of 1955 a struggle had started in Kham Province and this assumed serious proportions in

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188 Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 307.

189 Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile: the Autobiography of His Holiness The Dalai Lama* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990), 69.

190 Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile*, 86.

1956. In the consequential struggle, Chinese armed forces destroyed large number of monasteries.<sup>191</sup>

Before these violent struggles began, the Dalai Lama began to suspect that atrocities might happen; he decided to visit Mao Tse-Tung, together with the Panchen Lama, to discuss the conditions of this 'liberation' and to protect the Tibetan people and their traditions. This was also an attempt to prevent violence, which in the end took place on a massive scale. This visit was conducted within a context of complete isolation in 1954, after the reluctance of Tibet's so-called 'friends', Britain and India, to help them. This reluctance demonstrates the egotistic nature of the 'realist' approach to international relations. Even the United Nations did not pass Tibet's request to condemn the Chinese occupation; in fact all of the member nations, except from El Salvador, dismissed the case. It was only the United States, in its campaign against the spread of communism, that took interest in Tibet, giving some ammunition and offering the support of the CIA.

Thus, the Dalai Lama finally saw how world politics work, just as his predecessor witnessed several decades before, with relations not driven by compassion or the idea of interdependence but by the individual statist-interests of power, noted above. Regarding this, the Dalai Lama accepts that 'the U.S. support for Tibet in the 1950s was not out of moral principle or sympathy but because of the worldwide anti-communist policies that were there. So because of that, they helped'.<sup>192</sup> Thus, the Dalai Lama needed to put wisdom into practice to think about the best way to fulfil his responsibility as the Tibetan leader and to exercise compassion to act in accordance with the Buddhist principles of non-violence, peace and interdependence.

Hence, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama resisted the temptation to follow a policy of violence and dominion and instead followed his policy of compassion which was soon tested by Chairman Mao. During their meetings, several ideas of the socialist path were appealing to the Dalai Lama due to their focus on social development and equality among people. The process of the modernization of Tibet was needed, and China had the power to do it, so it seemed like a good and convenient state of affairs for both

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191 'Document 81: The Dalai Lama Issues Statement in Tezpur, India,' in *Tibet 1950-1967*, Weiyang Gong and Naiming Ling eds. (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968), 376.

192 Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 300.

countries, resembling the Dharma Lord-Worldly King relationship. However, in the last meeting, Chairman Mao told the Dalai Lama that ‘religion was poison’, that it retards development and that Tibet should be free from this burden, so China would liberate Tibet from it. The intentions were clear: to destroy Tibetan religious identity in order to achieve modernization under communist ideology. A few years later, with the rise of violence and the violation of basic human rights, the Dalai Lama said,

I began for the first time really to doubt the intention of the Chinese leadership. This shook me. After my visit to China, and despite the many negative impressions I had received, my attitude towards the Communists was still basically positive. Now, however, I began to see Chairman Mao’s words as being like a rainbow—beautiful, but without substance.<sup>193</sup>

### **Call for Non-violent Resistance and Exile**

From then on, China’s ambition was clearly about dominance and occupation. In this context new questions arose: Was violence justified? Would the Dalai Lama call Tibetans to fight for their country? The answer was no; the Dalai Lama continued working through dialogue while facing the atrocities perpetrated by the Chinese toward Tibetan people. He did so with bravery and strong faith in the non-violent path as the right one to follow. He even had to face severe criticisms from some Tibetan groups and also his elder brother, who had lost all faith in the peaceful resolution of this conflict, a perspective which he understood but with which he disagreed. Despite this adversity, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama still had faith in his *Dorje* of truth that would ultimately benefit all parties involved in the conflict. He explains the animosity toward his approach as follows:

Many people are critical of my middle path, including my elder brother, who says that his dear younger brother Dalai Lama has now sold out Tibetan rights. I respect him as my eldest brother, but his political view is different. So not only among Tibetans but also among my supporters; they always talk of independence—it is

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<sup>193</sup> Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile*, 122.

understandable that they are concerned about Tibet. I am committed to the middle approach. So if the Dalai Lama approach fails, their frustration increases.<sup>194</sup>

His force, faith and commitment are based in an indestructible faith in loving-kindness as taught by the Buddha, manifested in the glorious body of Chenrizi and bestowed on the Dalai Lama himself as the spiritual and political leader of the 'Land of Snows'. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama summarizes his compassionate view thus:

Still, I took note of the Buddha's teaching that in one sense a supposed enemy is more valuable than a friend, for an enemy teaches you things, such as forbearance, that a friend generally does not. To this I added my firm belief that no matter how bad things become, they will eventually get better. In the end, the innate desire of all people for truth, justice and human understanding must triumph over ignorance and despair. So if the Chinese oppressed us, it could only strengthen us.<sup>195</sup>

The Chinese occupation became more demanding and violent through the years, and the Tibetan people became more anxious about the safety of the Dalai Lama. This situation came to a climax when the people learned about an invitation from a senior Chinese official to the Dalai Lama for a performance of a play. The most suspicious aspect of this invitation was the fact that he was asked to go without his guards, so he would be escorted and protected by Chinese officials. Thousands of people went to the Norbulingka on 10 March, 1959, trying to persuade the Dalai Lama not to go to that play. As a result, the Chinese officials started to get very anxious, to the extent that General Tan Kuan-sen suggested taking the Dalai Lama to the general's headquarters for his own security. The Dalai Lama wanted to buy some time and gave a conciliatory reply, which was repeated two more times in response to later letters from the general.

After further mobilizations of the Chinese militia, the Dalai Lama went to consult the Nechung Oracle to ask whether he should stay or escape due to the imminent threat to himself and the Tibetans surrounding the palace. After three consultations the oracle told him to leave, and the Dalai Lama escaped from the palace in a soldier's uniform, with a rifle and an old *thangka*<sup>196</sup> that had belonged to the

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194 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 223.

195 Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile*, 88-89.

196 Tibetan silk painting with embroidery depicting Buddhist images such as deities, cosmology and scenes of Shakyamuni's life.

Second Dalai Lama. He headed south without being noticed, and so began his life in exile in India. While in Tezpur, he declared,

On March 17, two or three mortar shells were fired in the direction of Norbulingka Palace. Fortunately the shells fell in a nearby pond. After this, the advisers became alive to the danger to the person of the Dalai Lama, members of his family and his high officials to leave Lhasa. The Dalai Lama would like to state categorically that he left Lhasa and Tibet and came to India of his own free will and not under duress.<sup>197</sup>

His first two major proclamations were to repudiate the Seventeen Point Agreement and to create the Tibetan Government in Exile with a new structure and new rules. On 18 April, 1959, the Dalai Lama issued a document in which he explained how the Seventeen Point Agreement was signed under duress and, therefore, was null and void. In that statement he not only stressed the point that the signing took place under pressure but also that the Chinese had agreed to respect religious liberty and the autonomous administrative posts in Tibet. He declared:

In 1951 under pressure from the Chinese Government a 17-point agreement was made between China and Tibet. In that agreement the suzerainty of China was accepted as there was no alternative left to the Tibetans. But even in the agreement it was stated that Tibet would enjoy full autonomy. Though the control of external events was to be in the hand of the Chinese government it was agreed that there would be no interference by the Chinese government in the Tibetan religion and customs and in their internal administration.<sup>198</sup>

### **Politics of Hatred in Tibet**

As expected, years later the communist invasion in Tibet was completed with a high degree of suffering for the Tibetan people both in Tibet and outside. Continuous violations of human rights have been reported, but China uses its 'rights of sovereignty' to administer its territory independently. Furthermore, the Chinese Communist Party had used the 'Tibet Question' as an example to all minority groups in China who may

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197 Gong and Ling, 'Document 81: The Dalai Lama Issues Statement in Tezpur, India,' in *Tibet 1950-1967*, 376-377.

198 Gong and Ling, 'Document 81: The Dalai Lama Issues Statement in Tezpur, India,' in *Tibet 1950-1967*, 375.

think about raising their voices to ask for cultural respect or, even worse, independence. Therefore, China wants to avoid a 'domino effect', thinking that if Tibet achieves a certain level of autonomy it could then turn into an independence movement that would spread to other minority groups, mainly to Inner Mongolia in the east and Xinjiang in the west. Thus, China has used oppressive and violent means to rule within Tibet and also what Joseph Nye labelled 'soft power' in the rest of its territory and outside. This strategy of soft power 'rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others' through certain policies in education, culture, political discourse, foreign policy and mass media.<sup>199</sup>

From the religious point of view, the Chinese government saw a need to eradicate the element which was keeping Tibet at such a low level of development: religion. Following Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism, the government considered the religious worldview as idealistic and preferred to explain society's development through materialist factors. It is interesting to note that their critique of religion was more related to monotheistic religions, especially Christianity, than to Buddhism, which again shows an attachment to the idea of Western domination and also a misinterpretation of those religions. This can be seen in the following statement by Chu Ch'ing in 1959:

The religious outlook holds that all happenings are purely accidental; they are the expression of the actions of God, the true lord or a certain god. Thus, religion denies the possibility of man understanding the laws of nature and society; it opposes science and promotes superstitions and places man in a helpless position with regard to all things. Religion also paralyzes the people by the so-called heaven and hell after death which do not exist, so that the people delude themselves with the dream of going to heaven, endure oppression and hardships in a class society and give up the struggle and labour for the collective interests of humanity.<sup>200</sup>

Following this argument 'communists are of the opinion that religion is a fetter imposed on the labouring people, a kind of poor spiritual wine, and an opiate of the people'.<sup>201</sup> They even show a lack of knowledge regarding the basic characteristics of

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199 See *Witness to Tibet: News Reports on Tibet* (Beijing: New Star Publishers, 2003).

200 Gong and Ling, 'Document 49: Communists are Complete Atheists', in *Tibet 1950-1967*, 244.

201 Gong and Ling, 'Document 49: Communists are Complete Atheists', in *Tibet 1950-1967*, 244.



the *Bodhisattva*, the Buddhist ideal that the Dalai Lama also represents and which is related to having compassion for all sentient beings, by asserting that: ‘all religions preach that the most important thing for each individual is to ‘save his own soul to enable himself to enter heaven.’ This will then tempt the people to depart from the collective interests and even oppose collective interests’.<sup>202</sup> This document summarizes the Communist Party’s attitude toward religion by saying that: ‘all citizens have freedom of religious belief. But to the Party and to Party members it is not a private affair. A communist must necessarily be a complete atheist’.<sup>203</sup> The message was simple, if you want to be part of this new system, you must be an atheist; if you wish to become the enemy of the Party then you will suffer the consequences. This approach was not restricted to Tibet but was applied to other regions with similar problems of cultural genocide such as Inner Mongolia, whose first Secretary of the Communist Party Committee of that Autonomous Region Ulanfu declared,

Dwelling on the relations between religion and politics, Ulanfu said that in the past the lamaists had served the old society. This was to say that they had served the interests of the feudal lords. Now that the social system had changed and the Inner Mongolians, together with other peoples of the whole country, had taken the socialist road, whom should the lamaists serve? Ulanfu answered his own question by saying that anyone who did not wish to become an enemy of the people must serve socialism.<sup>204</sup>

Conversely, there had also been independent reports regarding the situation in Tibet, which clearly show an urgent necessity to work for the protection of human rights in the region. For example, the *International Commission of Jurists* of 1960 reported that the Commission ‘found that acts of genocide had been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group, and that such acts are acts of genocide independently of any conventional obligation’.<sup>205</sup> Although they did not find sufficient proof of a complete destruction of the Tibetan race, the Commission did find elements of what is called cultural genocide. They state four facts in relation to this:

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202 Gong and Ling, ‘Document 49: Communists are Compete Atheists’, in *Tibet 1950-1967*, 245.

203 Gong and Ling, ‘Document 49: Communists are Compete Atheists,’ in *Tibet 1950-1967*, 247.

204 Gong and Ling, ‘Document 47: Lamas Must take the Socialist Road’ in *Tibet 1950-1967*, 233.

205 Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet, ‘Report to the Secretary General,’ in *Tibet and the Chinese People’s Republic: a Report to the International Commission of Jurists* (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1960), 3.

1. That the Chinese will not permit adherence to and practice of Buddhism in Tibet;
2. That they have systemically set out to eradicate this religious belief in Tibet;
3. That in pursuit of this design they have killed religious figures because their religious belief and practice was an encouragement and example to others;
4. That they have forcibly transferred large numbers of Tibetan children to Chinese materialist environment in order to prevent them from having a religious upbringing.<sup>206</sup>

Thus, the Commission found that economic and social rights had been violated by the Chinese authorities in Tibet. Moreover, considering the Seventeen Point Agreement of 1951, the Committee found that its repudiation by the Tibetan Government in 1959 was justified. The report mentioned how a number of promises such as maintaining the existing political system of Tibet, the status and function of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, the protection of religious freedom and the monasteries had not been respected. Therefore 'the Committee found that these and other undertakings had been violated by the Chinese People's Republic, and that the Government of Tibet was entitled to repudiate the Agreement as it did on March 11, 1959'.<sup>207</sup> Despite this verdict, the Chinese government had denied all these facts and the Dalai Lama, with the power of truth in his mind, had been trying to find a long-lasting resolution of this situation in peaceful terms.

Other sources for the acknowledgment of the situation in Tibet after the communist occupation are the refugees' testimonies. Regarding the campaign to diminish religious influence in Tibetan society, Gyakar Gompo Namgyal stated that 'many monasteries were emptied of all their valuables and then demolished. Any person who was seen or heard muttering prayers or telling beads was severely flogged and imprisoned'.<sup>208</sup> In addition, they had to memorize textbooks on 'The Stages of Socialism' and to remember the 'four oppositions': opposition to religion, opposition to

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206 Legal Inquiry committee on Tibet, 'Report to the Secretary General', in *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, 3.

207 Legal Inquiry committee on Tibet, 'Report to the Secretary General', in *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, 4.

208 'Statement of Gyakar Gompo Namgyal', in *Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule: A Compilation of Refugee Statements 1958-1975* (Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1976), 23.

personal power, opposition to privileges and opposition to counter-revolutionaries.<sup>209</sup> This ban on religion is also reflected in the following statement of Ashang Lobsang Jhampa:

The Chinese are still claiming that they are allowing freedom of religion in Tibet. However, they forbid people to pray and present offering to the images saying that those are empty and useless deeds. The prisoners as well as the common people are forced to kill rats, flies, birds, dogs and insects and deliver them to the Chinese authorities.<sup>210</sup>

Therefore, the violation of the Five Precepts of Buddhism<sup>211</sup> (non- injury, avoiding theft and cheating, avoiding sexual misconduct, avoiding lying and other forms of wrong speech and sobriety), were systematically forced on Buddhist Tibetans. Some children were forced to kill their parents when they were found to have religious images and were suspected of being counter-revolutionaries in disguise. In addition, Chomphel Sonam stated that ‘in Lhasa, Lamayupas (Tantric monks) and nuns were forced to have sexual intercourse in front of the Central Cathedral. I came to know many monks and nuns who were forcefully recruited into the Chinese cultural troupes and then persuaded to break their vows of celibacy’.<sup>212</sup> There are many sources that tell the story of different abuses and violations of basic human right in Tibet, and despite promises of help, the international community had not taken any relevant measures to stop this abuse. Therefore, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, seeing all this suffering from exile, had to think of a plan that served to benefit the Tibetan people and the Chinese as well. A violent movement was never an option, so following the Buddhist teachings of non-violence and compassion, a new chapter of this turbulent relationship between Tibet, the Tibetan government in exile and China was about to begin.

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209 ‘Statement of Gyakar Gompo Namgyal’, in *Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule*, 27.

210 ‘Statement of Ashang Lobsang Jhampa’, in *Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule*, 62.

211 Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 69-77.

212 ‘Statement of Chomphel Sonam,’ in *Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule*, 87.

## Wisdom and Compassion: the Way of the *Bodhisattva* in Modern World

### The 'Middle Way'

Just as the Buddha taught the Middle Way between nihilism and materialism, ascetism and hedonism, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama also established a 'Middle Way' approach toward the Tibet issue. Manjushri explained the Middle Way declared by the Buddha as the avoidance of two extreme views: 'one is the view of eternalism, maintaining that defilements exist; the other is the view of nihilism, maintaining that defilements do not exist. World Honoured One, he who practices rightly sees no such things as self or other, existence or nonexistence. Why? Because he clearly comprehends all dharmas'.<sup>213</sup> Thus, the Dalai Lama contemplated two extremes concerning Tibet: accept communist rule despite the destruction of Tibetan culture in order to save some lives, or fight for independence even when facing a much more powerful army, thus sacrificing many lives in the process.

At first, the Dalai Lama opted to call for an independent Tibet in his first years of exile in India. But in 1970 he realized that this was an extreme position that in real terms could not bring positive results but only an extreme attachment to an ideal, a territory and even a culture without considering the losses or benefits to the Chinese, who are also human beings who seek to end suffering. Therefore, he visualized the Middle-Way Approach, which was then developed for the Tibetans as 'the protection and preservation of their [Tibetan] culture, religion and national identity; for the Chinese: the security and territorial integrity of the motherland; and for neighbours and other third parties: peaceful borders and international relations'.<sup>214</sup>

This new internationalist approach gives a vision of a new configuration of the Asian continent, when Tibet could regain its position as a buffer between the most populated countries with increasing military capabilities, namely: Russia, China and India. The 'buffer' is defined as 'a state or mini-complex *within* a security complex and standing at the centre of a strong pattern of securitization, whose role is to separate rival

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213 'Sutra of The Demonstration of the Inconceivable State of Buddhahood', in *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*, 29.

214 Dalai Lama, 'His Holiness 'Middle Way Approach for Resolving the Issue of Tibet', Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.225.htm>) accessed May 12, 2009).

powers.’<sup>215</sup> This task is related to the insulator, but the major difference is that the buffers’ function ‘is defined by standing at the centre of a strong pattern of securitisation, not at its edge’.<sup>216</sup>

### **The Five Point Peace Plan**

This Middle-Way strategy proposed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is the new model that could contribute to a harmonious relationship between China and Tibet: a new understanding that cannot be regarded as the continuation of a system that no longer fulfils the characteristics of the Dharma Lord-Worldly King bond of the past but rather one that replaces it according to the new conditions of relative international and domestic reality. This new relationship should be guided by mutual respect between a powerful state and an Autonomous Region, within that larger state, recognizing the ‘common humanity’ which integrates the right of freedom of speech, religion and movement. It implies the recognition of the ‘Motherland’ as a pluralist state not only in discourse but in *praxis*, with full respect of culture and religious manifestations, including the right to have a religious leader such as the Dalai Lama.

Hence, the Tibetan issue is highly important on the domestic level as well as for international relations between the states and regions around Tibet due to its geopolitical location. This international relevance is even higher because ‘the special characteristic of the Middle-Way Approach is that it can achieve peace through non-violence, mutual benefit, unity of nationalities and social stability’<sup>217</sup> which can set an example for future conflict resolution in similar conditions. It is clear that this position does not seek independence or separation; the Middle-Way Approach seeks to stay within the People’s Republic of China as an autonomous region or a mini-complex with full protection of its heritage and culture, but not with the sovereign status of an independent state.

This Middle Way was systematized in a five-point plan of action intended to protect the lives of thousands of Tibetans as well as their ancient culture, a plan which could lead to the peaceful reconciliation of Tibet and China. This was presented on 21

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215 Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 489.

216 Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*, 41.

217 Dalai Lama, ‘His Holiness ‘Middle Way Approach for Resolving the Issue of Tibet’’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.225.htm> (accessed 12 May, 2009).

September, 1987 at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in Washington, D.C., and is known as the ‘Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet’.<sup>218</sup> It includes: a) transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace; b) abandonment of China’s population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people; c) respect for the Tibetan people’s fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms; d) restoration and protection of Tibet’s natural environment and the abandonment of China’s use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste; e) commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

Regarding the last point, since 2002 there have been six rounds of talks with only minor achievements, but at least these talks demonstrate the will to continue the dialogue that can lead to a peaceful resolution. The Dalai Lama considers that ‘they try to build confidence. So each visit certainly makes some contribution regarding building up confidence. So that’s my view’.<sup>219</sup>

Therefore, this approach relies mainly on having a political entity that comprises the three traditional Tibetan provinces—Kham, Amdo and U-Tsang—and not only the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region. This new entity should have a national regional autonomy, which would be governed by a democratically elected legislature and executive and would include an independent judicial system.<sup>220</sup> Being an integral part of the People’s Republic of China and therefore with no threat of independence movements, Tibet could be transformed into a zone of peace and non-violence while security and international relations would be the responsibility of the motherland’s government. Tibet would manage other affairs such as religion and culture, education, economy, health and ecological and environmental protection in accordance also with the development projects of the whole country striving for an integral development not only for economic profit but for social welfare as well. As the Dalai Lama explains,

Under international law, this new Tibet would also be part of the People’s Republic of China, which would remain responsible for foreign and security policy. If

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218 Dalai Lama, ‘Address to the U.S. Congressional Human Right’s Caucus’, Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.121.htm> (accessed 9 May, 2009).

219 Dugdale, *The Unwinking Gaze*, DVD.

220 Dalai Lama, ‘His Holiness ‘Middle Way Approach for Resolving the Issue of Tibet’’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.225.htm> (accessed May 12, 2009).

Beijing would agree to such a model, I can guarantee that we would no longer have such unrest and such a crisis as we have now.<sup>221</sup>

The consequences of this Middle Way approach for the security of the region would be an improvement because it would be an integration-driven policy, where one sovereign territory would be able to respect the plurality among its people which, ultimately, is the most important component for the state's security. With this issue currently unresolved, China is still wasting too many economic resources trying to keep people in ignorance of the Tibetan issue and other democratic policies around the world, and its campaign of bullying every country that receives the Dalai Lama also deteriorates China's position in the world order. If China desires to be recognized as the world's leader, it will not be enough to achieve economic development; China needs to have social legitimacy, which begins with the protection of basic human rights within its borders. Therefore, this approach is for the benefit of all parties and, ultimately, in the interdependent relations of everything and everyone, it is for the sake of the world.

These policies are derived from a Buddhist interpretation of the world and the Buddha's teachings which can be expressed in two sentences: 'you must help others' and 'if not, you should not harm others'.<sup>222</sup> The first teaching is found in the *Mahayana* path and the second in the *Theravada*. Both are rooted in compassion toward others, following the idea of interdependence and the ever-changing quality of existence which can be transformed from one driven by suffering and despair, into one of peace and loving-kindness. It is within this interdependent relation that the Tibetan issue is important not only for Tibetans but also for the rest of the world. The protection of the Tibetan rights is ultimately part of the protection of human rights in all parts of the world, which is why the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's struggle for freedom was recognized internationally by his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

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221 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 222.

222 Dalai Lama, 'A Talk to Western Buddhists', in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, ed. Sidney Piburn (New York: Snow Lion, 1993), 82.

## The International Advocate of ‘Common Humanity’ and ‘Universal Responsibility’

In his Nobel Prize Lecture, the Dalai Lama stated the need to work for a better world, one rooted in compassion, tolerance and mutual help. If we recognize our similar human nature, he said, all differences of colour of skin, language and ideology can be easily overcome. In addition, we are human beings who want to be happy, who want to get rid of suffering, which is another common feature among all sentient beings, not only humans. Thus, ‘because we all share this small planet Earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. That is not just a dream, but a necessity’.<sup>223</sup>

Having recognized our common humanity and a shared responsibility for the survival of all sentient beings, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama called for a ‘Universal Responsibility’. He affirmed that ‘as individuals and nations are becoming increasingly interdependent we have no other choice than to develop what I call a sense of universal responsibility. Today we are truly a global family’.<sup>224</sup> This concept of ‘universal responsibility’ relies heavily on the need to have a clear awareness of the problems of the world and how they are a consequence of unwholesome actions driven by hatred, greed and anger:

What is entailed, therefore, is not an admission of guilt but, again, a reorientation of our heart and mind away from self and toward others. To develop a sense of universal responsibility—of the universal dimension of our every act and of the equal right of all others to happiness and not to suffer—is to develop an attitude of mind whereby, when we see an opportunity to benefit others, we will take it in preference to merely looking after our own narrow interests.<sup>225</sup>

Accordingly, the Dalai Lama believes that ‘basic human nature is gentleness, gentleness based on that kind of human affection [mother to child]. If your minds remain calm, compassionate, and open-minded, the physical condition remains healthy’.<sup>226</sup> Thus, if every individual has a compassionate mind as a transformation for

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223 Dalai Lama, ‘The Nobel Prize Lecture’, in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, 15.

224 Dalai Lama, ‘The Nobel Prize Lecture’, in *The Dalai Lama: a Policy of Kindness*, 16.

225 Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium*, 162-163.

226 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 203.



the good, the sum of individual efforts will construct a new reality, one rooted in the values of justice, love and compassion. The interdependent relation of the universe makes it possible to change our relative reality according to the nature or intention of every thought and action; therefore there is hope for a positive change in the ‘future present’.

As human beings need a reminder of their compassionate nature, religions can provide the antidote for the ‘poisons’ that have covered it. Thus, through awareness, analytical meditation and altruistic thoughts and actions the human mind can eliminate greed, hatred and anger. It is then clear that ‘through the various religious systems, followers are assuming a salutary attitude toward their fellow humans—our brothers and sisters—and implementing this good motivation in the service of human society’.<sup>227</sup> And more importantly, in order to achieve an interreligious dialogue that paves the way toward long-lasting peace, one must remember that ‘philosophical teachings are not the end, not the aim, not what you serve. The aim is to help and benefit others, and philosophical teachings to support those ideas are valuable ... Better to look at the purpose of the philosophies and to see what is shared—an emphasis on love, compassion, and respect for a higher force’.<sup>228</sup> This does not mean that we should have a single world religion, but instead, we should be delighted in the richness of traditions and rituals of world religions and how they proclaim the compassionate path toward peace and liberation. On the question of whether politics and religion should be mixed, the Dalai Lama clearly states,

You see, by itself there is nothing wrong with it, but it is dependent on the motivation or the behaviour of those who are involved in politics. Even in religion, if the motivation is not genuine, religion becomes dirty. On the other hand, when the individual in politics acts with sincere motivation, it is spiritual practice. So from my perspective, every human action that is conducted with sincere, honest motivation can be considered a spiritual activity. When Dharma becomes an

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227 Dalai Lama, ‘Cooperation Among World Religions’, in *The Dalai Lama: a Policy of Kindness*, 55.

