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JÓZEF TISCHNER  
CHAPLAIN OF SOLIDARNOŚĆ AND PHILOSOPHER OF HOPE\*

*On the theoretical level, Tischner's views on human nature, grace and freedom seem remarkably similar to Niebuhr's. The former speaks of the "ascent" of the human (note the influence of Romanticism on Tischner). The latter envisions a "reconstruction of the self." Both strive to maintain human freedom while acknowledging that ultimately humans are dependent on grace. The difference between the thinking of these two great minds arises in their consideration of the likelihood of the "ascent" or "reconstruction."*

This old but also very new word, solidarity, what does it mean? To what does it call us? What memories does it bring back? To explicate it more precisely, perhaps it is necessary to reach back into the Gospel and seek the origin of the word there. Christ explains its meaning: "Carry one another's burden and in this way fulfill God's law" (paraphrase of Paul in Gal. 6:2). What does it mean to be in solidarity? It means to carry the burden of another person.... Solidarity has still another facet; solidarity does not need to be imposed from the outside by force.... And one more thing—solidarity, the one that is borne from the pages and spirit of the [G]ospel, does not need an enemy or opponent to strengthen itself and grow. It turns towards all and not against anyone.<sup>1</sup>

Fr. Józef Tischner originally preached these words in a now famous sermon on Poland's Wawel Hill in Kraków on October 19, 1980. The occasion was the Solidarity movement's first national convention. His homily during that convention, along with essays later published in a collection entitled *Etyka solidarności*, earned Tischner the title of 'the philosopher of Solidarity' or the 'theologian of Solidarity.'<sup>2</sup> Twenty years later, on the twenty-eighth of June, Tischner died after an ordeal with cancer of the larynx. During those twenty

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<sup>1</sup> Józef Tischner, *The Spirit of Solidarity*, trans. Marek B. Zaleski and Benjamin Fiore (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984) 2–3. This is the English translation of Tischner's *Etyka solidarności* (Kraków: Znak, 1981). It was republished in 1992 and 2000 by Znak.

<sup>2</sup> It is debated as to whether Tischner's work was that of a philosopher, Christian humanist, theologian or all three. Upon hearing of Tischner's death, John Paul II spoke of "a theologian and philosopher, who was open to the human being, but never forgot about God." See Jan Paweł II, List do kardynała Franciszka Macharskiego, *Tygodnik Powszechny Online*, <http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/ludzie/tischner/jpii.html>. Charles Taylor remarked that he sees Tischner as a Christian hu-

years he touched the minds and hearts of millions of Poles and had an indelible impact on Polish society. After his death, many Poles experienced a deep void and wondered if anyone could provide the desperately needed intellectual and pastoral leadership as Tischner did in the struggle to achieve a just, democratic social order. Thus, Adam Michnik opined after Tischner's passing: "For me personally, he [Tischner] was the conscience of Polish democracy. How will Polish democracy manage without Józek's conscience?"<sup>3</sup>

In my judgment, Tischner represents one of the great Christian thinkers of our time. Tischner's deep commitment to pastoral ministry and his social involvement at the grass roots level with the Solidarity movement make him an outstanding example of an engaged Christian philosopher who witnessed to the Gospel through rigorous academic work and actively promoting social change. Tischner's description of the "ethic of Solidarity" that helped overturn the Communist regime in Poland also provides insight into the moral foundations of democracy. As Charles Taylor has written in an essay concerning Tischner's "ethic," we cannot abandon his theory of solidarity because it plays an essential role in the entire project of modern democracy.<sup>4</sup>

In this essay, I will focus primarily on his theological anthropology and its connection to some of his integral ideas concerning social change and the virtue of hope. First, I will explore some of Tischner's thinking on hope. I will then consider how Tischner's views about hope and the nature of the human person led him to conclude that nonviolence can bring about meaningful and lasting social change. In this section of the essay, I will contrast Tischner's ideas with those of the great twentieth century U.S. theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Like Tischner, Niebuhr also had major influence in the public sphere.<sup>5</sup> However, his more pessimistic view of human nature led him to conclude that nonviolence cannot be an effective tool in the struggle for justice. Thus, Niebuhr serves as

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manist. See also Charles Taylor, "Będzie nam go brakowało," trans. Tomasz Bieroń, *Tygodnik Powszechny Online*, <http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/ludzie/tischner/taylor.html>.

<sup>3</sup> This quotation is taken from one of the many recollections about Józef Tischner published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* after his death. It is important to note that the loss of Tischner is felt by Poles from all walks of life, not only the intellectual elite. I have personally witnessed the deep sense of tragedy among Poles. Having noticed that I was reading reflections about Tischner, an elderly woman on a bus in Kraków in summer 2000 turned to me and said, "It is terrible that Fr. Tischner has died. I don't know if there is anyone else in Poland who can be the kind of leader he was to us." Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

<sup>4</sup> See Charles Taylor, "Kilka refleksji na temat solidarności," trans. Andrzej Pawelec, *Znak* 52, no. 8(543) (2000): 28, <http://miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/archiwumpdf/543.pdf>. Given the limitations of the present essay, I will not thoroughly treat the elements of Tischner's "ethic of solidarity." For a nuanced discussion of it and its relevance today, see Taylor's essay and Wojciech Bonowicz, "Źródła Etyki solidarności," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, January 7, 2001: 1, 5.

<sup>5</sup> See Richard Wightman Fox, *Niebuhr: A Biography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

an interesting counterpoint to Tischner, revealing more clearly the link between hope, the human person, and social change in Tischner's thought.

