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Between Tolerance and Dissent:
Religious, Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Abstract

This paper attempts to articulate the question of tolerance for religious education within a broad historical-political and pedagogical context. It argues that during the twentieth century, in the aftermath of tyranny and totalitarianism, tolerance was not only a guiding political principle but an emergent educational one; that this principle has been behind the development of citizenship and human rights education (with its emphasis upon shared universal, especially human rights values) as well as shared by religious educators. However, this approach, with its emphasis upon universally shared values, has tended as a result, to neglect cultural particularity and especially religious difference within wider political as well as educational contexts. Outlining four critical contexts and four critical tensions, the paper argues that in the context of a number of dystopian political realities religious educators might be justified in arguing not for tolerance but dissent.

Introduction

A philosopher refugee from Nazi persecution (like his Viennese countryman, Ludwig Wittgenstein), Karl Popper's (1946) *The Open Society and Its Enemies* is a work of increasing relevance to our time threatened by new forms of totalitarianism, often presenting itself in the name of religion. Popper's book is divided into two volumes; the first is a critique of the totalitarian impulses of Plato, the second of the totalitarianism inherent in Marx's historical materialism. Popper's major point is that an open society needs to maintain a permanent guard upon those forces which might foreclose the openness of thought and other basic freedoms, whether these be from philosophical, political, ideological or theological sources. An authoritative critic of Popper puts it well: 'the maximum possible tolerance or freedom is an optimum, not an absolute, for it has to be restricted if it is to exist at all …' There are always compromises in freedoms, despite any stated indivisibility of rights, and 'the price of freedom is eternal vigilance' (Magee, 1985: 81; cf. Bailey, 2000; Gearon, 2004). Popper is important at both a theoretical and practical level because his thinking radicalizes and gives considerable urgency to the question of dissent. To what extent should a religious believer exercise tolerance and under what condition dissent? And do we mean tolerance of the State and its laws? To what extent should a religious believer dissent from or tolerate his or her religious tradition? What are the bounds of tolerance and when might a person or a tradition be impelled not to tolerance but dissent. And what form should dissent take? Might religious education offer a pedagogical framework for such analysis? How might it contribute to refining in pupils the skills of a beneficent discrimination? This article cannot hope to articulate all of these questions, but will present an attempt, tentative and provocative, to the question the limits of tolerance; arguing that there is much in the world about which a religious educator might offer not tolerance but dissent.

Tyranny, Totalitarianism and Tolerance: Pedagogy from Politics

It was totalitarianism and genocide that were on the mind of the newly formed United Nations (UN) when the UN General Assembly -- established by its founding 1945 Charter -- instituted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights in thirty articles, on 10 December 1948. Only the day before the UN General Assembly had made the Convention on the Prevention of Genocide. Arguably, because of this juxtaposition of declarations, totalitarianism and genocide define the subsequent contours of the UN mandate in all others areas of its operation (Ryan, 2000). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights arose from, or as a direct reaction to, the extreme denigration of freedoms by tyranny and totalitarianism. Studies abound of the United Nations, sixty years or so after its creation (Forsythe, 2000; Sellars, 2002; Schlesinger, 2003; Baratta, 2004; Bowles, 2004; Fasulo, 2004; Krasno, 2004; Weiss, Forsythe and Coate, 2004). These studies review the successes and failures of the UN from its inception when the world was a smaller place to a time when the notion of globalization has become a worn cliché. Arguably the UN has been preeminent amongst bureaucratic inter-governmental structures which have, along with advances in communications and other technologies, made the world smaller. The First and Second World Wars were indicative of the global reach of technology demonstrated by world war and the impetus for a global inter-governmental system based on common values ('universal human rights') that would determine and, at least in theory, maintain the peace.

The question of tolerance and its limits have been constantly raised by the short (six decade) history of the United Nations. If we look to the foundational statement of moral principle – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and those documents which constitute the International Bill of Human Rights (1) – we see that educational provision has been central since the beginning of the United Nations to the promotion of human rights and the wider political context of liberty (2). Thus, when – on that now famous 10 December day in 1948 – the UN General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in thirty articles, it provided a moving testimony to the good intentions of humankind in ridding itself of totalitarianism, genocide and the scourge of world war, as well as being a positive affirmation of human worth and fundamental moral principle. The Declaration provides the necessary legal and historical context and a statement of human value:

> Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind (sic), and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, whereas it is essential, if man (sic) is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law … Now, therefore the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, *shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction*. (UN, 1948: available www.un.org, emphasis added)

There is little that thirty articles do not themselves cover, at least in basic outline, by way of an ideal, aspirational statement of rights and responsibilities, freedoms and obligations – for the individual, the state and international community of nations.

