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Communion, Responsibility, Accountability

Responding as a Lutheran Communion to Neoliberal Globalization

The Lutheran World Federation
– A Communion of Churches

Communion, Responsibility, Accountability

Responding as a Lutheran Communion to Neoliberal Globalization

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Preface

As a part of the wider ecumenical family and civil society community, the Lutheran World Federation has, since 2000, had a programmatic focus on the challenges posed today by economic globalization. The first part of this book brings together the publications, processes, events and select responses that have constituted this work, including commitments made at the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation. Included here are diverse perspectives from LWF member churches, field programs and youth, as well as an indication of what has been said ecumenically.

The second part of this book contains articles that deepen the theological, pastoral and ethical reflections, which are evoked by economic globalization, but are much wider in their implications. The intent is to raise up some recognizably Lutheran theological emphases that can be brought to public life on this and related social challenges of our day. The framework here is grounded in what it means for us to be a **communion** of churches, who are empowered to live out an ethic of **responsibility** for our neighbors globally and to work together for greater **accountability** in the governance of globalization today. The perspectives here are diverse, sometimes in tension with each other, and often provocative.

It is my hope that member churches and those in related institutions will reflect and draw upon this material as, in partnership with others, they address more publicly the realities of globalization in their churches and societies. We are called to do so because of the common Christian faith we confess and seek to live out in the world which God so loves.

Ishmael Noko
General Secretary
The Lutheran World Federation

Introduction

Karen L. Bloomquist

What does it mean to be the church today, to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, living in light of what God has done, is doing, and promises to bring about? What does it mean to confess and live out the Christian faith in the midst of the pervasive challenges of our time?

These overarching questions are an appropriate focus of theology—not theology that remains abstract reflection, removed from what matters in people's lives, but that becomes incarnate in the defining realities and struggles of our time, in other words, theology that seeks to be truly contextual. Contextual approaches include the need for ongoing critique of what is occurring in a given context. Such theology seeks to enable the people of God to confess who God is and how God is active in our lives and world today, so that in our witness we might participate in, rather than stand apart from, God's transforming activity in the world.

Those challenges are many and complex, for example, as expressed in the Message of the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF):

> Our world is split asunder by forces we often do not understand, but that result in stark contrasts between those who benefit and those who are harmed, especially under forces of globalization. Today there is also a desperate need for healing from "terrorism," its causes and fearful reactions to it. Relationships in this world continue to be ruptured due to greed, injustices, and various forms of violence. People continue to be abused and excluded by other persons, institutions and practices. Those viewed as being of an "other" religion, race, caste, ethnicity or life conditions are often still kept at a distance and rejected.[1]

The Message continues by calling LWF member churches to carry out a long list of commitments to address these and other defining challenges of our day. Many feel overwhelmed in the face of such a call, ill equipped to carry out what is indicated, especially when local needs and limited resources are already over-burdened. "Don't give us another set of issues to address!" is a typical response, "We're just trying to be the church in our setting."

Social challenges not separate from the church

It is this kind of lament that we seek to address here. In some churches, even today, "social issues" are seen as matters "out there," that a small number in churches may be concerned with and seek to do something about, and for which intercessions may be offered in the church's prayers. The church's primary "business" still tends to be focused on private, "spiritual" matters, rather than on those concerns that permeate our public life in the world. For many decades now, this tendency has been challenged by a variety of theological approaches and by numerous gatherings and publications of the LWF. If the faith we preach, teach and embody remains only in a spiritualized space apart from these realities, if it does not bring critical perspectives that shape people to resist and transform what is occurring all around them, then the danger is that churches will sacrifice their very soul, or become increasingly irrelevant.

Martin Luther's focus on the individual before God (*corum Deo*) may have provided some impetus for privatized, individualistic interpretations of central Lutheran doctrines, such as justification by grace through faith.[2] At the same time, Luther's extensive address of the social, economic and political issues of his day suggest that his overall concern was far wider. Aspects of Luther's theological understandings—such as the reigning domination of sin—need to be reinterpreted and applied in relation to social, economic and political realities.[3]

In the first and the sixteenth centuries, as well as in our day, these realities continue to be viewed as unquestioned powers over which little human control can be exerted, such that they become unaccountable. Yet, the modern era has also been characterized by "over-humanization,"[4] the extension of human power to shape, conquer and control all realities. Despite this, human beings are left feeling powerless to affect these all-looming realities. The human realm has become all encompassing, but without a transcendent source of worth, goodness and direction for human action. Consequently, human responsibility is demeaned, and all forms of life are put at the mercy of forces released from moral evaluation or accountability.

The church's public voice

When the LWF and its member churches have spoken on public, social issues in the world, a major concern has been to speak in a language and in terms

that are not parochial to what we confess and live out as faith communities, but that are publicly accessible to those who do not share our Christian faith convictions.[5] Indeed, this is important if churches are to participate with others in shaping more just, humane policies and practices in the world. At the same time, however, it is important continually to articulate the faith bases of such stances—how the faith of the church not only warrants but impels us to speak and act. Although as churches we work alongside and with many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), our grounding for doing so is different.

Furthermore, questions are being raised about the adequacy of seemingly universal principles based on Western, especially Enlightenment traditions that have not been the basic influences shaping large parts of the world. People are decisively formed by and live out of specific Christian and other religious and cultural narratives and traditions that have often been passed over and ignored by such universalizing tendencies. This is especially the case in those areas of the world, such as the global South, where Christian and other religious movements have been growing at such fast rates.

In the face of this, continuing efforts need to be made to ground the church's social, economic and political stances in its theological commitments. These are not only a theoretical background but need to be reinterpreted in light of new awareness of what is occurring and how this challenges both the self-understanding and ongoing praxis of churches. This involves a process in which we begin by,

- Naming what is occurring in our context, especially from the perspective of those suffering and being excluded
- Analyzing why this is occurring (causal factors), and then asking
- How the God to whom Scripture and the Confessions witness is active in the midst of this, and
- What God is calling us to do?

In this way, the faith can come alive with new relevance and possibilities for empowering the church's life and witness in our day.

This becomes even more urgent when certain defining widespread assumptions and dominant realities are pervasively affecting our world, for better or for worse, in ways that seem inevitable and not able to be challenged. Such reigning "faith systems," usually promulgated in secular terms, develop a hold on the hearts and minds of people, cultures and nations such that they feel power-

less to question or challenge the premises. It feels too overwhelming or risky to do so. In some cases, resisting or challenging these reigning forces is done at the cost of people's livelihood if not their very lives. "In an economy of death, for some the method of protest is increasingly becoming that of suicide."[6]

Yet in the face of this, those shaped by and committed to a biblically-grounded faith and community ethos cannot remain silent, because competing "gods" are at stake. We are confronted with a situation of idolatry, in violation of the First Commandment. It is a challenge not only to speak out, but to give attention to how we are formed differently through the church—as a communion, to act responsibly and hold one another accountable—as a public witness to the faith we confess.

The kind of theological reflection called for above is needed in relation to whatever are the defining challenges in our respective contexts. In this volume, it is especially the challenges evoked by economic globalization that compel churches to pursue more deeply what it means to be and live as the church in the world. It is a strategic example because of the many different ways in which members of the Lutheran communion (as part of the wider *oikos*) perceive, experience and are affected by economic globalization. This is closely related to other issues, such as environmental devastation, government corruption, trafficking and criminal activity, the rise of extremist groups, lack of access to medicine (e.g., for retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS), technology, media, militarism and violence. Economic, political and military power are often used to reinforce one another.

We react quite differently to economic globalization, depending on whether we are among those who are benefiting or those who are clearly losing out. Both kinds of voices are present in the Lutheran communion and it is therefore a central challenge to enable these quite different responses to communicate with each other. This includes understanding each others' responses, how these are related to our respective exclusion from or access to economic power, challenging each others' analyses, finding effective ways to be mutually helpful and identifying how the different approaches might be complementary.

For many, it is the whole logic or regime of neoliberal[7] economic globalization that must be resisted. As a recent discussion among LWF Council members, some insisted that, "Neoliberal economic globalization cannot be transformed; it leads to death for our people, and must be confronted and opposed." Another, from one of the so-called "least developed countries" replied, "These are a lot of good words, but we are in despair: the practical

reality is that our people keep going further down." "Many in the global South are filled with despair, and in the global North most are too complacent," noted another. The discussion moved toward the realization that we need a profoundly different economic order: "another world is possible." But we cannot simply wait for that. While seeking alternatives we also must seek to transform what is. What is needed are both long-term visions and short-term actions that can make a difference for people now.

It is important to maintain the tension between these long-term visions, inspired by an eschatological sense of the justice God intends for all of creation, and the short-term practical measures that at least seek to improve some conditions in this imperfect, still unfair world. What follows is based on this combined premise.

Ethics might seem like the appropriate point of departure. But because the sweeping scope of economic globalization tends to leave people—as individuals and as groups—feeling unable or powerless to act, this must first of all be recognized as a spiritual crisis, reflected in an overwhelming sense of powerlessness with regard to economic globalization because it

- Seems inevitable and unstoppable
- Feels faceless: Who's responsible?
- Seems to be a new face of colonialism or imperialism
- Tends to pacify and dis-empower people
- "Occupies" us, keeps us from seeing or from living out alternatives.

The point is not to dispute what can be some positive outcomes that may improve life for some, but to challenge how neoliberal principles of economic globalization are applied like a global prescription for all, who are expected to trust that the eventual results will be positive for them. In this sense, it is posited as a matter of basic faith, and thus must first be countered theologically.

Neoliberal economic globalization has become a dominant logic or "faith" ruling our world today. Proponents plead, "Have faith that this will eventually bring prosperity to all." The universal applicability of its prescriptions is assumed, even though significant spans of the world, particularly in Africa, have little grounds to hope they will ever benefit. Meanwhile, throughout the world, more and more areas of life are being privatized and commodified, valued only in terms of their economic value.

In light of the Lutheran "two realms" distinction, we might say that neoliberal globalization (a matter of the "left hand" realm) has become "gospel" in today's

world, functioning like God's "right hand"—with its lure of "salvation." Those who question or oppose its programs are labeled as utopian, economically naive or troublemakers. These disturbing developments point to the theological grounds for resistance.

It is not that economic life, from the perspective of Christian faith, should necessarily be viewed as suspect. In Lutheran theology, it has long been seen as one of the ways (mandates or orders of creation) through which God seeks to protect, maintain and further life in the world. When economic policies and practices fall short of doing this, however, Christians are called to challenge and change them, as part of their Christian responsibility. Furthermore, when the mandates of economic life begin to function as if they themselves were where people should place their primary trust or hope (e.g., for "the good life"), then these threaten to displace what alone should be the ground of our future hope, which the God we know through Jesus Christ embodies and promises.

Although we proclaim that we are saved through God's free gift of grace, living out the implications of justification is an ongoing struggle because of all the ways we continue to be tempted by the allure of other "salvific" promises—those of consumerism, technological wonders, and the prosperity hoped for under economic globalization. Those for whom its promises deliver are lifted up and celebrated in popular culture, in the media and sometimes even in our churches (e.g., with the assumption that their prosperity is an indication of being blessed by God). But the faceless multitudes continuing to languish in impoverished obscurity are overlooked, and the prevailing assumptions and policies continue.

As the Tenth LWF Assembly declared in its Message:

> As a communion, we must engage the false ideology of neoliberal economic globalization by confronting, converting and changing this reality and its effects. This false ideology is grounded on the assumption that the market, built on private property, unrestrained competition and the centrality of contracts, is the absolute law governing human life, society, and the natural environment. This is idolatry and leads to the systematic exclusion of those who own no property, the destruction of cultural diversity, the dismantling of fragile democracies and the destruction of the earth.[8]

Economic globalization should not be seen as an unquestioned, autonomous realm, but needs to be critiqued in light of God's purposes as revealed through Jesus Christ. These purposes are part of the eschatological hope that permeates this and other passages of Scripture:

> For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth [...].
> They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit […]. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity […].
> They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain (Isa 65: 17, 21, 23, 25).

The new creation in Christ which we experience (2 Cor 5:17), and the rebirth from the Spirit (Jn 3:3) are the true anticipations of God's future which makes all things new.[9] It is the reign of God's inbreaking justice, as revealed in Jesus Christ (Lk 4: 18-21). Living as we do in the interim between the inbreaking and final fulfillment of God's reign, we are called and challenged to exercise responsibility and hold the powers accountable to the justice God intends.

> Against the apparent victory of injustice, despair, oppression, and death, faith clings to reality and to God's promises, trusting in the power of justice, hope, liberation, and life.[10]

The plan of this book

This book has a three-fold purpose. One is to bring together in one volume and thus document what has recently been said and done through the LWF on this topic, including in ecumenical collaboration with others, as a basis for critiquing what is occurring. This includes a sampling of what those from member churches have said in this regard, including from youth perspectives, and from the realities facing LWF field programs. The official commitments adopted by the LWF Assembly build upon this work and related perceptions.

Secondly, this book seeks to deepen theological, pastoral and ethical reflections around the three-fold focus of "Communion, Responsibility, Accountability." Under the "Communion" section, authors give attention to some of the ecclesial aspects of the challenge, under "Responsibility," some of the implications for economic life, and under "Accountability," the implications for advocacy with governments and others in the public realm. This three-fold theological-ethical focus is developed more fully in the final chapter as a basis for a Lutheran ecclesial ethic in the globalized world in which we live today.

Finally and most importantly, it is hoped that this book will help people in different parts of the world to reflect on and be motivated to act as communities of faith in the face of the enormous challenges economic globalization and related phenonena pose today.

