Mission in the Second Decade of Globalization

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The Second Decade of Globalization

It might seem odd to some in this seminar on mission and globalization and what it means for missionary congregations to begin talking about the "second" decade of globalization. I have deliberately chosen to do so for a number of reasons. The first is to remind us how long we have been grappling with this phenomenon. While talk about globalization reaches back into the 1980s, it wasn't until the collapse of Communism in most countries and the rapid spread of information and communication technologies that globalization began to press itself upon our consciousness as it does today. Secondly, in having had nearly two decades to ponder it, we should be looking at the phenomenon in a more nuanced way. Sweeping generalizations that might have been acceptable in the early years of our experience of globalization should be gradually replaced by more careful and strategic thinking. Third, having now had the amount of experience with globalization we should be able to see patterns and shape policies that will best serve the mission to which we are called.

Consequently, this presentation will be in two parts. The first part will be my own reading—limited as it is—on where we are in three key areas in globalization: the sociocultural sphere, the economic sphere, and the religious sphere. I have been trying to follow the research on globalization over the last fifteen or so years, especially as it might

pertain to the mission of the Church. Nonetheless the literature is now so vast that no single individual can keep abreast of it. So you will have to bear with this limited perspective.

If where we are nearly two decades into globalization might be considered part of the "signs of the times" we must read, then we must look to where it is calling us in mission for the immediate future. In the second part of this presentation, then, I will look at four sites of mission that seem to be especially connected to the phenomenon of globalization, and where we might see ourselves today in regard to it.

Where We Are in the Second Decade of Globalization

Before beginning our look at the three spheres of globalization, I would like to preface it by saying something about the general state of research into globalization. In a recent volume that tried to do exactly that, a number of authors noted that we are largely still using social frameworks developed for an earlier era to explain the complex phenomenon called "globalization."[1] Especially George Ritzer (who coined the "Jihad versus McWorld" metaphor for the social order under globalization) made an especially strong case for this. Neither Immanuel Wallerstein's "World System Theory" nor Hardt and Negri's "Empire" nor others have presented a fundamental rethinking of older frameworks. Authors tended to re-emphasize the familiar paradigms from their own perspective.[2] This is a little disheartening for those of us who are trying to deal with the material and moral consequences of globalization. There are to be sure nuances that have been brought into the discussion, but alas not new frameworks that help us understand globalization and its mechanisms more fruitfully. Neither Marxian models nor "new

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[1] Ino Rossi (ed.), *Frontiers of Globalization Research: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches* (New York: Springer, 2008).

[2] George Ritzer, "A New 'Global Era,' but is There New Perspectives on It?" in Rossi, op. cit., 361-370.

colonial" models nor social systems theory seem to move us much further ahead, although they may provide the comfort of recognizable frameworks to which we have become accustomed. They end up lulling us into thinking that we do not have to change much of our accustomed ways of viewing and doing things to come to terms with globalization and its consequences.

Having made this disclaimer, I must say that I have no new model to propose either. What follows here is an attempt to see where some shifts are taking place and give some suggestions what this means for us in mission. Let me say, however, one thing that you will need to know about what is said about globalization here. The more I have tried to keep up with the thinking about globalization the more I have become convinced that, absent more powerful explanatory models for grasping globalization, it pays to approach the phenomenon always as two-sided. There are positive and negative dimensions of nearly every aspect of globalization. These two dimensions are also almost never symmetrical: depending on where you are, one side will likely be more evident than the other. Consequently, the fact that everything gets more and more linked in globalization means that emphasizing only one side of the picture to the neglect of the other will not get us further in resolving the dilemmas that it creates. To see only the positive consequences of globalization can make us triumphalistic in tone and morally callous in character to the suffering in the world. To see only the negative consequences may make us feel prophetic or righteous, but it may contribute little to grasping the possibilities that will alleviate suffering. Most missionaries are likely to see the negative more clearly than the positive, because of our commitments to the poor and to justice. But changing those situations will call for a broader arrays of strategies than simply postures of

resistance. Having said all that, let me turn then to the three spheres of globalization: sociocultural, economic, and religious.

Changes in Globalization in the Sociocultural Sphere

There are three changes in the sociocultural sphere I want to highlight: communications technology, the rise in migration, and the increasing multiculturalism prominent especially in urban areas.