In excess of a half century later – in a world despairingly short of those ideals – the United Nations reiterated the role of education in the process and established the International Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). During that Decade there was held an International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (Madrid, November 2001). Advance planning of the meeting in Madrid could not have predicted what had happened in the preceding months to give the meeting a tragically topicality. Indeed, there were other ironies of the time: the events of 11 September 2001 had been preceded *only days before* with the closure, in Durban, South Africa, of the meeting of the World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Discrimination. This gave a more than nuanced urgency, two months later, to the address in Madrid by Amor (then Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief) 'The Role of Religious Education in the Pursuit of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination' (www.un.org and follow links) (3). In it, Amor suggested that prevention of much global conflict based upon religious difference could be 'ensured through the establishment of a culture of tolerance, notably through education, which could make a decisive contribution to the promotion of human rights values and particularly attitudes and behaviors which reflect tolerance and non-discrimination, hence the role of schools'.

Between Tolerance and Dissent I:
Four Critical Contexts for Religious, Citizenship and Human Rights Education
This contemporary rise to prominence of religion in global politics parallels the international development of interest in human rights and citizenship:

> During the 1990s there has been a resurgence of interest in Civic and Citizenship Education. The number of formal democracies in the world has increased from 76 (46.1%) to 117 (61.3%). This has been described as the 'third wave of democracy' related to significant world events such as the ending of apartheid in South Africa, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the democratisation of former communist states in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Civic education programmes have become an increasingly important means for countries to educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities. Increasing pluralism within states has encouraged the development of civic education programmes that go beyond simple 'patriotic' models of citizenship requiring uncritical loyalty to the nation state. By defining 'citizenship' in terms of human rights and civic responsibilities, civic education programmes attempt to avoid

concepts of 'citizenship' that define nationality in terms of ethnic, religious or cultural identity. The aspiration is that concepts of citizenship based on human rights and responsibilities may make it more difficult to mobilise political conflict around identity issues (www.unesco.org; follow links to citizenship)

The same report makes clear the general link between citizenship and human rights education:

> A comprehensive human rights education takes account of citizenship, and considers that good citizenship is connected with human rights as a whole. Conversely, citizenship education which trains citizens aware of the human and political issues at stake in their society or nation, requires from each citizen ethical and moral qualities. All forms of citizenship education aim at shaping respect for others by fostering a spirit of tolerance and peace (www.unesco.org; follow links to citizenship)

Simultaneously with such pedagogical developments, themselves the result of pressures in global politics (Osler and Starkey, 2006), the rise to prominence of religion in global governance has *also* been marked and dramatic in the recent history of the twenty-first century. Concomitant to the latter, as noted in a major report by UNESCO, has been a parallel and equally worldwide rise in religious teaching (IBE/ UNESCO, 2003). World events continue therefore to heighten the need for increased attention religion or belief in education, particularly in human rights and citizenship education, and the links between religious, citizenship and human rights education. Our understanding of religion in education, either within citizenship or as part of a wider curriculum needs to take account therefore of a wide historical and political, as well as a philosophical perspective. Yet the wider relation of religion and human rights and between religious, human rights and citizenship education has been the subject of little systematic critical interrogation nor pedagogical innovation. However, the same United Nations system that has recognised the need for education in the promulgating of universal human rights has also increasingly recognised the need for specific protections to be provided to ensure freedom of religion or belief. Presented here are four critical contexts which attempt to outline four aspects of the relationship: religion and global governance, religion and the UN, religion in citizenship and human rights education, citizenship and human rights in religious education.

Critical Context 1: Religion and Global Governance
The role of religion in public and political life has been historically underplayed since the European

Enlightenment. There is now increasing evidence of the importance of religion in post-Cold War public and political life, often but not exclusively centring on issues of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. This trend highlighted by a number of theorists of religion and education: Smart (1969; 1989); Casanova (1994); Haynes (1998); Bowker (2002); Woodhead (2002); Ward (2003); Gearon (2002; 2005); Runzo et al. (2004); Jackson (2003; 2004).