Having staffed this study program for nearly four years, I am grateful to all who helped plan and participated in the various processes and events, to Rev. Sandra Bach who as a theological assistant in DTS furthered this process in the LWF, to those who responded to the previous publications, critiquing and adding perspectives from out of their own realities, and especially to those who contributed articles for this volume.

Notes

[1] "For the Healing of the World," *Official Report, LWF Tenth Assembly, Winnipeg, Canada, 21–31 July 2003* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2004), p. 49.

[2] See some of the ways this has been countered with more social interpretations of justification in Wolfgang Greive (ed.), *Justification in the World's Context, LWF Documentation No 45* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2000), and Karen L. Bloomquist and Wolfgang Greive (eds), *The Doctrine of Justification: Its Meaning and Implications, LWF Studies No 02/2003* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2003).

[3] For example, see how this is done in the third part of "Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion" in this volume.

[4] William Schweiker, *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. xiii ff.

[5] Eckehart Lorenz (ed.), *To Speak or Not to Speak? Proposed Criteria for Public Statements on Violations of Human Rights, LWF Studies* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1984), and a number of documents by member churches seek to provide guidance for the church speaking on social challenges.

[6] A comment made by Chandran Paul Martin at an LWF conversation on economic globalization, 7 September 2004.

[7] Neoliberalism emphasizes the free market as the main form of interaction among human beings as free agents. Such activity needs to be freed as much as possible from regulations imposed by government. The intent is to intensify and expand the market over more areas of society, by increasing the number, frequency, repeatability and formalization of transactions.

[8] "For the Healing …," *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 61.

[9] Jürgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today's World* (London: SCM, 1994), p. 140.

[10] Walter Altmann, *Luther and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p. 77.

What Has Been Said

Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion

A Working Paper of the Lutheran World Federation (2001)

Slightly revised and updated version of a paper written by Karen L. Bloomquist in consultation with an advisory group including Guillermo Hansen, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, David Pfrimmer, Jürgen Reichel, William Stanley and Molefe Tsele. This paper was widely distributed and discussed in many countries. Reponses informed the next stages of this overall process.

An invitation to participate

In Jesus Christ, God's love became incarnate in the world. Today this world is being pervasively shaped—or distorted—by forces of economic globalization, which increasingly are turning the world into one unitary market, according to neoliberal economic principles. For those in a position to benefit, this evokes the exuberance of unlimited possibilities. Nevertheless, when these forces intensify what are already unjust relationships of power and access, feelings of fear, panic and powerlessness arise.

In the face of this situation, the biblical witness is clear: God consistently opposes and calls for change in practices and structures that are unjust, especially in their effect on the poorest. When assumptions, dynamics and outcomes of economic globalization go against what God intends, this becomes a matter of faith. We must name, reflect on and seek effective ways of responding to the challenges raised by economic globalization—if we really believe what we profess.

Along with other sectors of society, churches already are engaged in many ways in addressing the challenges of economic globalization. The Jubilee 2000 Campaign became a widespread movement seeking the cancellation of the debt of the severely indebted developing countries. The World Council of Churches (WCC) has been critiquing and raising up alternatives to economic globalization. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) is in the

midst of a process of "covenanting for justice in the economy and on the earth." A number of member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have recently studied and developed statements and taken stances on global economic matters. Numerous regional, national and local coalitions and initiatives are underway in relation to these challenges.

For many years, the LWF has been addressing economic realities, especially through its diaconal and advocacy ministries.[1] At its Eighth Assembly in 1990, the commitment was made,

> to be better informed about the dynamics at work in the present global economic system. We in the Lutheran World Federation will, together with our ecumenical partners, seek to develop appropriate and realistic means by which definable injustice can be addressed.[2]

The process seeks to build on efforts already underway, learning from them and finding ways of collaborating and acting together. Much is being written and discussed about globalization, in its economic and other dimensions. While some of this is briefly referred to, it is not the main purpose of this paper. The intent here is to raise up some distinctive theological understandings that can place what is occurring in perspective and guide and critique ongoing responses to economic globalization. The hope is to stimulate a process of dialogue or communication about economic globalization among those in significantly different situations, which might lead to new ways of witnessing or acting together as a communion of churches.

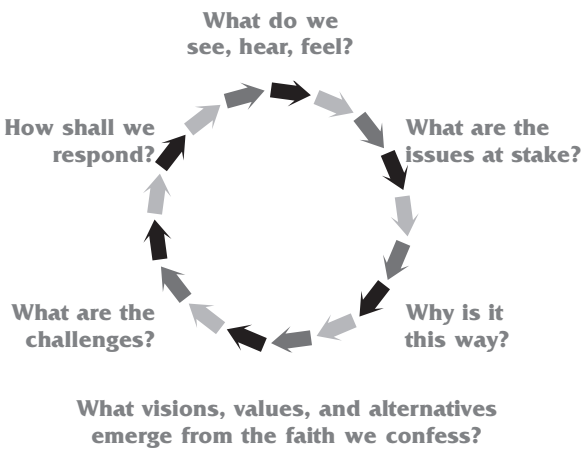
This paper challenges those who do not feel their faith bears on economic matters, and instead focus on the internal tasks of the church. In doing so, they overlook how the reigning power of this phenomenon in our world today often goes against what the church confesses. For many, economic globalization seems so overwhelming and inevitable that they feel they lack the time, expertise, or hope to respond to it, other than perhaps ministering to those who suffer because of it. Others point to the new opportunities economic globalization promises. In stark contrast are those who denounce economic globalization with strong words or symbolic actions, for the sake of solidarity with those oppressed by it. These latter two groups usually are polarized in ways that cut off the possibility for constructive ethical dialogue or joint action.

These and other differences are present within the Lutheran communion. The challenge is how to engage economic globalization in ways that reflect

who we are as a communion—as the body of Christ throughout the world—rather than in ways that are driven primarily by our economic self-interests. Some of us reap enormous benefits, while others find our communities and lands devastated by these forces. These disparities cut across our communion, and must be taken into account. But in the bonds that unite us, they should begin rather than end the conversation.

Although our responses to economic globalization emerge out of the quite different contexts in which we find ourselves as individuals, families, communities, churches and societies, these responses are not necessarily self-evident. They cannot just be asserted. If we are to discuss our different responses, we must be able to provide reasons for why they are right, good, or fitting. This is what ethics is about. It involves analyses based on the social sciences—in order to discern what is going on. Most importantly for our purposes here, this also means turning to biblical understandings and theological convictions that are central to the Christian faith. These provide a basis for critiquing the situation, inspiring and directing action. In the midst of ambiguities, we act boldly but humbly, realizing that our actions always fall short of what God expects.

The method of this study can be depicted in this way:



The questions and insights these questions provoke are not necessarily sequential but dynamically cross back and forth. For example, our faith provokes us to ask, Why is it this way? and to search deeper for how to respond. As we do so, we discover new questions and insights that further the process.

This process intended to engage people from different viewpoints,

- Who ***experience the effects*** of economic globalization in their daily lives, or are concerned about how it affects others
- Who ***analyze the dynamics*** of globalization and can help others to understand what is going on and can be done
- Who ***discern how biblical and theological visions and values*** challenge this and empower us to respond
- Who ***organize and act*** to hold forces of economic globalization more accountable to the values they hold.

What is going on in economic globalization?

"Foreign companies and investments are pervasive in our country today."
"Persistent mass unemployment is the massive problem we face."
"Our currency is worth less and less."
"As a company we're driven to make a profit that will please our shareholders."
"I'm making far more money than I ever expected."
"Small farmers are no longer able to make it."
"Cattle are transported across borders, leading to the spread of diseases."
"A mining company is closing because it's too costly to mine, whereas in other parts of the world, companies are displacing people in order to mine their land."
"Our youth feel they have no future; xenophobia and violence are on the rise."

"Globalization," popularly seen as the widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness or integration, is not a new phenomenon. Thousands of years ago, political and military empires, expanding world religions and nomadic migrations were early precursors of globalization. Modern globalizing patterns of social, political and economic domination by global powers began emerging nearly 500 years ago, followed later by industrialization. After World War II, the new world financial order emerged, with the Bretton Woods system of the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Later the gold standard in effect was replaced by the U.S. dollar. Since then, U.S.-based power and influence have become dominant in economic globalization.

Economic globalization has been expedited by powerful technological developments. Due to transportation developments, components can easily be manufactured, assembled and distributed in different parts of the world. Significant changes in how we produce, transport, communicate, invest and

acquire information are what make the pace, extent and intensity of globalization so dramatic today. For example, information technologies simultaneously expand and compress space and time. The Internet has expanded global connectedness by compressing massive amounts of information on a tiny computer chip. Computer-related technologies enable people to communicate instantaneously around the globe, but this also makes it possible for huge amounts of money to change hands at the touch of a computer key. Computers link exchanges, banks and transnational corporations around the world. This has helped global trade and investment to explode in magnitude, becoming the dominant factors in today's global economy.

Some defining trends

There are many dimensions to globalization, but our focus here is on economic globalization, as driven especially by institutions and practices of international finance and business. This version of globalization has become the defining reality in our world, replacing the Cold War framework that set the terms for over four decades. It also is deeply affecting most other areas of life.

Huge financial investments move across geo-political borders with few restraints. International financial and development institutions, such as the IMF and WB, have acquired enormous power to affect, for better or worse, the lives of billions throughout the world. Structural adjustment programs seek to correct economically unstable situations in countries according to one uniform strategy, usually at the cost of social expenditures. The rapid and free flow of capital for the sake of economic gain, and along with it, deregulation and liberalized trade policies, have become the dominant principles shaping our world today. The World Trade Organization (WTO) now plays a key role in breaking down trade barriers.

After close to nine years of suspended aid to Kenya due to corruption and bad governance, the IMF signed a three-year poverty reduction and growth initiative in 2000. This came with severe conditions attached. Meanwhile everything from food and water, to electricity has been in short supply.

Economic globalization is driven by the assumption that the "invisible hand" of the market, if allowed relatively free reign, will assure the optimum good

as each individual pursues his or her economic gain. Human beings are viewed primarily as individuals with insatiable wants or desires, who are competitively seeking to acquire or "have" more—rather than "being" in community with others. The goals that dominate are unlimited economic growth, productivity, efficiency, access to capital and freedom from restrictions. Wealth, power, ownership and control are what matter, along with a willingness to use nearly any means for the sake of higher profits. Economic globalization is fueled by these kinds of goals, although in some places it is tempered by other cultural values and traditions.

Common strategies of economic globalization include,

- Pursuing economic growth as the top priority over all other social goods
- Freeing up the mobility of capital
- Increasing privatization
- Reducing government regulation of economic activity
- Producing for export rather than the domestic market, and
- Seeking short-term profitability at the expense of long-term social well-being and environmental sustainability.

Some impacts of economic globalization[3]

> We live in a world scarred by inequality. Something is wrong when the richest 20% of the global population receives more than 80% of the global income […] when 10% of a population receives half of the national income […] when the average income for the richest 20 countries is 37 times the average for the poorest 20 […] when 1.2 billion people still live on less than a dollar a day and 2.8 billion still live on less than two dollars a day.[4]

- **Widening gaps:** Forces of economic globalization are bringing enormous gains to some, while for others they are like an all-devouring beast. Rather than a socialist versus capitalist divide, the divide today is between those who benefit from and those who are left behind by economic globalization, which is driven by capitalist understandings.

- Two-thirds of humankind live under the influence of economic globalization but are largely excluded from its benefits. Eighty-five percent live in

countries with "emerging" markets, which together have only seven percent of the global market capitalization value. Advocates of economic globalization claim it holds out the promise of a better life for all. For many this is fulfilled, but those who lose out become ever more invisible. Thus, the 200 richest people more than doubled their net worth between 1994 and 1998, largely due to economic globalization, while in half of the countries of the world, per capita income decreased over the past two decades.

In 2000 in Tanzania, liberal economic policies contributed to an accelerated inflow of international investment and a seven percent real macro-economic growth rate. This growth has been primarily in the mining and tourism sectors, with benefits distributed inequitably to those employed in these sectors and the urban élite. Large sections of the rural population continued to languish in traditional livelihoods of subsistence farming and fishing, which are definitely not booming.

- **Financial speculation:** Over 1,500,000,000 U.S. dollars are traded daily on foreign exchange markets, but less than two percent of this is for goods and services. Most of what is traded each day involves financial speculation. Such speculation, along with fluctuating currency values, can threaten the economic stability of any nation, but can be especially devastating in "developing" countries. This was especially evident in the Asian financial crisis, and its severe effects on countries in that area during the 1990s. One large-scale transaction in the global economy can have more of an impact on people in a given community than many small-scale transactions in that same community.

- **Corporate business:** The basic drive for economic growth has led to ever-more globalized quests for the production of goods and services at the lowest possible cost. Major transnational corporate brand names are transfiguring the skylines, workforce and culture of communities around the world, and drawing more and more people to urban areas for jobs. Production tends to move to where labor costs are lower, or where regulations are less restrictive and tax advantages greater. Acquisitions and mergers are common. Bigger and faster are the mandates for the sake of greater productivity, growth, and efficiency. Corporate strategies are driven by concern for corporate image and short-term stock value, often to the detriment of the affected communities and ecosystems.

- **Workers:** In recent decades, a massive number of manufacturing jobs have moved out of higher cost labor markets, and employment has shifted dramatically to the service sector. Women (and sometimes children) are recruited as cheaper, more docile sources of labor than men. Workers' rights and protections are sacrificed for the sake of economic interests. New technologies eliminate the need for certain kinds of workers, who become dispensable, unless they are able to acquire the education and training required for new expanding labor markets, such as in information technology. Unemployment is an ever-present threat for the sake of labor force "flexibility." Capital is able to cross national borders far more easily than are workers.