The most important development in communications technology in recent years has been the cellular telephone. As recently as fifteen years ago, more than forty percent of the world had never made a telephone call; there was pessimism about whether much of the world would ever be reached by landlines or fixed satellite reception. Today the estimates of the number of cellular phones run as high as nearly one telephone for every two people. To be sure, access to telephony is still very unevenly distributed, especially in rural and remote areas. But it is transforming the lot of many people who work in small-scale farming and production by linking them to the markets for their produce more quickly and directly.

Most recently, Raul Castro has now permitted Cubans to purchase cellular phones. Widespread telephony not only can benefit people economically, but politically as well. The revolutions generated by students in Serbia, Ukraine, and Georgia at the turn of the millennium were largely made possible by telephone contact with outsiders (Serbian students coached students in both Ukraine and Georgia regarding strategy).

The increasing number of people with access to computer technology and the Internet lags behind telephony. Yet as it increases, it provides people not only access to more information, it becomes also a new way to mobilize people as well. The campaign that

resulted in 120 countries signing a ban of the use of landmines was generated almost entirely through use of the Internet, as have been a number of ecological initiatives. In my own country, it has brought change to the electoral process, both in disseminating information and in securing small-scale financial contributions to political campaigns. While countries still are able to block access to certain sites, the continued growth of the technology available will likely be able to circumvent that in the near future. In that regard, it can be an important boost to human rights initiatives.

Migration has received dramatically more attention during the last decade in all sectors. The 2005 United Nations Development Program Report estimated that one out of every thirty-five people on the planet is in migration. The majority of the world's migrants are women. In Church circles, the excellent document *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* provides a wealth of insight and important policy suggestions. Conferences are being held to explore the theology underlying a ministry among migrants and develop more effective pastoral responses.[3]

One the positive side, migrants' remittances to their families in their home countries comprise more flow of capital into those countries than all the foreign aid given by wealthy countries combined. It constitutes a significant part of the annual Gross National Product of many of those countries and is often the single greatest source of foreign investment. While much of it goes to meet the immediate needs of families of migrants or to improve their way of life (better housing, a refrigerator, etc.) rather than longer-term investment, it does better the existence of many families.

[3] See for example Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (eds.), *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

The negative side of migration is immense. Journeys to places of employment are often hazardous and many die each year crossing the Mediterranean and along the border between Mexico and the United States. Migrants frequently suffer abuse and discrimination in the countries where they work. Migrants are often lonely and isolated in the country of their employment. At home, their families suffer from the absence of a loved one, and that can have long-term effects especially on children. The fact that some families have access to more money than others may create tensions and jealousy on the part of those other families who do not have the same kind of access.

Migration in search of work is creating greater multicultural sites around the world, especially in cities. While many cities (especially in times of empire) have often been multicultural places, there has been a dramatic increase of multicultural realities in recent years, even to places where this had not been the case before. Consequently, those places especially are struggling to find new ways of having people of different cultures live together peacefully, and to become more integrated into the economic sphere of those countries. The tensions created in multicultural societies have sometimes resulted in violence, and have provoked xenophobia in many places, notably in Europe.[4]

There have been three waves of responses to growing multiculturalism. The first largely ignored the role of culture in peoples' lives and urged pathways of assimilation on all levels: economic, social, and cultural. A second wave, beginning in the 1970s, argued for immigrants' maintaining their culture. It was from the policies flowing from this stance in progressive social democracies that the term "multiculturalism" first emerged. In a number of places—again, especially in Europe which had had little experience with

[4] For a reasoned negative reaction to migrants, see Paul Schaffer, *Het land van aankomst* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2007).

multicultural realities—this led to isolation of immigrants and contributed to their remaining at the bottom of the economic ladder. Most recently, sociologists have become interested in a new approach, beginning with an acknowledgement of the limits of how much difference can be tolerated by a community, and seeking ways to develop an approach that aims at assimilation in some areas of immigrants' lives as well as maintaining cultural patterns of distinctiveness.[5]

Changes in Globalization in the Economic Sphere

The economic sphere of globalization has gotten the most attention worldwide, and in missionary circles. Because of our commitments to the poor, we see most acutely the effects of exclusion from the benefits of globalization, and the wrenching character of globalization on their lives because of markets beyond their control and decisions made in which they have no voice. The theological writing on globalization has typically reflected especially on the plight of the poor in the time of globalization—as well it should.[6] As such it has been principally negative, often accompanied by sweeping assertions.