228 Dalai Lama, ‘Cooperation among World Religions’, in *The Dalai Lama: a Policy of Kindness*, 55.

individual's way of life, whatever that person might be involved in—politics or religion—it works for the benefit of others.<sup>229</sup>

Accordingly, the Dalai Lama believes that if politics were carried out by religious-minded people, there would be healthier politics. It is very important to highlight that the tensions between religion and politics are more related to institutions rather than to an inherent contraposition of goals. There can be found in both religion and politics a similar interest for the benefit of all beings; it is not necessary to enter into a competition for power but to cooperate for the sake of spiritual and economic welfare. For example, there are state policies offer benefits in different material aspects such as employment, health care and security. At the same time, religion deals with the spiritual welfare of beings, and the more spiritually balanced they are, the more healthier and more compassionate policies can be introduced. So it could be a healthy relationship. The Dalai Lama affirms,

From my own experience in dealing with official duties, I see where people can be hurt or helped, and I know that I must be careful and do what is correct by Dharma. A religious belief is very helpful to maintain honesty. Moreover, the experience I gain from practical areas benefits me religiously. I don't know how it will be in the future, but for now, the dual responsibility is very helpful.<sup>230</sup>

Thus, he is an advocate of *Engaged Buddhism*, a Buddhist-inspired movement that seeks to find peace through non-violence and freedom rooted in compassion, which was explained in the first chapter. The approaches of universal responsibility and *Engaged Buddhism* are based on the recognition of a common humanity. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama has pointed out that in order to develop a true sense of compassion and altruism one should recognize our 'sameness as human beings. We all belong to one human family. That we quarrel with each other is due to secondary reasons, and all of this arguing with each other cheating each other, suppressing each

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229 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 198.

230 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 197.

other is of no use'.<sup>231</sup> Therefore the Dalai Lama calls for compassion between brothers and sisters in the great family living on this planet.

One core idea of his approach to 'common humanity' is the mutual recognition of the right to overcome suffering and, ultimately, achieve happiness. From the first moment in this existence as a human being, one 'wants happiness and does not want suffering. Neither social conditioning nor education nor ideology affects this. From the very core of our being, we simply desire contentment'.<sup>232</sup> Following the Buddhist idea of interdependence the Dalai Lama argues that 'it is because our own human existence is so dependent on the help of others that our need for love lies at the very foundation of our existence. Therefore we need a genuine sense of responsibility and a sincere concern for the welfare of others'.<sup>233</sup>

Therefore, with this recognition of the same nature among human beings, peace and happiness are not an ideal anymore, but something achievable and, moreover, necessary. The Dalai Lama explains this correlation as follows:

Through accustoming your mind to this sense of universal altruism, you develop a feeling of responsibility for others; the wish to help them actively overcome their problems. Nor is this wish selective; it applies equally to all. As long as they are human beings experiencing pleasure and pain just as you do, there is no logical basis to discriminate between them or to alter your concern for them if they behave negatively.<sup>234</sup>

Following this idea, a true sense of brotherhood and sisterhood can be developed in the world while, at the same time, external differences such as language, colour of skin, gender and religion will be taken as part of the richness and diversity of our same nature as human beings. Accordingly, His Holiness asserts,

Whether one is educated or uneducated, rich or poor, or belongs to this nation or that nation, this religion or that religion, this ideology or that ideology, is secondary and doesn't matter. When we return to this basis, all people are the same. Then we

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231 Dalai Lama, 'Kindness and Compassion', in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, 48.

232 Dalai Lama, 'Compassion and the Individual', Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.62.htm> (accessed 10, May 2009).

233 Dalai Lama, 'Compassion and the Individual', Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.62.htm> (accessed May 10, 2009).

234 Dalai Lama, 'Compassion and the Individual', Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.62.htm> (accessed 10 May, 2009).

can truly say the words *brother, sister*; then they are not just nice words—they have some meaning. That kind of motivation automatically builds the practice of kindness. This gives us inner strength.<sup>235</sup>

It is that inner strength that helps individuals to overcome the veils of ignorance that have created the illusion of a separation between the ‘self’ and ‘others’, based on external differences. Thus, ‘when we put too much emphasis on superficial differences, and on account of them make even small, rigid discriminations, we cannot avoid bringing additional suffering both for ourselves and others. This makes no sense. We human already have enough problems’.<sup>236</sup> The most logical step to take, for the benefit of all, is to recognize our common nature and our need to overcome suffering and achieve happiness. Otherwise, ‘if we selfishly pursue only what we believe to be in our own interest, without caring about the needs of others, we not only may end up harming others but also ourselves’.<sup>237</sup> Therefore, the best option is to help us by helping others, or help others while helping ourselves, in an interdependent relation based in our common humanity. This would have an instant positive impact in individuals’ lives and, consequently, on any other sphere in society, including international relations.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, individuals’ have the capacity to construct their own reality and shape the character of every relation in society, from interpersonal to international relations among institutions and states. The Dalai Lama affirms that ‘individual happiness can contribute in a profound and effective way to the overall improvement of our entire human community’<sup>238</sup> if one can recognize that all human beings share the same need to overcome suffering and achieve happiness. So far, humanity has failed to accomplish this recognition and we can see the results of this failure in major conflicts in the international arena. The Dalai Lama argues,

These conflicts arise from a failure to understand one another’s humanness. The answer is not the development and use of great military force, nor an arms race. Nor is it purely political or purely technological. Basically it is spiritual, in the

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235 Dalai Lama, ‘The Nobel Evening Address’, in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, 112.

236 Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium*, 163.

237 Dalai Lama, ‘The Nobel Prize Lecture’, in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, 16.

238 Dalai Lama, ‘Religious Harmony’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.10.htm> (accessed May 10, 2009).

sense that what is required is a sensitive understanding of ours common human situation.<sup>239</sup>

This lack of recognition of our common humanity leads individuals to seek their welfare at the expense of others, without taking into account that ‘every action which is destructive is against human nature. Constructiveness is the human way. Therefore, I think that in terms of basic human feeling, violence is not good. Nonviolence is the only way’.<sup>240</sup> In an interdependent world, every action has repercussions of the same nature as the previous action. This *karmatic* relationship means that if one action is driven by selfishness and hatred, the consequence will also be selfishness and hatred, even if the short-term outcome seems to be a positive one. Thus, ‘although we may solve one problem, we simultaneously seed a new problem. The best to solve problems is through human understanding, mutual respect’.<sup>241</sup> The path of non-violence in international relations brings safer and more desirable long-term consequences.

Although there have been major developments in protecting human rights under the idea of our common humanity, this has not been complemented with a true commitment from individuals and nations to fulfil this goal. This lack of commitment has produced more conflicts and despair. The Dalai Lama calls for a true practice of those values and not only their use as political tools to gain power or recognition, because ‘as much as we praise diversity in theory, unfortunately often we fail to respect in practice. In fact, our inability to embrace diversity becomes a major source of conflict among peoples.’<sup>242</sup> He adds, ‘the most important field in which to sow the seeds of greater altruism is international relations’.<sup>243</sup>

In a continuously shrinking world, there is a great opportunity to strive for cooperation in equal terms and to gain the benefits of living harmoniously in this interdependent context. However, ‘especially in the conduct of international relations we pay very little respect to truth. Inevitably, weaker nations are manipulated and

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239 Dalai Lama, ‘A Human Approach to World Peace’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.62.htm> [accessed May 10, 2009]

240 Dalai Lama, ‘The Nobel Evening Address’, in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, 114.

241 Dalai Lama, ‘The Nobel Evening Address’, in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, 114.

242 Dalai Lama, ‘Speech of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the European Parliament, Strasbourg’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama. <http://www.dalailama.com/page.99.htm> (accessed 10 May 2009).

243 Dalai Lama, ‘The Global Community’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.75.htm> (accessed 10 May 2009).

oppressed by stronger ones, just as the weaker sections of most societies suffer at the hand of the more affluent powerful.’<sup>244</sup> This just causes more suffering and hatred, wherein violent movements such as terrorism find their seed to flourish. Thus, there is a need to work for peace, equality, justice and the protection of human rights in order to achieve long-lasting peace that, ultimately, refers to humanity’s survival. Hence, as the Dalai Lama points out, ‘injustice undermines truth, and without truth there can be no lasting peace’.<sup>245</sup> Furthermore, ‘peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free. True peace with ourselves and with the world around us can only be achieved through the development of mental peace’.<sup>246</sup>

Just as a doctor needs to recognize the problem in order to prescribe the medicine, the Dalai Lama recognizes the root of conflict and suffering in the world and gives the answer to alleviate that condition working with a true commitment for the benefit of all beings. There is hope for the future because ‘in the past, the simple expression of truth has usually been dismissed as unrealistic, but these last few years have proved that it is an immense force in the human mind, and, as a result, in the shaping of history’.<sup>247</sup> This reinforces the idea of the responsibility of individuals to shape their own reality, having in their hands the destiny of their own lives and the future of international relations, whether as violent or peaceful.

Therefore, this call for the recognition of ‘common humanity’ is focused on a transformation of individuals’ minds that, consequently, can shape the future of international relations. The Dalai Lama argues, ‘I, for one, truly believe that individuals can make a difference in society. Since periods of great change such as the present one come so rarely in human history, it is up to each of use to make the best use of our time to help create a happier world’.<sup>248</sup> The sum of individual efforts toward peace and altruism will definitely have a positive impact on the world order. This interrelation

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244Dalai Lama, ‘The Global Community’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.75.htm> (accessed 10 May 2009).

245 The Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium*, 206.

246 Dalai Lama, ‘The Noble Prize Lecture’, in *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness*, 17.

247Dalai Lama, ‘Buddhism and Democracy’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.62.htm> (accessed 10 May 2009).

248 Dalai Lama, ‘The Global Community’, Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.75.htm> (accessed 10 May 2009).

between individuals' efforts and international impact is stated by His Holiness as follows:

We each have a role to play in this. When, as individuals, we disarm ourselves internally—through countering our negative thoughts and emotions and cultivating positives qualities—we create the conditions for external disarmament. Indeed. Genuine, lasting world peace will only be possible as a result of each of us making an effort internally.<sup>249</sup>

This approach to world affairs is the corollary of a deep religious practice and commitment from the Dalai Lama as the embodiment of the compassion of the Buddha, which can be said to be a 'Compassion Theology'. This compassionate interpretation of the world can be summarized in four points: 1) universal humanitarianism is essential to solve global problems; 2) compassion is the pillar of world peace; 3) all world religions are already for world peace in this way, as are all humanitarians of whatever ideology; 4) each individual has a universal responsibility to shape institutions to serve human needs.<sup>250</sup> Following the idea of the possibility of re-creating this relative reality in light of a new understanding of the relationship between all sentient beings, humanity has a real chance and great responsibility of building a new covenant based on compassion, interdependence and non-self.

### **Dalai Lama's Threefold Mission**

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, as he has continuously stated, can be seen from three different perspectives: as a human being, as a Buddhist monk and as a Tibetan. Throughout this chapter we have also seen him theologically, as the embodiment of *Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara*, and we have seen this understanding brought new light to the previous three facets of this world leader. From the perspective of a human being he has developed the concept of 'Universal Responsibility' based in the recognition of our 'common humanity', which stresses individuals' roles in building a better world through a positive inner development that can transform society for the better. Furthermore, in an interdependent world, such a society would create better and more compassionate

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249 Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium*, 206.

250 Dalai Lama, 'A Human Approach to World Peace', Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.62.htm> (accessed 10 May 2009).

institutions that, ultimately, would also lead to fair and wholesome international relations. Accordingly, the Dalai Lama states,

Human rights, environmental protection and social and economic equality are all inter-related. In all these issues, I believe a sense of universal responsibility is the key to human survival and progress. It is also the best foundation for world peace and promotion of human rights and political culture of non-violence and dialogue in resolving human conflicts.<sup>251</sup>

From the perspective of a Buddhist monk the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has been a world ambassador for the *Dharma* and a true practitioner of interfaith dialogue. He has been the ambassador of Buddhism and the carrier of the living torch of Tibetan culture that has spread through the world. The Dalai Lama's life and work evidences a master plan of Avalokiteshvara in order to keep Buddhism alive as well as a compassionate medicine for the deluded minds in this time, where materialism and selfishness dominates human minds. With regard to materialism and selfishness, the Dalai Lama stresses the urge to re-value the importance of spirituality, by stating that 'in fact, I believe that as more and more material progress takes place, the limitations of materialist values will also become clearer. Under such circumstances, the value of spirituality will also become clearer, more significant'.<sup>252</sup> This master plan of compassion also states the importance of having a true cooperation among religions, focusing on their similarities toward world harmony, which is no longer an ideal but a necessity. Therefore, pluralism in religious doctrines and communities will contribute to a universal commitment toward religiosity, ethical and moral conduct between human beings who recognize their mutual right to eliminate suffering and enjoy their lives.

Finally, as a Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama has taken on the task of building a *Middle Way* approach in order to fulfil the expectations of Tibetans and the Chinese in a non-violent way. Following the first of the Five Precepts, he is committed to continue working for the benefit of beings in this life and the next. By preventing a violent upsurge, he reassures his people that no Tibetan will die in great suffering at the hand of

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251 Dalai Lama, 'Message on the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights', Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, <http://www.dalailama.com/page.42.htm> (accessed 10 May, 2009).

252 Mehrotra, *All You Ever Wanted to Know from His Holiness The Dalai Lama on Happiness, Life, Living, and Much More*, 197.



a Chinese person, who would in so doing commit an unwholesome action. Also, by preventing Tibetans from killing the Chinese, he has prevented them from having a lower rebirth as a consequence of taking life.

His role as the Tibetan political leader in exile has had a high impact on international relations regarding the role of China in the international community where, despite its economic development, it lacks recognition in such important issues such as human rights, political freedom and ethical conduct within and outside its borders. In addition, the international support received by the Dalai Lama, such as the honorary citizenships given by countries such as Canada (9 September 2006) and more recently the city of Paris (7 June, 2009) are signs of how the world still believes in the *Middle Way* approach regarding the Tibetan issue and the need to build trust and respect between different actors in international relations. While the Chinese government still labelled these actions as ‘reactionary’ and ‘harmful’ for future relationships with China, there are also governments that are working in light of a true commitment to healthier and safer international relations based on truth and understanding, rather than confrontation and lies. Hopefully, the international community will work toward this goal with more commitment and will help China to understand the mutual benefit of the proposal made by His Holiness.

In conclusion, by focusing on the particularities of Tibetan Buddhism, the relevance of core theological concepts within the Buddhist tradition and the historical role of the Dalai Lamas in Tibet, we have a better understanding of the role and work of Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. His life is a reminder of the possibility of a harmonious relationship between religion and politics and the ways in which the former can positively influence and bring new light to the understanding of political events, which cannot be explained only in terms of economic profit, political power gains, or mere historical description. This holistic view, based on a theological approach, enlightens the understanding of this world leader, strengthens the commitment to universal responsibility and brings hope for a brighter future. This is why he is considered a leading voice of *Engaged Buddhism* and a world-renowned religious peacemaker aiming to improve the living conditions of all sentient beings.

This peaceful approach of a religious leader who applies his or her particular theological understanding of the world for the benefit of others, is also shared by the

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He is also an example of working toward reconciliation through forgiveness and recognition of a common human nature. He has been an ambassador of peace and understanding, stressing the idea of brotherhood and mutual recognition of the same divine nature. His fight for freedom in South Africa became a quest for spiritual introspection toward compassionate integration in the world, which helps to overcome the emphasis on our differences and stress the recognition of our true nature. Therefore, this commitment to unselfish work, which can be seen in the life and work of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as well as in the next chapter with the ‘rainbow of justice’ of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, is brilliantly described in Shantideva’s words: ‘As long as space endures, as long as there are beings to be found, may I continue likewise to remain to drive away the sorrows of the world’.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Shantideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, 171.

# IV

## BUILDING BRIDGES OF JUSTICE:

### ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU AND GOD'S DREAM IN SOUTH AFRICA

The call for action in order to construct a world based on compassion, ethics and the recognition of a common humanity has been put into practice by several leaders around the world. Among those leaders that transcended the boundaries of their own homelands in a similar way to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is another Nobel Peace Prize Laureate: Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mphilo Tutu. His stature as a religious leader and role model for non-violent reconciliation through forgiveness, made a clear impact on the domestic and international political scenario in the last decades of the twentieth century making him one of the most influential religious peacemakers.

His call for action under Christian values against the oppressive apartheid regime and its crimes against humanity showed how religion can be a key element in the peace process even in such a powerful regime as that of apartheid in South Africa. Moreover, Tutu also called for an internal change in every individual in order to shape better and more just families, institutions and states, recalling the concept of 'universal responsibility' supported by the Dalai Lama as I have presented in the previous chapter.

In order to have a better understanding of the relevance of Tutu's work to domestic and international relations, I have divided this chapter into three major sections. The first one deals with the ideology of white superiority which was institutionalized when the National Party came to power in 1948 and established the 'apartheid' or separate development regime. In addition, I will explain how this separate

development was justified theologically, mainly by the support of the Dutch Reformed Church, and will also assess some of the most important legal acts supporting this strategy which set the context in which Desmond Tutu grew and later worked towards peace and reconciliation.

In the second section I will focus on Tutu's biography, stressing those events that helped him to construct his Middle Way of reconciliation, particularly the idea of being against apartheid but not in opposition to the white community. His continuous calls for action were given under the firm conviction of the immorality of apartheid and how the Liberator God<sup>254</sup> of the Exodus would lead the oppressed to victory for the benefit of all South Africans, a vision which was fulfilled in the 1994 election of Nelson Mandela. His non-violent liberation struggle was based on domestic pressure through his sermons and mobilizations, while on the international level he understood the interdependent relations between states and called for sanctions that eventually undermined the political, economic and moral stature of the apartheid regime.

In the last section, I will focus on Tutu's work as chairperson of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and how he provided the moral justification for such an initiative. In addition, I will present the ways in which Tutu urged people to support the reconciliation process that would eventually help to heal the nation from the wounds of hatred and suffering. In doing so, I will analyse how his theology finds resonance in the basic premises of the Buddhist Theology developed in this thesis and furthermore how it sets the conditions for developing the *Theology of International Relations* in the following chapter.

### **Politics of Hatred: Church and State's Acts of Apartheid**

The term 'apartheid' refers to a philosophy of separation that led to the formation of a particular political and legal system based on discrimination with a racial justification. Therefore, 'apartheid' was used to characterize the regime in South Africa from 1948 until, arguably, the first democratic elections in 1994. In order to show the main characteristics of this period I will stress the importance of the theological justification, the legal framework established through legal acts under different presidents and

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254 As in chapter two of this thesis, 'God' is used as part of the context of the subject explained here and not as an endorsement of his/her role in the Buddhist theological framework.

international support of this system. These categories will help to give a clear vision of the systematization of violence with theological justification and international ambivalence during the Cold War Era. Moreover, it will set the context for explaining the life and work of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the next section.

As I have stated before, apartheid was rooted in racial separation which also served the political ambitions of the ruling elite. One basic characteristic of it was 'the exclusion of the majority from participation in central government on the basis of colour'.<sup>255</sup> This separation of development and political and civil rights derived from the belief that every race had their own destiny and characteristics which had to be exploited wisely. Therefore, the government should guarantee different areas and spaces for this separate development: the mixing of races meant a threat to the divine order and to the interests of those races who were 'meant to rule' others. This separate development also portrayed a different political system within the same state. Robert Price and Carl Rosberg characterized it as follows:

In the West administrative states have been building up to provide for the national welfare; in South Africa such a state has been developed primarily to secure and uphold the dominance and privileges of a racial minority. The Whites enjoy a liberal-democratic substate, while the subordinated majority is ruled by a modern authoritarian state.<sup>256</sup>

Apartheid was also the political manifestation of a strong fear on the part of the white minority. Even with their claims of superiority, there was always the perception of a threat from the non-white majority and thus the need to take extreme measures to break the opposition by any means, even if this entailed crimes against humanity. It took policies of segregation to a new level of moral justification and political implacability never seen before. James Barber argues that apartheid appealed to faith and fear to guarantee its maintenance: 'faith that a resolution could be found to the problems of race relations while retaining white supremacy; fear that without authoritarian measures the white would be swamped'.<sup>257</sup> Therefore, the separateness of races in South Africa

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255 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 7.

256 Robert Price and Carl. G. Rosberg, Foreword to *The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Racial Domination*, ed. Robert Price and C.G. Rosbert (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1980), vii.

257 Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 140.

had one uniting factor, the rule of one race over the others. This oxymoronic system that claimed separateness while appealing to one ruling class-race elite was then maintained only through the implementation of policies of violence and fear. This fear, fed and demonstrated through violence, was the major root that strengthened the system and the favourite weapon of the ruling community.

Therefore, apartheid divided the non-white community into three well-characterized groups: Africans, Coloureds and Indians. The first term is used 'to refer to that section of the black community, the majority which is denied participation in central government and is assigned to Bantustan system'.<sup>258</sup> The term Indian referred to those categorized as 'Asian' and the Coloureds referred to different groups of people, 'including principally those whom they deem to be of descent that is mixed in terms of the categories of apartheid. Also included are those deemed to be of Malayan extraction, as well as descendants of the original inhabitants of the Cape, the Khoi and the San'.<sup>259</sup> Thus, the apartheid system worked on a basis of separation, insecurity, fear and racial domination that, along with a theological defence and political power, proved to be a clear demonstration of the politics of hatred, anger and ignorance of our common humanity. As we will see, the theological justification was a key element for the perpetuation of the system over many years.

### **The Church of Apartheid: Theological Justification of Separate Development**

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) or *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, provided the theological basis to rationalize and follow apartheid policies not only to the National Party but also to the rest of the white population who agreed to legitimize it. The DRC followed the Calvinist idea of predestination, which was used to justify white supremacy by claiming notions of 'the chosen' or 'the called' in the Old Testament. This idea of the 'chosen' had been developed since the time of the Great Boer Trek, the Boer War and the concentration camps where thousands of Afrikaners died. This tragic history, which led to what Dunbar Moodie calls the Afrikaner civil religion, was one in which 'God repeatedly revealed Himself to the Afrikaners as a chosen people'.<sup>260</sup>

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258 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 8.

259 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 8.

260 Hermann, Giliomee, 'The National Party and the Afrikaner Broederbond', in *The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Racial Domination*, 17.

evidenced by the fact that they were still together and now they had the chance to rule a land where their forefathers settled and built a small but strong community in the seventeenth century. Therefore, at the heart of apartheid is the notion of the Afrikaners as God's chosen people with an ordained calling or mission'.<sup>261</sup>

When the National Party came to power in 1948 and the apartheid was formally institutionalized, the DRC became the apologist in the theological foundations of such system. By doing so, 'the DRC not only provided that theology, it essentially provided the policy itself.'<sup>262</sup> Its particular interpretation of the Scriptures has been regarded as misled or, as Douglas Bax put it, instead of exegesis it is eisegesis, reading what is not there.<sup>263</sup>

The biblical foundation for idea of separate development, according to the DRC, can be found in Gn. 1:28, Gn. 11:1-9, Deut. 32:8, Ac. 2:5-13 and Ac. 17:26. It is particularly evident in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gn. 11:1-9), when God said, 'If, as one people all having the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come let Us go down there and confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech'.<sup>264</sup> Although this act is more closely related to the idea of teaching humanity to leave selfish dreams of false pride and arrogance that would lead them to fall into sin again, the theology of the DRC interpreted this as a calling to enforce and promote diversity at any cost, indicating also the commitment to a particular calling for every race and identifying this as part of their duty to fulfil God's will. Therefore, they interpret this act as a clear call to promote the separation of races, languages, cultures and identity in light of Scripture. Although they recognize the basic nature of all human beings as God's children, they also point out the differences in order to justify different plans for every race, with whites being the 'most blessed' race.

The most important reports of the DRC concerning the theology of apartheid are 'Human Relations in South Africa' and 'Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Lights of Scripture'. The first one, adopted by its General Synod in 1966 under

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261 Robert M. Price, 'Apartheid and White Supremacy: the Meaning of Government-led Reform in the South African Context', in *The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Racial Domination*, 299.

262 Johnston, 'The Churches and Apartheid in South Africa', 187.

263 Douglas Bax, 'The Bible and Apartheid II', in *Apartheid is a Heresy*, ed. John De Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1983), 114.

264 Gn. 11: 6-7 CSB

the name *Studie Sutkke oor Rasse Aangeleenthede* presents support for different laws approved by the National Party such as the Mixed Marriage Act (1949) and the Group Areas Act (1950) that led to migratory labour, to the detriment of non-white communities. In the report, it is established that ‘the Church must also be mindful to support rather than disturb the harmony of law which has to be achieved by the state’<sup>265</sup> while ‘criticism of specific, concrete actions for the authorities is not the normal order of things, except in those instances where the Church must be more obedient to God than to man’.<sup>266</sup> Instead of criticizing the racial policies of the government, the DRC justified them throughout its report.

In the case of the Marriage Act wherein interracial marriages were forbidden, the DRC states that what Scripture views as the ‘suitability’ of a holy marriage ‘requires a similarity of descent, language, culture, colour, nationality, and religion, with the emphasis on the sanctity of marriage’.<sup>267</sup> These conditions are not fully accomplished in a mixed marriage as is bluntly stated in the report: ‘a mixed marriage cannot fulfil all the essential requirements laid down for marriage by Holy Scripture, and must be rejected as impermissible’.<sup>268</sup> Furthermore, the report legitimized the state to take the required measures to guard this divine act:

In the interests of the peoples concerned and for the welfare of the whole community, the Christian state can, under given circumstances, prohibit racial mixing through legislation. This would happen especially if there was a fundamental danger of whittling down and deliberate obliteration of lines of division, and the level of civilization and moral values and distinctive character of the people is endangered by the number of ‘strangers’. In the interests of self-preservation, steps may be taken to maintain the continued existence of the character and characteristics and distinctive identity of the people.<sup>269</sup>

Regarding migratory labour which was forced by the creation of ‘black zones’ or Bantustans in the Group Areas Act, the Synod agreed that it helps the black community to gain some new skills in the white areas which they can apply later in their own

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265 Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, *Human Relations in South Africa: Report* (Cape Town, 1966), 42.

266 Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, *Human Relations in South Africa*, 41.

267 Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, *Human Relations in South Africa*, 6.