Of the 25 million Africans currently infected with AIDS, less that 0.1 percent receive the high-cost drugs that could avert their death. Like most things in the world, it comes down to money. "If cheaper drugs in Africa put downward pressure on the global price, then the core markets of the pharmaceutical industry are at risk."[5]

- **Political institutions:** Governments have become enmeshed in complex relationships that go beyond their boundaries. The fate of their people, resources and environment are determined by factors beyond any one government's reach. Regional alliances, global organizations and regulatory bodies, regional and international law, and multi-layered systems of global governance have profoundly affected the nature of political communities. Here is where regulatory efforts focus. However, these various political institutions tend to be captive to powerful economic or business interests, rather than serving the common good of all.

The Indian state of Orissa has been a target of economic growth through the exploitation of natural resources such as forest, water and land for corporate mining operations, hydro power production and land acquisition. Corporate quests for these natural resources have led to conflict with people's human rights, their livelihood and sustainable development.

- **The environment:** Under economic globalization, ecological problems become globalized. Economic development and progress belong to a highly particular culture that is based on using and dominating nature. The earth and its fragile atmosphere are too readily assaulted, exploited and depleted for the sake of economic gain. Nature is viewed as a limit-

less storehouse of resources for human use and control. Increasingly economic growth is colliding with the natural limits of the earth and its capacity to regenerate resources.

- **Family and personal life:** Central tenets of economic globalization spill over into other realms of life. What has been private, personal, or familial is now often measured or commodified according to an economic exchange value. Family time becomes shopping time. In some areas, stores now remain open and economic life spreads out over twenty-four hours a day. What cannot be measured economically is increasingly trivialized or devalued, such as the work of caring for the vulnerable and keeping communities together, which characteristically has been done by women. Nonproductive time, including Sabbath time, is not considered to be worth much. What individuals, families, and communities require if they are to survive, much less thrive, is given less time and attention.

- **Local culture:** In many places local culture is waning in importance, as a homogenized culture shaped by the same consumer goods and services continues to spread. English has become the universal language, along with the "languages" of the computer. Fed by the mass media, we are becoming more alike one another in our tastes and aspirations, ironically under the banner of greater freedom of choice. Advertising and the mass media determine our taste, in terms largely set in the United States and by the globalized class dispersed throughout the world.

Competition and bottom-line results work at virtually every point to press local limits in the interest of a net transfer of wealth and sustainability from one locale to another and then portray this, via mass advertising, as the good life for all![6]

> On the surface, it would appear that what is emerging is the "one world" for which people of faith have long yearned. But is it really that benign?
>
> Culture, at its best, can be one of the most powerful forms of voluntary restraint in human behavior. It gives life structure and meaning. It sanctions a whole set of habits, behavioral restraints, expectations and traditions that pattern life and hold societies together at their core. When unrestrained globalization uproots cultures and environments, it destroys the necessary underlying fabric of communal life.[7]

- The overall dialectics of globalization are such that intensified concerns for local cultural identity emerge as a reaction to these external homogenizing forces. Resenting this intrusion, people often retreat into what is familiar from the past, and cling more strongly to traditions and practices that exclude those who are different from themselves. Those excluded are people who have moved across borders to seek employment, as well as to escape political repression and conflict. But what they often encounter are nationalistic or anti-immigrant attitudes and movements that themselves can lead to violence.

- **One world?** Globalization promises to draw the whole world together, and it does connect us in amazing new ways. Parts of the world are connected in ways previously unimaginable, even by the church that has long prayed for the unity of the whole human family. Cultural, political and territorial boundaries are crossed and transformed. Although, on the one hand, globalization is experienced as a powerfully unifying force, on the other, it is resulting in increasing divisions and fragmentation. Those who previously were separated from one another, pursuing their own economic activities, are now competitively linked, in ways that benefit some far more than others. People's livelihoods increasingly depend on decisions and actions taken by economic actors in other parts of the world.

By compressing time and space, homogenizing certain cultures and universalizing aspects of modern social life, globalization brings a competing vision of the *Oikoumene*, the unity of humankind. But the unity of humankind being promoted by globalization is one of exploitation and domination, while the unity envisaged by the *Oikoumene* is one characterized by solidarity and justice. Our vision of the *Oikoumene* puts great value in plurality and cultural diversity for mutual enrichment and for affirmation of life experiences as expressed in different traditions.[8]

- **Churches:** As churches we do not stand outside the influence of economic globalization but find ourselves entangled in and affected by it. It influences who or what we see, our priorities, and even how we go about being the church, especially in economic matters. Some are viewed primarily as beneficent donors, others primarily as dependent recipients, making genuine relationships of mutuality nearly impossible. Market-driven assumptions and criteria for business practices, such as cost-

effectiveness, also increasingly drive governmental policies, as well as the work of churches that depends on government-related funds. Churches are in a competitive environment in providing services; they are told to "perform better" or they will be "out of business."

- Similar to how Western imperialism and colonization often compromised the church's mission in the nineteenth century, economic globalization has become a central challenge to the church's witness in the twenty-first century, especially when its assumptions, outcomes and scope clash with central Christian convictions.

Engaging economic globalization theologically

The processes of economic globalization proceed according to an overall logic that is assumed to be natural or inevitable, as if not controlled by human decisions and actions. The "other" with whom we are connected becomes our competitor rather than our neighbor. We resent that others have what we lack. We find ourselves set over and against rather than in relational community with each other. Economic globalization benefits some, and harms others, but people are told to "be realistic," to accept its inevitability. Seduced by the media, the world's eyes are fixed on the "winners" and the "losers," those left out, disappear from sight. What matters is that the global economy continues growing, showering some with unimaginable wealth, even while it extracts sacrifices from many others, especially those least able to afford it. From the perspective of the Christian faith, this must be challenged.

A matter of idolatry?

"You are to have no other gods." A "god" is the term for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. […] Anything on which your heart relies and depends is really your God. […] There are some who think that they have God and everything they need when they have money and property; they trust in them and boast in them so stubbornly and securely that they care for no one else. They, too, have a god—mammon by name, that is, money and property—on which they set their whole heart. […] On the other hand, those who have nothing doubt and despair as

if they knew of no god at all. […] Idolatry does not consist merely of erecting an image and praying to it, but is primarily a matter of the heart.[9]

Many view economic globalization as the reigning "god" in our world today, whose authority and rule is supreme.

> The wondrous machine of free-running enterprise has fantastic capabilities and people defer to its powers, persuaded it will carry them forward to millennial powers […] . Many intelligent people have come to worship these market principles, like a spiritual code that will resolve all the larger questions for us […] as long as no one interferes with its authority.[10]

Whereas previously there were other centers of value and meaning,

> now the Market is becoming more like Yahweh of the Old Testament […] the only true God, whose reign must now be universally accepted and who allows for no rivals […] omnipotent […] [with] the capacity to define what is real […] to convert creation into commodities […] a radical desacralization that dramatically alters human beings and nature for the sake of higher profits.[11]

In the Old Testament, wealth, power and idolatry go together and result in injustice toward the poor. Idolatry is a human construct, a manipulation of power (Jer 10:1–16; Isa 44:9–20) that leads to a corruption of life. As Jesus clearly stated, "You cannot serve both God and mammon [wealth]" (Mt 6:24). When tempted by the devil with worldly power, Jesus was clear about where his allegiance lay (Lk 4:1–12).

If idolatry is at stake in economic globalization, we cannot remain silent. By our silence or reluctance to engage these realities in light of our faith, we risk compromising the very faith we confess. When human constructs claim ultimacy for this life or beyond it, God's righteousness denounces them as idols and displaces them with the justification received through faith.[12] Liberated from vain attempts to justify us through activities of the global economy, we are freed through Christ to unmask and resist what is idolatrous in our lives and world today.

People's consumption patterns are influenced by the society in which they live. In money-based societies, the money necessary for buying tends to dominate and determine what people need.

A paradoxical reality

What makes economic globalization difficult to nail down and critique are the paradoxes and mixed results embedded in it. Globalization has been said to be everything, and its opposite. It democratizes both opportunities and risks. Its tools can break down communities, environments and traditions but can also be used to build them up. It promises new opportunities but it results in ever greater gaps in wealth. It operates in decentralized ways but results in growing monopolies of power and greater patterns of exclusion. It values unrestricted freedom, yet intensifies patterns of domination. It promises global connections, but accentuates the pain and suffering caused by global greed. It has helped raise the income of the poor in some parts of the world, yet it can also be brutal and cruel to the most disadvantaged.

From a Lutheran theological perspective, this should not surprise us. What is good and evil, righteous and sinful, constructive and destructive in human history usually is intertwined in complicated ways. Practices and institutions of our common life are ambiguous mixtures of good and bad, sometimes in ways that are difficult to separate or even see. Because much of economic globalization is so paradoxical, simply denouncing it all or disassociating ourselves from it may be illusory. Many people's livelihoods, as well as the financial support of the church itself, depend on it.

Created to live in communities of diversity

We believe that creation is sustained at every turn by the deliberate wisdom and goodness of God. God creates all that is, breathes life into the human creature (Gen 2:7), and provides for basic needs (1:29–30; 2:8-9). Human beings are given the responsibility to be wise stewards of all that God has created.

God's providence is at work—or being thwarted—through economic activities. That is why we cannot write this area off as peripheral to the life of faith. The well-being of persons, communities and the environment are too often sacrificed to this realm on which we rely for the security of our everyday life. The original purpose of the economy (*oikonomia*)—that it serve the well-being of the whole household of God (*oikos*)—too readily becomes eclipsed for the sake of economic profit and growth.

When this occurs, the full dignity of human beings, their communities and the integrity of creation are compromised. Under the prevailing logic of economic globalization, the complex array of human needs and desires tends to be reduced to wants, which are insatiable and stimulate consumerism. Human beings pursue their self-interests to satisfy wants, to maximize utility, or preference, or profit. In the process, relationships and institutions that cannot be measured in economic terms, such as those tied to a sense of land or home, are often threatened.

> When it becomes possible to buy things with money that are not commodities, the barriers between different spheres of life are broken down. Then, money becomes a "dominant good" whose influence extends beyond the market to all spheres of social life. Money will buy not only cars and houses but education, political power, love, friendship, respect and prestige.[13]

In contrast, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity focuses on the relational character of God, of human existence, and our interdependence with the rest of creation.[14] God is community, relationship, self-giving love. Created in God's image (Gen 1:27), we exist in relation to others. The dignity and value of each person emerge in community. The welfare of the whole community is important for individual well-being.

> The most fundamental human activity, then, is not rational economic agency motivated by self-interest, but the exercise of the power of self-giving love, the opportunity for entrance into relationship, for deeper participation in the life of the human community.[15]

People are in relationship with one another, not for the purpose of economic gain, but for the sake of loving, sharing and enjoying that which each contributes to the whole community. Vast inequities between those whom God has created are troubling because of this relational nature of life: who we are, is in relation to others. We are created in relationship to God, one another and the rest of creation.

From a biblical perspective, the diversity of creation, cultures and human beings is something to celebrate rather than reduce to a "sameness," or find ways from which to profit.

> True community means the freedom of people to be different […] yet it refuses indifference […], there is no agreement in an idea, in something once and for all achieved,

> but a consensus that is only in and through the inter-relations of community itself, and a consensus that moves and changes […]. Christianity uniquely has this idea of community: this is what "Church" should be.[16]

This is not a unity imposed from one high, whether by an hierarchical church or globalized economic power, but a unity that embraces differences in such a way that they no longer become the basis for ranking or conflict. Instead, they become threads weaving together a new whole, a new people, a new community. Through seeing, hearing and knowing we begin to participate in the life of the other.

This is a kind of "globalization of solidarity" that emerges from below, from people's deepest aspirations for a fuller life. Through this participation, community or *koinonia* emerges. Inspired by Trinitarian theology, self-sufficiency (apart from others) is transformed into community (with others), conquest into participation, production that uses others into receptive participation in the life of the other. Such a Christian vision sharply contrasts with and empowers resistance to the realities of economic globalization.

Sin and injustice

Sin destroys the bonds of human community, and the integrity of what God has created. Human beings fall into sin by going beyond God-given limits and seeking to become like God (Gen 3). This is at the core of what occurs in economic globalization, which focuses and thrives on endless economic growth and financial accumulation, rather than on the goal of meeting the material needs of all, particularly the poor. In the Bible, greed is seen as a primary expression of sin:

> Everyone is greedy for unjust gain (Jer 6:13). […] For I know […] how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate (Am 5:12) […] . Ah, you who make [sinful] decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right […] what will you do on the day of punishment, in the calamity that will come from far away? (Isa 10:1–3a).

Throughout the Bible, as well as in Luther's *Large Catechism*, the ethical priority is on what happens to those who are marginalized or impoverished as a result of certain policies, practices, or power inequities in a society:

> Stealing is not just robbing someone […] but taking advantage of someone …wherever business is transacted and money is exchanged for goods or services […]. The poor are defrauded every day, and new burdens and higher prices are imposed […]. Beware of how you deal with the poor […].[17]

Living under economic globalization is akin to what Luther and St Paul understood as living in a state of bondage to sin: "for I do not do the good I want […]" (Rom 7:19). To be in a state of sin is to be ruled by an alien power, a reigning power that feels inevitable. Economic globalization becomes a faceless "it." We are kept from seeing that human freedom lies behind what now feels inevitable.

Freedom and domination

Christian freedom, according to Luther, is in relation to others. It is a freedom to serve the neighbor in love. Economic globalization assumes the importance of freedom—but it is a "freedom" to seek out and pursue what is in one's self interest, unrestrained by regulations, borders, or traditions. This leads to greater domination over others, rather than the neighbor-love that is at the heart of Christian freedom.