### HOPE, THE HUMAN PERSON, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

In one of his last public lectures, Tischner spoke of his conversations with the Polish poet Halina Poświatowska, whose struggle to lead a zestful life despite her deteriorating health ceased at age thirty-two. While peering into the eyes of death, she pleaded in one of her poems, "say you won't condone, that I die all alone, in this world so cold and dark."<sup>6</sup> Tischner, who consoled Poświatowska and numerous others during their final days, once mused: "To a certain degree, our Christian faith is tested in our attitude towards death."<sup>7</sup> Afflicted by cancer during his last years, he continued to write from a hospital bed and function as the chair of the philosophy department at the Papal Academy of Theology in Kraków. When asked in an interview if he had ceased to believe in something as a result of his illness, he replied: "Actually, I am starting to believe in more and more 'impossible things.' I am discovering that the world is richer, more colorful than I previously imagined ... my illness has enriched the world for me. It has given me a sense of freedom."<sup>8</sup>

Even in his final moments, Fr. Józef Tischner provided inspiration and wisdom to those who would listen. It would seem that for Tischner the key is the movement from "why have you forsaken me" to "into your hands I commend my spirit." Hope conquers death. This movement allows us to enter the "other side of life" as "children of hope."<sup>9</sup>

The attempt to articulate and provide ground for hope represents one of the distinctive and pervasive characteristics of Tischner's work. Tischner acknowledges that this is a Herculean task after Auschwitz and Kołyma. He claims that the dimensions of the evil of the 'totalitarian epoch' were so great that they surpassed all intellectual categories and intellectual possibilities of compre-

<sup>6</sup> Halina Poświatowska, "kiedy umrę kochanie," in Halina Poświatowska, *Właśnie kocham... Indeed I love...*, trans. Maya Peretz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997), 213.

<sup>7</sup> Józef Tischner and Jacek Żakowski, *Tischner czyta Katechizm* (Kraków: Znak, 1996), 178.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted after Dorota Zająko, "To, co wiem," *Tygodnik Powszechny Online*, <http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/ludzie/tischner/zanko.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Tischner and Żakowski, *Tischner czyta Katechizm*, 184. His account of Husserl's death is intriguing. Apparently, Husserl continued to analyze his experiences in writing up until the moment of his death. At one point, he asked his caregiver, Sr. Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, for something to write with because he had seen a great light and wanted to describe it. When she returned, he was dead. The account is noted in the memoirs of Sr. Jaegerschmid.

hending it.<sup>10</sup> Yet, in a speech given to German students of theology in 1993, he contended that “it is not true that at Auschwitz and Kołyma the human being lost. The truth is that the human being won. How was this possible? In order to answer the question, we need to rethink the whole of European thought—Christian and Greek.”<sup>11</sup> This reinterpretation must be undertaken from another point of view—from the heart of Auschwitz and Kołyma.<sup>12</sup> In describing his own philosophy in the preface to an earlier work, Tischner explicitly discusses contemporary humanity’s crisis of hope. According to Tischner, early philosophy was borne of wonder for the world (e.g., Aristotle). Later, it arose from doubt (e.g., Descartes). Today it is borne of pain. Tischner prophetically states that “the quality of philosophy is determined by the quality of human pain that it seeks to express and assuage. Whoever does not see this is close to betrayal.”<sup>13</sup> Betrayal to whom? Betrayal to humanity. The task, therefore, of the philosopher, is to give testimony to our humanity. According to Tischner, not a single contemporary philosophy of the human being bequeathed such a witness to humanity as did Maximilian Kolbe. Kolbe symbolically represents the many who sacrificed themselves for the sake of others.<sup>14</sup> Tischner returns to the heroism of concentration camp prisoners again in his final systematic philosophical work, *Spór o istnienie o człowieka* [“The debate concerning the existence of the human being”]. Like the Viennese psychiatrist Victor Frankl, Tischner points to the freedom of those who gave their lives for others<sup>15</sup> (we will examine Tischner’s conception of human freedom in due course, as it is inextricably linked to his hope in humanity).

<sup>10</sup> See Józef Tischner, *Nieszcześnie dar wolności* (Karków: Znak, 1996), 66.

<sup>11</sup> Józef Tischner, *W krainie schorowanej wyobraźni* (Kraków: Znak, 1997), 86.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> Józef Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości* (Kraków: Znak, 1982), 13.

<sup>14</sup> See *ibidem*, 12. Tischner often speaks in this vein of his friend, Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko. Fr. Popiełuszko was brutally slain and dumped into the Vistula river on October 19, 1984 by “SB” (the Polish secret police during the Communist era) officers because of his association with striking trade unions of “Solidarity.” He sealed his fate when he sternly criticized the “falsehood” of the Communist regime in a homily. See George Weigel, *The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 149.

<sup>15</sup> Tischner refers here to Nazi camps and Soviet camps, such as Kołyma. See Józef Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka* (Kraków: Znak, 1999), 321. In my judgment, Victor E. Frankl, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote one of the most profound observations about human freedom in his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, trans. Ilse Lash (New York: Pocket Books, 1973), 104: “We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken away from a man but one thing: the last of all human freedoms—to choose one’s own attitude in any circumstances, to choose one’s own way.... Every day, every hour offered the opportunity to make a decision, a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom.”

Tischner believed that one needed to “work on” human hope in preschoolers, students, and adults in myriad situations. “When I look back at my work as a priest and philosopher, I realize that for decades I mainly worked on human hope,”<sup>16</sup> he once mused. One might easily be tempted to dismiss Tischner’s philosophical search for hope. Marx and Lenin made most of us cognizant of the “opium” that religion sometimes provides for those who suffer. Feminist theologians rightfully admonish those who urge us to ‘offer up our sufferings’ and ‘accept our crosses,’ while paying no attention to the material circumstances which generate suffering. Tischner, well aware of Marx, Lenin, and the real suffering that ensued from the instantiation of their ideas, refuses to root hope solely beyond this world: “We cannot talk about hope in this way! ... a repository of hope exists: ‘carry one another’s burden’, ‘you are mutually each other’s trustees of hope and from this trusteeship of hope community is created.’”<sup>17</sup> In other words, it is the responsibility of all members of a community (the Church, for example) to strive to eradicate obstacles to hope and to foster the hope of one another.