But to remain with its negative effects on the micro-level for those who are suffering most can cause us to neglect the more positive dimensions of the effects of economic globalization at the macro-level. It has raised hundreds of millions of people above the poverty line. In 1980, 1.1 billion lived below the poverty line (defined as living on one U.S. dollar per day). By 2000, 400 million of those people had been raised above that

[5] A large study using this approach that has studied multiculturalism in the United States (the third most multicultural country in the world, after Australia and Canada) is beginning to appear. See Robert Putnam, "*E pluribus unum:* Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30:2(2007), 137-174.

[6] Illustrative of this is the 2001:5 issue of the journal *Concilium*: "Globalization and Its Victims," edited by Jon Sobrino and Felix Wilfred.

poverty line—despite an increase in population in poor countries of 20%. Because this population increase has meant that, numerically, there are more poor people below the poverty line, another fact is obscured. The percentage of people in the world living on less than one dollar per day has dropped from 32% of the world's population in 1980 to 23% today. If the growth rate in the world economy from 1980 to 2000 can be sustained, the UN Millennium Goal of halving the number of people living on less than a dollar a day could be reached in 2015.[7]

I do not want to appear to be an apologist for globalization in citing these figures. There are many problems with globalization that are familiar to this audience. But the globalization of trade has been the single most effective measure we have found to reduce poverty on the macro-scale, despite all its shortcomings. In the nineteenth century, it lifted much of Europe out of poverty, and is doing the same today in China, and appears to be beginning so in India and Brazil, and in smaller countries such as Vietnam.

The injustices suffered by the poor and the plight of job loss as factories are moved around the world in search of cheaper wages must remain a missionary concern. But well into the second decade of globalization, I would propose that there are two considerations that should have a bearing upon how international missionary congregations think about and act on globalization. First of all, it is important to have two-sided thinking on globalization. On a macro-level, it has been an instrument of poverty alleviation over a longer period of time—better than any other one we have found thus far. As we fight injustice on the micro-level, we must remember that our experience on the ground has to be seen—at least at times—from a larger level as well. Secondly, we must be aware of

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[7] These are figures from a World Bank study cited by Robert Skidelsky in a review of Joseph Stiglitz's book, *Making Globalization Work*, in *The New York Review of Books* (April 18, 2008), 62.

other factors contributing to poverty, especially corruption and bad governance, and support those thinkers who are trying to find workable ways of poverty alleviation. To put all the blame on distant capitalists may obscure what we are able to change on levels to which we have greater access. I will return to this in the second part of this presentation.

Changes in the Religious Sphere

I would like to focus upon two changes in the religious sphere that are at least partially influenced by ongoing globalization. The first is the continued growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic forms of faith. It is estimated—perhaps even conservatively—that as many at 25% of all Christians today practice Pentecostal and Charismatic forms of faith. Its rapid growth in Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia has been well documented. As some of these people migrate to Europe, North America and Australia, they are bringing this faith with them. Now the largest Christian congregations worshipping on Sunday in large Northern European cities are often Pentecostal ones. Globalization plays a part in the spread of Pentecostalism in at least three ways. First of all, it can bring discipline into family life—especially for adult males—who are making the transition from rural to urban settings where work and living patterns are different. Giving up drinking, gambling, and philandering brings greater cohesion to the family. Second, direct access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit gives powerless people a new sense of self-worth and power. And third, Pentecostalism's emphasis on the spirits and healing may seem closer to patterns of indigenous religiosity than the more settled and institutional forms of Christianity like Roman Catholicism. It provides a smoother transition into the translocal

religion of a globalized world than the alien structures of historical forms of Christian faith.[8]

The second change is going on within the Roman Catholic Church. It has to do with how it understands its catholicity or its being a genuinely World Church.[9] There are two senses of catholicity at play here, each based upon long-held tenets of what being "catholic" means. The first approach to catholicity is based on catholicity as the Church being extended throughout the entire world. By being in nearly every land and culture, the Church's evangelizing mission involves inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and justice (especially for the poor). Engagement with the world, and a belief in the basic goodness of creation despite sin, are hallmarks of this approach. These are all themes that appeared in the 1981 SEDOS seminar, and helped reorient thinking for international missionary congregations at that time, and has animated SEDOS members down to the present time.[10]