> A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.[18]

Under economic globalization, it is assumed that everyone is free to compete, acquire and become self-sufficient. Actually, others are viewed either as threats (to "beat out") or opportunities (to sell to). Freedom becomes equated with the potential to become self-sufficient. Those who are the powerful, the "winners," prevail over the "losers"—those people and aspects of nature that are subjugated and exploited and thus not free. One becomes "free" at the cost of other people and the rest of creation. Community is destroyed for the sake of "freedom," which becomes a deception.

Economic globalization develops its own momentum, in ways that obscure the human decisions and actions that have constituted it, and through which unjust patterns and policies can be changed. When this occurs, its inner driving force must be called into account. It becomes like the "powers and principalities" referred to in the Bible. They have ambiguously good and bad aspects, with both an inner driving

dynamic and an outer institutional form.[19] Their internal power molds us and our desires in their image, making us powerless to stand apart from its influence.

Notions of freedom that are played out through the dynamics of economic globalization need to be critiqued. Theologically, freedom is something that is realized in and through community. Rather than viewing the other as limiting "my" freedom, through the other a more expansive sense of freedom emerges. The other contributes to who "I" am. It is through love, justice, solidarity and mutual participation in life that human freedom is realized. We become free as we respect and recognize others and they us. The focus shifts from "having" to "being," from controlling and winning to giving and receiving. Through sharing, rather than brutally competing with one another, we discover the common room for living which freedom offers. What is divided or separated under the freedom of a dominating rule is healed, transformed, made one. Through Christ, we are made one with another, with nature, and with God. This is what Christ's reconciling work effects.

In and through Christ

Despite evidence to the contrary, all-pervasive powers such as those of economic globalization really belong to and are accountable to God. They are put in their place as part of God's wider, transcendent purposes, which are revealed through Jesus Christ:

> For in him [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him (Col 1:16).

Through Christ's death and resurrection the "powers and principalities" of this world are disarmed (Col 2:15)—they lose their claim of ultimacy. God has placed Christ "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion […] "and "has put all things under his feet" (Eph 1:21–22).

Salvation in Christ does not remove us from this world, but involves a change in allegiance.

> God, who is rich in mercy even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him (Eph 2:4–6a).

Instead of remaining captive to the powers of this world, our vision opens up to God's promised reign. Living as we do in the interim between the in-breaking and final fulfillment of this reign, the ongoing struggle is to hold such powers accountable to the justice God intends.

> Against the apparent victory of injustice, despair, oppression and death, faith clings to reality and to God's promises, trusting in the power of justice, hope, liberation and life.[20]

We are liberated by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to resist the inner logic and outward injustices of the totalizing system of economic globalization. Christ liberates us for freedom in community with others, and through the Spirit, we also are empowered to participate in the future that God is unfolding. We become free as we see beyond the seeming inevitability of the present order of economic globalization (which some allege is the "end of history"), transcending it in the direction of God's promised future. In union with Christ, we participate in God's own freedom, in the inner dynamics of God's triune love. We become "friends" of God (Jn 15:15), assuming our responsibility to participate with God who brings into being a common future with others, a common good, rather than a future based only on self-serving desires.

Responding to economic globalization

From a Christian perspective, we cannot ignore economic globalization and its effects because it has become a reigning power and competing faith system in our world today. Rather than only retreating into what is local or sectarian, we must face it in ways that take seriously our interdependencies in this globalized world.

The complexities of economic globalization are such that if we are to respond adequately to it, we need the perspectives of those who experience its effects and respond to it quite differently. We need to talk together about this. Some voices should not be silenced due to their relative power, education, gender, social status, where they live, what they do for a living, or the unpopularity of their opinion.

Resisting economic globalization and pursuing alternatives

The above eschatological perspective opens up the space to hope and to act differently, and to embody a life-giving spirituality of resistance to the "spirit"

of economic globalization. What this means in different contexts may vary, but it involves making conscious shifts:

- From trying to justify ourselves through economic activity **to** being justified by God's grace through faith
- From a focus on individual wants **to** social needs
- From what will profit me **to** what will enrich others
- From the interests of the stockholders **to** the interests of the most vulnerable
- From using nature **to** participating in and enjoying nature
- From economic growth **to** human flourishing
- From accumulating **to** serving
- From standing in awe of virtual money **to** reverence for actual human beings
- From being controlled by the random movements of faceless economic transactions **to** being empowered to act in relation to what matters in our lives and world.

Christian education can look at economic realities from biblical perspectives and form people to resist consumerism and the continual need to earn more.

Support for resistance to the institutions of economic globalization can be found in Luther's own writings, especially in relation to the banking and early capitalist trading companies of his day, which he considered to be in conflict with the will of God:

> They oppress and ruin all the small businesses, like the pike eat the little fish in the water, just as if they were lords over god's creatures and immune from all the laws of faith and love. […] My only advice is this: Get out; they will not change. If the trading companies are to stay, right and honesty must perish.[21]

If meeting the needs of the neighbor is a central aspect of what it means to be the body of Christ, then when economic institutions fail to meet these needs, the church must resist.

A case study of resistance

Aluminum companies have especially targeted the rich deposits of bauxite in an ecologically fragile area of India where tribal peoples have lived for thousands of years. With significant enticements from the government, a consortium intended

to invest one billion dollars in a project in one area that would displace more than 12,000 people from their ancestral homeland.

Since 1993, the people affected have been engaged in peaceful protests against this, leading to many arrests on false charges. A network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including an LWF-funded project of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India, have supported them and contacted organizations in Norway and elsewhere to help in this effort. They, in turn, have challenged the Norwegian, Canadian and Indian corporations involved. In response, the state banned the NGOs, alleging that their organizing activities were detrimental to economic growth. The situation continued to escalate until December 2000 when three persons were killed by the state police. Soon 20,000 people came out to express their solidarity, and independent investigations began. The Norwegian company has now decided to put the project on hold. In April 2001, the state of Orissa introduced legislation that will monitor and limit the role of NGOs, curtailing their autonomy as watchdogs. Said one of the organizers, "Unless the people who will be the victims of economic globalization get organized and raise their voice, their existence will be under constant threat. […] It is urgent for the churches to take clear positions and get involved, including through sustained collaborative advocacy."

Churches are also called to live out alternatives to what prevails under economic globalization. As the WCC declared in 1998 at Harare: "The logic of globalization needs to be challenged by an alternative way of life of community in diversity."[22]

In a small country, logging companies moved in to log the tropical hardwoods, and thereby introduced cash into the local tribal economy. The church, concerned about the destruction of the community and environment, advocated sustainable forest use, in which only a few rather than many trees needed to be cut to provide a sustainable income source. The forest was thus able to regenerate itself, and these producers were linked with consumers in other parts of the world who are committed to purchasing wood produced in this way.

Relationships transformed through communio

If we are to respond as churches to the realities of economic globalization, we must attend to the ways in which relationships have become distorted.

Under economic globalization, some obviously benefit and others clearly do not. It can become impossible for the "winners" and "losers" to communicate honestly with one another, much less stand together in any kind of solidarity that does not quickly lapse into paternalism. This danger is present in organizations such as the LWF, for example, when most of the financial resources come from churches and agencies in western Europe and North America. The economic, political, ideological and cultural walls separating us are great. Relationship building across these chasms can be very difficult.

These relationships, however, can be transformed through a deeper theological understanding of what it means to be a communion. What can open up new possibilities for personal and institutional transformation of these relationships is a realization that what holds us together is not the convergence of our self-interests, of what is to our own advantage or disadvantage, or even of what we feel or think about each other. What holds us together is not our own efforts—including our most determined efforts to resist economic globalization—but the transforming, relational power of God's Spirit, who forms us into a communion or "a holy community."[23]

Since 1990, the LWF has defined itself as "a communion of churches which confess the Triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship."[24] Through Word and sacraments every local church is bound into the wider communion of churches. This wider communion—or eschatological *communio*—is called, gathered and maintained through God's action as we know it through the Triune God. This is the communion within God's self into which believers are received through Baptism. The communion with God and one another, based on the Holy Spirit, is manifest and realized in a communion that can be experienced, tasted and seen.[25]

Communion points to close organic relationships, mutual participation, and imparting of life benefits. In communion we are bonded together so that when one suffers, all suffer (1 Cor 12:26). The sharing of spiritual and material gifts, which is implicit in communion, cannot be isolated from examining the causes of inequities in wealth and joining with others to change such.[26]Thus, for example, rather than workers in other countries being seen as threats to "my job," their lives become connected with mine through a *communio* reality that is even more compelling than that of economic globalization. Similarly, those whose lands are being exploited by transnational corporate practices are connected to those who have access to these companies. A new sense of belonging to one another emerges, and with it, new possibilities for ethical action.

Luther's explication of the *communio sanctorum* opens up provocative possibilities for a social witness grounded in *communio*. For him, *communio* refers not only to the gathering of the people of God (*ecclesia*), but also to the dynamic of participation in Christ, and with one another. We are networked not only through computers and economic transactions, but through the sacrament we become organically interconnected: we are "changed into one another."

> The sacrament has no blessing and significance unless love grows daily and so changes a person that [s]he is made one with all others. For just as the bread is made out of many grains ground and mixed together, and out of the bodies of many grains there comes the body of the bread […] and through the interchange of his blessings and our misfortunes, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common. […] In this way we are changed into one another and are made into a community by love.[27]

This communion becomes an embodied sign of the interdependence of all of life. *Communio* is an indicative, not an imperative—a gift not something we make happen. It establishes a foundation for a much different kind or moral agency than one based on imperatives or goals, whose pursuit can lapse into moralism. We are freed from being obsessed with "doing right," or from trying to measure up, or acting out of guilt over the stark economic inequities in our world. All these can work against and destroy community. Yet, through the gift of *communio* we are also implicated in a calling or task—to live out this reality beyond the church. *Communio* has significant implications for how we are formed morally, for how we deliberate on ethical issues amid all our differences, and for the expanse of our moral vision and scope of our action.

Sharing in service (diaconia)

"You are not to kill." This commandment is violated not only when we do evil, but also when we have the opportunity to do good to our neighbors and to prevent, protect, and save them from bodily harm or injury, but fail to do so. If you send a naked person away when you could clothe him, you have let him freeze to death. If you see anyone who is suffering from hunger and do not feed her, you have let her starve. […] It will be of no help for you to use the excuse that you did not assist their deaths by word or deed, for you have withheld your love from them and robbed them

of the kindness by means of which their lives might have been saved. Therefore God rightly calls all persons murderers who do not offer counsel or assistance to those in need and peril of body and life. […] It is God's real intention that we should allow no one to suffer harm but show every kindness and love. And this kindness, as I said, is directed especially toward our enemies. For doing good to our friends is nothing but an ordinary virtue of pagans, as Christ says in Mt 5:46–47.[28]

In Christian freedom we are set forth to serve the neighbor, especially those who are adversely affected by forces and policies of economic globalization. This is especially in terms of recognizable forms of diaconal ministry. These are reshaped in light of the above *communio* understandings. What neighbors need becomes the focus of our response, rather than what we desire or what will advance our interests.

As a communion there are many specific ways in which this response is being lived out already, such as through the many field programs of the LWF Department of World Service (WS) in some of the poorest areas of the world. The goals of LWF work in El Salvador include supporting groups with low incomes (women, youth and children in rural poverty and urban marginalized) by strengthening capacities that will provide them with new opportunities for a better quality of life, food security and citizen participation.

Holding political and economic institutions accountable (advocacy)

Other responses seek to redress or lessen the unjust effects of economic globalization through advocacy work to hold institutions accountable for their God-given responsibilities. Social market economies are important examples of the influence of this theological tradition. Stable human living requires viable institutions, which change in contour and scope, formed and reformed by humans as part of God's mission in the world.

LWF Integrated Rural Development Activities in Cambodia include community organizing, food security and training, water supply and sanitation, agriculture and livestock development, small credit and loans, human rights awareness (such as land rights and trafficking of women and children), primary health care, education, environmental awareness, disaster preparedness, and de-mining and resettlement due to land mines.

God is active in creation and history through political and economic institutions. These are intended by God to be a means through which the needs of all are to be met. In the Lord's Prayer we pray "give us this day our daily bread," with the conviction that, although God is the ultimate provider of what we need, this occurs through human activities and institutions. We also are aware that sin becomes embedded in these very institutions and practices. When they and their policies obscure, distort, or violate God's purposes, they must be questioned, changed, or resisted. This is especially the case when they result in systemic exclusions, injustice, or exploitation.

"Give us today our daily bread." When you ask for "daily bread," you ask for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy daily bread and, on the contrary, against everything that interferes with enjoying it. This petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in this world, because it is only for its sake that we need daily bread […] in short, everything that pertains to the regulation of both our domestic and our civil or political affairs. For where these two spheres are interfered with and prevented from functioning as they should, there the necessities of life are also interfered with, and life itself cannot be maintained for any length of time. Indeed, the greatest need of all is to pray for the civil authorities and the government, for it is chiefly through them that God provides us daily bread and all the comforts of this life […]. But especially is this petition directed against our chief enemy, the devil, whose whole purpose and desire it is to take away or interfere with all we have received from God […]. How much trouble there is in the world simply on account of false coinage, yes, on account of daily exploitation and usury in public business, commerce, and labor on the part of those who wantonly oppress the poor and deprive them of their daily bread![29]

Governmental and intergovernmental organizations: Much of the advocacy work of the LWF in recent decades has focused here, in relation to intergovernmental organizations (such as the United Nations) at the international level, and through regional/national churches in relation to their respective governments. Member churches of the LWF have sought to hold these institutions more accountable to the justice for all that God intends through such efforts as:

- Participating in the Jubilee Campaign to cancel the external debts of severely indebted countries
- Encouraging greater transparency and democratic participation in international financial institutions such as the WB, IMF, and WTO

- Supporting the development of Human Rights instruments (including economic, social, and cultural rights) through international treaties and organizations, and monitoring governments at different levels to fulfill their responsibilities in this area
- Promoting coherence between social policy (including human rights obligations) and economic policy, both nationally and internationally
- Advocating for fair, more just trade policies and practices within and among countries.