Following the Reformation and resultant wars of religion, the European Enlightenment encouraged freedom of religion, thought and expression, and one of the defining political implications of this was separation of Church (or religion) and State, as with, for example, France and the United States in the eighteenth centuries (4). The post-Enlightenment separation of Church and State presented the groundwork for a wider marginalization of religion in public life, often defined as 'secularization'. Post-Enlightenment secularization thesis common amongst classical social and political theorists, and indeed even psychoanalytic theory (Durkheim, Weber, Marx Freud; see Ward, 2003) presents us with an expectation of the decline in the public role of religion, and its marginalisation to the private sphere. The post-Enlightenment tradition includes some militantly atheistic tendencies as well as those that take a more benign view of religion. In this wider intellectual tradition, though, religion was often regarded (and in some quarters still continues to be so regarded) as an anti-progressive element within society. When this intellectual tradition has been combined with totalitarian political power, such states have tended towards a militant atheism and violent persecution of religious traditions is frequently the result (Smart 1989; Ward 2003). Yet religion seems, against the expectations of secularization thesis, to have retained a role in public governance. Indeed, *some time before 11 September 2001*, religion and associated rights of religious freedom have been increasingly viewed as a barometer of wider democratic freedoms. For example, in the United States the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act made it a requirement for the US secretary of State to publish an annual report on religious freedom worldwide, the US Department of State clearly linking freedom of religion and the likelihood that countries that preserve this will respect other fundamental rights. The report is extensive and provides country-by-country and comprehensive worldwide accounts of religious freedoms, the infringements of and improvements in relation to such rights to belief, and can be found at www.house.gov/international_relation (and follow links). Even if the database represents, to a degree, a bias of the US administration it remains a resource much underused by educationalists. For a

critique of this US law on religious freedom, see Shattuck's (2003) keynote paper to a Harvard Conference on Religion, Democracy and Human Rights entitled 'Religion, Rights and Terrorism'; www.law.harvard.edu (and follow links).

Critical Context 2: Religion and the United Nations (UN)
The UN system incorporated and defined freedom of religion or belief since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights but the early history of the UN tended to downplay religious and ideological diversity. Now, after a long neglect (or low level treatment) of religion explicitly, the UN system from the late 1970s and with the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981) began to recognise the international significance of religion for a stable world order.

The 1948 United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes a number of articles of relevance to freedom of religion and belief. These include Article 2 (forbidding prejudicial distinctions of any kind, including those related to religion), Article 26 (on the rights to a particular religious education) and Article 29 (on responsibilities and proscription against limitations of proclaimed rights). Pivotal, though, is Article 18 of the Declaration, which states that, 'Everyone has the right to freedom of: thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.' As Lerner (2000) comments, Article 18 was influential in regional treaties and the 1981 Declaration and integral to several international instruments, notably:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The Arcot Krishnaswami Study (1959)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (1966)
- The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981)

Until the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981) had been relatively low level but after this relative neglect of religion explicitly, the UN system (especially with the 1981 Declaration) began to recognise the international significance of religion for a stable world order. During the 1990s – notably again in a post-Cold War world where issues of nationalism emerged

along with struggles over religious, cultural and ethnic identities – religion emerges further, gaining a new, unprecedented prominence, for instance in the:

- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (18 December 1992)
- Oslo Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief (1998)
- World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Discrimination (September, 2001)

For full texts, follow links at www.unhchr.org

The notion of freedom of religion was itself extended to freedom of non-religious (for example humanistic) worldviews in 1981 and 1998 Declarations, the 'or belief' in both being here significant. This in turn has had the effect of linking in a fairly direct way rights of 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion' to 'later generation' rights of 'human solidarity', concerned with specific groups – women, children, indigenous peoples, religious traditions – rather than generic 'civic and political' ('first' generation) or 'cultural and economic' ('second' generation) rights (Wellman, 2000). Most notable is the linking of religious intolerance to the ending of racism, xenophobia and discrimination more broadly. For example, the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief was followed just over a decade later by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities (1992). While a post-September 11 context has further highlighted the issue of potential violence in and over conflicts in (religious and/ or ideological) worldview, this potential fissure between universal rights and particular cultural, especially religious traditions has been a live one for many years (Ayton-Shenker, 1995). Yet there is no denying that, recently, issues of religion have increasingly come to the fore in a United Nations formerly cautious about being explicit about arguably the most contentious of all human rights. The historical irony should not be lost that the World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Discrimination in Durban, South Africa (September 2001) concluded its business on an 'optimistic note' according to a Human Rights Watch report on 10 September 2001 – how different the world was to seem twenty-four hours later (HRW, 2001).