268 Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, *Human Relations in South Africa*, 8.

269 Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, *Human Relations in South Africa*, 10.



separate homelands. Obviously these black workers contributed largely to the economy and with this system, the government could safeguard the differentiation between races while giving new skills to selected black workers to keep the Bantustan's productivity at good level. This growth in efficiency was addressed by the Synod arguing that planned Bantu labour contributed considerably to the rapid economic progress of the country. Moreover, with regard to this issue the report concluded the following:

The greatest advantage of the system is that it makes it possible for the state authorities to control the movement of Bantu which would otherwise be disorganized, so that there is not a surfeit of labourers (and consequent unemployment) in one place, and a shortage of labourers in another area (and consequent collapse of the economy. The country's economy is not still fluid; the African is to a large extent not yet Westernised; the civilizing process which the Bantu is now experiencing, his restlessness as a result of his detribalisation, this problems of adjustment, his great numbers, etc., could create a condition of chaos if his migration, opportunities of employment, housing problems, economic and technical education etc., were not controlled to a large extent.<sup>270</sup>

The second report of the General Synod of the DRC in October 1974 originally called *Ras, Vokd en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif*, also reflected their position of supporting government policies regarding apartheid, although not as evidently as the previous report. For example, it is stated that 'a political system on the autogenous or separate development of various population groups can be justified from the Bible, but the commandment to love one's neighbor must at all times be the ethical norm toward establishing sound inter-people relations'.<sup>271</sup> Following this idea, they still supported the Bantustans but pleaded for more 'generosity' in terms of space, affirming that 'within the framework of autogenous (separate) development sufficient viable living space (Lebensraum) for the various population groups is of the utmost importance; hence the state should continue to devote its attention to the fair and just handling of this problem.'<sup>272</sup>

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270 Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, *Human Relations in South Africa*, 49.

271 General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture* (Cape Town: Dutch Reformed Church Publishers, 1976), 71.

272 General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*, 73.

Once again in this report, there was an ambivalence of argument regarding apartheid policies. While not conflicting with the laws, the DRC pointed out some problems that may have arisen if the conditions were not improved. For example, regarding migratory labour, the report affirms the idea of continuing with this system but later highlights the idea that ‘the migrant labour system is one of the factors which disrupt the stability of marriage and family life among the Bantu’<sup>273</sup> which, consequently creates problems for the church in its efforts to establish proper and stable congregations in the Bantustans.<sup>274</sup> The relevance of this migratory system is validated by the DRC’s assertion that:

the economic structure of South Africa is to a large extent dependent on the migrant labour system and if this system should suddenly be abolished, it would not only lead to a serious disruption of the economy in general and that of the homelands, but would also cause deprivation for the migrant labourers and their families.<sup>275</sup>

Finally, the report affirms that ‘nations should jealously guard the spiritual and cultural treasures which they have acquired in the course of centuries and which, in the case of the Republic of South Africa, endow the White and non-White peoples with their specific and various identities’.<sup>276</sup> Thus, the DRC elevated the political claims of separate development to a divine level by explaining diversity in light of segregation and plurality in light of the differentiation of roles and identifying race as the major characteristic of discrimination and sign of dominance and oppression. This theological basis worked so efficiently that the DRC ‘has often been referred to as ‘the National party at prayer’.<sup>277</sup> These reports set the conditions for formulating the set of policies of hatred, fear and racism that characterized the South African government in the apartheid era.

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273 General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*, 75.

274 General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*, 75.

275 General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*, 74.

276 General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*, 75.

277 Johnston, ‘The Churches and Apartheid in South Africa,’ 187.

Having presented the theological foundation of this philosophy of separation, it is time to present the most relevant legal acts which were approved by the National Party between 1948 and 1994 under the leadership of D.F. Malan (1948-1954), J.G. Strijdom (1954-1958), Henrik Verwoerd (1958-1966), B.J. Vorster (1966-1978), P.W. Botha (1978-1984; 1984-1989) and F.W. De Klerk (1989-1994). The acts approved during these administrations demonstrated the severity of apartheid policies and help us to understand the further resistance movements and the relevance of Archbishop Tutu in the struggle for liberation through non-violent means.

### **Systematizing Apartheid: The Acts**

The implementation of apartheid policies has as its common denominator the separation between races, physically and psychologically. In order to accomplish its goal, the system has been categorized into ‘petty apartheid’ and ‘grand apartheid’. The first category refers to those policies concerned with people’s daily lives and necessities, where they faced constant reminders of their ‘distinct’ race and therefore had to make use of the facilities provided for their race exclusively. Thus, the restrictions on bus and train travel, the different doors used to enter public buildings, different benches to sit on the park and separate amenities, among many other factors, constituted a physical segregation with psychological consequences. The message was ‘You are different because of the colour of your skin, and you deserve what you have because of it’, do not fight, do not complain or you will be punished.

The second category, ‘grand apartheid’, refers to the massive population removals and work restrictions on a geographical-racial basis that guaranteed a separate development with almost no racial-mixing only the migrant workers with their relevant authorization by the authorities could stay periodically in ‘white areas’.

Both interrelated categories were meant to fulfil the principle that ‘underlay both the ideology and the institutional system it spawned—the complete separation of Black and White races in South Africa.’<sup>278</sup> From a political point of view, as A.J. Christopher puts it,

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278 Price, ‘Apartheid and White Supremacy: the Meaning of Government-led Reform in the South African Context’, 299.

it was the extinction of the Black political presence in the country which was uppermost in the White policy makers' minds, as it was realized that Black numerical superiority constituted the greatest threat to continued White control. In practical terms this perception was also to be translated in to a programme of the removal of as many Blacks from the White zone of South Africa as possible, leaving behind only those considered essential for the running of the economy.<sup>279</sup>

Therefore, the more relevant acts approved by the government in order to safeguard that separate development were the 'Population Registration Act', the 'Group Areas Act' and the 'Bantu Authorities Act'.<sup>280</sup> The 'Population Registration Act' was passed in 1949 (Act No. 30) and labelled every individual by racial characteristics, so that a national register was created listing name and race in order to enable population removals. The 'Group Areas Act' was approved in 1950 which made use of the previous act in order to create different residential areas based on racial separation. This act legalized forced removals and dictated that these racially exclusive zones should be respected by not attempting to illegally cross into another area. As a result, the Bantustans (or Bantu black-populated areas) were created and new efforts to isolate those areas with semi-autonomous government were implemented in various policies. One of such policy was the 'Bantu Authorities Act' of 1951 (Act No.52) which established authorities in these black 'homelands' in order to increase control over those zones by granting them a 'fake' self-government which ultimately responded to the major white elite rulers in South Africa. A.J. Christopher explains this strategy of groups' division as follows:

The broad Black or Bantu linguistic families were fragmented into ten subdivisions or 'national units'. Thus the Sotho linguistic family was divided into North, South, and West Soto, or Pedi, Basutho, and Tswana respectively. Similarly the Nguni linguistic family was divided into Xhosa, Zulu, Swazi, Shangaan, North Ndebele, and South Ndebele.<sup>281</sup>

Thus, the 'passes' legislation made non-white South Africans aliens in their own land by controlling their access to different regions within the country. These policies

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279 A.J. Christopher, *The Atlas of Apartheid* (London: Routledge, 1994), 66.

280 Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 140.

281 Christopher, *The Atlas of Apartheid*, 66.

integrated the past practice of 'black reserves' with a fake promise of independence; by creating separate groups that they weakened the relation between various members of the black community and controlled the degree of mixed relations between blacks and whites, creating a system in which the minority would always be favoured. In sum, the foundations and repercussions of these population policies that culminated in the creation of the Bantustans can be summarized as follows,

[The Bantustan political system] was built on the foundations of the 'reserves' established by the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, and on the separate administrative system set up the Native Administration Act of 1927. The process began in the 1950s, with the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951. Under the Act, Tribal authorities were set up in Bantustans areas. This gave new life to decaying traditional structures, and made the power of chiefs depend the apartheid regime.<sup>282</sup>

Another key element in the implementation of apartheid was education. It was used to perpetuate segregation and domination by preparing black children for subordinate positions in society. The 'Bantu Education Act' approved in 1953 justified a separate educational system between races according to their job expectancy. This was not based on skills but on race; therefore, the state wanted to prevent a 'waste of resources' in educating black people when these people would not have access to high-paying jobs that required more knowledge. The racist view of whites' intellectual superiority was clearly established and this was one of the many reasons why Archbishop Tutu compared apartheid with Nazism. This act not only enforced spatial separation but also limited the psychological and mental capabilities between races, which reinforced the idea of superiority-inferiority beginning in childhood in order to educate-to-control the masses.

In addition, the constant fear every time the migratory workers moved from one place to another was undermining the black community's trust in themselves and their abilities. The suppression of the 'pass', which was simply re-named as the 'reference book' through the 'Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act' of 1952, reinforced the idea of blacks being treated as unwanted strangers in their homes. The reference book had to contain the following documents:

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282 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 53.

a) residential address; bureau where registered: official permit to remain in, or go to, a specific area; and any referrals to admittals to Aid centers; b) employer's name and address and signature each week, as well as endorsement to leave; for students, pupils and scholars there must be a record of the name of the head of the school, university or college and a certificate of enrolment for the quarter; c) tax receipts; d) concessions, exemptions and privileges; e) driver's license; f) weapons license; g) identity document with sex, name ethnic classification, photograph and Reference Book number.<sup>283</sup>

Several acts were also passed under the justification of security to prevent the expansion of communism and black armed resistance. The 'Suppression of Communism Act' of 1950 banned the Communist Party in South Africa and prohibited all 'communist-oriented' organizations that might threaten the security of the government. In addition, the 'Terrorism Act' was approved in 1967, allowing indefinite detention without trial and establishing the Bureau of State Security. This Act was a response to the initial massive protests faced after the Sharpeville Massacre on 21 March 1960, when police killed 69 people involved in a peaceful demonstration, mostly by shooting them in their back while they were running out of the gathering.

In addition, after the foundation of the Apartheid Republic on 31 May 1961, the first laws allowing detention without trial were approved and up to ten thousand people were arrested and detained under the terms of the so-called '12-day law'. The insecurity of the state was pushed to the extreme when the first operation of the *Umkhonto We Sizwe* ('Spear of the Nation') formed by leaders of the ANC and allied organizations and the banning of organizations took place as an armed resistance against the oppressor regime.<sup>284</sup> Thus, this context gave birth to what have been called the 'security acts', such as the ones mentioned above, as well as others such as the 'Unlawful Organisations Act', the 'Riotous Assemblies Act' and the 'General Law Amendment Act'. The consolidation of this security strategy of apartheid can be found in the 'Internal Security Act' of 1982 which included the 'new' offence of 'subversion'. Its vague definition could lead to up to 25 years of imprisonment and included the following:

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283 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 43.

284 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 102.

Actions which are aimed, amongst other things, at 'causing or promoting general dislocation or disorder'; prejudicing the production and distribution of commodities or the supply and distribution of essential services or the free movement of traffic; causing 'feelings of hostility between different populations groups'; encouraging or aiding any other person to commit any of the acts listed.<sup>285</sup>

Finally, another relevant act of the apartheid regime was the 'Reservation of Separate Amenities Act' of 1953, which exemplified the so-called 'petty apartheid' which limited the sharing of space between races and even established different facilities for whites and non-whites. Even public events, such as cultural and sporting events, were subject to this condition, so there could not be any kind of mixing of races among members of the audience. In relation to culture, 'black artists, writers, and performers may be tolerated and even actively promoted as a means of building a more flattering image of South Africa in the international community'<sup>286</sup>, although there was not real freedom for those artists who became agents of the system used to legitimize its racial policies.

These acts were the core legal foundation of apartheid; they revealed the insistence on racial separation, oppression and physical and psychological violence toward the majority of the population. The policy of hatred was epitomized by the 'Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme' which Tutu described as 'the most diabolical aspect of apartheid'.<sup>287</sup> This programme was supported by a group of scientists, laboratories, universities and companies that carried out experiments in order to find effective chemical weapons to undermine the target community, understood as non-whites and especially blacks. Diseases such as cholera, botulism, chemical poisoning, anthrax and the stimulation of drug addiction and abuse were some of the projects of the programme. Moreover, this programme headed up by Dr. Wouter Basson, a cardiologist labelled 'Dr. Death' by the media, 'included a project that allegedly attempted to reduce fertility rate of blacks by finding a bacteria that would target blacks only'.<sup>288</sup>

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285 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 57-58.

286 International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, *Apartheid: The Facts*, 29.

287 Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (London: Random House, 1999), 143.

288 Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 143.

These abuses were condemned and labelled as ‘crimes against humanity’ by the UN General Assembly in 1973. In the resolution 3038, the ‘International Convention of the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid’ was declared, and the resolution states in Article 1:

The States Parties to the present convention declare that *apartheid* is a crime against humanity and that inhuman segregation and discrimination, as defined in article II of the Convention, are crimes in violation of the principles of international law, in particular the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and constituting a serious threat to international peace and security.<sup>289</sup>

Thus, the South African government soon faced domestic and international mobilizations that consequently led the politics of hatred to the abyss. This strategy of counter-apartheid campaigning was developed in violent and non-violent ways. The main actors in the armed resistance were the African National Party and its armed group Umkhonto We Sizwe well as black groups such as Inkhata and the United Democratic Front. In the middle between the armed campaign and the peaceful reconciliation process was the figure of Nelson Mandela; and the leader and symbol of the non-violent campaign was Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Therefore I will present a brief biography of Tutu and then explain his role in the liberation movement, his struggle with the violent strategy and how he finally accomplished his goal: to vote in a free election and enjoy the wind of change for the ‘rainbow people of God’.

## **Desmond Tutu: The Great Liberation Trek**

### **Early Years**

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born on 7 October, 1931 in Klerksdorp, a south-western town in Transvaal Province. The son of Zacharia, the headmaster of a Methodist primary school in Klerksdorp, and Aletha, who was employed by white families for domestic work, Desmond faced death beginning in his infancy due to health problems. In fact, ‘after his condition began to stabilize, Desmond’s grandmother gave him the middle

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289 United Nations General Assembly, ‘Resolution 3068: International Convention of the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid’, United Nations, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/281/40/IMG/NR028140.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed September 15, 2009).



name 'Mpilo', meaning *life*.<sup>290</sup> This name was a premonitory sign of what his life would become, he would become a fighter for life, forgiveness and reconciliation. Due to his father's job, he would be able to travel and meet different people, face the apartheid policies and build his own personality through very important role models such as Ezekiel Mphahlele, Father Sekgaphane and the Blaxall family. In particular, Reverend Arthur Blaxall and his wife Florence, showed Tutu the compassionate side of the white community by helping blind black Africans. Having witnessing this act of altruism, Tutu realized that the problem was the apartheid system, not the white community. He would reinforce this idea a few years later when Father Trevor Huddleston paid him some visits while Tutu was recuperating from tuberculosis in 1945.

Tutu met Father Huddleston while he stayed in a dormitory run by the Community of the Resurrection in Sophiatown. Huddleston paid visits to Tutu when, at the age of 14 years old, Tutu was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Father Huddleston went every weekend to give him books and comic books, and they frequently discussed the problems of South African society. The love and compassion showed by this white religious person, convinced Tutu that the inner love present in all human beings is there despite their racial differences. Therefore, Father Huddleston was his main role model for interracial relations and the consequent ideal of the 'Rainbow People of God'. Steven Gish summarizes the relevance of Father Huddleston to South Africa and Tutu as follows:

Father Huddleston was destined to become a legendary figure in South African history. He helped rally opposition to the South African government's plans to destroy multiracial neighbourhoods and downgrade black education in the 1950s. His passionate advocacy of black South African rights was exceptional in an era when most white South Africans fully supported racial discrimination. This towering example of Christian compassion would become the most important influence in Desmond Tutu's life.<sup>291</sup>

Desmond Tutu recovered from that illness and continued his studies, finished high school and passed the Joint Matriculation Board exams in 1950. In the following

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290 Steven D. Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 2.

291 Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*, 10.

year he began teacher training at Bantu Normal College in Pretoria and earned a teacher's diploma in 1953. Having accomplished this goal, he began teaching at Madibane High School in 1954 and earned his BA from the University of South Africa the same year. It seemed that Tutu would continue to follow his father's footsteps as a teacher, and he was now building a new family by marrying his college girlfriend Leah Shenxane on 2 July, 1955.

While Tutu was a teacher at Munsieville High School in Krugersdorp, his first of his four children was born on 14 April, 1956. With the responsibility of a larger family, Tutu was concerned about their future because he could no longer stand working as a teacher under the conditions of the Bantu Education Act. The books were full of stories from the 'white-colonialist' perspective, highlighting the fact that the natives stole cattle and provisions from the new settlers and how the Europeans brought new light and development to the South African land. Therefore, Tutu resigned from teaching in 1958 and the best option to safeguard his economic and his spiritual commitment was to become a priest. Thus, 'he believed that the priesthood would allow him to continue to serve his people. Tutu later referred to his decision to enter the ministry as 'God grabbing me by the scruff of my neck''.<sup>292</sup>

He began his theological training at St. Peter's Theological College in Rosettenville, where he deeply sympathized with their concern for the oppressed and poor. By stressing the idea of helping one's neighbour, the importance of forgiveness and the relevance of praying and meditation, Tutu finally found his true vocation. In 1960 he was ordained as a deacon and began preaching in Benona. The following year he was ordained as a priest and based in Thokoza, southeast of Johannesburg. He found a new context within the community, a sense of despair and hatred after the Sharpeville Massacre the year before. Soon he would find himself outside of South Africa, living for the first time in a non-apartheid system, an eye-opening experience that convinced him to work harder for a free South Africa.

### **A Taste of Freedom: Tutu On and After Britain**

Desmond Tutu moved to Britain to begin his studies at King's College, University of London in 1962 where he earned the Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1965. Living as a

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<sup>292</sup> Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*, 23.

free man, he had a vision of a free South Africa, where all races could share the benefits and responsibilities as free citizens and could enjoy an interracial community based on respect and justice. Then, when he returned to South Africa in 1967, he began teaching at the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice and later became Anglican chaplain at nearby Fort Hare University. It was during this time when Tutu began to advocate publicly against apartheid and support the recognition of blacks' dignity. Tutu was respected by those followers of the black consciousness movement who also liked his black theology arguments, with their clear advocacy of being proud to be a son of God, proud of being black and feeling that God matters for everyone despite colour, race or political ideology.

Due to his inclinations and social legitimacy within the black community, the government refused on several occasions to give him permission to leave the country. However, he managed to get his passport back and after being a lecturer of theology at the universities of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland he moved to London in 1972 for a second time. He was invited to become associate director of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches. This time was very important for his worldview of suffering and the relevance of forgiveness and reconciliation. During his three years in this post, he had to travel to several countries, witnessing high levels of social and political disruption that convinced him to look for a non-violent solution to the situation in South Africa. Tutu feared witnessing the horrors of the former Biafra in his own homeland, which he described as 'the awful ravages of that ghastly civil war on property and on the souls of the defeated Biafrans'.<sup>293</sup> S. Gish summarizes this time in Tutu's life as follows:

Travel was an important part of Tutu's job. He took several trips to Africa each year between 1972 and 1975 ... He travelled to Uganda when it was under the iron-fisted rule of Idi Amin; Ethiopia just before the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie; and Nigeria after the Biafran War. In Nigeria, he witnessed the immense suffering and dislocation that the war had inflicted on Africa's most populous

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293 Desmond Tutu, 'Letter to Prime Minister John Vorster, 6 May 1976', in *The Rainbow People of God* (London: Doubleday, 1994), 11.

country. Tutu also spent time in Zaire, the vast central African country under the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seki.<sup>294</sup>

Then he returned to South Africa in order to become a noticeable leader of the oppressed, the voice of the voiceless, preacher of the liberator Gospel of the Bible and, officially, the first black Anglican Dean of Johannesburg in 1975. Soon, his appeals to Vorster's government became evident and straightforward, which put pressure on the government such as had not been seen before. Tutu was aware of the danger of the situation and the rising anger within the black community and therefore asked the Prime Minister to show real commitment to change the harsh reality for the majority in South Africa. In his letter to Vorster on 6 May 1976, Tutu affirms that 'it is not to move substantially from discrimination when some signs are removed from park benches. These are wholly superficial changes which do not fundamentally affect the lives of Blacks'.<sup>295</sup>

Tutu urged the Prime Minister to take at least three policies in order to show his disposition to improve the conditions of the Black majority. This appeal was made because, as Tutu wrote, 'I have a growing nightmarish fear that unless something drastic is done very soon then bloodshed and violence are going to happen in South Africa almost inevitably. A people can take only so much and no more'.<sup>296</sup> The relevance of granting real freedom to the non-white community was in close relationship with white freedom as well, in an interdependent relation that Tutu highlighted in his letter saying that 'the whites in this land will not be free until all sections of our community are genuinely freed'.<sup>297</sup>

Therefore, Tutu advised Vorster that new signs of a change should be guided by the following steps: first, to accept blacks as permanent inhabitants of South Africa and stop the politics of the White South Africa; second, to avoid the 'passing laws' which were a daily reminder of how blacks were oppressed in their own country; third, to call a National Convention of social leaders to work for a non-racial South Africa that would

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294 Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*, 53-54.

295 Desmond Tutu, 'Open letter to Mr. John Vorster, 6 May 1976', in *Hope and Suffering: Sermons and Speeches*, ed. John Webster (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1983), 30-31.

296 Desmond Tutu, 'Letter to Prime Minister John Vorster, 6 May 1976', in *The Rainbow People of God*, ed. John Allen (London: Doubleday, 1994), 10.

297 Tutu, 'Letter to Prime Minister John Vorster, 6 May 1976', *The Rainbow People of God*, 11.

lead to peace and justice.<sup>298</sup> Vorster dismissed the recommendations and accused Tutu of engaging in political activities. However, only a few weeks later on 16 June 1976, the student demonstration in the South Western Townships (SOWETO) ended in bloodshed when police fired on demonstrators. Tutu had warned the Prime Minister of this escalation of violence and that is what happened after Soweto, making that year one of the country's most violent times.

### **Black Theology: The Role of Steve Biko and Tutu**

The stature of Tutu within the Anglican Church was rising and soon he was consecrated as Bishop of Lesotho in 1976. During his short period in Lesotho, one of the most beloved black consciousness leaders, Steve Biko, was brutally killed in detention by the police, and a new series of protests emerged. Although they never met, Tutu admired the courage of this young medical student who founded the South African Students' Organization (SASO) and later the Black People's Convention. As one of the major proponents of the black consciousness movement in South Africa, Biko pointed out the essence of this movement:

The only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward-looking process. This is the definition of 'Black Consciousness'.<sup>299</sup>

Biko connected the aims of black consciousness and those of Black Theology, stating that this movement 'takes cognizance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their values systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life'.<sup>300</sup> This is possible because 'it seeks to relate God and Christ once more to the black man and his daily problems. It wants to describe Christ as a fighting God,

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298 Tutu, 'Open letter to Mr. John Vorster,' *The Rainbow People of God*, 34.

299 Steve Biko, 'We Blacks' in *I Write What I Like, a Selection of His Writings*, ed. Aelred Stubbs (London: Bowerdean Press, 1978), 29.

300 Biko, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', in *I Write What I Like*, 49.

not a passive god who allows a lie to rest unchallenged'.<sup>301</sup> Moreover, Biko recognized the importance of individuals' minds and perceptions of themselves in the struggle for true freedom. Tutu affirmed that 'Steve, with his brilliant mind that always saw the heart of things, realized that until blacks asserted their humanity and their personhood, there was not the remotest chance for reconciliation in South Africa. For true reconciliation is a personal matter.'<sup>302</sup>

Regarding the quest for freedom, Biko wrote 'freedom is the ability to define oneself with one's possibilities held back not by the power of other people over one but only by one's relationship to God and to natural surroundings'.<sup>303</sup> Furthermore, he clearly acknowledged that 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. If one is free at heart, no man-made chains can bind one to servitude'.<sup>304</sup> This is why Tutu said that 'God called Steve to be his servant in South Africa, to speak up on behalf of God, declaring what the will of this God must be in a situation such as ours, a situation of evil and injustice, oppression and exploitation'.<sup>305</sup> And by being the founder of the black consciousness movement, 'God, through Steve, sought to awaken in the black person a sense of his intrinsic value and worth as a child of God, not needing to apologize for his existential condition as a black person, calling on blacks to glorify and praise God that he had created them black'.<sup>306</sup>

Biko was detained on 18 August 1977, handed into the custody of the Security Police the next day and held while he waited for interrogation. His interrogation took place on 6 September and by seven a.m. the next day he had suffered a brain injury as a consequence of the beatings to his head. Even more dramatically, he was transported to Pretoria naked on the floor of a police van and died on 12 September. After his death, an interview with him that had taken place some months before his arrest was published and it showed Biko's determination to lead the struggle until the end fighting for freedom. In one part of the interview he shared what he told the police on one occasion:

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301 Biko, 'Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity', in *I Write What I Like*, 94.

302 Tutu, 'Oh God, how long can we go on?' in *The Rainbow People of God*, 19.

303 Biko, 'Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity' in *I Write What I Like*, 92.

304 Biko, 'Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity' in *I Write What I Like*, 92.

305 Tutu, 'Oh God, how long can we go on?' in *The Rainbow People of God*, 19.

306 Tutu, 'Oh God, how long can we go on?' in *The Rainbow People of God*, 19.

So I said to them [the policemen], ‘Listen, if you guys want to do this your way, you have got to handcuff me and bind my feet together, so that I can’t respond. If you allow me to respond, I’m certainly going to respond. And I’m afraid you may have to kill me in the process even if it’s not your intention’.<sup>307</sup>

His death marked a new chapter for the conflict in South Africa, having international consequences such as the mandatory arms embargo enforced by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 418 in 1977, which stated:

2. Decides that all States shall cease forthwith any provision to South Africa of arms and related *material* of all types, including the sale or transfer of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary police equipment, and spare parts of the aforementioned, and shall cease as well the provision of all types of equipment and supplies and grants of licensing arrangements for the manufacture or maintenance of the aforementioned.<sup>308</sup>

In addition, the Security Council called the member states to finish all contractual arrangements in this regard and to refrain from cooperating in the manufacture and development of nuclear weapons in South Africa. This resolution brought hope for Tutu, who believed that the international community would support the struggle to end the apartheid era and set the conditions for a new strategy to pressure the government in Pretoria. Thus, Tutu confidently stated,

The powers of oppression, of exploitation, have done their worst and they have lost. They have lost because they are immoral and wrong and our God, the God of the exodus, the liberator God is a God of justice and liberation and goodness. Our cause, the cause of justice and liberation, must triumph because it is moral and just and right.<sup>309</sup>

### **Tutu on Duty: The SACC and the Eloff Commission**

Then, having witnessed the turmoil after Biko’s death and the massive security crackdown of the South African Government in 1977, Tutu received another chance to go back to South Africa and continue with the liberation struggle from within. That time

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307 Biko, ‘On Death’ in *I Write What I Like*, 153.