"You shall not steal." It is the responsibility of the princes and magistrates to restrain open wantonness. They should be alert and courageous enough to establish and maintain order in all areas of trade and commerce so that the poor may not be burdened and oppressed, and in order that they themselves may not be responsible for other people's sins.[30]

Corporate business: In the era of economic globalization, advocacy with governments and related organizations is not by itself sufficient. Given how powerfully large corporate business and financial interests are shaping our world today, including governments, the church's advocacy for corporate social responsibility becomes more crucial. This movement began with efforts to divest church funds from corporations doing business in apartheid South Africa, and from there to the filing of shareholder resolutions with companies whose practices are detrimental to persons, communities and the environment. It can range from consumer boycotts to extended dialogue with corporate leaders.

Although it is especially churches in the global North who have closer access to the decision makers of transnational corporations, it is important that this advocacy work be linked with those who are affected in specific, harmful ways by corporate practices in the global South. Criteria or standards for corporate practices, for example, related to child labor, worker compensation, or environmental protections, need to be developed with sensitivity toward the wider effects these are likely to have both within that country and in relation to others.

Holding one another accountable (ministries in daily life)

Talking with one another about how we experience economic globalization is itself an important aspect of the church's witness in society. The catholic-

ity of the church is appreciated not primarily through theological concepts but through shared life experiences across all that would divide us. The character of our communities and the power relationships within and among them become theologically and ethically significant. Those who are "other" from us challenge us when we mistake our reason and experience as being universally the case for all people. As we do so, we might begin to move beyond stereotypes, and to hold one another accountable in new ways.

Rather than transcending the material differences, *communio* holds us together in a way that can withstand honest speaking about the actual realities of our lives. There must be truth telling that is not captive to ideologies that keep us from seeing or speaking. There are enormous differences in power and access, which largely are affected by whether people are from an affluent country in the North (or West) or a poor country in the South (or East). These must be named and addressed. However, "North" and "South" can too easily become categories for stereotyping people. There are also desperately poor people in the "North" and enormously wealthy people in the "South." People are too complex to be easily categorized, as are the realities of globalization, which results in both winners and losers in most nations. Rather than only a reigning power—an "it"—economic globalization begins to have faces and voices with whom we enter into relationship, and who thus begin to hold us accountable for the decisions we make and the actions we can take in the spheres of our everyday responsibilities — as part of our baptismal vocation.

Toward the end of a consultation with African Lutheran church leaders, someone from the North noted that churches there need to be held more accountable for economic decisions made in their countries that adversely affect economies in Africa. An African bishop responded: "Yes, that must happen, and communion means that you would also hold us more accountable for dealing with the corruption in how our government leaders use the country's economic resources."

A different kind of power: How might this truly become an embodied, living reality with the power to make an effective difference in the face of economic globalization? The life and power of God are focused in the benefits we receive sacramentally that in turn are to serve or benefit others. This kind of power is much different from a dominating power in which some acquire power at the expense of others, as occurs under the prevailing forms of economic globalization. Instead, this power is shared with others; the more who participate, the

more power there is.[31] God's power, as understood through Luther's theology of creation, is not all-controlling or all-dominating (in ways that can be used to legitimatize such power in the world), but gives or communicates life, blessings, or efficacy to what is created. God communicates to creation a power constituted in the Word of creation,[32] giving it a goal much different from the human-centered quest to accumulate money or power as an end in itself.

A Lutheran pastor in Brazil, concerned about the tax rebates a big U.S.-based auto maker was receiving from his government in order to build a large plant there, proposed that members of his church ask members of the Lutheran communion where that corporation is headquartered, to meet with its leaders and raise questions on their behalf about this deal.

Thus, through the activity of the Spirit, God indwells and empowers intersubjectivity, which is implied in "the communion of saints." The communion becomes an embodied sign of the interdependence of all of life. It also implicates the members of this body of Christ in a calling or task—to live out this reality beyond the bounds of the church through our varied ministries in daily life. Here we pursue our livelihood, care for families and communities, invest ourselves and our resources, and make decisions that affect others for good or for ill. Grounded in our baptismal vocation, and empowered through the Holy Communion, we are held accountable by one another for the decisions we make and actions we take in our daily lives that affect our "neighbors" in much different parts of the same communion and of the same world we share.

This provides a basis for envisioning how a communion of churches, such as the LWF, can become a more effective counter-force to economic globalization in our day, in coalition with others, developing new linkages from the "ground up." There is an enormous diversity in this communion, with vastly different social locations, resources and access to power. Lutherans are represented among the very rich and the very poor in this world. These together become part of an organic, living communion. Mere diversity is transformed into a mutually supportive communion in which we participate in one another. *Communio* is lived out as those in member churches of this communion advocate and act out of this sense of relatedness, responsibility, accountability to others in the communion, and through them, to the rest of the created world.

What begins to emerge is the possibility of linked discourses that address the contradictions and failures of systems.[33] In concrete, everyday terms we

begin to share how the "promises" of economic globalization are realized or betrayed. Out of our particular cultural and personal situations, we begin to understand one another, and find ways of acting together. The basis for this are the multitude of relationships that local or national churches already have with one another around the world, e.g., through sister church or companion synod partnerships. This is counter-systemic, at times subversive, going against the grain of conventional wisdom. Through the power of the Spirit, there emerges a common recognition and basis for action.

This is similar to what caught up and empowered those first followers of the One whose life, death and resurrection decisively countered the systems of his day, and who calls us, his body, to continue in that same spirit in our day. Those whom globalization tends to split asunder are brought together in the body of Christ—the whole body, the ministry of all the baptized in their daily lives. We begin to discover connections that become the basis for effective actions where we least expect them.

Notes

[1] In this paper, most of the examples cited come from LWF field programs and other LWF work.

[2] "*I Have Heard the Cry of My People*," *Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation*, *LWF Report 28/29* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1990).

[3] What follows are some general impacts, based on a variety of sources. One of the most comprehensive is David Held *et al*, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[4] From a speech, "Building an Equitable World," by James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, 26 September 2000 in Prague.

[5] "Africans Plead in Vain for AIDS Treatment," *International Herald Tribune*, 28 December 2000.

[6] Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996), p. 124.

[7] Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Random, 1999, 2000), p. 302.

[8] Sam Kobia, in Richard Dickinson, *Economic Globalization* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998), p. 4.

[9] Martin Luther's explanation of the First Commandment, in "The Large Catechism," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), pp. 386–388.

[10] William Greider, *One World Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 473. He concludes this after observing firsthand its actual effects throughout the world.

[11] Harvey Cox, in "The Market as God," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1999), p. 20.

[12] David Tiede, in Wolfgang Greive (ed.), *Justification in the World's Context* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2000), p. 108.

[13] Robert G. Simons, *Competing Gods: Public Theology and Economic Theory* (Australia: Dwyer, 1995), pp. 70–71.

[14] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), p. 289.

[15] Simons, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 72.

[16] John Milbank, in Graham Ward (ed.), *The Postmodern God* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1997), p. 268.

[17] Luther's explanation of the Seventh Commandment, in "The Large Catechism," Kolb and Wengert, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 416–419.

[18] Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" (1520), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 31 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957), p. 344.

[19] Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984), p. 5.

[20] Walter Altmann, *Luther and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p. 77.

[21] Martin Luther, "On Trade and Usury," in Walther I. Brandt and Helmut T. Lehmann (eds), *Luther's Works*, vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962), pp. 270, 272.

[22] "Together on the Way" (Geneva: The World Council of Churches, 1999), p. 183.

[23] Luther's explanation of the Third Article, in "The Large Catechism," Kolb and Wengert, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 437.

[24] Constitution of the Lutheran World Federation (1990), Article III.

[25] Joachim Track, "Gleanings …," in Heinrich Holze (ed.), *The Church as Communion*, *LWF Documentation 42/1997* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1997), p. 54.

[26] Holze, in *ibid*, pp. 13ff.

[27] "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ," in E. Theodore Bachmann and Helmut T. Lehmann (eds), *Luther's Works*, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), p. 58.

[28] Luther's explanation of the Fifth Commandment, in "The Large Catechism," Kolb and Wengert, *op. cit.* (note 9), p. 412.

[29] Luther's explanation of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, in *ibid.*, pp. 449–452.

[30] Luther's explanation of the Seventh Commandment, in *ibid.*, p. 419.

[31] These understandings of Luther are developed by Kyle A. Pasewark, *A Theology of Power* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), especially chapter 2, and are consistent with many feminist understandings of power.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[33] Lewis Mudge refers in this sense to how ecclesiology and ethics came together at the 1998 WCC Assembly, in his article, "Toward a Hermeneutic of the Household," in *Ecumenical Review*, vol. 51:3 (July 1999).

Toward an Economy in the Service of Life

A Report of an Ecumenical Journey

During the last decade, churches all over the world began reflecting on the effects of economic globalization and the challenges this poses to them. This is an overview of the collaborative consultations and actions that have been taking place under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), usually also with ecumenical bodies.

The WCC and economic globalization

Delegates to the Harare Assembly in 1998 recommended that the challenge of globalization should become a central emphasis of the WCC's work, building upon many significant past efforts of the WCC. The vision behind globalization includes a vision competing with the Christian commitment to the unity of humankind and the whole inhabited earth.

> The logic of globalization needs to be challenged by an alternative way of life of community in diversity. Christians and churches should reflect on the challenge of globalization from a faith perspective and therefore resist the unilateral domination of economic and cultural globalization. The search for alternative options to the present economic system and the realization of effective political limitations and corrections to the process of globalization and its implications are urgently needed.[1]

The Assembly encouraged churches to join the process of recognition, education and confession (*processus confessionis*) started by the WARC.

WARC and the *processus confessionis*

In Debrecen (1997) the General Council of the WARC decided unanimously to

> call for a committed process of progressive recognition, education and confession (*processus confessionis*) within all member churches at all levels regarding economic injustice and ecological destruction.[2]

Reference was made (among other things) to the Barmen Declaration of the Confessing Church in Germany (1934), especially to the sentence: "We reject the false doctrine as if there are realms in our life in which we do not belong to Jesus Christ but to other masters," and also to the WARC General Council declaration on the apartheid system in 1982. "Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth," as the process came to be called, implies:

- The churches should pay special attention to the analysis and understanding of economic processes.
- The churches should educate church members at all levels on economic life and how to develop a life style which rejects the materialism and consumerism of our day.
- The churches should work towards the formulation of a confession of their beliefs about economic life which would express justice in the whole household of God.
- The churches should act with the victims of injustice.

Debrecen responded to the call of a consultation held in October 1995 in Kitwe (Zambia):

> Today the global economy has been sacralized, and elevated to an imperial throne. […] By redefining what it means to be human, it has become the creator of human beings. Thereby it usurps the sovereignty of God, claiming a freedom that belongs to God. For us as Christians this raises the question of idolatry and of loyalty to God or mammon.[3]

The consultation concluded that,

> the African reality of poverty caused by an unjust economic world order has gone beyond an ethical problem and become a theological one. It now constitutes a *status confessionis*. The gospel of the poor is at stake in the very mechanism of global economy today.[4]

The process eventually led to the stance taken at the 2004 General Council meeting in Accra, Ghana.

WARC and WCC joint activities on globalization

One of the first results of the cooperation between WARC and WCC on globalization was the symposium on the "Consequences of Economic Globalization," Bangkok, Thailand (November 1999) and, before that, the mini-symposium on "Globalization and the Asian Crisis," Seoul, Korea.

Statistics only focus on first-order consequences of crises such as the Asian one: a flood of bankruptcies and layoffs, and a general rise in prices due to the depreciation of the currency. Second-order consequences occur when policy makers start to develop programs for "rapid economic recovery." In most Southeast Asian countries, this has led to an austerity program conditioned by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has resulted in increased taxes on consumption, and a drastic cut in government spending on health and education. The third-order effects are perhaps the most impressive and severe. During the consultation several concrete illustrations were given, such as the rise of the suicide rate in these countries, growing illiteracy because parents can no longer afford to send their children to school, growing migration and problems related to this, the breakdown of trust in communities leading to an alarming rise in violence, theft, drug dealing and other crimes.

The Asian crisis cannot be seen as an isolated financial crisis. It has spread like a cancer throughout the whole of society, causing continuing damage not only at the level of "human capital," but also of social capital and natural capital (loss of care for land, use of more aggressive fertilizers, sale of forests to international investors). The consultations also studied the role of the different actors in the Asian crisis. This lead to the thesis that the role of most important actors (international agencies such as the IMF, speculators, political authorities) in the Asian crisis is open to severe criticism, partly because they have acted so clearly in the framework of distorted and reductionist worldviews, and partly because of strong indications of unacceptable pressure or force. Some remarkable new initiatives of communities resisting injustice and actions of protest were presented at the consultation. The consultation called upon other churches and church bodies all over the world to discuss the effects of globalization on their societies, and to gather all the information acquired in this way.

WARC, WCC and LWF joint consultations on economic globalization

In 2001, the LWF joined the collaborative process of WARC and WCC.

The Budapest consultation, "Serve God, not Mammon"

At the June 2001 consultation in Budapest, the churches of Central/Eastern Europe discussed with their ecumenical partners the effects of globalization on their societies. People in this region reported how they rejoiced, a decade ago, when they realized they were free. But, when they review the last ten years it becomes clear that the magnitude of the problems encountered has been grossly underestimated by both governments and churches.