How are we to be repositories of hope for one another? Shall we deny or denigrate the suffering of others? Is this just another proposal to ‘suffer with dignity’? As we have already seen, the “post Auschwitz, post Kołyma” philosopher does not deny the magnitude of human suffering. “We must accept the fact that our thinking falls under the judgment of the suffering human being.”<sup>18</sup> However, Tischner makes this contention in order to critique philosophies that have failed to recognize it. He has not yet put forth any constructive proposals. Hence, the question remains, what verdict shall the high court of humanity render towards Tischner’s philosophy? The answer depends on how trenchantly he addresses the problem of suffering and whether he demonstrates that “in the very structure of humanity lies a seed of hope.”<sup>19</sup>

In a provocative essay, Tischner censures a “new messianism” that exists in Poland with regard to the suffering that Poles have endured in the last several centuries: partitions, invasion and destruction by the Nazis, and forty years of Soviet domination. In his analysis of this phenomenon, he accuses some Poles of concentrating the eyes of the world on themselves. He acerbically states “Is there something worth looking at in the world other than *my* pain? Whoever doesn’t look at my pain is a sinner!”<sup>20</sup> He goes on to say ironically:

<sup>16</sup> Tischner and Żakowski, *Tischner czyta Katechizm*, 94.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>18</sup> Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, 324.

<sup>19</sup> “Filozofia z wnętrza metafory: Z Markiem Drwięgą, Janem Andrzejem Kłoczowskim OP i Karolem Tarnowskim, filozofami, rozmawia Jarosław Makowski.” *Tygodnik Powszechny Online*. <http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/kontrapunkt/48/makow.html>. According to Kłoczowski, this was Tischner’s goal as a philosopher.

<sup>20</sup> Tischner, *W krainie schorowanej wyobraźni*, 8.



However, one needs to ask one's self, what is the nature and meaning of the pain of the defeated such that it is worth universal consideration? There is, after all, much pain in the world. There are famines, poverty, diseases, and wars. Why should we focus on one pain, on the pain of these particular people and not others who are defeated? Because this pain is the messianic pain. It is from this pain that the emancipation of the world will come.... Messianic pain is Polish pain.<sup>21</sup>

While this message was delivered to Poles, it carries universal significance. Tischner asks us to swallow an unsavory dose of medicine. In an age when people often play the 'my suffering is worse than your suffering' game, Tischner's words are timely and necessary.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, this precautionary word against fixating on one's own pain does not deny the need for true healing and restoration as a result of real human suffering. This admonition alone does not spawn desperately needed, life-giving hope.

On the one hand, Tischner roots hope eschatologically in the future. Following Meister Eckhart, he claims that when God reveals God's self to human beings, it is always in a partial, perhaps fleeting way. God promises to reveal God's self to us fully only in the future.<sup>23</sup> However, neither this stance nor his rebuke of "messianic pain" overcomes the primary problem with which Tischner must grapple. He phrased the question as follows: "The human being died' engrossed by that which it thought up itself.... Why did the human being destroy itself? Because it discovered that it cannot be good.... Can we reverse this process? Can we make a human being from a game-player?"<sup>24</sup>

In other words, without denying that human beings built Auschwitz and Kołyma, took satisfaction from those monstrosities and tried to wash their hands of guilt after the fact, how can we restore faith in the human person? Eschatological hope is ultimately important for Tischner. Yet, he will not abandon the human person. Adumbrating his philosophical project, he maintains it is possible to "make a human being from a game-player" (i.e., one who views all of reality as a game to be won). This can be accomplished by "showing that from the interior of the human being's game we can extract [or call forth] a yearning for that which is truly good, a yearning that through freedom seeks a space for itself."<sup>25</sup> It is

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<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> I have in mind, for example, the fact that one hears attempts to quantitatively and/or qualitatively argue that the Holocaust was a more heinous crime against humanity than the institution of slavery or vice-versa. In my judgment, this is counterproductive and does not constitute a serious attempt at healing and reconciliation.

<sup>23</sup> Tischner and Żakowski, *Tischner czyta Katechizm*, 92.

<sup>24</sup> Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 64.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, 65.

at this moment that we must turn to Tischner's theological anthropology in our quest for his locus of hope.<sup>26</sup>

A thorough analysis of Tischner's theological anthropology exceeds the scope of the present essay. However, it is necessary to present, at least in broad strokes, the interconnected notions of freedom, good and evil (or sin) and grace as they appear in Tischner's writing.<sup>27</sup> The aim is twofold: First, a brief examination of these loci will illuminate the underpinnings of Tischner's philosophy of hope. Second, an understanding of Tischner's anthropology and philosophy/theology of hope will shed light on what Tischner believed could be achieved in the social sphere. One interesting way to do this is to contrast elements of the respective anthropologies of Tischner and Reinhold Niebuhr, and to show how their variant concepts may have produced divergent conclusions regarding social change.<sup>28</sup>

Our point of departure is the 'axiomatic given' of a phenomenologist's analysis of evil. It is the springboard from which we can move through Tischner's anthropology: "Evil is a given. I do not ask if it is an illusion or not. I know—I have experienced in a clear enough manner that in the other exists some kind of embodied evil."<sup>29</sup> Tischner's understanding of sin underscores its various dimensions. In one place, Tischner speaks of the "slavery of evil," which he describes as a loss of freedom. He also claims, in accord with the "Christian conception" of sin, that sin is a basic evil that is "overlaid" upon human nature. Following Hans Urs von Balthasar, he also portrays sin as the attempt of "finite freedom" to play or usurp the role of "Infinite Freedom." This is made possible by the glimpse of "Infinite Freedom" that exists within "finite freedom."<sup>30</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr's intriguing account of sin in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* strikes many similar chords. For example, Niebuhr states that "the

<sup>26</sup> Polish philosophers Marek Drwięga and Karol Tarnowski point out that Tischner ignored the post Enlightenment disjunction between philosophy and theology. Because he felt that theological categories were necessary to describe the human being, he used them without reservation, thus overcoming what Paul Ricoeur named "consciously controlled schizophrenia." See "Filozofia z wnętrza metafory."