308 United Nations Security Council, ‘Resolution 418, 1977’, United Nations, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/297/01/IMG/NR029701.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed September 15, 2009).

309 Tutu, ‘Oh God, how long can we go on?’ in *The Rainbow People of God*, 21.

he was destined to do so from a different position, now as the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), and he would soon face the power of the state against him and the organization. The SACC had 20 member churches and four observer churches and represented almost 15 million Christians; the Council's primary purpose was to present a common Christian stand on major social issues. The SACC had several programs on education, humanitarian relief and social activism with financial support from overseas as well as domestic sources and mainly from white populations.<sup>310</sup>

When P.W. Botha became the new Prime Minister in 1978, he was committed to dismantling this organization that was viewed as an 'umbrella' to cover communist and anti-government campaigns. Moreover, he had a personal crusade against Tutu since 1979, when Tutu said during an interview on Danish television that 'it was rather disgraceful that Denmark bought South African coal'<sup>311</sup>, which was rapidly interpreted as a call for economic sanctions by this religious leader. Furthermore, when Tutu dared to suggest a change of policies during a meeting with the Prime Minister and a delegation of SACC members in 1980, this was interpreted as confirmation of his involvement in the liberation struggle that threatened apartheid's survival.

When allegations of financial irregularities in the SACC became public, Botha wanted to seize the opportunity and created the Eloff Commission in 1981 to investigate the problem. With this, he put Tutu's and the SACC's credibility and integrity into question. However, this campaign back-fired, giving Tutu more support from that part of the black community that had once considered him 'too soft' for the struggle. Until the end, Tutu had to face the suspicions of the two radical sides of the struggle and trying to bring confidence between them was not an easy task.

In his statement to the Eloff Commission, Tutu presented the basis of his theology and the SACC's commitments, presenting a particular view of the relationship between religion and politics and the biblical justification to continue working on behalf of the oppressed. He boldly stated that 'we owe ultimate loyalty not to any human authority however prestigious or powerful, but to God and to His Son our Lord Jesus Christ alone from whom we obtain our mandate. We must obey the divine imperative

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310 Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*, 72-73.

311 Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*, 77.



and word whatever the cost'.<sup>312</sup> He strongly declared that 'without this biblical and theological justification you will almost certainly misunderstand what we are about',<sup>313</sup> he wanted them to understand that the aim of the SACC and of his own work was about creating the conditions to accomplish the 'Divine Intention' of unity and reconciliation between people and churches. Tutu declared,

The Bible describes God as creating the universe to be a cosmos and not a chaos, a cosmos in which harmony, unity, order, fellowship, communion, peace and justice would reign and that this divine intention was disturbed by sin. The result was disunity, alienation disorder chaos, enmity, separation. In the face of this God sent his Son to restore that primordial harmony to effect reconciliation.<sup>314</sup>

Regarding the allegations of foreign sponsorship of the SACC, Tutu referred to the generosity of people around the world who were committed to loving their fellow brothers and sisters whom they don't even know but with whom they share a common joy and suffering. He said that 'those who criticize the SACC for depending so greatly on overseas support show their woeful ignorance of ecclesiology, the theology of the nature of the Church of God-when one part suffers the whole suffers with it and when one part rejoices the whole rejoices with it'.<sup>315</sup> This universality and communality in working toward God's intention was expressed by Tutu when he said that 'the SACC is thus caught up in divine mission; it is a fellow worker with none other than God himself; it is an agent of the divine mercy and compassion. Its concern is not just for the world and not just for human beings, but for the whole of creation'.<sup>316</sup>

### **Not a Politician, but a Vicar of God**

Tutu never hesitated to point out that the apartheid system was as evil as Nazism and communism 'for it is ranging itself on the side of evil, injustice and oppression'.<sup>317</sup> Additionally, he affirmed that 'apartheid, separate development or whatever it is called, is evil, totally and without remainder ... unchristian and unbiblical'.<sup>318</sup> Due to his

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312 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 55.

313 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 55.

314 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 55.

315 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 57.

316 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 60.

317 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 58.

318 Tutu, 'The Divine Intention', in *Hope and Suffering*, 155.

constant remarks against the theological and political legitimacy of the apartheid system, he was considered by some as more of a politician. However, he was very clear that he was a man of faith and was only safeguarding the social values embedded in the Bible. Furthermore, he argued that ‘if anyone were to show me that apartheid is biblical or Christian, I have said before, and I reiterate now, that I would burn my Bible and cease to be Christian’.<sup>319</sup> Tutu referred to the first creation narrative and its climax when ‘God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’’,<sup>320</sup> as the first biblical truth regarding the unified nature of humanity, without separation. Furthermore, this proves that ‘each human being is God’s own representative, own viceroy or ambassador, and no mention is made of race or nationality or colour’.<sup>321</sup>

The second creation story in Genesis 2 shows God’s intention for His creation: man and woman living a peaceful and joyful life with animals, plants and the rest of the creation. Then, sin destroyed this blissful state and thus separation came to destroy unity, giving space for hatred, anger and ignorance to appear. Tutu refers to this story to show how separation cannot be sustained as biblical. Furthermore, Tutu answered the major theological argument of the DRC in support of apartheid, found in the story of the Tower of Babel,<sup>322</sup> stating that ‘it is a perverse exegesis that would hold that the story of the Tower of Babel is a justification for racial separation, a divine sanction for that diversity of nations. It is to declare that the divine punishment of sin had become the divine intention for humankind’.<sup>323</sup>

To the contrary, ‘the entire situation at the end of the story of the Tower of Babel cried out for reconciliation, for atonement’<sup>324</sup>, which was achieved through Jesus Christ. As St. Paul affirms ‘In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us’.<sup>325</sup> Moreover, as St. Paul continues, ‘we are ambassadors for Christ; certain that God is appealing through us, we plead on Christ’s behalf, ‘Be reconciled to God.’’,<sup>326</sup>

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319Tutu, ‘The Divine Intention’, in *Hope and Suffering*, 155.

320 Gn. 1:26.

321 Tutu, ‘The Divine Intention’, in *Hope and Suffering*, 160.

322 Gn. 11: 1-9.

323 Tutu, ‘The Divine Intention,’ in *Hope and Suffering*, 162.

324 Tutu, ‘The Divine Intention,’ in *Hope and Suffering*, 162.

325 2 Cor. 5:19.

326 2 Cor. 5:20.

Following this Christian commitment, Tutu clearly pointed out that he was not a politician but a vicar of God, a Christian who was following the path in order to bring God's intention to reality in a land where the sin of separation was still encouraged and safeguarded. Tutu had declared that he was not a politician but a pastor, and he understood his actions not as party politics but as committed Christian actions in the world. He affirmed that

I am a church person who believes that religion does not just deal with a certain compartment of life. Religion has a relevance for the whole of life and we have to say whether a particular policy is consistent with the policy of Jesus Christ or not, and if you want to say that is political, then I will be a politician in those terms but won't be as one who is involved in party politics.<sup>327</sup>

Therefore, Tutu's actions were guided by a religious motivation that did have political consequences, which is not to say that he was a politician in the conventional understanding of the word. He affirmed 'I was often criticized during the struggle to end apartheid for being 'political' and told by people in and out of the church that our place was to be concerned with religious matters. But we were involved in the struggle because we were being religious, not political'.<sup>328</sup> Regarding this issue, he told the Eloff Commission that 'if we are to say that religion cannot be concerned with politics then we are really saying that there is a substantial part of human life in which God's writ does not run'.<sup>329</sup> In all his writings he stressed the idea that the Exodus is the main example of how God also deals with politics without being a politician. He said this commitment to changing the world in light of God's intention inevitably has political consequences 'because politics are the sphere where God's people demonstrate their obedience or their disobedience'<sup>330</sup> and just as Jesus Christ 'did not use religion as a form of escapism'<sup>331</sup> but for action, a Christian should follow the path of helping to make possible God's intention.

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327 Desmond Tutu, 'I Am Not a Politician', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 197.

328 Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (United Kingdom: Rider, 2005), 64.

329 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 67.

330 Tutu, 'The Divine Imperative', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 71.

331 Tutu, 'The Divine Intention', in *Hope and Suffering*, 175.

Following his conviction of being an agent of change in God's creation, Tutu stated during the Eloff Commission that apartheid was evil because it was contrary to God's will in at least three aspects:<sup>332</sup> a) the Bible declares right at the beginning that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and apartheid exalts a biological quality to justify separation between human beings; b) the chief work that Jesus came to perform was reconciliation, in order to restore togetherness and unity in diversity, something that apartheid forbids; c) by facing the consequences of apartheid as evil, one can only come to the conclusion that the system that encourages those actions is precisely evil. Therefore, his statement at the Eloff Commission portrayed the theological basis of Tutu's work, and because the Commission did not find any irregularities for which to punish the SACC or Tutu, he continued his mission. Soon he would elevate his stature to the international level as a role model for non-violent leaders in search of peaceful resolution in an utterly violent time and place.

### **Tutu and the Nobel Peace Prize**

When Prime Minister Botha mentioned on several occasions that South Africa's future would no longer be determined by white minority rule alone, Tutu had hope for the future and confidence that the Eloff statement had touched Botha's sensitive side. However, the reforms in favour of a new Constitution incorporated a tricameral model in parliament, composed of whites, coloureds and Asians with a clear majority of whites. There was no black representation despite the fact that they were the clear majority; it was as if they were non-existent or voiceless. This time, the black community had not even been 'invited to the party' in the Parliament or in the Constitution. Tutu put it as follows:

Not to greet someone is really to destroy or dehumanize them. They are not persons—for all you care this could be trees. These proposals refuse to acknowledge our existence. We are here without being here, invisible. That is why even theologically they are iniquitous and evil and a sure recipe for national disaster.<sup>333</sup>

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332Tutu, 'The Divine Intention,' in *Hope and Suffering*, 166.

333 Tutu, 'Not Even Invited to the Party', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 80.

Despite Botha's policies and British and American lack of support for the black community in South Africa, Tutu would enter a new era as a leader and role model after he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. The relevance of being chosen as Nobel Laureate is that he was legitimized to speak more openly and freely about the liberation struggle. Just before his address to the UN Security Council on 23 October 1984, he was informed about the ceremony in his honour in Oslo, Norway. With this in mind, Tutu did not hesitate to accept several invitations to speak about apartheid and the liberation struggle, and he rapidly gained support from lobbying group on African and Caribbean affairs called TransAfrica, who organized protests in the United States.

It was in this context that he was invited to have a meeting with President Reagan where the president expanded on his plans to maintain South Africa as a main ally in the fight against communism and his support of the new constitution and its 'policies of inclusion'. Tutu criticized this 'constructive engagement' and publicly denounced this lack of support by the United States. Despite the initial failure, Reagan and his advisors were aware that 'it could ill-afford to ignore the growing antiapartheid movement in the United States—or Desmond Tutu'<sup>334</sup> and the president gave a speech calling for an end to forced removals and detention without trial in South Africa.

On 10 December 1984, Desmond Mphilo Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his tireless campaign to end the repression and violent methods of apartheid and his constant plea for justice and reconciliation through non-violent means. In an emotive speech, Tutu explained how apartheid worked and the danger of its policies. Moreover, he declared that just as Nazism had its final solution, the government of South Africa had one too. He described apartheid's final solution as follows:

Blacks are expected to exercise their political ambitions in unviable, poverty-stricken, arid, Bantustan homelands, ghettos of misery, inexhaustible reservoirs of cheap black labour, Bantustans into which South Africa is being balkanized. Blacks are systematically being stripped of their South African citizenship and being turned into aliens in the land of their birth. This is apartheid's final solution.<sup>335</sup>

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334 Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*, 101.

335 Tutu, 'Apartheid's 'Final Solution'', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 86.

He also noted the most blasphemous characteristic of apartheid, which was to make human beings believe that because of the colour of their skin they could not be considered children of God or and enjoy the great divine gifts of freedom and unity with all His creation. This was so because ‘apartheid has ... ensured that God’s children, just because they are black, should be treated as if they were things and not as of infinite value as being created in the image of God’.<sup>336</sup> It was this process of dehumanizing the other by not treating him or her with dignity as a child of God, by which the whole society dehumanized itself. This led to violence and oppression, and thus justice and peace could not flourish. This happened because, Tutu affirmed, people ‘need each other to become truly free, to become human. We can be human only in fellowship, in community, in *koinoia*, in peace’.<sup>337</sup> Thus, Tutu affirms in biblical terms that ‘if we want peace, so we have been told, let us work for justice. Let us beat our swords into ploughshares’.<sup>338</sup>

### **The Time has Come: *Kairos* Document and Statement of Affirmation**

Following these remarks, and after Tutu became the Bishop of Johannesburg, the church in South Africa published ‘The Kairos Document’ in 1985. This was ‘an attempt to develop, out of this perplexing situation, an alternative biblical and theological model that will in turn lead to forms of activity that will make a real difference to the future of our country’.<sup>339</sup> This call for action was rooted in a ‘prophetic theology’ in accord with Tutu’s theology of an active Christianity to help God’s intention to become real. The church must not only rely on prayers but also on actions such as civil disobedience, because ‘a Church that takes its responsibilities seriously in these circumstances will sometimes have to confront and to disobey the State in order to obey God’.<sup>340</sup> The moment of truth, the *kairos*, is expressed in the document as follows:

The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived. South Africa has been plunged into a crisis that is shaking the foundations and there is every indication that the crisis has only just begun and that it will deepen and become even more

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336 Tutu, ‘Apartheid’s ‘Final Solution’’, in *The Rainbow People of God*, 86.

337 Tutu, ‘Apartheid’s ‘Final Solution’’, in *The Rainbow People of God*, 92.

338 Tutu, ‘Apartheid’s ‘Final Solution’’, in *The Rainbow People of God*, 92.

339 Kairos Theologians, ‘The KAIROS Document: Challenge to the Church’, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no. 53 (December 1985): 61.

340 Kairos Theologians, ‘The KAIROS Document: Challenge to the Church,’ 80.

threatening in the months to come. It is the KAIROS or moment of truth not only for apartheid but also for the Church.<sup>341</sup>

This mobilization of churches continued and in 1986 the ‘Statement of Affirmation’ was published, containing the recommendations derived from the National Initiative for Reconciliation. Appeals to end the state of emergency, to remove the SADF and the Emergency Police forces from the townships and to release all detainees and political prisoners, were part of a series of initiatives given in this effort to act for a positive change in South Africa.<sup>342</sup> This effort was possible because ‘the spirit of compassion and forgiveness, as well as resolution to move forward together, has laid hold upon us all and is impelling us toward extending God’s Kingdom together and building a new South Africa along with all its peoples’.<sup>343</sup> This effort was part of a shared responsibility for changing the conditions that had let apartheid continue in South Africa, and the plea was not for reformation of the system but for its complete eradication. This was because, as Tutu put it, ‘of course apartheid cannot be reformed. It must be dismantled. You don’t reform a Frankenstein—you destroy it’.<sup>344</sup>

Being aware of the difficult task ahead and facing a partial state of emergency in South Africa, Tutu began a new strategy of weakening the apartheid system and calling for punitive sanctions from the international community on April 1986. Tutu stated,

I have no hope of real change from this government unless they are forced. We face a catastrophe in this land and only the action of the international community by applying pressure can save us. Our children are dying. Our land is burning and bleeding and so I call the international community to apply punitive sanctions against this government to help to establish a new South Africa—non-racial, democratic, participatory and just.<sup>345</sup>

Although this call for sanctions was illegal, Tutu was not arrested mostly due to his international stature and his accomplishments in bringing attention to what was happening in South Africa. His influential role in the liberation struggle within church

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341 Kairos Theologians, ‘The KAIROS Document: Challenge to the Church’, 62.

342 National Initiative for Reconciliation. ‘Statement of Affirmation’, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no. 54 (March 1986): 52.

343 National Initiative for Reconciliation. ‘Statement of Affirmation’, 51.

344 Tutu, ‘You Don’t Reform a Frankenstein’, in *Rainbow People of God*, 96.

345 Tutu, ‘Punitive Sanctions,’ in *Rainbow People of God*, 108.

and society was strengthened when on 7 September, 1986 he became Archbishop of Cape Town. His three main goals in becoming an Archbishop were: the ordination of women to the priesthood, the division of the large Diocese of Cape Town into smaller Episcopal pastoral units and the liberation of the people of South Africa.<sup>346</sup> Eventually, only the second goal was not accomplished due to the churches' lack of support, but the fight for women's rights within the church hierarchy and the end of apartheid was a tremendous success. In a sign of reconciliation, in the same year, the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa adopted the 'Confession of Belhar', which showed a clear move toward justice and unity. It stated,

We reject any doctrine which, in such a situation sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the force separation of people on the grounds of race and color and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ... Therefore, we reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.<sup>347</sup>

On the international level, Tutu's efforts to pressure the United States to stop supporting apartheid finally worked; overriding a presidential veto, the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. This Act 'banned new American investment and bank loans to South Africa; prohibited imports of South African iron, coal, and steel; ended South African landing rights at American airports; and banned exports of oil and armaments to South Africa'.<sup>348</sup> Thus, with a renewed confidence in international community and his election as president of the All-Africa Conference of Churches on September 1987, Tutu continued to put pressure on Botha's administration, as his sermon in St. George's Cathedral exemplifies:

We must say to our rulers, especially unjust rulers such as those in this land, 'You may be powerful, indeed, very powerful. But you are not God. You are ordinary mortals! God—the God whom we worship—can't be mocked. You have already lost! You have already lost! Let us say to you nicely: You have already lost, we are

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346 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 9.

347 Synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, 'Confession of Belhar', Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church, <http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/confession/belhar.pdf> (accessed September 2, 2009).

348 Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography*, 123.



inviting you to come and join the winning side. Come! Come and join the winning side. Your cause is unjust. You are defending what is fundamentally indefensible, because it is evil. It is evil without question. It is immoral. It is immoral without question. It is unchristian. Therefore, you will bite the dust! And you will bite the dust comprehensively.<sup>349</sup>

In a letter to Prime Minister Botha, Tutu reaffirmed his position by stating '[T]he Church's criticism [is] that your apartheid policies are not only unjust and oppressive. They are positively unbiblical, unchristian, immoral and evil'.<sup>350</sup> Although Botha had no intention of relaxing apartheid policies and security measures, due to health problems and tensions within the ruling party, he resigned on 14 August 1989, and F.W. de Klerk became the new Prime Minister. In addition, international support from other African countries was given in the 'Harare Declaration' of 1989, which stated:

We believe that, as a result of the liberation struggle and international pressure against apartheid, as well as global efforts to liquidate regional conflicts, possibilities exist for further movement towards the resolution of the problems facing the people of South Africa. For these possibilities to lead to fundamental change in South Africa, the Pretoria regime must abandon its abhorrent concepts and practices of racial domination and its record of failure to honour agreements all of which have already resulted in the loss of lives and the destruction of much property in the countries of Southern Africa.

We reaffirm our recognition of the rights of all peoples, including those of South Africa, to determine their own destiny, and to work out for themselves the institutions and the system of government under which they will, by general consent, live and work together to build a harmonious society.

The Organisation of African Unity remains committed to do everything possible and necessary, to assist the people of South Africa, in such ways as the representatives of the oppressed may determine, to achieve this objective. We are certain that, arising from this duty to help end the criminal apartheid system, the

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349 Tutu, 'You Will Be Bite the Dust', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 137.

350 Tutu, 'Your Policies are Unbiblical, Unchristian, Immoral and Evil', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 144.

rest of the world community is ready to extend similar assistance to the people of South Africa.<sup>351</sup>

The last chapter of the apartheid regime had begun and the day of liberation was certainly coming. De Klerk announced the release of anti-apartheid leaders in 10 October 1989, and the highly-awaited release of Nelson Mandela was finally witnessed on 11 February, 1990. Later that year in Rustenburg, the Dutch Reformed Church publicly confessed its support of apartheid and asked for forgiveness, which Tutu granted, representing the spirit of reconciliation and the commitment of the churches toward peace. In the Rustenburg Declaration we find the following confession:

As representatives of the Christian Church in South Africa, we confess our sin and acknowledge our part in the heretical policy of apartheid which has led to such extreme suffering for so many in our land, we denounce apartheid, in its intention, its implementation and its consequences, as an evil policy, an act of disobedience to God, a denial of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a sin against our unity in the Holy Spirit... We know that without genuine repentance and practical restitution we cannot appropriate God's forgiveness and that without justice true reconciliation is impossible. We also know that this process must begin with a contrite church.<sup>352</sup>

With these hopeful signs of reconciliation between races, Tutu proclaimed 'this country is a rainbow country! This country is technicolour. You can come and see the new South Africa!' <sup>353</sup> and began to think about retirement. However, now his work was to be harder. He appealed for unity within the black community and urged them to stop the killings between political groups, especially between the African National Congress and Inkhata.

This impasse of violence between rival black groups shocked Tutu, and now his suggestions for achieving a peaceful settlement were addressed to black leaders. He

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351 The Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa of the Organisation of African Unity, 'The Harare Declaration', African National Congress, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/oau/harare.html> (accessed 27 August 2009).

352 National Conference of Church Leaders in South Africa, 'The Rustenburg Declaration', Dutch Reformed Church, <http://www.ngkerk.org.za/abid/dokumente/amptelikkestukke/Rustenburg%20Declaration%201990.pdf> (accessed 15 August, 2009).

353 Tutu, 'We are the Rainbow People!', in *The Rainbow People of God*, 182.

knew this was a consequence of political rivalry and of a lack of experience in that field. Tutu affirmed that ‘political groups in the black community are fighting for turf and they do not seem to know, or certainly some of their followers don’t seem to know, that a cardinal tenet of democracy is that people must be free to choose freely whom they want to support’.<sup>354</sup> Tutu was now calling for unity in diversity not in racial matter but in political preferences. He further said ‘it seems that we in the black community have lost or sense of ‘ubuntu’—our humaneness, caring, hospitality, our sense of connectedness, our sense that my humanity is bound up in your humanity’.<sup>355</sup> He continued appealing to the black community in his sermons and also to the government through international appeals.

Thus, after years of violence between races and within racial groups, Tutu’s efforts finally witnessed the institutionalization of reconciliation through a new Constitution in 1993, the political settlement that called for elections for the following year. In a pre-election service which was broadcast nationally, Tutu called for a new time and new responsibilities for all people in South Africa in order to accomplish true peace through reconciliation:

We must now all work together for confession, forgiveness, restitution, reconciliation and peace. The interim constitution will assist in this process because we are compelled to have a Government of National Unity which will be a multi-party administration that will operate on the basis of consensus and compromise.<sup>356</sup>

Finally, the struggle for a united South Africa, one that could bring God’s intention to reality was symbolized by the election of Mandela as the new president and by his call for reconciliation between races. A new chapter would begin in order to find the best strategy to heal the wounds of both the oppressed and the oppressors. Thus, a call to achieve reconciliation through acknowledging the truth was about to be issued with Tutu in the leading role. He lived the dream of finally voting as a free man in South Africa and raised the hands of a new president to a new rainbow country of God:

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354 Tutu, ‘Something Has Gone Desperately Wrong’, in *The Rainbow People of God*, 222.

355 Tutu, ‘Something Has Gone Desperately Wrong’, in *The Rainbow People of God*, 223.

356 Tutu, ‘A Miracle Unfolding’, in *The Rainbow People of God*, 258.

We of many cultures, languages and races are become one nation. We are the Rainbow People of God. And one man embodies this new spirit of reconciliation and unity. One man inspires us all, one man inspires the whole world. Ladies and gentleman, friends, fellow South Africans. I ask you: welcome our brand-new State President, out-of-the-box, Nelson Mandela!<sup>357</sup>

## **The Divine Intention: The Transfiguration of Suffering into Liberation**

### **South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The role of Desmond Tutu in the liberation struggle in South Africa was not finished yet. This time, the task was to help to liberate South Africans from the burden of hatred, anger, guilt and despair. The goal was to ‘heal the nation’ by healing individuals’ souls through repentance and forgiveness. Although Tutu had been working with both kinds of liberation in past decades, the interim Constitution of South Africa in Act 200 of 1993 set the provisions to begin working on a reconciliation process to promote unity and forgiveness in South African society. Once in power, Mandela approved the founding act of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC) with the enactment of the ‘Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act’ No. 34 of 1995 (also referred to as the South African Act) in order to

provide for the investigation and the establishment of as complete a picture as possible for the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights committed during the period from March 1960 to the cut-off date contemplated in the Constitution, within or outside the Republic, emanating from the conflicts of the past, and the fate or whereabouts of the victims of such violations; the granting of amnesty to persons who make full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to acts associated with a political objective committed in the course of the conflicts of the parts during the said period; affording the victims an opportunity to relate the violations they suffered; the taking of measures aimed at the granting of reparation to, and the rehabilitation and the restoration of the human and civil dignity of, victims of violations of human rights; reporting to the Nation about such violations and victims; the making of recommendations aimed at the prevention of the commission of gross violation of human rights; and for the said purposes to provide for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a

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357 Tutu, ‘A Miracle Unfolding’, 261.