After the period of a state planned economy, politicians and leaders embraced the unrestrained market mechanism as the path to a better future. They did not realize then that a market without social, cultural and institutional frameworks would threaten the very fabric of society. The reports warn us that this economic ideology has deep spiritual implications. People are compelled to invest their faith in the god of money. "The unregulated flow of capital becomes the arbiter of the economic goodness or badness of all human or political actions."[5] The meeting called the churches in the West to resist the destructive forces of economic globalization and to be advocates for global social justice.

The Fiji consultation, "Island of Hope"

The August 2001 Fiji consultation held in Nadi, was a global consultation with an emphasis on the situation in the Pacific region. Central to the meeting was the presentation of the document "The Island of Hope," which for the Pacific churches represents life-centered values rooted in Pacific communities, providing an orientation for a just and sustainable economy and a life of dignity. Components of this vision are, "spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect;" it "prioritizes relationships, celebrates quality of life, and values human beings and creation over the production of things."[6]

The Soesterberg consultation, "Economy in the Service of Life"

At Budapest plans were made for a consultation for the Western European churches, which then took place in the Netherlands in 2002. This consultation gave special attention to the issue of global capital. Previous consultations had emphasized the important role of international financial flows and international financial institutions. The main actors in international finance are governments and institutions in the North. The Canadian churches also were represented at this consultation.

The discussions and deliberations clearly showed the different social locations and contextual conditions of churches in Western Europe from those in other parts of the world. They tended to favor solutions modeled according to the institutional frameworks of the social compromise that marked their own societies during the Cold War period.

The Buenos Aires consultation, "Faith Stance on the Global Crisis of Life"

The Latin American Council of Churches convened a consultation in 2003 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Among other things it was pointed out that,

> The dynamics of death and exclusion are of human making. They have a common base. The neoliberal deregulation of the capitalist market at all levels, driven by an unbridled lust for money and control, turns the market into an idol […]. We are seriously worried that rich countries are more and more inclined to use military force to impose the neoliberal economic system in the world, playing a divine Caesar […]. We believe that neoliberal ideology violates the will of God, the creator of the garden of life.[7]

God of Life,
You are our God who liberates us from any system of oppression, exclusion and exploitation.
We shall not make Mammon our God, accumulating power and wealth.
We shall not make ourselves an idol, worshipping the effectiveness of our achievements.
We shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord God calling the implementation of the wealth accumulating market and imperial wars a Christian policy.
We will observe the Sabbath day by not exploiting human labor and destroying Mother Earth.

We will provide for solidarity between the generations, not only by securing a decent living for the aged but also by not burdening the coming generations with ecological damage and debt.
We shall not murder, excluding from the economy those who have no private property or who cannot sell their labor in the market.
We shall not tolerate the commodification and sexual exploitation of women and children.
We shall not allow the manifold robberies of economic and financial actors.
We shall not misuse the legal system for our personal profit but promote the economic, social and cultural rights of all people.
We shall not follow the greed of limitless accumulation by depriving our neighbors of their means of production and income so that all may live in dignity on God's rich and beautiful earth.[8]

The Stony Point consultation, "Just Trade in the Service of an Economy of Life"

Representatives of churches in Canada, Mexico and the United States met early in 2004 at Stony Point, New York, and focused on the upcoming Free Trade Agreement in the Americas as a prime example of what is occurring under economic globalization. They declared their commitment to principles (here excerpted) for just and fair trade that serves the needs of all. Trade and investment agreements should:

- Be subordinate to international law guarantee universally recognized human rights, including of Indigenous Peoples.
- Be subordinated to the goal of sustainable development and poverty reduction.
- Include measures to promote and strengthen environmental regulations and standards.
- Recognize and respect national sovereignty and the legitimate responsibility of governments to safeguard the well-being of all members of society
- Allow for mutually beneficial agricultural trade.
- Ensure greater corporate social responsibility and accountability.
- Be reached through transparent negotiations and provide for greater participation by civil society in their negotiation, implementation and monitoring of their performance.

- Incorporate genuine special and differential treatment for small, weaker and less developed states that require long-term special exemptions.
- Permit the stabilization of agricultural and mineral commodity prices.
- Respect the sovereign rights of peoples and nations to choose a diversity of development paths.[9]

"The Accra Confession"

At its July 2004 General Counsel meeting in Accra, Ghana, WARC adopted the following confessing stance, as excerpted from "Covenanting for Peace and Justice in the Earth."

> Speaking from our Reformed tradition and having read the signs of the times, the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches affirms that global economic justice is essential to the integrity of our faith in God and our discipleship as Christians. We believe that the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization and therefore […].
>
> We reject the current world economic order imposed by global neoliberal capitalism and any other economic system, including absolute planned economies, which defy God's covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable and the whole of creation from the fullness of life.
>
> We reject any claim of economic, political, and military empire which subverts God's sovereignty over life and acts contrary to God's just rule. […]
>
> We reject any ideology or economic regime that puts profits before people, does not care for all creation, and privatizes those gifts of God meant for all.
>
> We reject any teaching which justifies those who support, or fail to resist, such an ideology in the name of the gospel.[10]

AGAPE

An extensive process on "Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth" (AGAPE) is currently underway. One of the events in this process

was a meeting of women from the global South. In their "[A] Call to Transformative Reflection and Action" they observed the following:

> The neoliberal model has intensified the feminization of underpaid market work and unvalued care work, the feminization of forced migration, labor export and trafficking, the feminization of poverty and even the feminization of survival. The insecurity and frustration provoked by the neoliberal model are inflicting on women's lives—from womb to tomb—patriarchal disciplining, including social and institutional control of reproductive rights, and violence against women are escalating in many parts of the world.[11]

These various consultations and actions, along with other specially focused events, are expected to culminate at the WCC Assembly in Brazil in 2006.

Notes

[1] Diane Kessler (ed.), *Together on the Way. Offical Report of the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, Harare, 1998 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999), p. 183.

[2] *Section II, Justice for All Creation*, Resolution of the 23rd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1997.

[3] *Reformed Faith and Economic Justice*, WARC-SAARC Consultation, 12–17 October 1995, Mindolo Ecumencial Foundation, Kitwe, Zambia.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Serve God not Mammon. Message from the Joint Consultation on Globalization in Central and Eastern Europe*, 24–28 June 2001, Budapest, Hungary.

[6] WCC, *Background Materials for the AGAPE Workshop*, 2004.

[7] From, *Faith Stance on the Global Crisis of Life*, Latin American Council of Churches, Buenos Aires, 26 April 2003.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] WCC, *op. cit.* (note 5).

[10] *The Accra Confession on Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth*, A Statement of the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, August 2004.

[11] "A Call to Transformative Reflection and Action," in *Women's Voices on Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth*, 27–29 August 2004, Antipolo City, Philippines, World Council of Churches.

European Perspectives on Economic Globalization

Many analyses of economic globalization have been written. They are usually reflective of the contexts from which they come. Below are excerpts from a discussion paper "European Social Market Economy—An Alternative Model for Globalization?" prepared by the North-South Working Group of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches, July 2002.

Perceptions and dynamics

Globalization is a word associated with the hopes and fears of people on all continents. It is noticeable that those who have an influence on global activities are typically positive, even enthusiastic, while among those who feel powerless and dependent—probably the majority—fears prevail. At a superficial level, globalization means worldwide economic integration. Due to political decisions, international agreements and to technical progress in transport and communication, regions, states and continents have become ever more closely integrated in economic terms.

There are historical reasons for the dramatic acceleration of political and economic integration after 1990, leading to a qualitative leap in the process of internationalization and consequently to the globalization of economic developments.

1. With the breakdown of the Eastern European political system, a change set in from a politically defined contest of systems to an economically defined competition of locations, involving nearly all existing states, including regions and cities. They must now intensify their efforts to attract capital, as the market has become so much more volatile after the lifting of restrictions on capital movement during the eighties. As a result, their negotiating position in relation to international capital owners was considerably weakened. Since the end of the old bipolar system we furthermore observe the growth of new polarities between ideologies, religions and cultures.

2. Rapid advances in computer and information technology have enabled new, globally interlinked production techniques and logistics to develop.

> With financial transactions and price comparisons feasible within seconds, the pressure to cut costs has dramatically increased.

What began as international economic policy has rapidly had profound political, social and cultural repercussions. The liberalization of trade, investments and capital markets has led to the emergence of international or transnational relations and interdependencies of unprecedented dimensions. For example, the Asian "tigers" have succeeded by their own dynamism in fitting into the global market and achieving unprecedented growth rates. On the other hand, the serious financial crisis in East Asia in 1997 also spread to Russia and Brazil, illustrating growing economic interdependence.

While some developing countries have been able to attract investments, others have been completely by-passed. This applies especially to African countries south of the Sahara. Although many of them have long been integrated into the world market through their exports of raw materials, they have witnessed continual falls in commodity prices. At the same time, these countries were forced to liberalize and deregulate their markets in the context of structural adjustment policies which were required in highly indebted countries by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As a consequence, their own local, non-competitive producers have had to yield to cheaper imports. Often these imports consisted of goods which were subsidized by Northern governments and "dumped" on Southern countries. Agricultural exports from the European Union are a case in point. In countries able to profit more from globalization, progress has often been concentrated on certain areas and economic sectors of the country, yet specific regions and sectors can participate in it without this leading to countrywide prosperity. In this context we observe an increasing exclusion of countries and of large parts of the population in the so-called developing countries as well as in industrialized countries who are not regarded as "economically productive."

Compared to the production of goods and consequent trade, recent years have seen a greater increase in international capital movements. Liberalism is most advanced on the international finance markets. What was first intended to alleviate or enable international trade and foreign direct investments has largely become autonomous. Every day on which the stock exchanges are open for business, over 1.5 trillion U.S. dollars are sent around the globe. This corresponds to an annual turnover of 300 trillion U.S. dollars. Real economy financial flows, i.e., trade and investments not related to speculative movements, amount, however, to just 2.5 percent of this gigantic sum.

Increasing trade liberalization has led to growth in international trade with a simultaneous drop in transport and communication costs. The global exports of goods and services have almost tripled since the 1970s. Global markets have arisen for services in banking, insurance and transportation. However, developing countries object that in fields in which they have comparative advantages, the industrialized countries have liberalized trade insufficiently. Agriculture is a case in point. In OECD countries farming is state subsidized with contributions that together exceed the gross domestic product (GDP) of the whole of Africa.

Liberalization has led to a steep rise in foreign direct investments. The deregulation of cartel law has led to a flood of mergers and takeovers. Of the over 800 billion U.S. dollars in foreign investments in 1999 (400 billion in 1997), 636 billion went to industrialized countries. The money invested in developing countries was basically concentrated on twenty countries.

Continuing economic globalization has led to very different consequences, not least because political globalization is lagging behind. We observe that economic globalization has weakened national governments and increased the significance of multilateral institutions.

Many people have been able to benefit from the changes while for many others conditions of life have deteriorated. This is the case also within Europe. Europe, as one of the strong economic powers, is among the driving forces of economic globalization and has gained substantially from it. But, at the same time, globalization has had various negative effects on European countries.

Globalization and its effects on Europe

We observe that the global neoliberal economic system creates in Europe and elsewhere a climate of decreasing solidarity. The traditional social market economies in Europe are based on economic freedom balanced with solidarity and social responsibility. As the European economy has to be competitive in an open world market, this system, and thereby its basic principles, come under pressure. We consider this to be the major challenge of economic globalization since solidarity and justice are at the heart of any biblical and Christian ethic. We watch this development with concern as solidarity and justice continue to be violated today.

Persistent mass unemployment in Europe mainly caused by technological progress, cheaper means of transport and a global free market system is danger-

ously volatile. Without overcoming mass unemployment there will be no reliable consolidation of the welfare state. The high unemployment figures mean loss of social insurance revenue and high outlay in unemployment and social welfare benefits. So it is unemployment that is too expensive, not the welfare state.

Addressing the high unemployment rate in many European countries is a prerequisite for the stability of social market economy. Despite the steady growth of the global economy unemployment has not been reduced. This also applies to the OECD states. With an average GDP growth rate of 2.3 percent in the last twenty years unemployment in the OECD states has been at an almost constant seven percent. The concentration of income, and thereby social disparity and poverty, has increased globally between countries and within countries, also within Europe.

Increases in goods and traffic flows are leading to growing strains on the environment. Since low transport costs only concern energy prices, but externalize environmental costs, short-term gains are bought at the price of long-term environmental damage. A beneficiary of globalization is also international crime. Through the insufficient control mechanisms new opportunities arise for drug and human trafficking, money laundering and illegal arms deals.

There are different views on the way in which cultures are growing closer. On the one hand, influences from other ways of life are seen as enriching while, on the other, there is fear of cultural dominance. The revolution in communication technology has created a new form of illiteracy and exclusion because many people have access neither to the Internet nor to computers. Equality of opportunity only exists on the globalized market for those who can meet certain minimum requirements. This creates a gap also within Europe.

Within European countries there are winners and losers of globalization. It is clear that highly qualified workers, when they are sufficiently mobile, are among the winners. They can choose where they want to work. Likewise some transnational companies (TNCs) can achieve enormous profit margins. Through internationalizing their production they can cut production costs; and through trade deregulation, open up new outlet markets. This has put pressure not just on southern companies. Pressure of competition has increased on seasoned northern companies who were less lucky when going global.