<sup>27</sup> Tischner has returned to questions such as the nature of evil and human freedom again repeatedly in his writing. I recognize that this presentation runs the risk of grossly oversimplifying Tischner's ideas. It should be treated as an initial attempt to outline the most salient points in Tischner's writings on these matters.

<sup>28</sup> The choice of Reinhold Niebuhr is not arbitrary. His stature and impact in the United States makes him one of the few American theologians who have had the same kind of significance for his society as Tischner did for Poland. Like Tischner, he made his impact both through his prolific career and his link to social movements such as the pro-labor Union for Democratic Action. For more on the latter topic, see Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*, 197.

<sup>29</sup> Józef Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu* (Paris: Éditions du Dialogue, 1990), 141.

<sup>30</sup> Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 345.

self lacks the faith and trust to subject itself to God. It seeks to establish itself independently.”<sup>31</sup> He also speaks of the slavery of sin: “The ultimate proof of the freedom of the human spirit is its own recognition that its will is not free to choose between good and evil.”<sup>32</sup> While many of Niebuhr’s ideas echo what we have heard from Tischner, their ‘tones’ begin to diverge even within the last of Niebuhr’s cited statements. It would seem that their paths split (perhaps not radically, but in important ways) in regard to human freedom and grace.

According to Tischner, the Christian concept of grace developed in contradistinction to the pagan, Greek concept of *fatum*. Among their differences, *fatum* ignores or denies the freedom of the human being while grace affords freedom’s achievement. Tischner points out that philosophers and theologians have debated throughout the ages over how this seemingly paradoxical statement can be true.<sup>33</sup> In his judgment, the problem of grace represents the crux of the matter; it encompasses the problem of the human being, sin, freedom and responsibility.<sup>34</sup> The Christian concept of grace assumes two things about the human being: first, that human beings are in need of grace; second, that human beings are capable of receiving it.<sup>35</sup>

If grace is that which creates the possibility of human freedom, what *kind* of freedom can it create? For Tischner, grace is the remedy for human evil. Grace is that which *liberates* human beings from the slavery of sin. According to Tischner, Christianity portrays the human being enslaved by sin from birth who can undergo a gradual liberation. Therefore, Christianity does not proclaim an absolute freedom, unlike the Enlightenment, which professes that all human beings are borne totally free.<sup>36</sup> How does grace concretely operate in granting us freedom? Tischner claims that it “fastens wings” to the human being, in order that he or she may gaze “from above” at everything that limits or restrains.<sup>37</sup> While Tischner does not elaborate on these ‘restraints’ in his philosophical treatises on grace, he proffers insight into their nature in his book entitled *Jak żyć?* [How to live?]. In a sense, the beatitudes free us from the “things of this world”; they allow us to see earthly affairs in the proper perspective. “The hope of the kingdom frees us from slavery in relation to the world”<sup>38</sup> (It is interesting to note that Tischner reflected on the meaning of

<sup>31</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. 1, *Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1964), 252.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, 258.

<sup>33</sup> Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 131.

<sup>34</sup> Tischner and Żakowski, *Tischner czyta katechizm*, 129.

<sup>35</sup> Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 132.

<sup>36</sup> Tischner, *Nieszczerzy dar wolności*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 297.

<sup>38</sup> Tischner, *Jak żyć?*, Wrocław: Tum Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej, 1995, 102.



the Beatitudes for the ‘liberation’ of Poland in 1982 in articles published during the martial law period<sup>39</sup>). The “human being” of the beatitudes is a pilgrim. The pilgrim, like Abraham, journeys towards a “fatherland.” In short, it would seem that for Tischner grace allows the pilgrim to hope in the future and thus to have the courage to travel the path of justice, righteousness and mercy towards union with God. This is a journey of progressive liberation from sin towards absolute freedom or “Infinite Freedom.” To be free, is to be free in relation to good and evil.<sup>40</sup> The following passage encapsulates Tischner’s understanding of the relationship between grace, freedom and human hope:

Freedom is the power that liberates hope. It also liberates joy and the feeling of dignity. But how is the passage from despair possible? How is it possible to defeat sadness with joy? How is it possible to conquer contempt and to free the sense of one’s dignity? If freedom is a kind of ‘ascent,’ how is such an ‘ascent’ possible, raising one’s self from the state of despair? Can the human being accomplish this alone? If the human being could, the human would certainly not have fallen. And if he or she has fallen, he or she cannot get up themselves. Freedom means that a human being can accomplish this. On the other hand, however, freedom comes from the outside. In the incomprehensibility of this passage from despair to hope the experience of grace is anchored. Freedom is grace opening up towards grace.<sup>41</sup>

Paradoxically, “freedom comes from the outside.” Only the infusion of grace can enable the human being to begin the “ascent” that Tischner describes. Recall, however, that evil embodied in others is an “axiomatic given” for Tischner (perhaps all would readily agree to this). Therefore, either not all human beings are free or there is a possibility to reject grace. Tischner elucidates his position in *Spór o istnienie człowieka* and *Jak żyć?* In the former, he contends that the good cannot be good by force or necessity. “Goodness, in order to be good, must itself ‘want to be’ good.”<sup>42</sup> In the latter work he argues that in order for an act to be considered sinful it must be performed “with at least a dose of consciousness and a degree of freedom.”<sup>43</sup> Moreover, “the human being, placed at the foot of the signpost and pushed by grace in that direction, must decide to march. The will must decide.”<sup>44</sup> Hence, Tischner explicates why not all human beings decide to “spread their wings and fly” at every given

<sup>39</sup> These articles were later published in book form as *Książeczka pielgrzyma* (Warszawa: Libellus, 1996). This edition indicates the portions of the original texts that were censored out by the Communist authorities.