Committee on Human Rights Violations, a Committee on Amnesty and a Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation.<sup>358</sup>

The nature of this effort followed the basic goals and demands of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions established before in other parts of the world such as Chile and Argentina. At the same time, the SATRC established new operational innovations that made it a model for future commissions. Alex Boraine mentions that these kinds of commissions share the same political context upon their creation: a shift from totalitarianism to form a fragile and precarious democracy, a negotiated political settlement, a legacy of oppression and violation of human rights, a commitment to safeguard human rights and respect for the law and a determination not to repeat the same atrocities of the past.<sup>359</sup>

Thus, truth commissions seek to ‘uncover the past in order to answer questions that remain unanswered’<sup>360</sup> and say ‘never again’ to those gross violations of human rights and oppression. This is a call to acknowledge that truth (confession) is required to attain reconciliation through repentance and forgiveness; it is a process that implies a compassionate commitment to both aggressors and victims. Therefore, these commissions embody a more holistic approach to reconciliation than that offered by retributive justice and prosecutions. Martha Minow argues that these commissions ‘emphasize both truth finding and truth telling. If the goals of repairing human dignity, healing individuals, and mending societies after the trauma of mass atrocity are central, truth commissions offer features that are often more promising than prosecutions’.<sup>361</sup>

These features are the capacity of victims to tell their stories and express their suffering; the opportunity for aggressors to express their guilt and offer true repentance; the chance for the whole society to recognize the fallibility of the human mind when it is obscured by hatred, anger and ignorance; and, consequently, the acknowledgment of the healing power of forgiveness through the recognition of a common humanity that

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358 Office of the President of South Africa, ‘Act No.34 of 1995: Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995’, Government of South Africa, <http://www.info.gov.za/acts/1995/a34-95.pdf> (August 20, 2009).

359 Alex Boraine, ‘Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: The Third Way’, in *Truth vs. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 142.

360 Robert I. Rotberg, ‘Truth Commissions and the Provision of Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation’, in *Truth vs. Justice*, 3.

361 Martha Minow, ‘The Hope for Healing: What can Truth Commissions Do’, in *Truth vs. Justice*, 235.

wants to eliminate suffering and achieve happiness through compassion, unity and reconciliation. Thus, 'by the terms of their charters, these commissions sacrifice the pursuit of justice as usually understood for the sake of promoting other social purposes, such as historical truth and social reconciliation',<sup>362</sup> that set new conditions to construct a new reality of unity and interdependence.

Gutmann and Thompson argue that truth commissions can be more effective if their existence fulfils three moral challenges: to be moral in principle, in perspective and in practice. In the case of the SATRC, the principle of forgiveness stressed by Tutu as the chairperson of the Commission paved the way toward reconciliation. This was possible because instead of prosecuting the aggressors and punishing them, it offered the possibility of a mutual healing process that lead to their integration in the construction of a more just society. Thus, punishment was sacrificed to give space for redemption in thought and action, accomplishing the first moral challenge. The second challenge was fulfilled by the SATRC through its capacity to hear testimony from all sides of the conflict seeking to encompass the representation of most parts of society. This integrative characteristic of the commission helped to accomplish the third moral challenge by opening the process to people from all races, political affiliation and religious beliefs who wanted to help in the reconciliation process.

Therefore, truth commissions can contribute positively to the construction of a new society that, by sharing and recalling a collective memory of suffering, can move forward toward reconciliation based on forgiveness and recognition of a common humanity. Thus, truth commissions 'are worthy of human effort in the continuing struggles against mass atrocities',<sup>363</sup> and in the re-making of the world, trying to accomplish the ideals of justice, compassion and happiness that in Tutu's theology would be the realization of God's intention and the vivid representation of God's dream.

### **SATRC at Work Facing the Critics: 'Not to Forget but to Forgive'**

Following these objectives, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission began to work as stipulated in the South African Act, through the work of three Commissions: the Human Rights Violations Committee, the Amnesty Committee, and

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362 Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, 'The Moral Foundations of Truth Commissions', in *Truth vs. Justice*, 22.

363 Minow, 'The Hope for Healing: What Can Truth Commissions Do?', 255.

the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. The first conducted public hearings, many of which were broadcast nationally through radio and television. Having their first public hearings in East London on 16 April 1996, the SATRC took more than 21,000 statements which related to around 35,000 violations of human rights. It received the testimony of representatives of political parties, trade and industry, the bar association, the judiciary, medical bodies, the press, unions and non-governmental organizations.<sup>364</sup> The testimonies taken into account had to refer to the period prescribed by the Commission:

16. The time period set by the Act was between 1 March 1960 (the month in which the Sharpeville massacre took place) and 5 December 1993 (the date the final agreement was reached in the political negotiations). This last date was subsequently extended to 10 May 1994 to coincide with the date of the inauguration of the first democratically elected President of the country.<sup>365</sup>

The Amnesty Committee dealt with applications that had to accomplish a certain criteria in order to be granted amnesty. These criteria were based on the Norgaard Principles and had to be under the stipulation of political objective. Specifically, this committee had to take into account several factors to grant amnesty:

The motive of the perpetrator; the context in which the incident occurred (for example whether it occurred in the course of a political uprising); the nature and gravity of the incident; the object or objective of the conduct and, in particular, whether it was directed against political enemies or innocent parties; the existence of any orders or approval of the conduct by a political organization, and finally, the issue of proportionality. Moreover, the Act specifically provided that, where the perpetrator had acted for personal gain (except in the case of informers) or out of personal malice, ill-will or spite towards the victim, the conduct in question would not qualified as an act associated with a political objective.<sup>366</sup>

By September 1997, the SATRC report indicated that 'in excess of 7000 applications had been received and were being dealt with by a maximum of nineteen

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364 Luc Huyse, 'Dealing with the Past in South Africa', in *Peace-Building: A Field Guide*, ed. Luc Reyckler and Thania Paffendholz (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 359.

365 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report: Volume Six* (Cape Town: Juta & Co. Ltd, 1993), 6.

366 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, 9.

committee members and ninety-four staff members'.<sup>367</sup> The high number of applications challenged the capacity of the Committee and was one of the problems highlighted by the critics of the Commission. Tutu affirms that amnesty 'was the carrot of possible freedom in exchange of truth, and the stick was the prospect of lengthy prison sentences for those already in gaol, and the probability of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment for those still free.'<sup>368</sup> In addition, the third Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee also faced a high number of demands and a limited capability to fulfil them completely. Despite the difficulties, it proved to be a successful effort that set new conditions in the process of reconciling the previously divided South African society.

This effort faced several criticisms not only due to the high number of applications, as previously stated, but for being too religious, too male, too cheap and too bad for history<sup>369</sup>. For the purpose of this chapter, I will briefly refer to the so-called 'cheap forgiveness' which had been the most common critique of the SATRC and on Tutu's approach. The 'limited scope of justice' of the Commission is stressed by Richard Wilson, who argued that the process artificially merged religion with a legal process, thus limiting the right of the victims to prosecute the perpetrators of gross violations of human rights and trying to impose the idea of forgiveness in Christian terms.<sup>370</sup> However, as Megan Shore affirms, "excluding religion in the process would have been interpreted as foreign by many South Africans. In other words, excluding religious discourse in the (SA)TRC may well have threatened the authenticity of the process."<sup>371</sup>

One of the leading voices against the efficiency of the SATRC was Tinyiko Maluleke who affirmed that this Commission was "dealing lightly with the wounds of my people"<sup>372</sup> because there was no certainty "whether reconciliation without judicial justice is possible or how can you push forward a process of national reconciliation if

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367 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, 22.

368 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 33.

369 H. Russel Botman, 'Truth and Reconciliation: the South Africa Case', *Religion and Peacebuilding* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), 253-255.

370 Richard Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

371 Megan Shore, 'Christianity and Justice in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Case Study in Religious Conflict Resolution', *Political Theology* 9, no. 2, 169.

372 Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, 'Dealing Lightly with the Wounds of my People: the TRC Process in Theological Perspective,' *Missionalia* 25, no. 3 (November 1997), pp. 324-343.



you don't get enough reparations for the psychological and material damage.<sup>373</sup> Furthermore, he affirmed that transformation and reconstruction was substituted for liberation and a previous 'commitment to the poor' became a 'shared commitment' with the state.<sup>374</sup> Despite his criticism, one must remember that the basic idea is that the power of forgiveness leading to reconciliation in an individual level will trigger a social transformation by constructing a new society on the basis of individual transformation rooted in forgiveness and expressed in reconciliation.

Following Maluleke's criticisms, Mahmood Mamdani argued that justice is not guaranteed because its major concern is about truth and reconciliation, and not justice and reconciliation. In the case of South Africa, he said, we are dealing with reconciliation without justice. Thus, "if truth has replaced justice has reconciliation turned into an embrace of evil?"<sup>375</sup> He was concerned by the fact that truth-telling cannot guarantee peace and forgiveness but, to the contrary, it may lead to race on the part of the victims, trigger revenge or fear on the part of former perpetrators, which will bring back the idea of separation.<sup>376</sup> However, one of the most important ideas of Tutu for the Commission, was to give opportunity for the victims to speak and the former perpetrators to assume their responsibility in order to move forward together. This was not to forget but forgive, to integrate the past as a cornerstone to build a new South Africa, not to separate them again.

Therefore, the SATRC put forward the possibility of coexistence and respect through a difficult process of reconciliation.<sup>377</sup> In addition, Boraine pointed out the following achievements of the Commission: it broke the silence regarding the actions and consequences of apartheid; brought forth truths thus far not known; made it impossible for white Africans to say 'I did not know'; brought a huge media coverage; and helped to 'say no to amnesia and yes to remembrance; to say no to full-scale prosecutions and trials and yes to forgiveness. South Africa chose the third way'.<sup>378</sup>

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373 T. Maluleke, 'Truth, National Unity and Reconciliation in South Africa: Aspects of the Emerging Agenda' *Missionalia* 25, no 1 (1997), pp. 59-86

374 T. Maluleke, 'Dealing Lightly with the Wounds of my People', 337.

375 Mahmood Mamdani, 'Reconciliation without Justice' *SARoB*, 46 (November/December 1996), [http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/sarb/X0045\\_Mamdani.html](http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/sarb/X0045_Mamdani.html) (accessed June 10, 2011).

376 Mahmood Mamdani, 'Reconciliation without Justice'

377 Boraine, 'Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: The Third Way', 154.

378 Boraine, 'Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: The Third Way', 154.

This third way, amply supported by Tutu, refers to making a link between justice and reconciliation through confession and forgiveness. This option was chosen while considering which path to take in order to reconcile the nation with itself. The first and more common way to do it was to form a special tribunal such as those of Nuremberg and Tokyo to punish the criminals as an example of retributive justice. The second option, suggested by the De Klerk's government and some black groups, was general amnesty and moving on burying the past without acknowledging it.

Thus, moved by his deep Christian commitment to justice and forgiveness and his unbreakable faith in Jesus Christ's words and their applicability in this particular context of history, 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free',<sup>379</sup> Tutu supported the third way: heal the wounds of individuals in order to heal the nation. This painful process was worth enduring and, despite the difficulties and critics, it helped to remove a great amount of resentment, hatred and anger by granting an opportunity to publicly confess sins and publicly be able to grant forgiveness.

Tutu rejected the first option because it would drive the former victims to punish those who hurt them, giving space to revenge and continuing the cycle of dehumanization. The second option of general amnesty was to call for a national amnesia that 'would have victimized the victim of apartheid a second time around. It would have meant denying their experience, a vital part of their identity'.<sup>380</sup> Thus, the third option was chosen and was based on the African worldview known as *ubuntu* or *botho* which 'speaks of the very essence of being human'.<sup>381</sup> Hence, 'the quality of *ubuntu* gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them'.<sup>382</sup> In this particular case Tutu argues that *ubuntu* means,

that in the real sense even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. Our humanity was intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrators of apartheid's atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or

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379 John 8:32

380 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 32.

381 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 34.

382 Tutu, *God Has a Dream*, 26.

not. In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanized as well.<sup>383</sup>

Central to this ‘third way’ toward reconciliation is forgiveness. Tutu affirms that ‘forgiveness will follow confession and healing will happen, and so contribute to national unity and reconciliation’.<sup>384</sup> This is possible because by forgiving those who sin against us, we are accepting the divine truth that ‘despite the awfulness of their deeds, [they] remain children of God with the capacity to repent, to be able to change’.<sup>385</sup> Thus, ‘in this theology we can never give up on anyone because our God was one who had a particularly soft spot for sinners’.<sup>386</sup>

Therefore, Tutu brought a religious aura to the SATRC that helped to encourage people to speak freely and confidently. Although this Christian-guided model was not liked by everyone, it certainly helped the Commission and society to find comfort and relief by transfiguring hatred and anger into forgiveness through confession and repentance. This inclusion of religion in the commission, Megan Shore argues, is an example of how a religions dimension can be vital to successful transition from a violent and authoritarian regime to a peaceful social arrangement and policies.<sup>387</sup>

Hence, Tutu’s hope in achieving this restorative justice was rooted in the capacity of human beings to forgive, just as Jesus Christ forgave those who humiliated and tortured him even before they repented. James Gibson argues that ‘when South Africans talk about restorative justice, they often refer to the processes such as restoring the ‘dignity’ of the victims’<sup>388</sup>, which in this process means to ‘humanize’ those previously ‘dehumanized’ victims and oppressors. Hence, those who participated in the SATRC have proved to be the viceroys of God, contributing to realizing God’s dream of unity because, as Tutu put it,

They have dispelled the murkiness and fresh air has blown into that situation to transfigure it. It was filled people with new hope that despair, darkness, anger,

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383 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 35.

384 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 91.

385 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 74.

386 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 74.

387 Megan Shore, ‘Christianity and Justice in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A case Study in Religious Conflict Resolution’ *Political Theology* 9, no. 2 (2008): 176.

388 James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?* (South Africa: HSRC Press, 2004), 263.

resentment and hatred would not have the last word; hope that a new situation could come about when enemies might become friends again, when that dehumanized perpetrator might be helped to recover his lost humanity.<sup>389</sup>

### **Tutu through the Buddhist Theological Looking-Glass: The Sacred, the Four Noble Truths, Interdependence and *Karma***

Thus, the success of this process encouraged by Tutu, who in 1996 became Archbishop Emeritus, is in accordance with the capacity of individuals to construct a new reality. This capacity to transfigure the world they live through healing themselves and then society, corresponds to the Buddhist theology this thesis presents. The following remarks refer to the bridge of understanding found in Tutu's Christian theology as well as the one proposed by the Dalai Lama in the previous chapter. This understanding, which can be found in the Buddhist theology developed in this thesis will serve as the foundation for the *Theology of International Relations* developed in the next chapter.

As stated in previous chapters, the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism refer to recognizing the existence of suffering in this *samsaric* existence of relative truth; being aware that the root of suffering is attachment; being aware that there is a possibility of eliminating suffering by eradicating its cause; and finally recognizing that there is a path to overcome suffering and achieve liberation from *Samsara*. This path is integrated by eight qualities: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right effort, right way of living, right mindfulness and right concentration.

Similarly, Tutu argues that 'suffering is not optional. It seems to be part and parcel of the human condition',<sup>390</sup> which finds resonance with the first Noble Truth. Furthermore, he continues 'in the universe we inhabit whether will always be suffering. Even if God's dream were to come true, there would still be pain in childbirth, torment in illness, and anguish in death',<sup>391</sup> thus identifying three of the four main sufferings of sentient beings referred to in Buddhism.

The Second Noble Truth, the attachment to worldly-relative conditions as the root of suffering is represented in Tutu's words as attachment to success in human

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389 Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 121.

390 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 71.

391 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 72.

terms. He says that in this culture of success ‘the worst thing that could happen to a person in contemporary society is for him to fail’<sup>392</sup> and ‘it has affected our whole atmosphere so that we find that stomach ulcers become a status symbol’.<sup>393</sup> Furthermore, he affirms,

We have tended to treat the weak, the poor, the unemployed, the failures with disdain because success and power have become the gods at whose altars we have burned incense and bowed the knee. We have tended to be embarrassed by compassion and caring things that were inappropriate in the harsh, callous world of business.<sup>394</sup>

The Third Noble Truth is represented in Tutu’s theology when he refers to the possibility of transforming suffering and eventually overcoming it completely. Thus, ‘when we are able to see the larger purpose of our suffering, it is transformed, transmuted. It becomes a redemptive suffering’.<sup>395</sup> Thus the transfigurative quality of suffering, as with every person or situation, opens the possibility of achieving the ultimate goal of accomplishing God’s dream, which Tutu explains as follows:

‘I have a dream’, God says. ‘Please help me to realize it. It is a dream of a world whose ugliness and squalor and poverty, its war and hostility, its greed and harsh competitiveness, its alienation and disharmony are changed into their glorious counterparts, when there will be more laughter, joy and peace, where there will be justice and goodness and compassion and love and caring and sharing. I have a dream that swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, that My children will know that they are members of one family, the human family, God’s family, My family’.<sup>396</sup>

In order to accomplish God’s dream, humanity should follow a way of compassion and caring, just as the Fourth Noble Truth establishes in the Eightfold Path. In Tutu’s words, in order to ‘address this suffering from a place of love and not hate, of forgiveness and not revenge, of humility and not arrogance, of generosity and not guilt,

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392 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 32-33.

393 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 33.

394 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 37.

395 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 72.

396 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 19-20.

of courage and not fear, we must learn to see with the eyes of the heart'.<sup>397</sup> This sets a path that encourages individuals 'to see with the eyes of God—to see with the eyes of the heart and not just with eyes of the head... As we cultivate these eyes we are able to learn from our suffering and to see the world with more living, forgiving, humble, generous eyes'.<sup>398</sup> Therefore, the path to construct this world according to God's intention is summarized by Tutu as follows: 'what is it that allows us to transform our suffering, to transmute it? Ultimately is love'.<sup>399</sup> Love that encompasses all, that enables people to see the true nature of things, to experience our divine nature, to become enlightened, to be God's dream.

Another key element in Buddhist theology that can be found in Tutu's approach is interdependence. Although it is not found in its entirety, which may indicate a deeper conflict between theological understandings of ultimate reality, one can find elements of interdependence between human beings and their relation with the environment and their construction of a shared relative reality. This is a call to recognize what the Fourteenth Dalai Lama refers to as 'common humanity' and its implications for a 'universal responsibility' in this world. During the liberation struggle in the apartheid era and his time as chairperson of the SATRC, Tutu connected the divine intention with the idea to 'heal the nation' as the result of a true reconciliation. This process permeated the Commission's *ethos* and functions because 'confession, forgiveness, and reparation, wherever feasible, from part of a continuum'.<sup>400</sup>

The concept of *ubuntu* can also be understood as an expression of the interdependence of human beings and the acceptance of the truth that 'we are created to live in a delicate network of interdependence'.<sup>401</sup> In sum, 'our humanity is caught in that of all others, we are human because we belong. We are made for community, for togetherness, for family'.<sup>402</sup> If, as human beings, we recognize this quality, we can then extend the sense of interdependence to all the elements around us, and 'every part of the created universe could be the site of 'theophany'—of a revelation of the divine'.<sup>403</sup>

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397 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 69.

398 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 72.

399 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 75.

400 Tutu, *God has a Dream*, 57.

401 Tutu, *No future without forgiveness*, 213.

402 Tutu, *No future without forgiveness*, 154.

403 Tutu, *God Has a Dream*, 95.

Finally, the *Karmatic* consequences of individuals' actions and thoughts can construct a new world. Tutu agrees with the Buddhist- constructivist approach used in the present thesis by recognizing that

We have the power. Institutions or corporations or governments have no life of their own, despite what we typically think about bureaucracies. They are only groups of people. They are people like you and me, making choices, deciding whether to heed God's call or not, to accept God's proposal or not. To become God's partner or not.<sup>404</sup>

This is possible because, as Tutu acknowledges, 'I'm coming to believe more and more in the truth that everything we do has consequences. A good deed doesn't just evaporate and disappear. Its consequences saturate the universe and the goodness that happens somewhere, anywhere, helps in the transfiguration of the ugliness'.<sup>405</sup> This *Karmatic* relation gives individuals the chance to construct their world and the choice of whether to follow the path of suffering through anger, hatred and ignorance that has led to violence so far, or the path of wisdom and compassion as expressions of love of the divine, whether referred to as God or *Shunyata*. This is how Tutu understood the chance to heal his nation and, furthermore, to heal the world from the wounds of hatred, separation and violence that human beings had constructed in different periods of history. Regarding our universal responsibility in shaping our world, Tutu affirms,

Our decisions—personal, corporate, at play, at home and in public—make the moral fabric of our society, indeed of the world. How we interact with the people in our lives—whether we are centres of peace, oases of compassion—make a difference. The sum total of these interactions determines nothing less than the nature of human life on our planet. Similarly, you stand for justice and right, your witness, your prayers and your caring and concern are what chance the planet—these things do not evaporate and disappear.<sup>406</sup>

Thus, both of the case studies presented in chapters three and four, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, support the key elements of Buddhist theology and the constructivist approach of this thesis. Furthermore, they set the

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404 Tutu, *God Has a Dream*, 122-123.

405 Tutu, *God Has a Dream*, 80-81

406 Tutu, *God Has a Dream*, 123.

conditions, theoretical and empirical, to sustain the argument that religion matters in how individuals construct their world. For better or worse, individuals are inspired by their belonging to the divine, as expressed in different forms and are responsible for shaping the world we all live in. Following these ideas, I will present in the following chapter the *Theology of International Relations*, which seeks to establish the basis for the proper study of the role of individuals in constructing their reality and affecting society and institutions such as the state as well as how religion plays a major role in the construction of this relative, interdependent world.





## THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF A *THEOLOGY OF*

### *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

As we have seen throughout this thesis, relative reality is contingent on the sum of individuals' wills, which are institutionalized in organizations and states. The relevance of individuals relies on the fact that they put in motion a process of social change through their thoughts and actions, and these are often motivated by spiritual and religious beliefs and goals. If one recognizes the power of religious belief in the sacred with a particular set of theological elements, and how different religious traditions can dialogue by advocating their similarities in the nectar of their own traditions, it is possible then to establish that a peaceful arrangement of domestic and international relations is possible when guided by religious people. This includes religious leaders, as we have seen in the previous two chapters, and also all individuals—practitioners—who consider themselves followers of those leaders and the traditions they represent. They become religious peacemakers and a cornerstone for the construction of a compassionate relative reality.

In addition, the extreme and violent interpretations of the theologies of major world religions, along with economic interests and political influence, have contributed to a tendency to overlook the relevance of religion in the reconstruction of a more compassionate and just world. For a time, it looked like Samuel Huntington's thesis in the *Clash of Civilizations* was becoming true:

The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nations states will remain the most powerful actor in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of

different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.<sup>407</sup>

Thus, state power will face the revenge of religion: the secular and the private spheres are about to clash. Has *Armageddon* begun? Certainly not. Religious forces in Western societies were not gone, but only hidden from the public gaze. Even if the idea of 'American exceptionalism' convinces scholars that Americans were the victims of the ultimate sign of the destruction of the world on 11 September 2001, the truth is that it was just another act of violence that captured wider attention because it happened right at the heart of New York. Nevertheless, the twentieth century witnessed many conflicts rooted in religious beliefs and ethnic-group differentiation such as the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland; the Sikhs and Hindus of the Punjab; the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka; and the genocides of Rwanda and Tibet. Thus, religious conflicts did not begin on 11 September 2001; the events of that date merely showed the Western states that religion matters but, unfortunately, they also reinforced a negative approach toward religion in international relations. Thus we need to bring back the compassionate *ethos* of religion through a proper theological understanding of the sacred.

But then, how can we speak of religious peacemakers while many social conflicts have been ignited by the flame of religious hatred? Is the ambivalence of the sacred a way to find the compassionate force of religion in constructing a better reality? Can we dream about a more humane global governmentance, as Richard Falk suggests? If so, how can the *Theology of International Relations* contribute to it? How can we integrate the role of theology, religion and politics in a new understanding of foreign affairs and sacred matters? Is it possible to study religious variables and explain religiously motivated movements? Moreover, is it possible to change a negative cycle of causal relationships rooted in anger, fear and delusion into a positive one of mutual benefit and happiness?

In order to answer these questions, this chapter will address different interconnected issues in its different parts. The first refers to the re-thinking of religion in international relations, stressing on the importance of overcoming terror through

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407 Samuel Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations', *Foreign Affairs* 72, no.3 (Summer 1993), p. 22.

sacred-nonviolence. This is possible thanks to the role of religious peacemakers and committed religious practitioners of peaceful movements which devise a more humane society by the development of a compassionate view among all individuals.

Next, I will define the characteristics of the *Theology of International Relations* (*TIR*) and its aims for the fields of theology and politics. Then, the major guidelines of the *TIR* known as the Four Truths will be used to explain the method of study which will be developed further in the last part of the chapter. Finally, this method will be presented through an analytical chart of each discipline—theology-religion-politics—and an overall chart of analysis. Following the Buddhist interpretation of relative reality, all causes and conditions as well as the interaction of disciplines and actors have a major impact in each other, and thus they can become agents of peace or war, creating new conditions to achieve a compassionate relative reality in relation with the sacred.

## **Re-thinking the Role of Religion in International Relations: Constructing Peace in Times of War**

### **Overcoming Terror through Sacred Non-violence**

The dominant understanding of religion in international relations had been sustained by two central assumptions: first, that religion is part of a past where religious institutions had political and moral power while—at the same time—restraining the material and ideological development of societies, a past that should not be recalled again; and second, that religion is a factor of disruption, violence and hatred. With these two assumptions in mind, the religious variable has been locked in the coffin of backwardness and war which I consider counterproductive for the proper study of the relevance of religion on domestic and international levels and for the need to take more seriously the role of individuals—particularly religious leaders—in the reconstruction of the world in positive terms. With this in mind, further questions must be answered: is it true that religion encourages war? If not, how can religions contribute to peaceful actions? Who counts as a religious actor? What does one do in this new century regarding religion and politics?

Although at first glance we can answer the first question positively, due to the particular use of religious truths, interpreted in light of the anger, hatred and delusion of

egotistic individuals, one should bear in mind that religion has the same power to be part of peace as well as violence. There is not an intrinsic, violent nature in religions and, more radically, the bases of all major religions are love and compassion, which are constitutive parts of peace. Therefore, we should not fail 'to appreciate the profoundly humane and humanizing attributes of religion and the moral constraints it imposes on intolerant and violent behaviour'.<sup>408</sup> This issue was addressed by the former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan when he said,

To be kind, to be merciful: no single religion can claim a monopoly on such teachings. The problem, as I see it, is not with the faith; it is with the faithful. 'Wars begin in the minds of men', says another famous Charter, that of UNESCO; and so it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed'.<sup>409</sup>

One of the major problems that results in violence is the claim of superiority by one religion over the others. The allegiance of one truth, one God, one religion is regarded as a basic foundation of some religious communities. This particular intolerant view of religious adherence is seen when the interests of religious leaders and followers are misguided by fear and hatred. The use of religion to legitimize violent actions, which is often referred to as 'just war', leaves out the power of religion to accomplish change through non-violent means. However, this term is used to justify violent actions and the practice of abuse of power toward other human beings, which would otherwise be seen as morally indefensible. This worldview appears when 'claims of national aspiration become cosmic tropes and eschatological battles of good against evil severed from any utopian vision of as just end or divine compassion, mercy is viewed as naïve and righteousness as false piety'.<sup>410</sup> José Maria Vigil addresses this matter as follows:

Only the God of Peace with Justice will make these so-called 'just wars' unnecessary. The world religions all have this same challenge to meet: to dialogue, to discern the presence of the 'God of war who has been crouching in front of them throughout history in the shape of 'exclusive salvation', unique choice by God,

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408 S. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 10.