The second sense of catholicity might be called Neo-Augustinian, since it owes a great deal to that strand of thinking in Catholic theology, especially as found in Augustine's great work, *The City of God*. This approach emphasizes the other long-held tenet of what constitutes catholicity, namely, adherence to the fullness of faith given in divine revelation to the Church. The Church stands as a beacon of truth in a sinful world, and that truth is embraced by entering the Church. Evangelizing happens, then, by bringing people into the Church out of a dangerous and sinful world. The Church is the visible presence of the City of God amid the Earthly City. The world has little to teach to the

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[8] For more on globalization and Pentecostalism, see Sturla Stalsett (ed.), *The Spirits of Globalization: The Growth of Pentecostalism and Experiential Spiritualities in a Global Age* (London: SCM, 2006).
[9] I develop these ideas further in "Forms of Catholicity in a Time of Globalization," *Imig Ugnayan* 8(2007), 1-18.
[10] Joseph Lang and Mary Motte (eds.), *Mission and Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982).

Church, because the Church has truth from God. The best way to change the world is to begin with oneself, and to achieve a degree of holiness that prompts others to change their own lives. The Church provides, then, a shining alternative to the world.

Both of these visions are present in the Church today. The latter has gained some ascendancy since it appears to be closer to the vision for the world of the current Pope. Both are ways of responding as a World Church to an increasingly interconnected, globalized world: one more or less embracing that world; the other, offering an alternative to it.

Thus, globalization is affecting even the religious response to the world, either consciously or unconsciously. It is now time to turn to the second part of this presentation about four areas of mission that seem to be highlighted for us by the second decade of globalization

Mission in the Second Decade of Globalization

Our ways of engaging in mission are many. The four that I wish to explore here are prompted especially by the times in which we find ourselves: in a second decade of globalization. By making this proposal, I am not advocating abandoning the evangelizing work that missionary congregations are now undertaking. They are still important and even vital. It is, rather, to think about what is on our immediate horizon. The four areas of mission I propose here are these: (1) accompanying the bottom billion; (2) raising a collective voice; (3) engaging the new secularity; and (4) seeking alternatives to globalization.

Accompanying the Bottom Billion

Oxford economist Paul Collier has been a prominent voice in the global discussion of alleviating the acute poverty that about twenty percent of the world suffers. His own work focuses especially on Africa. Last year he published a synthesis of what he has been thinking about this matter. It is entitled *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It?*[11] While acknowledging the considerable progress that the globalization of trade has helped to create, he sees about 20% of the world locked out of the potential benefits of globalization by larger structural factors that need to be addressed. This billion people at the bottom are concentrated in 58 countries, many of them in Africa and Central Asia. The structural issues that are blocking alleviation of poverty in those countries constitute four "traps" in which these countries are caught. The poorest countries are caught typically in more than one of these traps at the same time. The four traps are: (1) protracted warfare, (2) being landlocked with hostile neighbors, (3) dependence on a single resource (either extractive resources or agricultural products), and (4) bad governance. This is not the place to go into an extended description of these four traps. I wish to explore here only two of them here for their implications for mission.

The first trap is protracted warfare, usually internal to a country, but often abetted by neighboring countries as well. Eighty percent of the wars today happen in the world's 20 poorest countries. The chances of warfare re-irrupting in those countries within five years are 50%. One-sixth of the world's population has five-sixths of the wars being fought today. There are a number of countries that have experienced protracted warfare now for a half century. The impact on the population, infrastructure, and resources is enormous.

[11] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)

The preferential option for the poor is part of Catholic Social Teaching, and preaching the Good News to the poor (Luke 4:18-19) have long been part of the Church's evangelizing mission. In our own time, the realization of the impact of protracted warfare has led to a new emphasis on peacebuilding and reconciliation. The 2005 conference of the Committee on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (a commission in which the Roman Catholic Church is a full participant), made healing and reconciliation the central theme of its reflection on doing mission today. The growth of interest in healing and reconciliation generally has opened up this area of our tradition for the conduct of mission today.

In our practice of mission, there are skills to be learned but also a theology and spirituality to be deepened in the membership of international missionary congregations. We are called to a ministry of reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor 5:17-20), and helping societies heal and rebuild is an important step in the alleviation of poverty today. Moreover, that experience of healing and reconciliation can be one of the most profound experiences of God that a person or a group can have.