<sup>40</sup> Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 298.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, 317.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> Tischner, *Jak żyć*, 148.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, 57.

moment. Freedom, the “grace of all graces,”<sup>45</sup> liberation from sin, is offered to all human beings. This freedom can be freely rejected or accepted. This position is consistent with what we have already heard in the historical sketch of Tischner’s life. In salvation history, nothing “must be.” Rather, everything “can be.”<sup>46</sup> It also resembles *Gaudium et Spes* concerning “the excellence of liberty.” The Council fathers argued that “only in freedom can man [sic] direct himself towards goodness.”<sup>47</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr discusses a “reconstruction of the self” in similar terms. It is a consequence of “power” and “grace” from beyond the self. He maintains that the Christian experience is of a new self. “The new self is more truly a real self because the vicious circle of self-centeredness has been broken.”<sup>48</sup> It would appear on this basis that he, like Tischner, believes in the possibility of some degree of liberation from the stranglehold of sin, at least theoretically. Elsewhere, as we have seen, Niebuhr contends that “man [sic] is most free in the discovery that he is not free.”<sup>49</sup> How are we to make sense of these apparently contradictory claims? In a segment entitled “grace is a power not our own,” Niebuhr provides a pithy nuance of his position on grace and freedom:

The real situation is that both affirmations—that only God in Christ can break and reconstruct the sinful self, and that the self must “open the door” and is capable of doing so—are equally true; and they are both unqualifiedly

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<sup>45</sup> The title of one of Tischner’s articles is “Wolność – łaska wszystkich łask” [Freedom—the grace of all graces]. It is found in *Nieszczęsny dar wolności*, 10–3.

<sup>46</sup> See footnote 13. This statement gives rise to some questions pertaining to Christology. Does salvation history ultimately depend on human beings or the incision of the Christ-event into human history? Tischner’s stance on freedom as grace “from the outside” rescues him from the first potential accusation. Tischner ultimately roots salvation in Jesus Christ. Far from being Pelagian, he merely wants to underscore human freedom. For example, in “the Phenomenology of Justification,” we read: “There would be no justification if it were not for Christ’s offering.... In order for God to ‘justify’ the sinner, the sinner should ‘convert,’ but in order for the sinner to convert, he or she must accept the fruits of redemption. In the act of redemption, someone ‘just’ intervenes between God and the sinful human being, which, on the one hand, enables God to perform the act of justification; on the other hand, it enables the human being to ‘raise’ its nature to the level of ‘justice.’ There is no justification without the savior. The human being alone insults God, but is not capable of rectifying the insult alone.” T i s c h n e r, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 189–90. See also Tischner, *Ksiądz na manowcach* (Kraków, Znak 1999), 79–80.

<sup>47</sup> The Second Vatican Council, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*,” Section 17, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbot (New York: Guild Press, 1966). See also The Second Vatican Council, “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,” Section 11, and The Second Vatican Council, “Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae*,” Section 11.

<sup>48</sup> Reinhold N i e b u h r, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. 2, *Human Destiny* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1964), 110.

<sup>49</sup> N i e b u h r, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. 1, 260.

true, each on its own level. Yet either affirmation becomes false if it is made without reference to one another.<sup>50</sup>

Hence we see that for Niebuhr, the human must “open the door” and for Tischner the human must “decide to march.” Niebuhr indicates that claiming that grace alone produces the reconstruction of the self is tantamount to a “divine determinism.” This would “imperil every sense of human responsibility.” On the one hand, Reformation theology has run that risk.<sup>51</sup> On the other, Catholic theology errs in trying to precisely delineate human versus divine activity and places them “on the same level.”<sup>52</sup>

On the theoretical level, Tischner’s views on human nature, grace and freedom seem remarkably similar to Niebuhr’s. The former speaks of the “ascent” of the human (note the influence of Romanticism on Tischner). The latter envisions a “reconstruction of the self.” Both strive to maintain human freedom while acknowledging that ultimately humans are dependent on grace. The difference between the thinking of these two great minds arises in their consideration of the likelihood of the “ascent” or “reconstruction.” It is one thing to hold out the theoretical possibility of “liberation from sin.” Does this liberation actually take place? If so, how often? Niebuhr reminds us that “history is filled with endless possibilities of good and evil” and that “every new human potency may be an instrument of chaos as well as order.” He maintains that the Reformation most fully comprehended “this tragic aspect of history.” Its polemic against Catholic doctrines of sanctification, which exhibited a “too-simple confidence in historical possibilities, was well founded.”<sup>53</sup> In short, the history of humanity’s “denial of the Gospel” militates against any false sense of progress and naive optimism about the human’s ability to “reconstruct the self.” As we have seen, Niebuhr has a doctrine of grace that theoretically grants this possibility. Yet, in his words, “human pride is more powerful than any instruments of which it avails itself.”<sup>54</sup>

While Niebuhr seems to focus on the dark side of human history, Tischner dares to speak of the “discovery of the good.” It is intriguing that a philosopher from Poland, a land that has been historically battered by “evil”, holds out more hope in the human possibility for liberation from sin than Niebuhr.<sup>55</sup> In an essay entitled *Wiara w mrocznych czasach* [“Faith in Dark Times”], Ti-

<sup>50</sup> Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. 2, 118.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, 116.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, 118.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, 155.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, 128.

<sup>55</sup> While Niebuhr’s homeland was ‘relatively’ prosperous compared to a place like Poland, Niebuhr was deeply disturbed by what he saw on a visit to Germany during World War II. See Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*, 78.

schnier articulates the need to understand the horrors that Central and Eastern Europe experienced. Having pondered how people could have perpetrated such heinous crimes upon their fellow citizens, he states that the experience of evil “opened the door” for the experience of good. According to Tischner, people have struggled to define the good since Aristotle. He claims that it is perhaps indefinable. However, one can “‘see’ concrete ‘good’ in those who, jeopardizing their own lives, came to the aid of those who were doomed and often died for others.”<sup>56</sup> Once again he names Fr. Maximilian Kolbe and Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko as paragons of embodied goodness. In the case of Kolbe, those prisoners who witnessed his act underwent a passage from despair to hope. A new attitude reigned among them.<sup>57</sup> Tischner considers what inspired Father Jerzy Popiełuszko to risk his life in the name of truth. Among what he calls “some aspects of the experience of the good,” he enumerates the willingness to be heroic and resignation from violence. The latter represents one of the linchpins of Tischner’s ethics of Solidarity and will be the focus of the remainder of this essay. For the moment, it will suffice to point out that Popiełuszko acted according to the maxim he often repeated: “Conquer evil with goodness.”<sup>58</sup> This phrase, rooted in Paul’s letter to the Romans,<sup>59</sup> was often repeated by the Polish Romantic poet Cyprian Norwid. John Paul II also appealed to it during his pilgrimages to Poland during the Communist era.