409 Kofi Annan, 'The Challenge of Diversity', Tanenbaum Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, <http://www.tanenbaum.org/Annan1998.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2009).

410 Shaul Magid, 'Reconciliation, Repentance and the World to Come: A View from Judaism', *Concilium* 5, ed. Luiz Carlos Susin and Maria Pilar Aquino (2003), 70.

justification of one's own privileges, connivance with power, disregard of the poor... and to be converted to the universal God of peace and justice.<sup>411</sup>

Consequently, religion is not violent in itself but is part of other factors that, when combined, produce a violent outcome. The most important idea is to recognize the capacity of individuals to recognize the basic, shared values among religions and to use these to set new conditions for building peaceful relationships. Therefore, as John Francis Burke affirms,

The world's religious traditions, in collaboration with each other and with major humanistic traditions, are pivotal to evoking an ethos that diverse cultures and spiritualities can engage each other in non-violent ways which lead to mutual constructive formation, not the triumph of one tradition at the expense of the other.<sup>412</sup>

This mutual collaboration would be possible if there is a common recognition of the same goal between religions. This common goal is explained by the Dalai Lama as follows:

All religions agree upon the necessity to control the undisciplined mind that harbors selfishness and other roots of trouble, and each teaches a path leading to a spiritual state that is peaceful, disciplined, ethical, and wise. It is in this sense that I believe all religions have essentially the same message.<sup>413</sup>

In sum, religion is a source of peace and, even more, its nature is rooted in compassion and recognition of our interdependence as human beings. By recognizing our common humanity through our religious traditions, there is a chance for non-violent means to arise as a collective force of compassion and justice. It is important to remember that non-violence does not mean retreat from social action; to the contrary, it is active social engagement through compassionate intention and peaceful means that help to build a new set of principles and state of minds that will eventually create a new and improved reality. Hermann Häring affirms that it 'is becoming increasingly clear that non-violence must not be confused with passivity. The overcoming of violence

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411 José María Vigil, 'The God of War and the God of Peace with Justice', *Concilium* 2, ed. Dietmar Mieth and María Pilar Aquino, trans. Paul Burns (2001), 101.

412 John Francis Burke, 'The Interreligious Dimension: A Global Ethic of Peace', *Concilium* 2, 69.

413 Dalai Lama, 'A New Approach to Global Problems', in *Mindful Politics*, Melvin McLeod ed. (Somerville, Wisdom Publications, 2006), 22.

presupposes an active formation of consciousness, active action, and sometimes active resistance'.<sup>414</sup> Then, with, Robert Schreiter, one can conclude that

Religion is a source of reconciliation through its visions of peace, its commitments of truth and to justice, and the prospects it holds out for forgiveness. It is a resource in its leaders, its people, and its institutions which can help anchor and guide a reconciliation process in the unstable times immediately after conflict.<sup>415</sup>

### Religious Peacemakers

Following an individual level of analysis which emphasizes the role of individuals who become international actors through their capacity to influence others' ideas, beliefs and behaviour, changing social and state relations, I will refer to these individuals as religious peacemakers. By not denying the relevance of global, interstate and societal levels but, to the contrary, integrating them as part of their efforts to improve the well-being of individuals, these leaders acknowledge their moral stature and capacity to lead others through the use of language, images and shared religious doctrines through their particular theologies from their own religious traditions. They help to reconstruct relative reality by planting the seeds of compassion in individuals' minds and, one by one, creating a social change toward a generalized well-being. Therefore, religious actors are those individuals who are raised up by a religious community and work toward the benefit of others through the application of their doctrines to a socially engaged spirituality—e.g., engaged Buddhists.

The religious peacemaker is thus 'committed primarily to the cessation of violence and the resolution of conflict: *reconciliation or peaceful coexistence with the enemy is the ultimate goal*'.<sup>416</sup> Therefore, religious peacemakers are more concerned with creating the conditions to build peace rather than establishing a particular religion by force. They are not trying to win converts to their own traditions but to become the embodiment of the nectar of their own religious traditions. In this way they differentiate themselves from extremist religious leaders who interpret and use religion as a means to

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414 Hermann Häring, 'Working Hard to Overcome Violence in the Name of Religion', *Concilium* 4, ed. Wim Beuken and Karl-Josef Kuschelby, trans. John Bowden (1997): 81-92.

415 Robert Schreiter, 'Religion as Source and Resource for Reconciliation', *Concilium* 5, 116.

416 S. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 13

win over the other, to get rid of infidels or heretics and thus to proclaim the only true way to the divine.

In addition, religious peacemakers should speak from their own traditions in order to retain their moral stature and leadership among those they inspire. Appleby affirms:

Contrary to the misconceptions popular in some academic and political circles, religious actors play this critical and positive role in world affairs not when they moderate their religion or marginalize their deeply held, vividly symbolized, and often highly particular beliefs in a higher order of love and justice. Religious actors make a difference when they remain *religious actors*.<sup>417</sup>

Can a Buddhist theological approach analyse only Engaged Buddhists? Are they the only ones who can be explained in Buddhist terms? As I have presented in the case of Archbishop Tutu, there is not an exclusivist nor inclusivist approach in the theology I am developing, but a pluralist understanding of the sacred as explained in chapter 1. But then, how can we explain this pluralism within a Buddhist theological framework? The Buddha explained that there are thousands of *Dharma* doors—some scriptures recall 89,000—and just as there are ‘three vehicles’ of Buddhism which are only expressions of the all-encompassing vehicle of the Buddhas, different ways to explain the truth about the sacred or the transcendent are part of those doors. This does not mean that all religions and theologies are integrated in Buddhist thought in a strict manner, but their doctrinal values of justice, compassion and the conception of a supramundane reality are what makes them part of the *Dharma* doors. Therefore, any individual who is working toward the elimination of suffering through compassionate means become a practitioner of the Dharma, whether he or she considers him- or herself to be Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Jew or Atheist. This is how a religious peacemaker is taken into account in this thesis, as was exemplified by the case study of the role of Archbishop Tutu in overcoming suffering through forgiveness and thus working toward reconciliation in South Africa and the world.

Obviously, religious leaders are not isolated and thus they need the help of other individuals who are religiously and socially committed to the benefit of their fellow

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417 S. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 16

human beings. The role of individuals, besides those leaders is fundamental for the success of spiritual revolutions, which are changes of mind and heart toward a compassionate understanding of our shared nature and common responsibility for re-creating a more just and peaceful existence. If the believers are not well-rooted within their traditions, if they do not have enough theological understanding or know the basics of their creeds they are an easy target for religious extremists. Conversely, ‘if the believers in question are well formed spiritually and informed theologically, such arguments may find little hearing’.<sup>418</sup>

Therefore, individuals are the key element in understanding the role of religion in society and how it can transform certain conditions which results in an alteration of relative reality in domestic and international arenas. As Appleby suggests, ‘unless other leaders of the community find the argument for nonviolence compelling and join efforts to build support for it within a religious community, in short, the peacebuilding will fail’.<sup>419</sup> In the previous chapters I have presented how two religious peacemakers, one Buddhist and one Anglican, share the vision of a compassionate humanity and have inspired other individuals to unite efforts and wills to overcome suffering through loving-kindness, revenge through forgiveness and violence through reconciliation. Their work is not done yet, but they represent two successful examples of how religious leaders can speak within their own religious traditions and advocate the same values for the protection of human dignity and the promotion of spiritual revolution rooted in compassion and loving-kindness, which are key elements of the Buddhist theology developed in this thesis.

### **Toward a More Humane-Compassionate World**

After a long history of viewing religion in politics as a source of violence or a characteristic of a dark age of humanity, new questions arise from a peaceful approach to both disciplines. If the relevance of religion in politics has been admitted, how can it be analysed? Is it really present as a root-cause for social movements in defence of particular theologies or is it just a political tool to mobilize people and gain power? Moreover, is religion inherently violent by calling for particularist world-views, or is

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418 S. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 17.

419 S. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 283.



there a chance to have a community of religions in dialogue? Following the Buddhist theological framework, the contemporary need to study this phenomenon more deeply is the result of certain causes and conditions. The time has come to go beyond dichotomies between modernist and post-modernist theories and call for a ‘middle way’ by which to study the effects of religion in politics and vice versa.

The last decade rapidly brought signs of change as a consequence of two different worldviews that in fact have centuries-old origins: one rooted in an egotistic view and the other rooted in a compassionate view. This first was derived from actions guided by anger, hatred and delusion and has materialized in current times as the ‘threat of terror’. It is the sum of intersubjective consensus rooted in selfish desires, biased party politics, sectarian interpretation of sacred texts and abuse of environmental and economic resources. Richard Falk describes it as an ‘inhumane global governance’ with four adverse normative effects: polarization and global apartheid, neglect of human suffering, decline of the global public good and looming technological horizons.<sup>420</sup> All of these are just consequences of a particular interpretation and re-construction of relative reality rooted in a negative view of the self and the other which calls for separation and competition instead of integration and partnership.

Conversely, the second view was rooted in a shared understanding of reality in accordance with compassionate action, justice and the need for reconciliation. The means to achieve reconciliation and peace are non-violence and understanding of the ‘other’ as interdependent of ‘me’, which automatically eradicates both labels and becomes an integrative approach. Falk describes this view as part of the ‘humane global governance’ and the contributions of religion he establishes along with the Buddhist theological means are represented in the table below:

*Table 1. Compassionate View through Theological-Religious Elements*

Religious Contributions to A Humane Global Governance <sup>421</sup>	Buddhist Theological Means to a Compassionate Reconstruction of Relative Reality
An appreciation of suffering	The First Noble Truth: the existence of suffering as part of the sensorial existence
Civilizational resonance through charismatic	Individual transformation for social

420 Richard Falk, *Religion and Humane Global Governance* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 21-24.

421 Falk, *Religion and Humane Global Governance*, 30-31.

individuals	improvement through the role of individuals from leaders to committed religious practitioners
Normative horizons	Mindful politics as normative and ethical guidelines for humanist aspirations
An ethos of solidarity	'Common humanity' as the basis for solidarity
Faith and power	Socially engaged religion which, sustained by spiritual energy, affects all societal spheres from the private to the public
Limits of human capacity (humility-tolerance)	Equanimity as a virtue to recognize the limits of humanity and, at the same time, the capacity to build bridges of understanding among parties, correct mistakes through better actions and recognize the limitless nature of the ultimate-sacred reality
Identity	The sense of belonging to a family, a society, country, to humankind and finally to the whole universe through the interdependent nature of all phenomena, thoughts and actions
Reconciliation	A holistic approach of multidisciplinary effects where the reconciliation of theology, religion and international relations can dialogue and, moreover, contribute to the reconstruction of a more just and desirable compassionate humanity

This worldview is the one represented in the present thesis and particularly in the two case studies. The compassionate approaches of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu as religious peacemakers with local and global influence are examples of the need to take religion seriously in international relations and they also represent the harmonic interrelations between theology, religion and politics. This three-fold allegiance becomes the force behind all efforts toward understanding by stressing common ideas and ideals regarding peace, justice, compassion and loving-kindness.

For International Relations, it is vital to find a common ground of understanding between individuals, institutions and states in order to support the ideals mentioned above. For example, individuals need security on their physical, mental, and spiritual bodies; thus the state apparatus, social institutions and religious bodies and leaders can help them fulfil their claims if they work as *missionaries of welfare* instead of trying to be *social saviours*. This will become a social partnership rather than competition, where all levels of society will be benefited and thus the construction of a more compassionate relative reality will be the logical outcome of such an intersubjective consensus.

What is needed to accomplish this goal is a dialogue between all parties in order to create understandings and strategies to benefit all of society, focusing on the strengths of each and how they can be combined without trying to monopolize the decisions of the other. Carlson and Owens point out three reasons why religion has been an important issue for politics without necessarily being a threat to it, but rather a partner in accomplishing their social duties:

First, from a descriptive standpoint, religion for centuries has played an important role in shaping the structures of international political life. Theology and religious pluralism in the West are largely responsible of the Westphalian scheme of sovereignty which, with few exceptions, has endured since 1648.<sup>422</sup>

Religious perspectives also afford an indispensable axis of critical interpretation that secular vantage cannot provide.<sup>423</sup>

Religious perspectives move beyond analysis to adopt a constructive role when they show their unique resources for refining and resolving urgent political quandaries, including proposals concerning human rights, humanitarian military intervention, and the sifting tides of sovereignty.<sup>424</sup>

Therefore, this relation can help to accomplish the goals of both institutions if they recognize their power in society. For example the state may develop its social programmes through religious groups and associations, while religion as represented in churches, may be encouraged by the state in stressing the importance of education in human values, tolerance and the need to enforce spiritual development. Moreover, religious leaders and followers have the chance to become true embodiments of the compassionate nature of their own beliefs. This is not only to identify oneself as a member of one religion or another but truly to be guided by one's own theologies and ethics. As Scott Appleby affirms,

To be formed in a religious tradition is not merely to give intellectual assent to theological and ethical doctrines; it is to internalize these teachings and precepts, to hold them in one's heart, to fasten them in the center of one's will. It is precisely in

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422 Carlson and Owens, 'Reconsidering Westphalia's Legacy for Religion and International Politics', in *The Sacred and the Sovereign*, 9.

423 Carlson and Owens, 'Reconsidering Westphalia's Legacy for Religion and International Politics,' 10.

424 Carlson and Owens, 'Reconsidering Westphalia's Legacy for Religion and International Politics', 10-11.

extraordinary circumstances, such as those generated by deadly conflict, that formation in an ethical and spiritual tradition distinguishes the behaviour of genuinely religious actors.<sup>425</sup>

All this should be done in order to encourage individuals to be more conscious of what they want and how to achieve their goals better in communality under those principles derived from the distinct theologies of different religious traditions. It is within this theological-religious-political effort that the *Theology of International Relations* is rooted, aiming to help understand the role of individuals and their collective bodies in constructing and re-constructing relative reality, and how they can change from a negative cycle which lead them to suffering, into a positive one as the logical consequence of compassionate thoughts and actions which can be found in all major religious traditions.

### Defining A Theology of International Relations

The contemporary world needs to find paths for dialogue and peace, not only in the empirical world but also in academic fields. The interdisciplinary nature of academic projects can boost a new era of understanding, dialogue and common goals that highlight the similarities instead of stressing the differences between individuals and subjects of study. There are several scholars who have tried to find a harmonic relation between religion and politics, such as John D. Carlson and Erik C. Owens. Carlson and Owens offer a *via media* in the study of this relation, one which ‘acknowledges the irreducibility of sacred matters to the life of nations, states, and their citizens and proposes a cautious yet deep engagement of religion and international politics’.<sup>426</sup>

Following the urgent need to find this *via media* in the study of religion and politics, the *TIR* arises as a new method to accomplish that goal. The *TIR* is based on the principles of *karuna* and *ahimsa*, compassion and non-violence respectively, used in Buddhist and Hindu traditions. The first one, *karuna*, refers specifically to the need to study and help to develop a politics of inclusiveness and justice; the second, *ahimsa*, aims to have religions of peace and not of war, looking for common religious values among them. By focusing on shared compassionate commitment we move beyond a

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425 S. Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 286.

426 Carlson and Owens, ‘Reconsidering Westphalia’s Legacy for Religion and International Politics’, in *The Sacred and the Sovereign*, 9.

negative perception of religious reality to one that reflects a true spirituality embedded in all major religious traditions. Thus, as Richard Falk affirms, ‘it is there that civilization and religious renewal can help by nourishing and mobilizing a vision of the possible and necessary that is anchored in human solidarity as well as in distinct traditions of morality, compassion, and spirituality’.<sup>427</sup>

This is an alternative approach to the study of state and religion, stressing the importance of analysing their relationship and how they affect society through the formation of social movements and the application of social policies. By doing so, scholars will be able to study specific cases through the looking glass of the inherent relation between religion and politics without constraining the study to either theology or political science in particular. Furthermore, this new perspective seeks to build what I call a *holistic compassionate model* that helps decision makers to develop better policies by taking into account the shared values of freedom, justice, peace and tolerance among individuals without leaving aside other important factors such as the economy, technological developments and so forth, but instead integrating them into new social policies. Thus, by focusing on the individual level of analysis, the method is aware of the interdependent nature of relative reality and its effect on the society, state, interstate and global levels of analysis; this awareness is a consequential outcome of the fundamental change in perspective initiated by the *TIR*.

## ***TIR* Aims**

### **Theology**

Referring to the academic disciplines involved in the *TIR*, there are several specific goals that this method will accomplish. From a theological perspective, the new approach looks for a publicly oriented theology, following Stephen Pattison’s argument, which can also be useful to non-theological scholars as a research tool of analysis and to which other disciplines can contribute as well. According to Pattison,

Theology is poor at listening to voices from outside its own limits. Furthermore, it is inclined to have a view on everything and to pronounce before it properly analyses and understands. Theology generally seems to prefer to speak rather than

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<sup>427</sup> Falk, *Religion and Humane Global Governance*, 5.

to listen. Ever since God spoke and created the world, theologians seem to have adopted the idea that communication is one-way—they should speak and others listen. This ensures contempt and irrelevance in the outside world.<sup>428</sup>

Furthermore, with reference to theology and religious studies, Flood states that ‘to survive into the future... it needs to be able to discuss and articulate areas of shared concern in forms of language, whereby different world religions and discreet subject-specific areas can communicate and illuminate each other’.<sup>429</sup>

Therefore, the *TIR* is interested in becoming a field of interdisciplinary dialogue to analyse topics that involve politics and religion as the major forces of social mobilization. This new perspective has three main characteristics of political theology: dynamic analytical thought, missionary aim, and contemporary applicability. The first characteristic refers to the idea that studies must be conducted under the premise of the ever-changing quality of existence, one of the basic Buddhist ideas, which encompasses a series of events that cannot be studied under one framework or be constrained by it.

Therefore, the study must be open to explore other disciplines building an interdisciplinary dynamic of research. In doing so, one must analyse the cases of study taking into account that the ever-changing reality and how individuals relate to that constant process and the institutions involved in it. In addition, studies should be aware of the elements that influence individuals’ behaviour, such as symbols, beliefs, myths and social context due to the fact that ‘religion is no more and no less than an umbrella for symbolic behaviour, and representations of human actions, thoughts and beliefs’.<sup>430</sup>

The second characteristic, missionary aim, implies that the study should not be restricted to academic applicability, but should also demonstrate a social commitment to highlight certain social features or dynamics that could be helpful in finding a solution to a problem or way to prevent a certain negative process from beginnings. This study would not serve to the interest of a particular church, but rather the interest of building bridges of understanding between religious beliefs, states, institutions, markets, individuals and all of the societal components. Finally, contemporary applicability

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428 Stephen Pattison, ‘Public Theology: A Polemical Epilogue’, *Political Theology* 2, no. 1 (May 2000), 61.

429 Gavin Flood, ‘Reflections on Tradition and Inquiry in the Study of Religions’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no. 1 (March 2006), 48.

430 Mario I. Aguilar, *Current Issues of Theology and Religion in Latin America and Africa* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 2002), 19.

refers to the idea that research should be guided by the need to explain contemporary issues in order to understand and learn from them. This does not mean forgetting about historical events, but rather using history as a tool to understand the present and think about the future, instead of focusing the whole study on the past.

### Political Science

From a political science perspective, specifically on International Relations, the *TIR* has a high significance because it opens out the statist-minded approach to international politics. Although the state and other institutions are taken into account in this new perspective, individuals remain the main units of analysis. Individual beliefs, particularly religious ones, lead individuals to behave in a certain manner, and how these individual processes spread to society and ultimately to institutions such as states is the core focus of this method of study. The internationalist perspective of this approach derives from three core statements.

First, the spread of religiously-inspired movements around the world and their influence over relationships between states, have led the discipline of International Relations to reformulate its basic postulates, which were based on a secular objective way of thinking. As Peter Berger stated ‘those who neglect religion in their analyses of contemporary affairs do so at great peril’,<sup>431</sup> because ‘despite the supposed dawning of the secular age, we are in fact living in a time of incredible religious vitality and conflict. Although modern religious ethics often fought about ‘secularism’ under various guises, one salient feature of the current age is that the religions, old and new, are planetary forces’.<sup>432</sup>

Second, the religious beliefs of world leaders and policy-makers influence their views of the world, their interests and their views of ‘others’. As R. Scott Appleby points out, ‘in the hands of a fluent translator who can comprehend the sensibilities of religious believers while weighing conduct that protects universal norms, however,

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431 Peter L Berger, ‘The Desecularization of the World: a Global Overview,’ in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 18.

432 William Schweiker, ‘On the Future of Religious Ethics: Keeping Religious Ethics Religious and Ethical,’ *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no. 1 (March 2006), 138.  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/journal\\_of\\_the\\_american\\_academy\\_of\\_religion/v074/74.1schweiker02.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/journal_of_the_american_academy_of_religion/v074/74.1schweiker02.pdf)  
(accessed November 3, 2007).

rights discourse can be powerful mediator of the sacred'.<sup>433</sup> Therefore, the religion of such public figures and the ways in which they perceive the 'other' can be seen in particular aspects of their domestic and foreign policies and in the claims of certain pressure groups and non-governmental organizations.

Third, the new configuration of society and the world system challenges all the social disciplines that exiled religion from their fields of study. If International Relations incorporates more variables of study and new research tools in its analysis regarding religious phenomena, its understanding of the world will be more accurate and helpful for policy-makers. This would entail an interdisciplinary reconciliation between religion and the state, wherein the religious factor would not be exiled anymore, nor would it displace other elements of study. This is a crucial issue in understanding current world dynamics because, in the words of Shweiker, 'what we are witnessing worldwide is the confluence and mutual reconstruction of religious life and moral sensibility within an increased awareness of the vulnerability of human and nonhuman life'.<sup>434</sup>

Therefore, the *Theology of International Relations* is one of these new academic efforts to bring religion back to contemporary international studies. Its ultimate goal is to make the field ready to witness a true reconciliation of the sacred and the mundane on an academic level as well as in real world politics, with a true communality of scholars, politicians, theologians and all individuals gathered around a common good and participating in dialogue in order to find an achievable peace.

### **The Four Truths of the *TIR***

This new method is based on four basic assumptions, which may be called the Four Truths of *TIR* because each of them leads to the other and, at the same time, nothing falls outside of these four. It is well known in Buddhism that the Four Noble Truths constitute the core of the Middle Way teachings on the eradication of suffering, as this was the first teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha to his first five followers in Benares. If

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433 R. Scott Appleby, 'Serving Two Masters? Affirming Religious Belief and Human Rights in a Pluralistic World,' in *The Sacred and the Sovereign*, 190.

434 William Schweiker, 'On the Future of Religious Ethics: Keeping Religious Ethics Religious and Ethical', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no. 1 (March 2006): 139.  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_the\\_american\\_academy\\_of\\_religion/v074/74.1schweiker02.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_american_academy_of_religion/v074/74.1schweiker02.pdf)  
(accessed 7 November 2007).



one wants to understand Buddhism, one must read, analyse and comprehend the Four Truths first. Accordingly, in order to understand how the *TIR* works it is necessary to know what claims constitute and produces its existence: the *Truth of Individuality*; the *Truth of Intersubjectivity*; the *Truth of Congeniality*; and the *Truth of Internationality*.

### Truth of Individuality

This refers to the main unit of analysis, individuals. It is important to state that this truth does not rely on the conventional Western interpretation of the individual as a separate self but rather on the Buddhist idea of the interdependent non-self that acts as an individual in a relative world. This Buddhist interpretation of the individual, rooted in the theory of *anatman* (no-self), means that ‘some westerners have surmised, that he human person is unimportant in Buddhism and therefore society and its demands must be dominant’.<sup>435</sup> However, the true Buddhist conception of the individual is a more integrative approach, where individual and society are not adversarial but mutually constitutive and interdependent. As Sally B. King explains,

As Thich Nhat Hanh characteristically put it, *anatman* means that the ‘self’ is constructed of non-self parts. In other words, a given person in the present moment is constructed not only of memories and dispositions built up from her past, but also of many physical parts incorporated into her body from the environment, and many dispositions, attitudes, etc. incorporated from society.<sup>436</sup>

Following this understanding, this first truth refers to how an individual constructs reality as the result of a series of factors that are in constant relation both within and without himself/herself and that will set the basis for the second truth of *TIR*. For example, in the environment where the individual was born, what kind of social roles are given and which are forbidden? The person receives from the outside a series of beliefs, traditions and explanations about the world and the self as well as instructions on how to behave in the face of difficulties in life. Nevertheless, each individual has his or her own process of giving meanings to reality, and so the individual develops his or her own set of beliefs that construct interests and motivations. This process is produced by a complex net of symbols, aims and questions that are

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435 Sallie B. King, ‘Human Rights in Engaged Buddhism,’ in *Buddhist Theology*, 297.

436 Sallie B. King, ‘Human Rights in Engaged Buddhism,’ in *Buddhist Theology*, 297.

important for that particular person. As Mircea Eliade points out, 'since man has a 'symbol-forming power', all that he produces is symbolic'<sup>437</sup> and 'the religious symbol not only unveils a structure of reality of a dimension of existence; by the same stroke it brings a *meaning* into human existence.'<sup>438</sup> Therefore, every individual action has a repercussion in the overall societal arrangements which, in turn, will affect institutional and global spheres. Thus, 'small acts of no apparent consequence are capable of catalysing enormously significant changes, thereby making passivity and non-action highly irresponsible.'<sup>439</sup>

Therefore, the individual is the architect of his or her own reality in an interdependent relation with other individuals, causes and conditions, and the way he or she wants to deal with them will come as a consequence of his or her interpretation of reality, including his or her conception of the sacred. Even when facing differences in context and interpretation, we may find a common source for a divine conception in every person. On this matter, Pettazzoni argues,

Existential anxiety is the common root in the structure of the Supreme Being, but this structure is expressed in different forms: the Lord of Animals, the Mother Earth, and the Heavenly Father. All these structures have profound relations with different cultural realities which have conditioned them and of which the various Supreme Beings are expressions.<sup>440</sup>

Accordingly, Falk argues that the commitment of individuals to constructing global civil societies redirects loyalties from the primacy of space toward the primacy of time or future normative order that engages their reconstructive energies<sup>441</sup>. Thus, focused more on the common good regardless of their nationality and guided by a shared recognition of our nature as human beings, compassionate actions on part of individual leaders and followers can lead to overcoming violence.