Another area that our mission activity should be addressing is related to the third of Collier's traps, too much reliance on a single source of income. I want to address one area that relates to this, namely, the growing food and water crisis. From March 2007 to April 2008, the world price of wheat (the second most consumed food staple) rose 130%. In the first three months of 2008, the price of rice (the most consumed staple world wide) rose an astonishing 100%. In April of 2008, there were food riots in 13 countries. This steep rise in the cost of food staples is not an accidental or short-term thing. Many

economists believe that this will be a long-term crisis such as the world has not seen in thirty years, and will likely take two decades to reverse.

Four factors are contributing to this crisis: bad weather (especially drought), the rise in the cost of oil (necessary for transport and the production of chemical fertilizers), the production of biofuels in and for the wealthy world, and increased meat and dairy consumption in Asia. A dramatic increase in production will take about ten years to bring about. Most experts believe that what will be needed is larger scale farming since this is the most productive use of arable land. However, chemical fertilizers, genetically manipulated seed, and the heavy equipment needed all pose important questions to the environment and threats to long-term ecological sustainability. Return to small-scale farming may alleviate food shortages on a restricted local level, but with more than half the world's population now living in large cities, this does not offer a global solution.[12] The best projections at the moment suggest that the world's population will likely top out at 9 billion people—nearly 50% more people than live on the earth today. How will these people be fed adequately and the earth preserved properly? Feeding the hungry is an evangelical mandate; how this is to be carried out in the 21st century?

These, then, are two areas that keep people locked in poverty—warfare and malnutrition—that mission congregations can address in a globalized world. They need to be taken into consideration as we plan our mission and our congregational futures.

Raising Collective Voice

A second area of mission in a globalized world has to do with the use of the channels of communication that are available to advocate for social justice and for change. As was

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[12] As an example, two-thirds of Mexico's farmers produce only 12% of Mexico's food.

noted above, cellular phones and the Internet have already been used successfully in advocacy against landmines and for ecological issues.

One of the advantages that a church like the Roman Catholic Church has is what sociologists call its horizontal and vertical integration. The Church is horizontally integrated in its ecclesiology of communion: to be Catholic is to be in communion with other Catholics around the world. This kind of connectivity—heightened by the means of communication now available to us—allows a voice to be raised on transnational issues. The Church is vertically organized by its hierarchical organization. That gives it the capacity to address societies at all levels: at the grassroots, in the mid-levels of civil society or the public sphere, and at the top levels of national government. No other religious body has both of these dimensions of integration at the level of the Catholic Church. This sets the place for both advocacy and direct action.

At the level of advocacy, considerable steps have already been taken as groups of missionary congregations have banded together to form centers for advocacy with the United Nations and its many organizations, in the joint Justice and Peace Committee of the UISG and USG in Rome, or the Africa Faith and Justice Network as well as others. This work must continue and indeed be intensified.

At the level of direction action, projects such as the Solidarity with Southern Sudan Initiative, sponsored by the general governments of more than fifty congregations of women and men, is an exciting project. This international, intercongregational initiative is partnering with the bishops of the Southern Sudan to rebuild society there after nearly a half century of civil war. It is a rebuilding of society physically, and also morally and spiritually. It has the potential of becoming an example of what such collaborative

response to post-conflict situations can be, and how pooling the resources of many institutions can be of lasting benefit to one of the most struggling parts of the world. As the human and financial resources of international missionary congregations are shifting, it is perhaps an especially opportune time to consider more such collaborative action of this kind.

Engaging the New Secularity

In this second decade of globalization, the standard narrative about secularization has been shifting as well. Heretofore, the narrative went something like this: the modernization process of European society that began a half millennium ago has had a two-fold effect on religion (meaning here Christianity). First of all, it has gradually banished religion from the public sphere, making it a privatized phenomenon that people may or may not choose to follow. Secondly, in the marginalization and privatization, religious practice and belief will decline and eventually disappear altogether, leaving a secular worldview that is determined mainly by science. This secularization process began in Northern Europe, but will spread throughout the world as modernization takes hold. Religion will thus finally disappear as reason replaces faith and other forms of non-rational thinking.