Critical Context 3: Religion in Citizenship and Human Rights Education
The role of religion in civic education, citizenship, human rights education has been underplayed. Reflecting broader global trends there is now

increasing recognition of the importance of religion in citizenship and human rights education, although the recognition of the importance of teaching about religion remains arguably less strong in civic or citizenship education than in religious education.

If religion has tended to have been underplayed in the early UN system for similar reasons that led to the creation of the UN in the first place; and within educational context the same negative historical and political aspects of religion have tended to be excluded from school curricula for similar reasons that is, of potential conflict. However, the range of global educational initiatives (in response to the International Decade of Human Rights Education) in relation to citizenship and human rights education curricula (http://ap.ohchr.org/documents), presents strong evidence that to show marginalisation of religion in citizenship and human rights education. There yet remains then an absence of any systematic consideration of the role of the place of religion fully developed within human rights and, more broadly, citizenship education, as a systematic review of citizenship education literature indicate (EPPI, 2005, Osler and Starkey, 2006; cf. Gearon, 2004). At the international level, the UN and UNESCO have made moves towards a consideration of the contribution of teaching about religion as a contribution to toleration and mutual understanding but this still presents a piecemeal, arguably reactive and in some regards negative appraisal of the role of religion, in that religion is seen as a contributor to conflict as much as a factor in its resolution. Global politics have however forced a change and there is increased evidence of the importance of freedom of religion or belief, forcing a radical, and as yet unresolved reappraisal of religion in the context of global governance (Harpviken and Eggen Rioslien, 2005) and the implication of education for this (Lindholm, Durham and Tahzib-Lies, 2003).

Critical Context 4: Citizenship/ Human Rights Education in Religious Education
The political (for example, citizenship/ human rights) has been underplayed in religious education, and contentious historical contexts sidestepped. Yet the exponential growth of civic or citizenship education around the world has forced religious education to consider the political and historical, an exponential growth itself forced upon education by manifold changes in the world in which we live.

The historical circumstance of a European post-Enlightenment context has meant the consequent neglect of religion as a subject of serious study, and indeed religion has been formally excluded from many curricula internationally. UNESCO studies

have pointed, too, to the increase in new emphases and new worldwide thinking on re-including forms of religious education (UNESCO, 2005). Ironically, where it exists, religious education has tended to emphasize precisely the positive aspect of religion in order either to justify its place in contributing to harmonious and open governance where religious difference is tolerated. Arguably, though, in a context where tolerance, and related positive *utopian* attributes of religious education, is often the focus (cf. Grimmitt, 2000; Osmer, 2003; Larson and Gustavsson, 2004) educators need to take seriously *dystopian* global realities of which religions, often through ethnic and cultural identity, are a root cause (Gearon 2002; 2004; Rushton, 2004; Runzo et al. 2004; Harpviken and Eggen Roislien, 2005). It is precisely these sorts of dystopian realities with which religious education needs to come to terms, but in many historical and contemporary contexts, religious educators might be justified in arguing not for tolerance but dissent. Arguably the pedagogical methods do not at present exist which would allow us sufficiently to integrate *both* sensitivity to freedom of religion or belief *and* discussion of those divergences between religious traditions and modern democratic governance based on universal human rights. The tensions *do* exist, and ignoring them by opting for a sole focus upon the positive and harmonious aspects of religious traditions in historical and contemporary contexts, risks only an anodyne treatment of religion that could arguably perpetuate the very prejudices open and critical religious education seeks to promote. I present here, in bare outline only, four 'case study' exemplars which demonstrate where dissent or at least critical engagement might be preferable to 'tolerance': genocide; gender; governance; social justice.