Tischner’s belief, shared by his compatriots, that good can conquer evil and that “evil is not free because it is dependent on hatred of the good” seems to distinguish him from Niebuhr. In his writing on grace, freedom and evil, he ultimately defends the human being’s ability to “ascend” or “transcend” those things that enslave him or her. Moreover, it is a *real* possibility. Whereas Niebuhr’s reading of history conveys a sense of resignation and pessimism about the possibilities for the embodiment of good, Tischner harkens to paradigmatic examples of “the experience of the good.” These exemplars indicate what is truly possible. This belief enables Tischner to hope unwaveringly in the human spirit. It is this hope that drives his insistence on the real possibility of social change brought about through non-violent means. Having seen the anthropological underpinnings of Tischner’s philosophy, we may now examine his proposals for the fostering of social change. Once again we will contrast his thinking with Niebuhr’s on this matter. It would seem that what has been already stated in regard to Niebuhr’s anthropology evinces why what he con-

<sup>56</sup> Józef Tischner, “Wiara w mrocznych czasach,” *Znak* 44, no. 4(443) (1992): 9.

<sup>57</sup> See Tischner, *Nieszczęsny dar wolności*, 69.

<sup>58</sup> See Tischner, “Wiara w mrocznych czasach”: 10.

<sup>59</sup> Romans 12:20–21: “No, ‘if your enemies are hungry feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

siders “really historically possible” looks meager in comparison to Tischner’s more optimistic proposals.<sup>60</sup>

“We should not think negatively of utopias,” urges Tischner. “Utopias say more about the human being than more than one statistic, and to some degree always shape our real world, which is more than we can say about statistics.”<sup>61</sup> He hastens to add that utopias do not consider the real force of evil in the world. A world without sickness, death, limitations on freedom and full of harmony is not a possibility. The key, according to Tischner, is to distinguish those utopias which are “fables” from those which can eventually become a real social program. Hope awakens in the “consciousness of the community” a project “for tomorrow.” Tischner’s reflections on hope and the project for tomorrow came in 1980, a year before he delivered his sermons at the Solidarity conventions. In *Etyka solidarności* we find the most clearly articulated sense of his project for tomorrow. Our primary interest here is not so much the content of the project itself. This is a matter for another essay. We are concerned primarily with the methods to be utilized in its realization.

Niebuhr’s theory of power in society will serve as the foil against which Tischner’s theory of “the adversary,” “dialogue,” and “revolution” will be examined. Niebuhr’s student Larry Rasmussen has neatly summarized one of the central tenets of Niebuhr’s theory of power as follows: “social justice is not possible apart from coercion, and since countervailing power is needed to check or destroy oppressive power, the question is how to make new power constellations moral.”<sup>62</sup> It is important to note that Niebuhr considers non-violent resistance a form of coercion.<sup>63</sup>

As we have seen, Tischner maintained that the solidarity “borne from the pages and spirit of the Gospel” does not require external imposition upon people. How then can solidarity grow? Tischner uses the image of planting trees. The awakening of consciences is like the planting of trees: “Someone plants a tree—one, a second, a third ... from these trees a forest grows.... Whoever passes by will have to take into account the existence of the trees.”<sup>64</sup> It is obvious that most people instinctively want to resort to violence or invoke fear in their oppressor. Yet, the “solidarity of

<sup>60</sup> Richard Wightman Fox cites an illuminating quotation from Niebuhr’s dairy. “I am not going to let my decision in regard to war stand alone. I am going to try to ... experiment with the potency of trust and love much more than I have in the past.” See Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*, 79.

<sup>61</sup> Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, 481. Paul VI stated something similar in regard to “utopias” in his Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, Section 37, [http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_apl\\_19710514\\_octogesima-adveniens.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens.html).

<sup>62</sup> Larry Rasmussen, “Niebuhr’s Theory of Power,” in *Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)*, ed. Gary A. Gaudin and Douglas J. Hall (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1994), 159.

<sup>63</sup> See Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932) 250-256.

<sup>64</sup> Tischner, *The Spirit of Solidarity*, 80.



consciences” renounces the shedding of blood and scare tactics. Instead, it resorts to “shaming.” It is worth citing this lengthy passage, as it appears to be at the very core of the ethical approach of the Solidarity movement:

Today people abhor fear so much that they have not only ceased being afraid but also ceased frightening others. It seems as if frightening has been replaced by shaming. One takes a mirror and puts it in front of adversaries’ faces so they can see for themselves what they are. ‘You were saying that you want to govern, but in fact, you plundered the forest.’ This is the hour of disgrace. After this, some lose all desire to govern, or even if they do not lose it, others are no longer able to take them seriously enough to be able to listen to them. Kings leave because they are no longer needed. The forest still grows.<sup>65</sup>

When the normal course of dialogue or arbitration fails, those who are exploited can shame their oppressors by striking. According to Tischner, the strike, as it was used in Poland, was not an act of violence or coercion. When workers strike they protest against “senseless work”; they continue to work but experience deeper and deeper levels of poverty. Yet, this act forms a “communion of people of goodwill” which has “love in their hearts for those for whom they work.”<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps a ‘Niebuhrian’ response would argue that striking, the stoppage of work and elimination of employers’ profits, does not constitute a form of love (Niebuhr is renowned for insisting that social ethics must not purport to solve everything by love). It is an act of coercion. The claim that striking workers love their abusive employers does appear strange at first glance. However, Tischner nuances his position in his discussions concerning the nature of dialogue and revolution.