Some things happened, beginning in the 1990s, that have challenged this narrative of human history. First of all, there has been a resurgence of religion in many parts of the world rather than a decline. Some opponents of religion correlate that resurgence of religion with the rise in violence that was occurring at more or less the same time. There are some connections, but much more recent thinking is suggesting that the connections between religion and violence—while certainly there—are not principally causative ones:

religion is often enlisted to legitimate violence as an ideological cover for other motives. The rise of religion again coincides with the collapse of secular utopian thinking, especially the fall of Communism in Europe and the former Soviet Union. People are seeking meaning that transcends them as individuals, but distrust totalizing, utopian schemes. Secondly, the spread of modernization has not necessarily meant secularization (in the sense of the disappearance of religion) in some parts of the world. Certainly the United States stands out as an exception to a narrative of secularization spreading out from Europe. In parts of Asia modernization and the introduction of global capitalism has been done with authoritarian governments (as in Korea, China, and Vietnam) or unchanged levels of religion (as in India). Today, people are more likely to speak of modernit*ies* (in the plural) than modernity as some single or uniform phenomenon.[13] Europe may be an exceptional case in modernity rather than the rule of what will happen.

So new narratives are emerging, especially in Europe and North America. The German philosopher Juergen Habermas, an avowed non-believer, surprised the world in his October, 2001 address upon being awarded the Peace Prize of the Frankfurt Book Fair by stating that religion retains its intrinsic value in even a highly secularized society. European society cannot be understood in its current form without acknowledging the role of faith in its genealogy. In a series of additional addresses, including his 2005 Holberg Prize lecture in Norway, he has expanded upon this theme.[14] We are living in what he calls a "post-secular society," by which he means that a crude kind of scientism cannot establish itself as the sole arbiter of reality. Religion has its rightful place in the

[13] See here the now-classic article of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129:1(2000), 1-29.
[14] A number of these addresses may be found in his volume, *Zwischen Primitivismus und Naturalismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005).

discourse of society, although it may carry the "asymmetrical burden" of having constantly to prove itself in the face of secular reason.

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, a Roman Catholic, has also presented a recast narrative in a long and carefully argued book entitled *A Secular Age*.[15] He traces the development of secularization in a somewhat similar way. He notes that one cannot tell the story of the rise of secularization and the demise of religion by means of a "subtraction theory" whereby religion is subtracted from the sum of Western society. Rather, society has continued to be a "mixed" reality, wherein religion has both rational and non-rational elements, and secularity has also the same. As an example of the latter, one could look at human rights discourse. Human rights theory posits the essential dignity and equality of all human beings without being able to substantiate, but can only assert, this position. In point of fact, Western human rights discourse, now seen as utterly secular, was originally a religious one. Human rights were founded theologically upon the assertion that all human beings are created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). This too is an assertion of faith, but it is no more an assertion of faith than the secular assertion. Consequently, Taylor argues, religion and secularization exist side by side, each trying to negotiate the questions that modernity raises.

I point to this recent work (others, such as the U.S. sociologists José Casanova and Robert Bellah, are writing in the same vein) to say that this new line of thinking reshapes how we are to look at the New Evangelization, especially as it applies to Europe. The Neo-Augustinian view of the World Church would suggest that a rechristianizing of Europe accepts the older narrative of secularization and proposes that the Church become a "little flock" of the elect that beams out truth in a world of relativism. The other view

[15] (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

of the World Church suggests an engagement with secularization within this redrawn map of secular society, and plots a New Evangelization that "seeks the whole" in a fragmented society, and acknowledges the good and the not so good in both religion and secularity. Rather than looking for the purity of belief and practice, such an approach would mean trying to meet secularity where it stands, and help it find within itself both its rational and non-rational roots. Rationality does not trump all forms of non-rationality inasmuch as rationality itself has non-rational roots. Thus one can trace two broad strategies for a New Evangelization of secularized societies based on understandings of what the Church is to be in a globalized world. Mission to secularized societies has to take into account these understandings and the strategies that will flow from them.

Seeking Alternatives to Globalization

As we have seen, globalization is a deeply ambivalent phenomenon when viewed through the lens of Christian mission. On the one hand, it is the best instrument yet found for alleviating poverty. On the other hand, it does not alleviate poverty evenly; it is widely acknowledged that it polarizes the "haves" and the "have nots" economically. Former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was fond of saying about globalization that there was no alternative. Historical studies have shown, however, that globalization is not inevitable. It has been stopped before, when countries have closed their borders to trade. Such a thing happened in 1914 with the outbreak of the Great War in Europe, and globalization did not recommence on a large scale for some seventy years.