Between Tolerance and Dissent II:
Four Critical *Tensions* for Religious, Citizenship and Human Rights Education
Genocide
In her Pulitzer-winning *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, Power (2003) presents an account of the post-Holocaust development of term 'genocide' from Latin and Greek derivations meaning 'race-killing'. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was approved on 9 December 1948, the day before the Universal Declaration and in many ways foundational to it. Few regimes intent on silencing a minority will remain content with the repression of their culture and whether the term genocide is used; and there are few instances of mass slaughter since those optimistic days of late 1948 when the repression of culture and genocide have not, almost inevitably intertwined (Saunders, 2001; de Baets, 2001; Jones, 2001; Rose, 2000; Raven 2004; Gearon, 2002; 2006). There are no major religious

traditions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism – that do not advocate or espouse values of peace and non-violence, and it is therefore amongst the greatest of historical ironies that few religions have not contributed in some way or other to war, violent conflict and mass slaughter (Bartov, 2002). Religious, cultural and ethnic differences remain the major source of conflict in a post-Cold War world, as they were prior to this period (Gearon, 2002); though the same traditions are also a source of conciliation and peacemaking (Harpviken and Eggen Roislien, 2005). Religion and cultural difference remain then a source of potential conflict, whether worldview is a cause or a pretext. Yet, the matter is *complex*. If the emphasis in the international media today and in contemporary international relations is on the role of religion as a source of conflict, Marshall's (2000) international study, (and monitoring by the Freedom House NGO and indeed the US Department of State's annual reports on international religious freedom) demonstrates how in a contemporary context religions are as likely to be persecuted as they are to persecute.

Gender
There are tensions between particular cultural and especially religious traditions and the notion or the idea of universal human rights. Of all universal human rights in relation to religious traditions, differences in attitudes to gender equality are likely to be most consistently paramount. Here, issues of universal rights between men and women remain as critical for religious traditions as they do for the international community. It is not simply that many religious traditions exclude women from positions of power and authority but that they envisage roles which limit women's role within wider societal contexts, and this restriction on female freedom tends to happen in societies governed by religious and especially theocratic rather than secular principles. On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly, and entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981. While marking significant progress, and the culmination of three decades of work by UN Commission on the Status of Women (established 1946), from the 1990s onwards, the Beijing and Beijing+5 meetings show that the equal status of women remains in many countries and cultures a distant ideal, despite the fact that fundamental equality in human rights was foundational to the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration. The Convention outlines that discrimination against women is real and extensive and details the areas (health, education, employment, and legal and political status, for instance) where progress needs to be made. The Convention also devotes much time to reproductive rights, issues around maternity and

rights centered on marriage. Of general importance is the disparity between the UN definitions of women's rights and those perceived within cultural and religious traditions. Here, each religion will represent particular issues of integrating or rejecting women's rights within their respective traditions, tempered by particular political circumstances. We should note that, in general, the legal difficulties in combining equalities, rights and freedoms of religion with equalities, rights and freedoms of women are very real, representing arguably the most significant tension between international system of human rights and religious traditions (Askin and Koenig, 2001).

Governance
There are tensions within and between religious traditions and models of open, democratic governance. Religions are members of states and the international community but religious traditions and states do not always share the same models of governance or the models of democratic openness. Few religious traditions operate hierarchies governed under democratic principles. Many, across a range of traditions, are autocratic. Notions of authority are based simply upon different principles than they are within democracies. In societies where there is separation of religion and state, the latter will not generally interfere with the former; in states governed by religious principles (theocracies), the risk to democratic principles of governance and general openness are greatest. For instance, examination of post-Cold War trends reveals relatively precise international trends in literary and other forms of cultural repression in a particular historical period (de Baets, 2001; Jones, 2001). These issues surface strongly in open societies as much as totalitarian and repressive regimes; but the amount of freedom of expression citizens are allowed is a perennial question for all forms of governance; yet today the tension between freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief is at the heart of open governance itself (cf. Harpviken and Eggen Roislien, 2005).

Social Justice
Arguably the widest of all tensions that exist in our contemporary world calling for more dissent than tolerance is the tension between a stated universality of rights and factual, generic inequalities, often across a broad sphere of social justice issues such as poverty and resulting poor access to education, employment, food and health. Thus, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights resulted in the Vienna Plan of Action. Priorities for the global implementation of human rights were listed and, as with the majority of recent UN world conferences, a five-year review was planned. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993) expressed 'its dismay and condemnation that gross and systematic violations

and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of all human rights continue to occur in different parts of the world'. It is this most fundamental sense of inequality – over and above differences between religious traditions and secular notions of human rights – that arguably presents the greatest cause of conflict the world over. Such thinking is reiterated by the end of the International Decade of Human Rights Education and the (2005-2007) World Programme for Human Rights Education.