We observe that, in Europe, globalization jeopardizes the ability of the welfare states to retain a high level of social security. Without doubt, globalization based on an ideology of a free market system is posing challenges for the welfare state, but it is not automatically leading to cutbacks. How a society deals with

poverty and unemployment, with disability and disadvantage, with winners and losers, will continue to be decided in national as well as international contexts. The changes in the world of work, the further changing and individualizing of careers and the immigration of people from other cultures make it necessary to review available instruments and, if necessary, to restructure them.

As Europe and the United States both continue to protect their own markets and restrict market access by various political means, the development opportunities of poor countries are still being hampered by this protectionism.

Stock markets in Europe gain more importance, as more and more people buy stocks. Priority for shareholders implies that those who want to earn from a company get priority over those who work in a company. This represents a very important paradigm shift, with major ramifications for society. Companies are no longer primarily valued for the products/services they produce, but increasingly, if not exclusively, for the "value they create" for shareholders. The future of companies, including the interests of the other stakeholders, is increasingly determined by the erratic and unpredictable behavior of the stock market. There is increased emphasis by management on short-term positive results. Long-term perspectives which would include work satisfaction, social benefits and work security for employees as important positive economic factors are rather neglected.

Growth, and the ability to compete internationally, have become the major yardsticks for success. This may take the form of a company increasing its own turnover, but also by taking over other companies. People are seen as customers and consumers rather than as citizens. New marketing strategies are increasingly based on the creation of need. They penetrate deeply into the minds of potential consumers, and focus on new markets such as the young (who are made to believe that this is what they need). To a certain extent, this phenomenon is as old as business. The difference is the much more systematic approach and far-reaching effect on the consumption pattern as the consumption level is increasingly rising.

Globalization and migration

Globalization and migration represent two of the most dynamic global socio-political trends of our present time. While both have their own driving dynamic, they are highly interrelated.

Globalization has an ambivalent and somehow contradictory influence on the current migratory flows. On the one hand it creates situations and conditions which increase the pressure and intensify the desire to migrate:

- Growing economic inequalities; extreme poverty; the breakdown of national economies; the decline of traditional industry; environmental degradation; revival of tribal, ethnic and religious fundamentalism; conflicts and wars, to name only a few of the direct or indirect results of globalization, contribute towards migration understood as a "survival strategy." A considerable number of the estimated 150 million people working outside their countries of origin have been forced into migration by the economic consequences of the globalized economy.
- The revolution in communication; the easiness and low cost of information flow and geographical movement of persons; the daily projection of prosperity and affluence pictures at a global scale; the cultivation through the mass media of the illusion of an increased familiarity with the North and accessibility of the Western way and quality of life to everyone living in the Western countries intensify the desire to participate—particularly among those who, for political or economic reasons, lived up to now isolated and deprived—and constitute a great temptation and the urge to take the risk to migrate.
- The functioning of a national economy increasingly depends on the quick availability of a (small) number of highly skilled migrants and a larger number of migrants belonging to the pool of poorly paid workers (often undocumented workers constituting a cheap and flexible but also vulnerable labor force). The capacity to manage and steer migration movements towards a country has thus become an important element of the global competitiveness for a global economy.
- In addition, the demographic developments in most Northern industrialized countries will pose enormous challenges to these societies. A far greater percentage of the population will be part of the older generation with more demands on the social and health services. At the same time, most of these societies will decrease in numbers dramatically over the next years. While most of the related problems require structural responses, they will also require active migration policies. A number of countries, among them major European states, have already started active recruiting policies.

On the other hand, globalization constitutes a restraining force, counteracting migration:

- Globalization prioritizes the importance of capital and downgrades significantly the role and relative power of labor in the globalized economy. Particularly in the developed economies of the North the value of the unskilled labor force has dramatically decreased since the early 1970s resulting in an official brake on immigration. The EU countries decided to apply—albeit unsuccessfully—a policy of "zero migration," imposing continuously new and additional controls, restrictions and barriers to the entry of migrants originating from so-called "third countries."
- The downgrading of the significance of the factor "labor" partially explains the fact that powerful governments and International Governmental Organizations like WTO and IMF, while undertaking intensive efforts to achieve freedom of movement of goods and capital, show a limited interest in promoting the free movement of persons. Free movement is often restricted to the "global élite."

In parallel, TNCs transferring their economic activities to where labor is cheap, flexible and unregulated, environmental protection minimal and taxes very low, contribute indirectly to counteracting migration. However recent surveys show that this trend is far less important than originally anticipated.

In the context of the globalizing markets, the global, fast and flexible movement of labor (a small percentage of highly skilled workers as well as a big number of cheap often undocumented workers) becomes an important key element of successful economic development. Labor migrants could thus be key players in the process towards a globalizing economy–both as those largely profiting from and setting the agenda of globalization as well as potential objects and victims of globalization processes.

In this area, restrictive policies operated within the EU prove ineffective from the moment that there is a demand for cheap and flexible labor. The proof of this is the formal and informal employment of thousands of seasonal workers in the European agricultural sector.

It is noteworthy that a whole global industry has developed around migration. This industry includes both those activities related to the trafficking of human beings (creating alarming new structures of slavery through forced labor and debt enslavement) as well as the provision of "services" of smug-

gling human beings to those seeking to migrate. Revenues in this area are extremely high and exploitation of those concerned fierce. Given the initiative of most governments in immigration countries further to limit the possibilities for legal entry into their countries, it is foreseeable that the migration industry will continue to boom and the levels of exploitation connected with it become more fierce.

Some other considerations on the important link between globalization and migration:

- The countries of Southern, as well as Central and Eastern Europe, candidates to join the EU, constituting the external borders of the EU have turned into "control points" and "waiting rooms" for would be immigrants to the "core" countries of the EU.
- The money sent home by migrants is an important economic contribution to the national economy of many countries of the South. For such countries this is one of the most important sources of foreign currency earnings. In many cases, these transfers help to create an unofficial social security system. The World Bank estimates that remittances by migrant workers amount to 65 billion U.S. dollars per year. The national economy of Turkey for example annually receives around 3 billion U.S. dollars from remittances of migrant workers, compared to 1.5 billion in official development assistance.

A Feminist Critique of Free Market Economics

Julie A. Nelson

The prevailing economic assumptions and models can be critiqued from many different perspectives. Here is one such example.

Underlying the neoliberal program of globalization is an image of a perfect "free market" in which efficiency gains from trade liberalization are envisioned as providing potential welfare gains for all. While feminists have pointed out how neoliberal policies often disproportionately increase burdens on women, feminist critique can also reach into examining the very concepts and professional norms favored by those who advocate such policies. This article explains for non-economists the fable underlying the trade liberalization program of neoliberalism. It also indicates how a view of economics informed by feminist theory can provide a basis for questioning the hegemony of neoliberal thought.

Neoliberal economics, "free market" rhetoric and the policy prescriptions of the Washington consensus are currently pressing towards a radical restructuring of the global economy. Many questions have been raised about these policies by people concerned with the negative effects on human well-being that have been observed. Decreases in health and employment related to the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), global instability resulting from precipitous international capital flows and the possibility of a "race to the bottom" in national labor and environmental standards have many observers very worried. Feminist economists have noted that the problems caused by cuts in social services often dictated by SAPs have often fallen most heavily on women.[1]

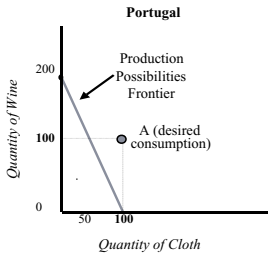
While more work needs to be done on the effects of such policies, in detail and in context, and the design of specific alternatives, this paper takes on a more basic question, Why is it that such policies continue to hold such sway? Why is it that it is so hard to get critiques heard, or have alternative approaches accepted as being credible forms of economic thinking?

A tale of two countries

A famous fable—currently presented in most Principles of Economics courses and all classes in International Economics—underlies the advocacy of neoliberal policies. While economists tend to present it in terms of mathematics and proof, it originated in a story told by classical economist David Ricardo in 1817 that goes more or less as follows.

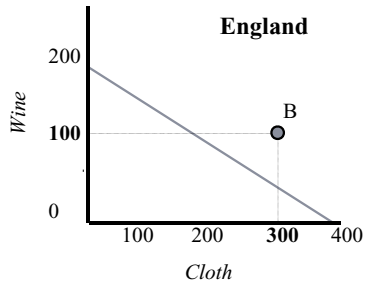
There once was a country named "Portugal." Portugal had labor time, grapevines and sheep. Portugal needed to choose how much wine she[2] wanted to produce, and how much woolen cloth. To be both "well clothed" and "well drunk," she wanted to be able to consume a hundred bolts of cloth and a hundred barrels of wine. Alas, however, if she tried to produce a hundred bolts of cloth, she would use up all her resources and be able to produce no wine at all! And if she produced a hundred barrels of wine, she would only have enough resources left over to produce fifty bolts of cloth. Poor Portugal!

Figure 1[3]



There also was once a somewhat bigger country called "England." England also had labor time, and grapevines, and sheep. Due to the cool climate, England's sheep were nice and wooly. His grapevines, however, were not as vigorous as Portugal's. To be both well clothed and well drunk, England wanted to be able to consume 300 bolts of cloth and a hundred barrels of wine. Alas, however, if he tried to produce 300 bolts of cloth, he would not have enough resources to produce the amount of wine that he wanted. If he tried to produce a hundred barrels of wine, he would not have enough resources to produce the desired amount of cloth. Poor England!

Figure 2



But wait, there is hope for our story's protagonists yet!

A wizard with the Wisdom of Solomon entered the scene. "Portugal," he said, "You specialize in producing wine. England, you specialize in producing cloth."

The countries, desperate to achieve their desired bundles of cloth and wine, complied with the wizard's advice. Portugal produced 200 barrels of wine and England produced 400 bolts of cloth.

"But I'm cold!" said Portugal.

"And I'm thirsty!" said England.

The wizard replied, "Now, Portugal, you give a hundred barrels of wine to England, and England, you give Portugal a hundred bolts of cloth in return." (Illustrated in Table 1.)

Table 1

Specialization
Portugal produces 200 wine, no cloth.
England produces 400 cloth, no wine.
↓
They trade 100 wine for 100 cloth.
↓
Portugal can consume 100 wine and 100 cloth
England can consume 100 wine and 300 cloth
"Gains from Trade"

The two countries engaged in trade, and behold, they each magically found themselves with exactly the combinations of cloth and wine they most wanted. Portugal now had a hundred barrels of wine she had produced herself, and, from England, a hundred bolts of cloth. England now had the hundred barrels of wine he got from Portugal, and still had 300 bolts of cloth to keep for himself. The two countries were so happy they threw a big party and danced all night.

The moral of the fable is: everyone can be made better off through specialization and free trade.

The power of a fable

That is the story of how specialization and exchange, through the use of "free markets" and "free trade" make production efficient and consumers happy. The story really hasn't changed since David Ricardo first articulated it, though it has occasionally been dressed up with fancier titles like "the theory of comparative advantage" and discussion of "opportunity cost," "gains from trade," and "economic integration." (And the line about dancing all night is usually left out in the textbooks.)

But behind any explanation from an economist that "free trade" is "good for people" is some elaboration of this old fable. The free market economists' recommendation is not, at its core, based on anything more than the fable—not on fancier models, not on historical studies, not on empirical studies of contemporary economies. The belief that free trade is good, always and everywhere, with no need to consult history or evidence, relies on nothing more than the insight about market magic (presumably) "demonstrated" in the fable of Portugal and England.

It is crucially important to recognize that the models that economists create are partial, created, always somewhat fictional representations of whatever phenomena economists think are important to explain.

What is really spectacular is how this little, simple story has come to be so powerful! The belief that "free trade is best," based on this fable, is now guiding policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and affecting the lives of millions of people around the world. Why?

One reason is that it can serve the interests of those who have the most to gain, financially, from lowered trade barriers and unrestrained capital flows. Those with personal business interests in trade, however, and the politicians they influence, seem to have a rather relaxed attitude about actually apply-

ing "free trade" in practice. The actions of George W. Bush's administration concerning trade in steel, lumber, orange juice and many farm products show that the rhetoric of "free trade" in fact tends to be used when it is convenient and disregarded when it is not, by many in business and politics.

The most consistent voice behind this argument seems to come from academically trained professional economists. To investigate the source of the fable's strength within the discipline, we have to ask how the discipline itself came to be shaped.

Is economics a science?

Most economists in the mainstream of the discipline like to think of themselves as scientists, who reveal hard economic "laws" through the application of rigorous scientific practices. Free trade economists would like to believe that the tale of two countries is not a literary fable, but rather an illustration of a timeless principle. Some call it "the law of comparative advantage." Behind this idea that economists simply interpret the "laws" underlying economic functioning lies a very important philosophical assumption—the assumption that the economy is, at heart, a machine. The idea that all of nature could be thought of as a clockwork mechanism, functioning according to predictable forces, in principle describable in equations, was important in the rise of early European science in the period of the Enlightenment. It seems to have held on strongly in economics, even when questioned, if not entirely dismissed, more recently within the physical sciences themselves.

The fact that the clockwork image of the world lends itself to the use of mathematical equations and graphs serves an important purpose in maintaining the aura of "scientificity" around conclusions such as "free trade is good." Neoclassical economists claim to have privileged knowledge about how the economy really works, and hide behind a wall of mathematics when challenged. If references to the elegant results of Ricardian theory (that is, to the fable just discussed) does not supply sufficient intimidation, then they might pour on "general equilibrium theory," "Pareto optimality," "first fundamental theorem of welfare economics," and other scientific-sounding jargon, dressed up in theorems and equations.

There is another, more satisfactory image of science. This one does not assume a clockwork reality or rely solely on cool methods for objectivity. It takes as its starting point a notion of science as inquiry, as guided by the desire to make sense of the world we are in, in order to live in it better, wher-

ever that may lead in terms of theories. The trademark of such inquiring science—what many would argue is real science—is an openness to having a theory proved wrong or inadequate by others.