Those who are concerned about globalization worry about its dehumanizing features, counting only those human beings as worthwhile who either produce or consume tradable goods. They see a grinding wheel where relentless innovation replaces efforts to build a

just society and assure the common good. In the past ten years, the World Social Forum has become an annual site where dreams are set forth under the slogan, “Another world is possible.”

Is another world possible, or is it only possible to create small islands of difference that we hope will not be washed away by the tsunami of globalization? Utopian thinking, now in some eclipse, is but a secularized form of eschatological hope. The problem has been that utopian thought, cut off from its religious origins, can become profoundly dehumanizing when it is based only in abstract principles and rules, and not in a gracious, merciful, and forgiving God who alone comprehends the future. The utopian disasters of the twentieth century—fascism and the various forms of atheistic Communism—provide ample testimony to that.

So are there alternatives? And if there are, should part of the evangelizing mission of the Church be seeking them out? My answer would be “yes” to both questions. To seek alternatives is to not acquiesce in the inevitabilities in which globalization is sometimes cast by its enthusiastic proponents. It can be modified—not just by the “invisible hand” of the market but by the assertion of a common will. Those elements of globalization that so clearly stand against the deepest values of the Gospel must be addressed and changed.

The UK sociologist Leslie Sklair has struggled especially with this question.[16] To simply adopt an anarchic stance of the destruction of capitalism with no reasonable alternative to replace it, or to retreat into sectarian and isolationist shells does not present

[16] See his book *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), and an update on it “A Transnational Framework for Theory and Research in the Study of Globalization,” in Rossi, op. cit., 93-108.

real and realistic possibilities for the world we live in. Describing some of his principal points are of use here.

First of all, neither capitalism nor socialist alternatives are closed systems. Socialist countries such as China and Vietnam have large sectors of capitalist practice. The social democracies of Western Europe have practiced "socialist" ideas regarding the welfare systems for caring for their citizens. Catholic Social Teaching finds strengths and weaknesses in both capitalist and socialist systems, particularly as articulated by the late John Paul II.

Second, global capitalism is especially vulnerable on two points: class polarization and ecological unsustainability. It is at these two points that possibilities for change should be addressed. Even as sectors of the most impoverished are lifted out of their misery, the upper edges of society profit at a level far beyond their needs for survival. The food crisis we now face, and the way of life that those who have moved above the poverty line hope to have is simply not sustainable over a long period of time.

Third, Sklair suggests a shift in what he calls the "culture-ideology" of globalization, from a culture-ideology of consumption to a culture-ideology of human rights. By that he does not mean an end to consumption, but a dethroning of it as the ultimate criterion of success for a society. The culture-ideology of human rights would not be addressed just to so-called "first generation" human rights (political rights), but to second generation (the right to adequate nutrition, housing, employment, education, and health care) and third generation human rights (the right to development).

A fourth point I would like to add to this list has to do with scale in alternatives to globalization. Certain things can be done in specific circumstances that do not require

change at the global level. The success of micro-credit ventures in many parts of the world to enable the poor economically is an example of this. This is not an alternative to international monetary policy, but a niche where much good can be done in a very specific place. We may live in a globalized world, but most of us continue to live locally as well. Both the global and the local have a role to play in building the common good for humanity.

Conclusion

What I have been arguing for here is a more complex, two-sided look at globalization as it pertains to Christian mission. The general governments of international missionary congregations have a special responsibility not only to keep this two-sided approach before the hearts and minds of their membership, but also to utilize both the horizontal and vertical integration of their congregations to carry forth the mission of God in the world. I have spoken some of the changes or shifts in our sphere of activity that globalization is bringing upon us, now well into the second decade of globalization—changes at the social, economic, and religious level. On that basis I have suggested these changes in turn cause us to focus upon four sites of mission in a globalized world today: accompanying the bottom billion, raising our common voice in advocacy and collaborative action, engaging secularity in a new way, and continuing to seek alternatives to—and within—globalization. These sites for mission could only be sketched in the broadest of strokes. But I hope that enough has been given here to help us find new ways to be as faithful to our missionary vocation as we can be. It is of course, in the end, not our mission but God's mission—a mission into which we are called to participate, a mission that we hope will change both us and the world.