Conclusion

The suppression of freedom of public religion in Cold War states coincided with the resurgence of religion in global governance in a _post_-Cold War world. Trends in post-Cold War and post-9/11 and (and in the UK post-7/7) are thus closely interrelated, but in ways which are still being outplayed (Boulden and Weiss, 2004; Bennett and Finnemore, Martha, 2004). Heightened emphasis upon religion and culture in international relations shows that we live in a world that continues to reflect, then, considerable tensions between worldviews. It is these tensions which necessitate the increased attention to and strain upon notions of tolerance within both political and pedagogical contexts. These tensions or ambivalences are most often found _between_ cultural, especially religious, traditions _and_ ideas of open democracy and universal human rights. In terms of pedagogy and educational research, one of the most pressing current-day needs is to examine ways in which religious, citizenship and human rights education may interact constructively to make some contribution to the pressing political questions of our time. While the religious educator would never wish to relinquish sight of the existential and the metaphysical, in the context of public religion, in settings of religion in global governance, the religious educator will inevitably find him or herself on contentious ground, playing a key role in adjudicating and facilitating critical judgements which may, on occasion, necessitate not tolerance but dissent.

As the critical contexts and critical tensions outlined in this paper would seem to suggest, the role of religion in relation to global governance and world politics is evolving constantly. The relationship between religious education and citizenship education – as differently as these might be conceived in various countries – represents an ideal forum for the exchange of ideas between the two subjects that tend increasingly to reflect both the tensions and possibilities of a wider world. Human rights education presents a model of and for a particular form of moral and ethical standards ('universal human rights') developed through the contingencies of contemporary history – in the UN

era in particular and specifically as a response to the atrocities of genocide and the absolute repressions of totalitarianism. Yet human rights, as an essentially secular formulation, are themselves _contested_ standards; and in regard to them we thus find in religious traditions a range of responses to them, from wholehearted support to ambivalence or even hostility, just as secular authorities may react to religious traditions with a mixture of tolerance and or dissent (Gearon, 2002). Human rights and human rights education are presented here then as a contested middle ground, a focus for pedagogical and wider educational enquiry, between citizenship education and religious education, contested ground that is at the heart of the struggles and aspirations of the contemporary world.

Notes

1. The legal framework for international human rights builds on and incorporates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is itself incorporated within the International Bill of Human Rights, consisting of five documents:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty

The major office for _human rights_ is the UN High Commission for Human Rights, based in Geneva, Switzerland, with a specially appointed UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – operational details can be found at www.unhchr.ch or through the UN's home page at www.un.org (see also Ghandhi, 2004; Mertus, 2005; Smith, 2005). With the UN's headquarters in New York and its operating centre for human rights in Geneva, these locations in wealthy nations are often cited as reasons why developing nations especially consider the UN to have a western bias (Weiss, Forsythe and Coate, 2004; Ziring, Riggs and Plano, 2005).

2. Cf. the International Decade for Human Rights Education and the World Programme for Human Rights (UN and UNESCO related) at http://ap.ohchr.org/documents (and follow links), and relevant links at www.unesco.org

3. For the full text of The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981) follow links at www.un.org. There are numerous related

educational sources that might be used for the teaching tolerance, and which use the links between religion and global governance. The United Nations' hub is at www.un.org and follow links to human rights, and an entire host of issues in international relations, including the full documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (several hundred languages available). Especially relevant is United Nations High Commission for Human Rights at http://www.unhchr.ch and follow links, especially to the 'International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination' Also, follow links at the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights at http://www.unhchr.ch to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on Freedom of Religion or Belief, including the Rapporteur's mandate.

Also see the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded international consultancy on the role of religion in international diplomacy at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo; follow links at www.prio.no; the International Association for Religious Freedom at www.iarf.net and follow links; the International Association for Religious Freedom presents some useful and accessible case studies at www.iarf.net and follow links. Also Norway-based is the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief is a UNESCO)-commended source for 'Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief', available at www.hri.ca and follow links.

4. Amongst the oldest established networks for scholarly research on religion and politics is the *Journal of Church and State* (since 1949) and its regular updates on the relationship between religion and the national authorities worldwide, especially conflict zones, is most useful, visit the links at www.baylor.edu to 'Church-State Notes'. See also the charitable foundation PEW's Forum on Religion in Public Life http://pweforum.org/religion-human-rights.

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The relationship between religious education and citizenship education – as differently as these might be conceived in various countries – represents an ideal forum for the exchange of ideas between the two subjects that tend increasingly to reflect both the tensions and possibilities of a wider world.