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437 Mircea Eliade, 'Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism', in *The History of Religions*, 87.

438 Eliade, 'Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism', 102.

439 Falk, *Humane Global Governance*, 115.

440 R. Pettazzoni, 'The Supreme Being: Phenomenological Structure and Historical Development', in *The History of Religions*, 66.

441 Falk, *Humane Global Governance*, 103.

### Truth of Intersubjectivity

The second truth refers to the shared interpretations of reality among individuals. Having noticed that each person creates his or her own world, when he or she relates to others in society a new and complex process of sharing interpretative understandings of the self and others begins. In doing so, individuals make a connection, and mutual affectation will result in a new intersubjective construction of reality. Each one makes the decision to be part of this social consensus or not; moreover, there can be several intersubjective understandings that sometimes lead to confrontations when one side wants to impose its own interpretation, as the history of humankind in general, and the history of religions in particular, has shown. Peter Berger states that ‘society is a dialectic phenomenon in that it is a human product, and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts back upon its producer. Society is a product of man... yet it may also be stated that man is a product of society’.<sup>442</sup>

Hence, scholars in social sciences should never dismiss the importance of individuals for every social phenomenon, even when it appears that society acts as a single unit. This is a new challenge that the modern world is facing to have a better understanding of the internal processes in societies. One must recognize that society is formed by individuals who have set of beliefs and motivations that they agree to share in community, and not as a monolithic, independently originated society. Therefore, intersubjectivity recalls the concept of interdependence among individuals, who affect and are affected by other individuals, the environment, new experiences and new challenges that reality presents. Nicholas Onuf, one of the leaders of constructivist thought in international relations, argues about this interdependence as follows:

By our social relations we construct ourselves into the persons we are, and ‘we make the world what it is, from the raw materials that nature provides, by doing what we do with each other and saying what we say to each other’. What we have, Onuf asserts, is a continuous ‘two way process’ in which ‘people make society, and society makes people’. In and from such interaction, we develop rules of behaviour within institutions.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 3.

<sup>443</sup> Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 149.

Thus, the interdependent quality of relative truth, brings out the challenge of being aware of our interconnectedness as individuals, society and global community. R. Falk affirms that the 'first calling of a citizen is engagement at points of interest and concern in improving the quality of life within the self, among the family members, in the immediate community, in the wider social order, and in the global village'.<sup>444</sup> From here, further developments can be achieved in accordance with a compassionate view of reality and awareness of its social construction through the sum of individuals' thoughts and actions.

### Truth of Congeniality

This third truth is about the capacity of intersubjective truth to bring peace and not war. Most studies of religion in international relations and history refer to religion as a source of social disruption and violence. Although it is an undeniable fact that if we study the history of humanity we can find many examples of wars and violent social mobilizations in the name of religion, we should never forget that these are not religion itself. All religions share a common appreciation and idealization of peace and justice, but the problem arises when one single religion (or intersubjective understanding of the world) claims to have the only truth and insists that the 'others' must find salvation by sharing, by force if necessary, their particular view of the world and God. However, the *TIR* stresses that religion can also be a source of social cohesion and peace, with a high capacity to build communication channels between and within religions as well as a harmonious dialogue with other social forces and institutions.

We all have the opportunity to decide whether to use religious beliefs and motivations to find peace and justice or to seek vengeance and violence. Religion is not inherently violent, but it has been a source of legitimation for war and death. We must recognize that religions share an ideal of peace and harmony, and that ideal has also been a source of justice, as witnessed in the twentieth century with great religious leaders such as: Mahatma Gandhi, John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Goshananda, Aung San Suu Kyi, Archbishop Tutu and His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, among others. Scholars must also be aware of this positive side of religion and count on it as a source for understanding, dialogue and peace; otherwise, they become part of the tendency to

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<sup>444</sup> Falk, *Humane Global Governance*, 160.

demonize religion, which will create a consensus that religion equals violence. Therefore, religion of any denomination has the power to enhance the possibility of finding peace, because while under its name there may have been many wars, yet under its divine umbrella it can provide a source for dialogue, peace and tolerance among individuals and societies. As R. Falk affirms 'religion provides the foundation for a more compassionate and empathetic approach to suffering than is provided by economic thinking which is single-mindedly dedicated to efficiency, profits, growth, and ultra-individualism'.<sup>445</sup> This is possible by bridging the gap between the sacred and the mundane, uniting the 'other-worldly' experience with 'this-worldly' reality and thus realizing our interconnectedness with each other and the divine through compassion and loving-kindness.

### Truth of Internationality

This truth opens the border of theological studies, by connecting religion to contemporary international affairs. . Even though traditional theological studies are very important, they are lacking of proper understanding about the international dynamics between individuals, societies and states which are directly related to religion. In a broader sense, we may identify this shared characteristic by saying that religious beliefs affect the behaviour of both policy-makers and citizens; it is a logical consequence that state and social mobilizations will also be affected by them. Furthermore, states tend to use the force of religion in order to obtain legitimation for their policies, and one can also find that some religiously inspired groups are under state control as part of its strategy to obtain power.

Thus, religion transcends the private sphere of action within individual consciousness and manifests its power on the societal and institutional level whether in domestic or international affairs. One cannot underestimate the power of religious organizations in the modern world because they are not only sources of radicalism tending toward violence, but there are also many which take actions to benefit societies around the world, some sponsored by specific churches and others as independent civil movements with a religious basis. This important role of religion in international politics is highlighted by Carlson and Owens, who argue that 'international politics

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<sup>445</sup> Falk, *Humane Global Governance*, 68.

cannot be fully or properly fathomed without addressing its embedded religious and moral dimensions'.<sup>446</sup> For example, the worldwide movement for the protection of human rights is deeply related to religious allegiance for the respect of human beings by individuals and institutions as well. It is said that

progressive leaders and activists from different religious traditions and communities found similar ways to sacralise human rights. They celebrated the memory of virtuous and holy 'progressives' from the religion's past, their lives interpreted and projected as embodiments of the tradition's core human rights values.<sup>447</sup>

Therefore, religious actors 'offer irreplaceable and effective remedies to the ills that beset societies mired in social inequalities and vulnerable to systemic or random violence'<sup>448</sup> thus affecting individuals' lives and consequently society on local and global levels. Thus, 'by integrating the entire truth about religion into our thinking about conflict, we might better be able to imagine and work toward peace, realized as 'sustainable reconciliation' in societies divided along ethnic and religious lines'.<sup>449</sup>

### **Basic assumptions of the *TIR***

These previous truths are expressions of a religious commitment rooted in the Buddhist theological understanding of relative reality. This is not to say that it rejects other religions, but rather through particular concepts and ideas from the Buddhist path it tries to explain how relative reality is constituted and mutually constructed by the sum of individuals' wills. The role of religion is vital for this theology because, as R. Falk argues, without a religious identity the possibility of shifting our conditions of 'inhumane governance' into a 'humane global governance' or 'politically engaged spirituality,' 'appear to lack a credible social or political foundation, and, more important, lack the spiritual character that can mobilize and motivate on a basis that is

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446 John D. Carlson and Erik C. Owens, 'Reconsidering Westphalia's Legacy for Religion and International Politics' in *The Sacred and the Sovereign*, J. Carlson and Erik Owens eds. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 5.

447 Appleby, 'Serving Two Masters? Affirming Religious Belief and Human Rights in a Pluralistic World', in *The Sacred and the Sovereign*, 179.

448 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 8.

449 Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 16.

potentially more powerful than what the market, secular reason, and varieties of nationalism have to offer'.<sup>450</sup>

Following the Four Truths explored above, the *TIR* presents ten core assumptions for the study of religion in international relations:

*An action depends on the intersubjective meanings, understandings and expectations of 'one' and the 'other'.* This gives the individual and the community the basic patterns from which to build a group identity, leading them to begin working as part of the same family that shares common views of the world and, consequently, common goals and interests as well as ways to achieve them. One kind of identity is the one related to religious beliefs and, particularly, to a certain conception of the divinity.

*Religion provides the Divine Entity that individuals try to connect with in order to understand their existence, its nature and purpose.* This strengthens the religious identity within a group of people, who pray to that divinity to whom they feel connected and share that feeling of belonging with the entire community.

*Not the state, nor the nation, the market or the territory can surpass the Divine Power over individuals' consciousness.* This is because belief in the divine endows a reason for existence beyond mundane, materialistic, and temporal conceptions in human-constructed institutions. Moreover, it promises something more desirable than money, power or other mundane benefits. The Divine Power offers a better and longer life in a place called Paradise, The Land of Ultimate Bliss or Heaven.

*The TIR should be understood by a wider public, not only by theologians.* The main purpose of this kind of study is to come closer to a greater number of people, who can receive benefits from the understandings, explanations, analyses and proposals of the *TIR*. This does not mean undermining the importance of classical theology but rather opening its academic borders so it can dialogue with other disciplines and be attractive to non-theological scholars as well.

*The first characteristic of this innovative approach known as the TIR relies on its multidisciplinary nature.* By opening a dialogue among disciplines, this theology can be enriched by disciplines such as politics, economics or anthropology in its own

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450 R. Falk, *Humane Global Governance*, 29.

studies. Additionally, this theology can provide a new framework for understanding issues in those disciplines.

*The second characteristic relates to the multirreligious dialogue within the study of religion and politics.* By not constraining the study to a particular religious framework, the *TIR* expands its range of study and thus its ability, to deal with the many religions that are present on the world as a major force behind individuals' identities, social mobilizations and states' behaviour.

*TIR studies are focused on interdependence.* The interdisciplinary and interreligious characteristics of *TIR* studies give them the characteristic of interdependence on an academic level. From an empirical viewpoint, the *TIR* tries to point out certain features of a conflict that can lead to mutual understanding, highlighting the routes that bind them together; such as, for example, appealing to human rights as universal values, shared religious and moral values, and common goals between previously rival institutions such as the church and the state.

*TIR studies are guided by compassion and not by the selfish interests of individuals or institutions.* This approach is not intended to be an academic branch by which individuals with institutional interests can gain benefits. The studies are, therefore, undertaken with the purpose of finding better explanations and possible solutions to problems that encompasses religion along with other disciplines such as politics or economics, among others.

*The basic tools of analysis are religious performances and discourses of religious leaders as well as speeches of non-religious leaders who use religion as a political strategy, together with history, demographics and the records of social movements with religious bases.* By analysing the concurrence of religious beliefs, ideas or values consecrated in a specific religion, we can measure the level of religiosity endowed to certain policies used by state or social leaders. The second tool refers to the study of the current influence of religion in world dynamics through social movements inspired or legitimized by religion. It is also important to measure the amount of people affiliated with the religions involved in social conflicts, because that can be useful information for predicting the size and power of the religious group and deciding how to deal with it. Last but not least, history is very important because the history of a state, a nation or any other social group is generally, if not completely, determined by feelings



of identity that have their roots in religion. Therefore, by studying the history of the parties in conflict and their religious background, it will be increasingly possible to have an accurate perception of the atmosphere surrounding a conflict, which may lead to a solution to the problem.

*There should be new alternatives for solving the problem.* The *TIR* is not intended to stay only on the academic level, but to give guidelines to policy makers and social leaders interested in resolving a problem. This is done by providing an interdisciplinary study that stresses the importance of religion to individuals, its relation with other institutions, and how these factors must be taken into account in order to further non-violent solutions.

### **The Two Cycles of Reality**

Despite these academic efforts to show the importance of dialogue, it is not clear where space can be found for religion and politics to dialogue between them, and not only within their separate spheres. Therefore, the *TIR* proposes a new approach to deal with this challenge of studying the relation between these two powers and attempting to understand their relational dynamics on common ground, instead of separating both spheres of analysis; in other words, a holistic compassionate study of religion and politics. This new approach encompasses dialogue within religion and politics and focuses on the relation between them, particularly on how they influence each other's behaviour, how they influence individuals (and vice versa), and how individuals change the whole configuration of that relationship. In order to clarify this process, we can understand it as a causal relation of their contingency or interdependent nature. Here we find two sets of six causative actions, one set in negative relation that leads to suffering and another in positive relation that leads to peace. Humanity has more often experienced the first type of relation, and as long as individuals are not aware of this, the cycle will continue without transcending to the other path, which has been explained by great teachers and prophets in the history of humankind such as Shakyamuni Buda and Jesus Christ. In recent times, this message has also been promoted and supported by world leaders, such as those presented in previous chapters.

In the negative causation cycle (fig.1) the root of the process is ignorance, which is understood in Buddhist theology as the belief of being a separate self and thus

different from ‘others’ independent selves. Therefore, *differentiation* creates a perception of *separation* from others and thus the need of the ego to sustain its illusory identity through *competition*. With this intent of establishing how my-self is better than others whether in religious, ideological, economic, political or physical terms, among many others, the competition becomes a *fight* of dominion over the other. Thus, this fight creates *violence* and the victims of the acts of aggression, caught in this cycle of ignorance, are prone to react and take *revenge* from on their aggressors, and the outcome for all parties involved as well as for their surroundings, which will continue to be *ignorant* of their interdependence nature.

## Negative Causation Cycle

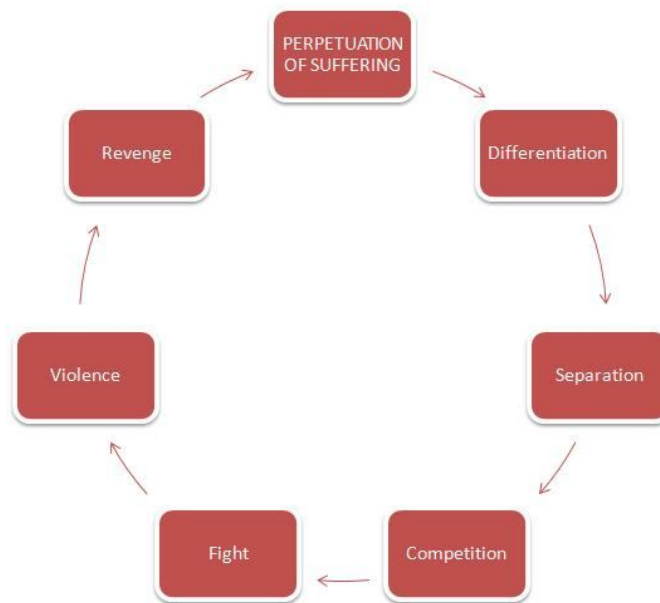


Fig. 1 Negative Cycle

Conversely, the positive causation cycle (fig. 2) is rooted in the recognition and full awareness of the lack of independent self, the emptiness of a separate entity and thus the realization of our *interdependence* as sentient beings. This recognition will lead to a social level of *communality* where ‘my’ needs and ‘your’ needs are ‘our’ needs. This will lead us to *cooperate* in achieving our common goal, and thus we create a *brotherhood/sisterhood*. This higher level of social construction can only be sustained if

we *forgive* each constituent part for any past faults which may have been guided by an illusory belief in separateness, and thus create a compassionate understanding of our common humanity that consequently will lead us to achieve *peace*. This peace will become the *liberation* from suffering, from separateness, from the cycle of violence through the complete awareness of the emptiness of the independent self and the fullness of the interdependent nature of causes and conditions. This is the interdependent way we, as sentient beings, can follow and achieve as the natural consequence of this positive-compassionate causation.

## Positive Causation Cycle

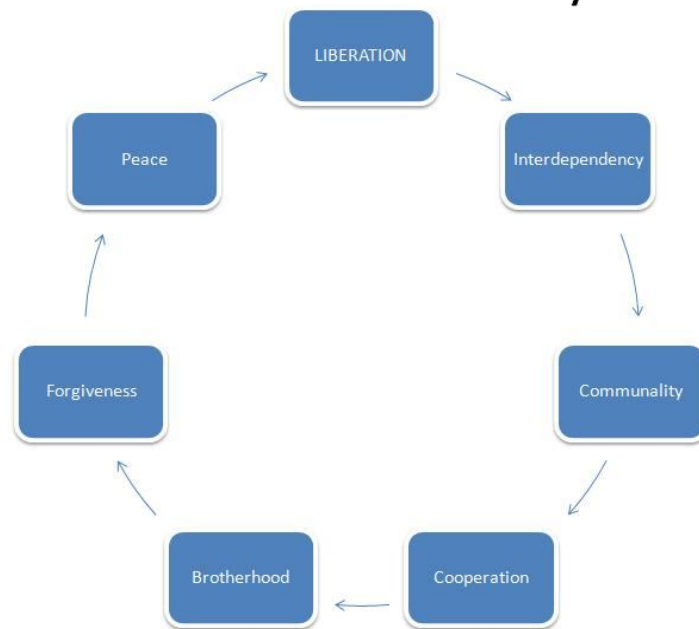


Fig. 2 Positive Cycle

These causation chains are not a mere calculation of events and their possible outcomes, but are chains of *Karmatic* relations that work on every level of existence and that refer to the natural consequences of what we do and think, individually and collectively. Thus, scholars, policy-makers and all individuals have a responsibility for making the world in which we live. Following the statement of Wendt when he said that ‘anarchy is what states make of it’, we can say that reality is what individuals make of it. It is from that point of view regarding a shared responsibility for reality that we can begin to work toward dialogue and reconciliation, peace and tolerance if we really want

it, between all sentient beings. This *free will* to use religion as a peaceful force among individuals or as a factor of violence in society is recognized by Carlson and Owens when they argue,

Religion clearly plays both unifying and splintering roles in international politics—a fact we can appreciate better when we consider the differences between the modern and medieval archetypes. On one hand, certain extreme forms of religion and religious groups continue to foster and perpetuate violent conflict—exactly the situation modern state sovereignty was intended to prevent. On the other hand, it is no less true—and here the medieval archetype enters into the picture—that religion or certain forms of ‘religiosity’ can unite people through transnational communities, common commitments, and shared values. There is evidence afoot that a new postsecular global synthesis may be taking shape amidst an emerging ‘universal religiosity’, ecumenism, or global concern for justice.<sup>451</sup>

In order to systematize the study of religion in International Relations following the Buddhist theological elements of interdependence, impermanence, the two realities, the eighth consciousnesses and the possibility of overcoming suffering, I will present an analytical chart with helpful categories for studying the ‘religious factor.’ The variables proposed on the chart will allow us to recognize first whether we are dealing with a religious movement or not, and second whether it is a compassionate non-violent movement or one rooted in anger, hatred and delusion. This will be possible by identifying the actors involved and examining how they fund their activities for individuals who share their commitment to change the current relative reality.

This is not constrained by religious allegiance, geographical-geopolitical relevance or a religious agenda to criticize or flatter a particular tradition or religious group. It is thus valid for its application in any state or nation, provided religious movements are present and have some influence over society and thus, over the political arrangements within state boundaries.

The interdependence of the construction of relative reality which will be studied in a systematic way through this chart, the causal-interdependent relation is as follows: the individual is taken as the agent/actor, the believer, the one motivated, the one

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451 Carlson and Owens, ‘Reconsidering Westphalia’s Legacy for Religion and International Politics’, in *The Sacred and the Sovereign*, 6.

persuaded by religion, the one mobilized, the one affected and the one who commits a certain action derived from his or her beliefs in relation to the sacred in a religiously motivated movement. Therefore, the sum of individual agency produces social religious movements which affect domestic and international policies by constructing and reconstructing their relative reality in accordance with their religious motivations, whether toward peace and reconciliation or violence and war.

### **Analysing Religion in International Relations: A Theological Method**

The guiding questions behind this analysis are: Are we dealing with a religious movement? What is its character? What type of religion are we dealing with? Is it a new approach or an extreme interpretation of sacred scriptures? Who or whom are the leaders? How do they motivate their followers in order to achieve their particular goals? What are the means? How are they affecting wider reality in politics, international relations, economy, social welfare and security? Moreover, what is the responsibility of theologians, religious leaders and political actors in reinforcing a positive causal cycle or counteracting a negative causal cycle and transforming it into a positive one? These questions are dependent to the individual level of analysis which, as I have established throughout the thesis, influences the statist, institutional, interstate and global levels by an interdependent relation.

In order to understand more accurately the nature of a religious movement whether as the product of a negative causative cycle which needs to be reconstructed into a positive one or as the product of a positive cycle which needs to be reinforced, we need to take into account the three major disciplines used in this thesis: theology, religion and politics. These three will provide the elements for understanding individual and social mobilizations with local and international repercussions.

There are two major criteria to consider: the *nature* and *operational* criteria (see table 2). The first refers to the type of religion, its basic claims, its motivation and its goals. This information provides the departure point for understanding which religious tradition or movement we are studying, its theological understandings of the sacred and the secular, the motivations for being in a particular group and the goals they are trying to achieve while integrating these theological, political and religious elements.

The second criterion refers to actors, persuasion, mobilization and funds which will provide us with information on the operational characteristics of the religious movement in question. By identifying the religious characteristics of the actors, from individual leaders to an entire organization, it will be easier to trace the way they organize their adherents. In addition, by adding a theological understanding of the methods of persuasion, one can identify the reasons why individuals decide to put their faith in the movement. Finally, the operation is completed an analysis of the kind of mobilization applied to the members of the group, how they are coordinated by the religious leadership and also how and by whom their activities are funded.

*Table 2. TIR Analytical Chart by Discipline and Group*

	<b>Nature</b>	<b>Operational</b>
<b>Religious</b>	<i>(Type of Religion)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream</li> <li>• Sectarian</li> <li>• Syncretic</li> <li>• New Religious Movement</li> </ul>	<i>(Actors)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious leaders</li> <li>• Religious organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ State</li> <li>◦ NGO's</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Practitioners</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>
<b>Theological</b>	<i>(Basic Claims)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremist/exclusivist</li> <li>• 'Just War'</li> <li>• Inclusive</li> <li>• Pluralist</li> <li>• 'Just Peace'</li> </ul>	<i>(Persuasion)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eschatological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Other-worldly</li> <li>◦ Paradise</li> <li>◦ Rebirth</li> <li>◦ Reincarnation</li> <li>◦ Heaven</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mundane gains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Economic support</li> <li>◦ Societal status</li> <li>◦ Family pride</li> <li>◦ Organizational reward</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Doctrinal</li> <li>• Spiritual</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>	<i>(Goals)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power-Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Forgiveness</li> <li>◦ Reconciliation</li> <li>◦ Segregation</li> <li>◦ Revenge</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Dialogue/Oppression</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<i>(Funding)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violent</li> <li>• Non-violent</li> <li>• Pragmatic</li> </ul>

<b>Religious Theological Political</b>	( <i>Motivation</i> )	( <i>Mobilisation</i> )
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecumenism</li> <li>• Evangelization</li> <li>• Peace</li> <li>• War</li> <li>• Redemption</li> <li>• Salvation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Self</li> <li>◦ Community</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Accomplish ‘calling’</li> <li>• ‘shock effect’.- gain attention</li> <li>• Xenophobia</li> <li>• Nationalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public</li> <li>• State <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Agencies</li> <li>◦ Banks</li> <li>◦ Reserves</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Private</li> <li>• Banks</li> <li>• Donors</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• NGO’s</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• Mixed</li> </ul>

This multidisciplinary approach should guide the study of all the possible elements while analysing a religious movement and determining whether it encourages a positive or negative causative cycle. Once we have identified the elements necessary to study a specific conflict, we continue to fill in the *TIR* chart of analysis, as exemplified in the table 3 below. In it, the elements in table 2 become the guidelines for filling in each category. Then, by establishing whether the religious movement has more to do with religious dynamics, secular interests or both, the scholar will be able to analyse in more depth the *ethos* and *modus operandi* of the individuals, institutions and states involved in it. Furthermore, this exercise to establish whether if there is a negative causal cycle which should be contained and re-constructed or whether there is a positive causal cycle which must be supported through mindful policies and safeguarded by the mutual commitment of individuals and institutions.

*Table 3. TIR Chart of Analysis*

Category	Sacred	Secular	Religious-Political
<b>Religion</b> Mainstream Sectarian	Monotheist Polytheist Non-theist	Non-religious Ideological group	Religious-Nationalist organization
<b>Basic claims</b>	Justice, peace and love. Sectarianism, fight against ‘infidels’	Freedom, justice and peace Nationalism Xenophobia	Mixed
<b>Motivation</b>	Faith and Commitment	Responsibility and	Both. Commitment to

		Power	Divine will in accordance with civil and political responsibilities
<b>Goals</b>	Save the souls of believers. Redemption of all. Doctrinal expansion through missionary work.	Strengthening state power over all institutions within the state and in relation with other abroad.	In pursuit of benefits or supported by the state or pressure groups that wants State control.
<b>Main actors</b>	Preachers Missionaries Churches Spiritual leaders Religious communities	State leaders. Entrepreneurs Military groups Pressure groups NGO's	Mixed
<b>Methods of persuasion</b>	Prayers Paradise promise God's compassion and love. Freedom from reincarnation/rebirth in lower realms of suffering.	Money. Political influence Power.	Mixed
<b>Type of mobilization</b> Violent Non-violent	Religious movement //sacred aura through religious claims	Statist. Economic inspired movement // security aura through military and economic threat	Religiously-based movement sponsored by the state or pressure groups
<b>Funds</b>	Donations / private	Public / private	Mixed
<b>Repercussion</b> Religious Political Social Economic	Domestic / International	Domestic / International	Domestic and International

Due to the purposes of this thesis, I will only provide a general explanation of the *TIR* chart as the departure point for further analysis of specific cases. Suffice it to say that these categories constitute the way that *TIR* contributes to the dialogue between academic disciplines and religious traditions, opening the door the for discussions of their role in providing the necessary tools of analysis which can lead to the development of better policies for the benefit of all. The explanation is as follows.