Responsible, honest dialogue always attempts to find the truth. In this search for truth in dialogue, the dialogue partners must be able to ‘feel’ the position of the other. Tischner argues that “the full truth is the fruit of our experiences in common—yours about me and mine about you.”<sup>67</sup> In other words, responsible dialogue attempts to reveal the situation at hand through mutual engagement. The goal is not to eliminate or destroy the other, but to reveal to him or her the truth about themselves. In the case of the Solidarity movement, the dialogue was primarily about the suffering of Poles caused by the Communist regime. As Tischner states, resolution did not come about easily. The Communist party was not eager to “look themselves in the mirror.” Popiełuszko’s death, along with the murder and torture of others throughout forty years of Communism, witness to this fact. Nonetheless, Tischner’s hope in humanity allows him to end his reflections on dialogue as follows: “Hope is awakening that things and

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, 80–81.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, 81.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, 11.

events can be changed. The people involved in the dialogue about solidarity must guard this hope as the apple of their eye.”<sup>68</sup>

When sustained resistance is encountered, one must continue to shy away from violent means.<sup>69</sup> This stems from Tischner’s conception of revolution. The “revolutionary consciousness,” which arises when the “sufferings of some are the offenses of others,” often gives rise to the illusion of revolution. The erroneous principle of revenge is applied to the justified sense of offense.<sup>70</sup> However, true revolution is a revolution in “realm of the spirit.” It is the accusation of those who have inflicted suffering and at the same time the hope that new solutions can be found to problems that were once impossible to resolve. It is to believe in the “progress” of science, ethics and indeed the human spirit (recall Niebuhr’s polemic against progress). Following Hegel, Tischner contends that in order for a revolution to take place there must be real progress. Furthermore, he argues that the measure of a true revolution is the degree to which it is “bloodless.”<sup>71</sup>

In analyzing Tischner’s ethic of solidarity, it is natural to inquire whether this is feasible in “our world” or whether this is naive optimism. One calls to mind the recent wars in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya and areas continually riddled with strife, such as Columbia, Zimbabwe and Tibet. Without denying this tragedy, one must admit of the triumph of Solidarity. The remarkable thing about the ethics of Solidarity is that it bore real fruits. While Solidarity’s victory does not prove that non-violent, non-coercive revolution will always be successful, it certainly demonstrates that it can happen.<sup>72</sup> Tischner himself preached in 1981 that the significance of a revolution can be seen in its fruits. In his later reflections on the bloodless “Polish revolution,” he states that it took Poles under Communism decades to discern that violent struggles against the Communists would only end in defeat.<sup>73</sup> However, the Solidarity movement eventually achieved its goals. As Timothy Garton Ash has written, “Solidarity was the most infectiously hopeful movement in the history of contemporary Europe, and its long term legacy is one of hope.”<sup>74</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, 13.

<sup>69</sup> In 1989 Tischner gave a lecture in Caracas in which he urged theologians of liberation to commit themselves to non-violent means of spreading the Gospel. It is published in Józef T i s c h n e r, *Etyka solidarności oraz Homo sovieticus*.

<sup>70</sup> T i s c h n e r, *The Spirit of Solidarity*, 51.

<sup>71</sup> T i s c h n e r, *The Spirit of Solidarity*, 54.

<sup>72</sup> While I do not know with certitude, I venture to guess that Tischner himself was not an absolute pacifist. He created the ethic of Solidarity for a specific movement in a specific place and time. As I mentioned earlier, he did urge liberation theologians to denounce violence. It would seem that while he may acknowledge the need to wage war, he would never relate war to the Gospel in any way.

<sup>73</sup> T i s c h n e r, *Nieszczęsny dar wolności*, 71.

<sup>74</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1983), 337.

Does the existence of democratic Poland from 1989 disprove Niebuhr's claim that justice can only be established through the use of coercive power? Niebuhr did not live to witness Solidarity's victory or the victory of the "Velvet Revolution" in the former Czechoslovakia. However, he did encounter Gandhi's movement and the African American Civil Rights movement, led by Dr. Martin Luther King.<sup>75</sup> While he lauded Gandhi's efforts, Niebuhr criticized him for not recognizing that non-violent resistance was a form of coercion.<sup>76</sup> Would he have chided Tischner for the same reason? Of course, we can only hypothesize. As for the verdict, one must consider the fact that Tischner, and many of the members of the Solidarity movement, were committed to the "truth"; they wanted the Communists to see themselves in the mirror and to change for the better, to undergo conversion (to use religious terms). It would seem that this can be considered an act of love. If someone loves another, he or she wants to bring out the best in her or him, to edify her or him in their journey. Pilgrims assist other pilgrims in their journeys of liberation from sin towards the 'fatherland.' One must also consider Tischner's continued insistence on reconciliation, as opposed to revenge, in his polemics against what is known as 'decommunization' in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>77</sup> In the context of this issue, Tischner urged that "Forgiveness liberates. From what? Above all, from the principle of revenge."<sup>78</sup> Whatever the verdict may be, the jurors must consider the fact that it in the twentieth century, which has been deemed the bloodiest by many, a peaceful revolution achieved its ends. The Solidarity movement, inspired by the writing of Józef Tischner, defeated the Communist regime. This type of David versus Goliath victory through non-violent means was perhaps unprecedented in human history. Perhaps then we can speak of human progress. In my judgment, this victory should at least call into question both Niebuhr's anthropological claims and his sense of resignation concerning the necessary utilization of coercive force.

Józef Tischner believed and argued for the ability of human beings to undertake an "ascent." This ascent liberates one from self-centeredness and attachment to earthly goods such as power and wealth. God-given grace provides the "wings"

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<sup>75</sup> Rasmussen claims that *Moral Man and Immoral Society* practically laid the basis for the strategy of the American Civil Rights Movement. See R a s m u s s e n, "Niebuhr's Theory of Power," 160.

<sup>76</sup> See N i e b u h r, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 251–6.

<sup>77</sup> The process by which all former members of the Communist party stand trial and are officially barred from public life for anywhere from ten years to life. The process has gone in different directions in various former Communist countries. In Poland, 'lustracja' was eventually ruled out.