The first group—*nature*—will provide us with the root cause of the conflict and thus will show whether the conflict has something to do with religion and politics or not. It is a common mistake to label a conflict as religious or non-religious without getting deeper into the intrinsic nature of what is happening. This is where the first category is crucial to the proper understanding of the whole study: religion.



By identifying which religion is involved, whether it is a sectarian approach with its particular interpretation or the mainstream theological approach of a particular religion, it will be easier to understand the way actors operate and legitimize their actions. For example, if one labelled Al-Qaida as a 'fundamentalist Muslim organization' which should be eliminated, the research is automatically biased because it does not specify what is meant by the term fundamentalist. Does it refer to a particular approach by Al-Qaida leaders or is it a common understanding between Muslim communities? Moreover, is it a mainstream theological understanding of the Quran or a violent interpretation of a basic pillar such as the *jihad*? Therefore, by clarifying the religious characteristics of the group one can give the best explanation of the group involved and hence is more likely to understand how adherents act and why their actions are legitimized. Moreover, one can rely on this new finding as a way to incorporate new theologians who can work together in society in order to clarify and provide another approach to their religious traditions. This is where theology plays a major role in identifying the manipulation of religious truths for selfish gains whether by a group or an individual.

Therefore, this first category is the key for understanding the whole phenomena and enables the scholar to identify from the beginning, whether the conflict in question is purely about religion, purely secular or if it involves both areas. This process is reinforced by studying the kinds of claims behind a particular action, whether they involve a call for peace, reconciliation, freedom or justice or tend toward violence and separation. Furthermore, it becomes possible to understand whether these claims are posited only in religious terms, only in secular terms or in mix terms. This distinction connects with the next two categories regarding the motivation and goals of the parties involved, thus helping to identify whether motivation may be religious even while the goal is a political one. For example, in Sri Lanka the Sinhalese government advocates a protection of the *Dharma* while facing the threat of the separatist Hindu Tamil Tiger movement as a way to legitimize their actions. They recall ancient stories of previous Tamil abuses in popular culture to justify Sinhalese dominance rooted in Buddhist tales. This not only violates one of the five precepts of mainstream Buddhism—not to kill—but also justifies an action with a sacred motivation even though its goal is a political one of retaining power, as if in Buddhism anything could be called a 'just war' or any a

reward could be offered for killing in the name of the *Dharma*. There is not a theological basis to sustain such a claim and, again, this is why theology is needed in this study.

Another example of how this distinction is fundamental is found in the sixteenth century, when colonial (mainly Christian) powers arrived in the 'New World' to impose their rule by force. They tended to legitimize their violent actions and cultural genocides by recalling sacred motivation and goal, to save the natives from their 'evil' beliefs and 'cure' them through Christianity, which would save their souls. However, here we can also correlate this action with a secular interest in expansionism for economic and political power, thus recognizing a more complex situation that needs to be addressed carefully in each of its motivations and goals. This will give us a better understanding of the problem and will allow us to analyse more profoundly the operational categories.

The next categories belong to the *operational* group, which aims to study how the nature of a conflict is materialized in a particular time and place. Given the nature of the conflict, we can identify which actors are involved if they are in accord with previous categories of the *nature* group. For example, if one identifies the nature of the conflict as a purely religious one, it is unlikely one would find a secular actor involved unless he or she is using a secular façade as a strategic move in the conflict. Conversely, if we have identified a purely secular conflict and then we discover that religious actors are involved, one can easily identify it as a mixed movement in operation although it is a secular one in nature.

Thus, the study should portray both elements as constitutory parts of a conflict. This is one way to identify the parts of the bigger picture of a conflict that may not be what it appears. Then it is useful to identify the methods of persuasion, whether they call for spiritual rewards, mundane gains or both. This is important because if we can identify that both methods are present, then the scope of analysis is wider and the conflict is more likely to grow and become more powerful. For example, in South Africa the apartheid regime used a mixed method of persuasion, a sacred and a secular one. The theological justification for separate development was believed and faithfully followed by most of the white South African community as a duty to their Christian tradition. It was unthinkable to be 'against the Bible' when it was clear that God desired this separation as portrayed in the story of the Tower of Babel. In addition, this implies

added economic and social control by the state, diminishing the capability of the black community to be educated and have a healthy development, which would threaten the power of the white minority.

In consequence, the type of mobilization used in the conflict is another key element to study in a particular case. Whether the operation will be violent or non-violent will show the scope of analysis and new variables of study. For example, the genocide in Rwanda not only showed an ethnic rivalry and hatred, but also a violent mobilization boosted by the provision of arms from other countries such as France. So, by establishing the kind of mobilization used, one can identify new elements that would otherwise be hidden from the research. This happens also in the case of identifying a peaceful resistance. For example, the call for a non-violent campaign by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama opens the study to a different scope of analysis. This implies a worldwide network of groups that, through educational campaigns and social mobilization, are committed to be the voice of a culture that exists in a different country than their own. Peaceful mobilizations are in fact more appealing to world-wide communities although less extravagant than violent ones. They are envisioned for long-term and more sustainable change, rather than immediate and more often weak short-term policies that end in more violence and social disruption. Another example of peaceful mobilizations include the international campaign for Burma, the one that was launched for South Africa led by Archbishop Tutu as we saw in previous chapters, and also the Vietnamese call for action by Buddhist monks led by Thich Nhat Hahn and Maha Goshananda in Cambodia.

Hence, identifying the type of mobilization leads us also to find out how it is funded. This will provide us with new insights, because if there is a violent mobilization then funding is needed to buy armaments. So, who is selling and buying? How can groups in poor countries afford expensive weapons? If they are not buying weapons but using home-made equipment, who provides them with the raw materials to build it? If we are dealing with peaceful mobilizations, who is funding the social rallies and international broadcasts of non-violent campaigns? Is it in the interests of individuals only or of states international states and corporations?

This will enable us to have a bigger picture of the complexities of the conflict. In sum, the categories presented here are the guidelines for a better understanding of what

we are studying and as we can see all of the categories are interrelated in an interdependent constitution of a social phenomenon in domestic and international relations. Thus, we will be able to present the repercussions in the religious, political, economic and social spheres and also to provide elements that will help to develop better and more fruitful policies to solve the problems that give rise to such conflicts.

In conclusion, this new path offers the chance to apply a new approach that is not constricted to a sole discipline but open to the use of argumentation derived from other disciplines. It provides a new framework to study theology and international and domestic conflicts, dealing with the power of the state and religion as part of the same dynamic and not as separate spheres of analysis, providing a more accurate perception of reality that will lead to finding better solutions for every party involved. Just as S. Pattison argues for the reformulation of public-oriented theology studies, the *TIR* is one facilitator to help accomplish the goal of mutual understanding:

A key feature of any kind of publicly useful and accessible theology is that it should be playful, imaginative and porous, a zone of experimentation and innovation, rather than a closed domain or orthodoxy and conformity. For too long, theologians have seen themselves as custodians and interpreters of doctrinal ‘truth’ rather than facilitators of imaginative theological gymnastics.<sup>452</sup>

The *Theology of International Relations* provides an academic approach which seeks to provide new research tools and guidelines with which to study individuals’ behaviour under the religious’ umbrella of beliefs, motivations and goals. In this interdependent world, where each thought, word and action have repercussions on the environment and on other individuals, the *TIR* demonstrates the possibility of achieving peace and understanding in this ever-changing world, by listening to the common values of love, compassion, justice and truth consecrated by all religious traditions. The next challenge is to use these tools to further research on current domestic and international conflicts in order to achieve a better understanding of these interdependent relationships and become socially-engaged scholars who help more actively in the development of compassionate policies. We have received the message from the prophets, and it is our

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452 Stephen Pattison, ‘Public Theology: a Polemical Epilogue’, *Political Theology* 2, no.1 (May 2000), 69.

responsibility to transform their teachings into ways of life, walking the path of liberation toward the goal of peace and happiness in an enlightened humanity.

# C ONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have presented how religion, as the interdependent individual-social construction of a way to be in contact with the sacred, is a major factor which determines the way individuals, societies and institutions behave. This behavior is the result of interdependent relative reality, which is constructed through the sum of individuals' wills crystallized in an intersubjective consensus. Therefore, the relevance of theology, religion and politics is highly important in order to understand how individuals, institutions and states behave the way they do.

Theological understandings in every religion help to get a deeper understanding of the nature, claims, characteristics and world-views of a religion. Thus, this theological approach to international relations acknowledges the relevance of theology in contemporary affairs and its responsibility to serve as a bridge of understating between an interdependent absolute and relative reality. Thus, it helps to bridge the illusory gap between divine and secular and show the path toward awareness of the emptiness of this distinction due to the interdependent nature of the divine and the secular, which existing beyond all separation in one absolute reality.

Thus, religion should no longer be considered as only a private matter for the individual, but as an actual factor in how individuals think, act and, ultimately, recreate public life through an intersubjective consensus. Kofi Annan, as Secretary General of the United Nations, acknowledged the importance of religion by stating,

I said upon my return from Iraq that we should never underestimate the power of prayer. When we speak up, when we pray, individually and collectively, with one

voice or with a multitude of voices, we can overwhelm the sounds of war. If we can overcome the seeds of intolerance, we can forge the peace and justice that is the birth right of every human being.<sup>453</sup>

This interdependent construction of reality has been explained in this thesis using a Buddhist theological approach to international relations, which establishes the ever-changing quality of existence in this relative reality, and the possibility of creating new causes and conditions that can lead to the end of suffering. This approach stresses the importance of individuals' ideas, thoughts and actions in shaping their reality. Being aware of the *karmatic* relationships of cause and effect, all *dharmas*—all phenomena—are conditioned by different elements including individuals' thoughts and behaviour. This conditioned reality is thus subject to change and there is a chance to transfigure a reality of suffering into one of happiness if wisdom and compassion play the pivotal role in individuals' minds.

This positive transfiguration of suffering, understood as a common goal and a universal responsibility of each individual, is rooted in the recognition of a common humanity that suffers due to our ignorance of this mutual dependence and of our inner power to construct a world where wisdom and compassion could permeate all levels of existence. The basic idea of this common humanity is 'the simple fact that, in general terms, all others' desires are the same as mine. Every being wants happiness and does not want suffering'.<sup>454</sup> Through this practical and profound awareness, interdependence will not be rooted in selfish interests but in true compassion and altruism that will set the conditions for long-lasting peace. The Dalai Lama affirms,

If people in poorer countries are denied the happiness they desire and deserve, they will naturally be dissatisfied and pose problems for the rich. If unwanted social, political, and cultural forms continue to be imposed upon unwilling people, the attainment of world peace is doubtful. However, if we satisfy people at a heart-to-heart level, peace will surely come.<sup>455</sup>

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453Kofi. Annan, 'The Challenge of Diversity', Tanenbaum Centre for Interreligious Dialogue. <http://www.tanenbaum.org/Annan1998.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2009).

454 Dalai Lama, 'A New Approach to Global Problems', in *Mindful Politics*, 18.

455 Dalai Lama, 'A New Approach to Global Problems', 24.

This effort is not a utopian ideal, but something that is achievable through the development of a compassionate mind that will consequently build a better society. As previously stated in this thesis, institutions such as the states, understood as the projection of individuals' shared ideas, beliefs and goals through an intersubjective consensus are interdependent on new causes and conditions and therefore a change can be made, whether toward compassionate or selfish interests. Thus, 'the practice of compassion and wisdom is useful to all, especially to those responsible for running national affairs, in whose hands lie the power and opportunity to create the structure of world peace'<sup>456</sup>, and to all individuals who have the opportunity to re-make their shared reality according to the nature of their thoughts and actions.

It is in this capacity to recreate our reality that religion, as the sum of the shared compassionate ideals of particular religions, can play a pivotal role in constructing a better understanding between individuals and their context. As Tapio Kanninen affirms,

The many aspects of religion—as an element of root causes of conflict, a source of ideology to assist in resolving a conflict or the motivation or source of authority for people who play in the prevention of conflict—demonstrate its practical effect. Far from being an ethereal, isolated spiritual field of endeavor, religion can provide a *vita* means of a practical approach for conflict prevention in our life both as individuals and as members of the spiritual community of the world religions.<sup>457</sup>

As we saw in previous chapters, religion is the vessel of faith *par excellence* which connects individuals with their inner divine nature through rituals, names, myths and stories, helping them grasp a non-conventional knowledge of reality. Thus, it is the task of theologians to introduce, explain, interpret and give new understandings of those beliefs derived from a particular path in order to help individuals be in touch with the divine. Although there are many people who do not consider themselves religionists and are not interested in any theological explanations from a particular religion, they still seek to understand what lies beyond this conventional world. In fact, they develop spiritual movements which are also enriched by certain hierarchies, rituals and dogmas,

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456 Dalai Lama, 'A New Approach to Global Problems', 21.

457 Tapio Kanninen, 'Prevention and Reconciliation in a World of Conflicts: the United Nations Perspective', *Concilium* 5, 99.



following a religious-model of worshipping the divine and developing a particular theology to understand the object of their devotion.

Consequently, religion is constituted due to the deep need of the *homo-religiosus* to express devotion and allegiance to a major divine force. Thus it matters to religious practitioners as well as non-practitioners, because they all share the same need to 'be awakened' through the clear awareness of their divine nature, which has been covered by the veils of ignorance in the illusion of a separated self and expressed in hatred and anger. Despite the existence of different vehicles of faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, among many others, they all share the same element of faith in something beyond an earthly-bound existence. Ultimately, the vessel is just a projection of human needs to understand the mysteries of the divine; it is how the *upaya kaulsaya*—skilful means—is manifested to adapt the explanation so that individuals may comprehend the ultimate and absolute truth. The importance of the vessel is in relative reality, where the *dharma*s or phenomena are perceived as real, and thus religions appear as true containers of divine truths.

Therefore, religion matters in this conventional reality for practitioners and non-practitioners. It matters for practitioners as a vessel to enable them to go from a mortal existence and suffering to a new land of immortality, liberation, happiness and experience the true nature of emptiness of existence and non-existence. Religion matters for non-practitioners because they need to recognize its relevance in order to understand others who are firm in their religious convictions. Religion posits a challenge to their secular views of the world while presenting them with a world-view that is rooted in an otherworldly force of divine aura, and thus takes to the extreme the limits of human reasoning and logic. This is why religion is the most identifiable and most reliable vessel of faith which interacts with religionists, theologians, philosophers, and secular thinkers in an interdependent relation of discourse about the sacred or divine and which, ultimately, can only be experienced; and all that can be said or explained about it are only provisional truths that help individuals to get closer to that experience of the sacred.

As I have presented in the two case studies, the role of religion in providing the raw materials for a compassionate view of humanity can prevent violence even while facing abuses and mistreatment from those whose actions are driven by the three

poisons of greed, hatred, and delusion. Moreover, the capacity to inspire others to commit to a non-violent pursuit of common interest, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu have been able to do, is living proof of how human beings are not predestined to violence but are able to develop their inner compassion as recognized in their union with the sacred. These religious peacemakers have acknowledged the potential within their own traditions to build bridges of understanding through more humane interrelations and governance. The role of the leader is as important as that of the adherent or follower, because they construct their identities in a contingent way; thus the sum of individuals' wills—both leaders and followers—are the roots for the construction of a compassionate reality.

Despite spending more than fifty years in exile and facing the suffering of thousands of Tibetans, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama still embodies the compassionate nature of the Buddha that the *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara has bestowed upon many Dalai Lamas in Tibet. His threefold commitments as a human being, a Buddhist monk and a Tibetan leader are sustained by a theology of compassion toward all human beings, religions and countries. His non-violent approach was not only recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, but by a wider community around the world which receives him as an advocate of peace, dialogue and understanding.

Accordingly, the life and work of Archbishop Tutu shows a deep commitment to making God's dream a reality in this world. His advocacy of confession and forgiveness as pillars for reconciliation in South Africa resonated all around the world. Even while facing the atrocities of the apartheid system and resulting clashes within the black community, Tutu was always faithful to his belief in the redemptive power of forgiveness. He was convinced of the transformative capacity of compassion, following the path of love given by God through Jesus Christ and, in Buddhist terms, the ever-changing quality of existence which is contingent on an interdependent relation of causes and conditions, where compassionate ideas and actions will produce positive *karmatic* outcomes for all sentient beings.

Both case studies exemplified the need for committed and compassionate leadership and cooperation from people within and beyond a state's boundaries. Part of the conditions that helped Archbishop Tutu to achieve his goal for South Africa were the end of the Cold War and the amount of international support in imposing sanctions

on Pretoria's government during apartheid. Without a doubt, if the international community would leave aside their selfish interests in China's economic development and their fear of China's military development, they could also go beyond rhetorical support to proper non-violent action to solve the conflict in Tibet. Such a solution would also require that the Chinese authorities see that the position of the Tibetan government in exile does not seek to claim independence but rather respect for their culture and legacy, while at the same time remaining within Chinese borders. Thus, there is the need in this and other problems around the globe to set new conditions that lead to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The Dalai Lama still urges people to take the non-violent way and he, like Tutu, acknowledges the power of dialogue, forgiveness and reconciliation as key elements to achieve long lasting peace. He affirms,

We need a well-thought-out, co-ordinated long-term strategy. The proper way of resolving differences is through dialogue, compromise and negotiations, through human understanding and humility. We need to appreciate that genuine peace comes about through mutual understanding, respect and trust. As I have already said, human problems should be resolved in a humanitarian way, and non-violence is the humane approach.<sup>458</sup>

The first kinds of allegiance between religion and politics are what I call *divine politics* and *politicized faith*. These categories help us to have a better understanding of how this relationship between theology, religion and politics works in both a theoretical and an empirical way. It is clear that politicians gain benefit in advocating religious commitments to legitimize their actions and retain power. In addition, the active roles of religious leaders in their communities have trespassed the limits of the secular understanding of politics, creating a new social order that is still unsettled. Both are proofs of the convergence of previously separate spheres, the religious-private and the secular-public ones, and the greater challenge in contemporary politics and academia is to recognize the 'grey zone' where they interact and explain how this relation is developed, a key issue that the *Theology of International Relations* aims to address.

A second kind of allegiance is the politics of reconciliation through a theological lens, which urges us to have a tolerant approach toward other faiths and traditions,

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458 Dalai Lama, 'Non-Violence: the Appropriate and Effective Response to Human Conflicts', *Concilium* 5, 51.

stressing the points of convergence between them and reinforcing the ideals of love, compassion, tolerance and peace that can be found in all major religions. Accordingly K. Annan affirms that 'a culture of diversity can be ours. Just as the pen is mightier than the sword, so too are appeals to values—religious values, UN Charter values—more forceful than any call to arms'.<sup>459</sup> This new culture aims to transform the negative causation that leads to the perpetuation of violence and suffering into the positive causation that leads to liberation and peace. This transformative power of ideas will be reflected in new efforts and determined actions from different levels, political, religious, economic and environmental, that will re-shape this relative reality to the benefit of all beings.

Believers in any religious community have the responsibility to act ethically, having in mind the common humanity that we all share despite our differences of creed. Theologians have the responsibility to explain and deepen the study and interpretation of sacred texts, ideas and ideals within a religious tradition while respecting other theological approaches within and between various traditions. Accordingly, Kanninen affirms,

Theological studies, for instance, might provide us with new insights into the dynamics of moral tensions and prejudices as well as suggesting possibilities for understanding prevention potential inherent in such disagreements and spiritual clashes... the authority of religious leaders and religious organizations has a source in the values and principles they represent and make them therefore an effective group to mediate or appeal to parties to a conflict that share their beliefs and values.<sup>460</sup>

I have argued that the religious factor can and must be integrated in International Relations and policy-making, and this can be done by studying it systematically using the elements of the *Theology of International Relations*. This goes beyond the recognition that religion matters, which was widely proved throughout the chapters, but also addresses the issue of how to develop a proper understanding of the religious factor in international relations. Thus, the *TIR* and its holistic compassionate model, gives

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459Kofi. Annan, 'The Challenge of Diversity', Tanenbaum Centre for Interreligious Dialogue. <http://www.tanenbaum.org/Annan1998.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2009).

460 Kanninen, 'Prevention and Reconciliation in a World of Conflicts: the United Nations Perspective', *Concilium* 5, 97-98.

tools to demonstrate the relevance of religion in domestic and international affairs and shows how, by studying different variables, theologians and political scientists can provide new insights into the nature of certain conflicts where religion and politics are involved.

By giving preponderance to the study of religion as a variable of study while consequently analysing the nature of a conflict—its basic claims, motivation and goals—and its operational elements—actors, methods, mobilization and funds—the *TIR* facilitates a proper understanding of how these interdependent conditions produce particular outcomes. Furthermore, it will provide a deeper knowledge of those individuals involved in religious-politically motivated conflicts and how they are collectively changing the domestic and international arenas. By doing so, scholars will be able to advise policy-makers and institutions regarding further steps toward the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

This thesis opens new research avenues to explore in further works such as a dialogue between different theologies in dealing with politics, terrorism and peace studies. The first deals with an inter-theological dialogue guided not by a missionary aim but by the need to find shared ideals and approaches toward a compassionate view of humanity and social needs. This assumes a deep theological understanding of issues of human nature, social justice, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation in light of the divine. Thus, a theological dialogue on common issues can be transformed through interreligious understanding between religious practitioners, theologians and secular thinkers, which would encourage openness, tolerance and finding common ground through dialogue for the benefit of all sentient beings.

The second area of research is terrorism, particularly those forms with religious roots or those which are legitimized through religion. In contemporary terrorist studies, it is common to find an instant connection between religious extremism and violence, sometimes falling into simplistic views of religious commandments and allegiance. Such studies too often dismiss the relevance of religion, taking it only as another legitimizing rhetorical tool used by certain groups to achieve political power or as the extreme interpretation of religious extremists who want to annihilate the non-believers. There is a need to recognize first that terrorism is a phenomena formed by actions aiming to create disruption and terror in society. Then, one should recognize that behind

those actions are individuals who can also change their view of reality, from one of deep suffering and hatred, to one of compassion and tolerance. By recognizing this common humanity, new steps can be taken to alleviate their suffering and, at the same time, to get rid of those causes and conditions that led them to terrorist groups. In addition, there is a need to study the role of religious leaders and organizations which are working to contain the influence of misguided interpretations of sacred texts to justify terrorism. The connection between terrorism and religion, the latter being the justification for violent acts, can also be transformed by studying the counter-balance of theologians and religious leaders suggesting a more moderate and compassionate view of religious texts.

Third, peace studies can also be strengthened by studying the possibility of achieving peace through non-violence. Although there are many studies regarding non-violence and peace, there is still a need to stress the idea of non-violence as an active social engagement of individuals and communities in creating a new environment of tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation. It is not enough to say that it is possible to achieve peace; it is also necessary to conduct more studies regarding how this has been done and what routes might be followed in current conflicts. Thus, peace will not be achieved only through the eradication of major warfare, but through a deep transformation of human minds. Just as Thich Nhat Hanh affirms, the only way to achieve long-lasting peace is by each individual becoming peace in their own mind; thus he or she will have the capacity to reflect this inner peace on a societal level. With this in mind, compassion in action will be the best way to make peace possible and construct a better reality for all sentient beings.

These areas of research face three major challenges: extreme views of reality, limited temporality and isolationism. The first refers to the tendency of taking a single view, whether the religious vision or the secular one, and falling again into the separation of spheres. This academic temptation is rooted in the idea of narrowing the object of study in order to gain a more in-depth understanding, although what it reflects is a minor dissection of a major problem with multiple variables. The integration of different disciplines can only strengthen research and can provide new insights in explaining a conflict and thus projecting new solutions.

The second challenge of temporality refers to keeping religion on the International Relations agenda. It should not be necessary to have a great upsurge in

books about religion and politics for ten or twenty years and then to forget about it for the next fifty years, only to talk later of a resurgence of religion. The fact is that religions have been there all along, and what is lacking is consistent research on the relevance of religion for International Relations and political affairs.

Finally, there is the challenge of isolationism of the disciplines which may limit the proper understanding of the complex reality where individuals' behaviour affect the domestic and international arenas. Therefore, multidisciplinary approaches must be developed in order to bring more elements from different fields to analyse the causes and conditions of the object of study. In other words, while multidisciplinary approaches integrate different methods, variables and elements to understand a complex reality, the interdisciplinary works—by isolating the fields of study—do not go further in integrating different disciplines, but only stress the formulation of particular understandings from one field of expertise. Therefore, political scientists, theologians, economists and so forth, need to have a closer relationship and need to cooperate in order to understand and ever-changing and complex reality and thus, be able to suggest solutions and recommendations to solve specific problems.

In sum I claim that just as Wendt argued that 'anarchy is what states make of it', current domestic and international affairs are what individuals, through institutions—including states—make of them. An interdependent understanding of international relations implies a universal responsibility for recognizing a common humanity in order to build bridges of understanding between human beings, state actors, institutions and the environment toward a the construction of a peaceful reality. This interdependent and mutual responsibility is for theologians, politicians, economists and all individuals who share the same existence and need to overcome suffering by eliminating the veils of ignorance, hatred and anger, through different religious paths towards the ultimate liberation. It is thus the nectar of religion, the element of sacredness manifested in all relative reality as an expression of an absolute state of emptiness of independent origination, which is expressed in different forms, names and rituals, but with the same ultimate nature.

Thus I have heard; the Buddha, when explaining the different approaches to about the ultimate truth, told Kasyapa and other disciples that there is a unity in the diversity of teachings. This unitary nature of *Dharma*, divine law or God's will, can

lead us to a true communion with the sacred, returning to a state of innocence, purity, and ultimately voidness. It is the greatest existential challenge of all, to change a negative causation that leads to suffering into a positive one that can lead us to happiness and peace. By being peace through inner spiritual development and through a shared intentionality based on compassion, we will help to re-construct a relative reality where international relations can truly reflect the transcendent, wise and compassionate nature of the sacred for the benefit of all beings. The Buddha affirmed,

Just as that great cloud, raining on all the plants, trees, thickets, forests, and medicinal herbs, and according to the nature of their seed perfectly fertilizing them so that each grows and develops, [so] the Law preached by the Tathagata is of one form and flavor, that is to say, deliverance, abandonment, extinction, and finally the attainment of perfect knowledge... The Tathagata knows this unitary essential Law, that is to say, deliverance, abandonment, extinction, final nirvana of eternal tranquility, ending in return to the void.<sup>461</sup>

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461 Bunno Kato, and Miyasaka, trans., *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, 128.



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