<sup>78</sup> Józef T i s c h n e r, "Kot pilnujący myszy, czyli cierpienia okresu transformacji," *Znak* 49, no. 7(506) (1997): 42. Of course, Tischner recognizes the complexity of this issue and does not argue for a complete negation of and absolution from Poland's Communist past. He merely argues that all Communists cannot be treated collectively, i.e., individuals joined the party for different reasons.

and “propels” the human being in flight. However, not all human beings “fly”; none are able to “gaze from above” at the shackles of sin at all times. This results from true freedom and the succumbing to the temptation of sin. Some are obviously more encumbered by illness, depression, and other sad twists of fate. Yet, this does not obviate the need for hope. Tischner dedicated his life to hope: hope in the human spirit and hope in human progress. “Hope”, he wrote, “is that which allows the human being to overcome the obstacles of the present and to turn towards the future.”<sup>79</sup> His perduring hope in the human spirit led him to challenge Poles under martial law to a “revolution in the realm of the spirit.” The hope that he maintained bore many fruits, in the social sphere and in the lives of multitudes of individuals. He eradicated systemic evils and assuaged the pain of personal suffering.

I have attempted to illustrate the greatness of Józef Tischner, a “light for the world” (Mt 5:14-16). This essay pays tribute to a man who truly was a “person of the Beatitudes” and attempted to show that in our world which is in many ways broken, exemplars such as Józef Tischner produce character, and their character produces hope (cf. Rom 5:4-5). I also aimed to evince that Tischner’s legacy has much to contribute to contemporary debates about social change and solidarity. Tischner himself argued that solidarity and the manner in which it is realized must be continually reinterpreted in new historical contexts.<sup>80</sup> *Etyka solidarności* speaks to the exigent social issues of our time: poverty, unjust wages, discrimination and violence in the social sphere. Hence, earnestly studying Fr. Tischner’s philosophy would serve humanity greatly by illuminating the path toward the eradication of these perils and inspiring the hope that it can be achieved. His life and death as a “child of hope” have much to teach us about the “culture of death” that John Paul II denounced in *Evangelium Vitae*. It is my hope that the theological and philosophical communities in the US will recognize this in the near future.

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<sup>79</sup> Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, 480.

<sup>80</sup> See Tischner, *Etyka Solidarności oraz Homo sovieticus*, 10, 15. In 2001, Wojciech Bonowicz demonstrated how Tischner’s claim that “work must make sense” sheds light on the situation of striking nurses in Poland, whose poverty continued to grow due to inordinately low wages. See Bonowicz, “Źródła Etyki solidarności.” I have discussed the changes in the wage structure in Poland in light of the ethics of solidarity in an unpublished essay entitled “Roman Catholic Social Teaching, The Roman Catholic Church and the Free-Market Era in Poland.”

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#### ABSTRACT / ABSTRAKT

Gerald J. BEYER, Józef Tischner: Chaplain of *Solidarność* and Philosopher of Hope  
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Józef Tischner's deep commitment to pastoral ministry and his involvement with *Solidarność* make him an outstanding example of an engaged Christian philosopher who witnessed to the Gospel through rigorous academic work and actively promoting social change. Tischner's description of the ethic of Solidarity, which helped overturn the Communist regime in Poland, also provides insight into the moral foundations of democracy. This article focuses primarily on his theological anthropology and its connection to some of his integral ideas concerning social change and the virtue of hope. First, the article explores some of Tischner's thinking on hope. Next it considers how Tischner's views about hope and the nature of the human person led him to conclude that nonviolence can bring about meaningful and lasting social change. The article contrasts Tischner's ideas with those of the twentieth century U.S. theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Like Tischner, Niebuhr also had major influence in the public sphere. However, his more pessimistic view of human nature led him to conclude that nonviolence cannot be an effective tool in the struggle for justice. Thus, Niebuhr serves as an interesting counterpoint to Tischner, revealing more clearly the link between hope, the human person, and social change in Tischner's thought.

Keywords: Józef Tischner, hope, social change, theological anthropology, solidarity, Reinhold Niebuhr

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Gerald J. BEYER, Józef Tischner. Kapelan Solidarności i filozof nadziei

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Poświęcenie, z jakim Józef Tischner sprawował posługę duszpasterską, i jego oddanie sprawie Solidarności, czynią zeń znakomity przykład zaangażowanego filozofa chrześcijańskiego, który dawał świadectwo Ewangelii poprzez swoją pracę badawczą oraz działalność na rzecz przemian społecznych. Dokonany przez niego opis etyki solidarności, postawy, która przyczyniła się do obalenia reżimu komunistycznego w Polsce, pozwala również lepiej zrozumieć moralne podstawy demokracji. Niniejszy artykuł skupia się przede wszystkim na rozwijanej przez Tischnera antropologii teologicznej i jej związkach z jego koncepcjami zmiany społecznej oraz cnoty nadziei. W artykule omówiono najpierw wybrane wątki refleksji Tischnera dotyczącej nadziei, a następnie ukazano sposób, w jaki refleksja ta oraz jego poglądy dotyczące osoby ludzkiej doprowadziły go do uznania walki bez przemocy (nonviolence) za środek umożliwiający dokonanie istotnej i trwałej zmiany w społeczeństwie. W artykule zestawiono również idee Tischnera z koncepcjami dwudziestowiecznego teologa amerykańskiego Reinholda Niebuhr. Podobnie jak Tischner, Niebuhr wywarł znaczący wpływ społeczny, lecz jego bardziej pesymistyczny pogląd na naturę nie pozwolił mu uznać metod wolnych od przemocy za skuteczne w walce o sprawiedliwość. Myśl Niebuhr może stanowić interesujący kontrpunkt dla stanowiska Tischnera, uwydatniając obecny w jego myśli związek między nadzieją, osobą ludzką i zmianą społeczną.

Słowa kluczowe: Józef Tischner, nadzieja, zmiana społeczna, antropologia teologiczna, solidarność, Reinhold Niebuhr

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