Openness to being proved wrong is completely lacking in the dogmatic free-trade view, grounded as it is in the faith that the tale of two countries tells us "all we need to know." This "gains from trade" fable is internally logical, it is true. But held to religiously and exclusively, it is dogma, not science.

Gender and value

How did mainstream economics become so narrow and dogmatic? Many scholars have raised criticisms against the neoclassical stranglehold on economics—against its narrowness in methodology, and against the simplistic and often welfare-reducing policy pronouncements that arise from following a naive belief in the intrinsic goodness of markets. These include many economists from among the "heterodox" schools that exist at the margin of academic economics, including institutionalist, Marxist, socio- or humanistic, post-Keynesian and ecological approaches. Even within the mainstream, some economists who accept most of the approach of neoclassical economics seek to modify it at the edges, with increased attention to (so-called) "market failures," "information problems," and—on occasion—actual empirical and historical evidence. Yet such critiques face an uphill battle.

Why is it that attempts to make economics more realistic, more human, to make it a more adequate tool for promoting human flourishing, run into such trouble? Feminist economists, beginning in the early 1990s, have pointed out how the value system of academic economics reflects judgments about value that run throughout dominant Western contemporary social understandings, and are intimately linked to notions of gender.[4] In particular, what is relevant for this issue is how gender works cognitively—how gender serves as a way we organize how we see the world around us, even in areas far removed from issues of maleness and femaleness.

Feminist economists have drawn on literature on gender and notions of scientific practice in general, by such authors as Evelyn Fox Keller[5] and Sandra Harding.[6] They had pointed out how objectivity, separation, logical consistency and individual accomplishment all have a masculine cultural connotation. Similarly, mathematics, abstraction, lack of emotion and science itself

have long been culturally associated with rigor, hardness—and masculinity. Meanwhile, subjectivity, connection, "intuitive" understanding, cooperation, qualitative analysis, concreteness, emotion and nature have been associated with weakness, softness—and femininity.

Applied to economics, it is clear that an androcentric gender bias has also been behind the choice of definition of mainstream economics and its choice of methods. To see this in a simple way, note the splits in Tables 2 and 3 (adapted from Nelson 1992, 1996):

Table 2

The Neoclassical Definition of Economics

Core	***Margin***
Public (market)	Private (family)
Wants	Needs
Efficiency	Distribution, Fairness
Individual Choice	Social and Political Constraints

Table 3

Preferred Methods

Core	***Margin***
Precise	"Vague"
Mathematical	Verbal
Abstract	Concrete

Gender/Sex Associations

Masculine	Feminine

In mainstream economics, for example, the unpaid work of women within households and communities is marginalized by a focus on markets as the *locus* of "economic" activity. Likewise, the idea that people have real needs, and that poverty prevents people from living full lives, is neglected. In recent decades a popular definition of economics has been "the study of how people make choices, given unlimited wants and scarce resources." Neoclassical economists have taken issues of choice and efficiency as their focus, leaving questions of distribution and fairness aside as merely "social" or "political." The result of defining economics in terms of markets and rational choice modeling is a discipline heavy on quantification and precision.

Note that in contemporary Western society the cultural gender associations are predominantly of masculinity and "hardness" for the left-hand column and femininity or "softness" for the right-hand column. The intellectual standards of the economics profession appear to reflect the larger cultural biases concerning gender and value—making central what is associated with ideas of masculinity, and marginalizing what is associated with ideas of femininity.

The alternative suggested here involves redefining the discipline, radically rethinking associations of gender and value, and investigating how these play out in our definitions of acceptable subjects, assumptions and methods.

An alternative definition of economics is to think of the discipline as being about how societies organize themselves to provide for the provisioning and flourishing of life. This sort of definition encompasses both market and non-market activity, both acts of choice and economic outcomes resulting from oppressive power or norms. If such a discipline were also open to using whatever methodological tools lent insight, then we might finally get somewhere.

To arrive at such a practice, however, involves really getting past long-entrenched gender biases, and the ways these have distorted our perceptions and language. It would not be very effective, for example, to argue against "precision" if the only perceived alternative is "vagueness." The definitions and perceptions themselves must undergo a transformation.

The gender/value compass

This analysis is about cultural understanding concerning gender—that is, perceptions of masculinity or femininity—rather than about biological sex. It is not that women have tended to raise these particular questions about the value system of economics because we bring something different (via our genes or brain functions)—that we are more intuitive, emotional, etc. Rather, it is mostly a case of the masculinist biases being far more obvious to those outside the system.

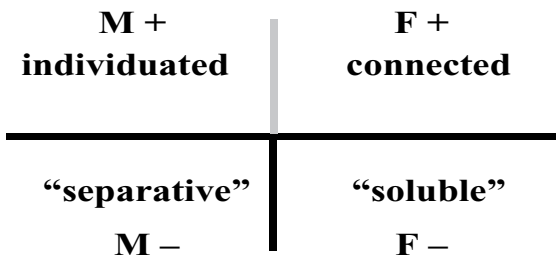
To the extent we cognitively associate certain characteristics with gender, the culturally dominant tendency is to associate masculinity with superiority, and femininity with inferiority or lack. What if we thought of there being both positive and negative aspects of characteristics perceived as "masculine," and similarly for those perceived as "feminine"?

For example, take the emphasis in the neoclassical model on agents as individual, autonomous "choosers," as contrasted to beings subject to—or

even formed by—their social and political environments. This harkens back to a long tradition in Western thought of regarding individual autonomy as the sign of masculine maturity, while dependence or interdependence are regarded as signs of inferiority or immaturity, more reminiscent of the situation of women and children. In fact, the presumed autonomy of men has always been built on a traditional support system of women who raise children, cook, clean, care for the ill, etc.—but all invisibly, so as not to challenge the image of the heroic and self-made man.

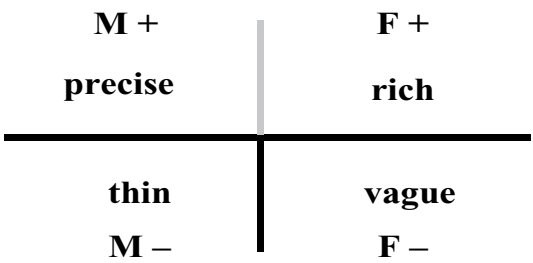
Feminist theorists have challenged this androcentric view of human nature, noting its mythical aspects. What is needed instead of either extreme is the development of ways to think beyond this dualism—to think of people as both individuated and connected, as "individuals-in-relation" (Figure 3). Feminist economists and sociologists are among those exploring how we can progress in our thinking beyond the images of hyper-individuated, "separative" selves, and hyper-connected, "soluble" selves.[7]

Figure 3



The gender/value compass changes the terms of the argument. Moving beyond the usual association of masculinity with superiority and femininity with inferiority, it breaks gender and value associations into separate dimensions. For example, instead of "precise" vs "vague," the compass (Figure 4) suggests that a valid attempt to reach precision, when possible, can be balanced by an equally valid attempt to achieve maximum richness—maximum assurance that all important factors are being taken into account, whether they can be fit into a mathematical model or not. Both the failings of overly thin and narrow analysis, and overly vague analysis, could be avoided.

Figure 4



In practice, this means that the mathematical modeling and simplicity of analysis preferred by mainstream economists need to be balanced by a willingness to dig deeper into the richness of qualitative and historical work.

Emphases and omissions

The fable of "gains from trade" can be used to illustrate in more detail how the value biases about "precision" vs "richness," "masculine" vs "feminine," have influenced the choices made by mainstream economists. Any creation of a story that purports to relate to the real world involves assumptions and interpretations, the highlighting of some parts of reality and the setting aside of others. The way these decisions about what to emphasize and what to hide are made reflects, in turn, the underlying value system of the discipline.

For example, what is emphasized, and what is left out, in the fable of Portugal, England and the wizard? How do these emphases and omissions reveal, in detail, the value system of economics?

The tale of two countries emphasizes a few concepts that are held in high esteem within the profession:

- Choice
- Efficiency
- A positive role for markets (specialization and exchange)
- Precise results from mathematical modeling.

The story is about how each country chooses its production and consumption levels, and how free markets lead to efficiency in production and con-

sumption. The story can be illustrated with graphs and mathematics: the result looks clean and elegant. These are characteristics, as we have discussed, that are highly valued within the profession.

What is left out in the fable? Many things are, including:

- History, constraints and institutions
- Distribution, power and fairness
- Interdependence, needs and vulnerability
- Actual observation of real world results over time.

One might consider some examples of how these could change the nature of the story and its moral.

History and institutions

In real historical time, countries do not meet up with a wizard and solve their economic problems once and for all by making clever rational choices. Countries enter into relations with other countries through actual relations of trade—or of conquest, or of colonization. Colonization, for example, may leave a country with an infrastructure of roads and ports that give it a created "advantage" in depleting its mineral resources, whereas a more truly rational approach to creating long-term economic well-being in the country might point towards different areas of specialization. Looking toward the future, the fact that technological changes and institutional innovations may affect some sectors more than others, and may cause unpredictable shifts in future costs and revenues, can in addition point toward the wisdom of retaining some diversification in production.

Distribution

Distributional issues were finessed in the story by having the wizard determine the distribution of the gains from trade. In fact, if England is bigger and more powerful (perhaps militarily) than Portugal, there is no need for it to settle for the division set out by the wizard. England could, for example, use its power to demand that Portugal give it the hundred barrels of wine, but accept only sixty bolts of cloth in return. Portugal would still find it to her advantage to accept this offer rather than go it alone—sixty bolts of cloth is better than the fifty she

could produce herself, along with the desired level of wine production. But just because trade is voluntary does not mean that it is fair.

While Portugal may be able to find other buyers for her wine, the large numbers of perfectly informed buyers and sellers needed to change the story from one of bilateral bargains to "perfect competition" is, of course, unlikely to occur in reality.

If the countries were to follow free-trade policies, the result would include the sudden unemployment of English wine makers and Portuguese cloth makers. Economists tend to finesse the within-country distributional issues by asserting that the efficiency gains would be big enough to compensate the losers for their losses, in principle. Whether the "in principle" would ever become "in actuality," however, is considered a political, not an economic, problem. Similarly, problems of unemployment are dismissed by assuming that labor markets are such that everyone unemployed can move smoothly and quickly into a new job.

Interdependence

The implications of interdependence are not investigated in the fable. Interdependence can have its good side—traders may learn how to get along in a civilized way since there are mutual gains to be made—but it can also have its bad side. The weaker a country is relative to its trading partners, and the more important the goods imported are to the survival of its people, the more vulnerable it is to market fluctuations. Trading coffee or fiber for food looks good when the terms of trade are favorable, but can lead to disaster when they are not.

Observation

An economist who does seriously look at historical evidence and at the experience of contemporary economies will notice that, while "gains from trade" do exist, real life is much more complicated than the fable suggests. Economists Dani Rodrik[8] of Harvard and Alice Amsden[9] of MIT, for example, are among those who have made empirical studies of the relation between trade "openness" and economic performance and growth. They find that the relation between the two is much weaker than the fable would suggest. Even those countries that have built prosperous economies around an export orientation very often made heavy use of tariffs and state planning in the early stages of their commercial transformation.

Likewise, economists who observe that the real world includes problems of poverty, gender disparity, inhumane forms of labor and ecological degradation notice that the simple fable does not encompass their concerns. Nor does the fable raise any opportunity for questioning the nature, democratic or otherwise, of the institutions involved in expanding free trade.

Conclusion

What if economists took a fresh look at economic issues, entertaining the possibility that the world just might not be in accord with the favored, precise methods? What if advocates, grant- and policymakers demanded that economists work with an expanded notion of "rigor" that includes not just attention to precision, but attention to richness as well?

The questions of gender and economic integration are not just questions that can be answered by the tale of two countries, nor by any other simple story. To get to analyses that are helpful, however, requires a steady, confident understanding of what real science and real knowledge are about. It requires a willingness to dig into the messy details, to deal with the complex institutions, and to face the challenges of power and interdependence. What is most important is to shake off the idea that the economy is an impersonal machine whose rules we must simply learn and submit to, and recognize that we are bound together in an ever-evolving economy, with institutions that can be worked on and changed, and on which our well-being—as individuals and as global society—all depend.

Notes

[1] Isabella Bakker (ed.), *The Strategic Silence: Gender and Economic Policy* (London: Zed Books, 1994); Nilufer Çagatay, Diane Elson and Caren Grown, "Introduction," special issue on gender, adjustment and macroeconomics, *World Development*, 23 (11) 1996. Diane Elson (ed.), *Male Bias in the Development Process* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).

[2] I refer to Portugal as "her" and England as "him" because this makes it easy to recycle the fable in another context. Substituting "wife" and "home production" for "Portugal" and "wine," and "husband" and "market production" for "England" and "cloth," the story comes out the same, with the wife specializing in the home and the husband in the market.

[3] Notice that with her own resources, Portugal could produce anywhere along or below the Production Possibilities Frontier line, but Point A (desired consumption) is out of reach. A similar principle applies to England in Figure 2.

[4] Marianne A. Ferber and Julie A. Nelson, *Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory and Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Marianne Ferber and Julie A. Nelson, *Feminist Economics Today: Beyond Economic Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[5] Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflection on Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

[6] Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

[7] Julie A. Nelson, "Separative and Soluble Firms: Androcentric Bias and Business Ethics," in Ferber and Nelson, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 81–99. Paula England, "Separative and Soluble Selves: Dichotomous Thinking in Economics, " in *ibid.*, pp. 33–59. England and Nelson picked up the terminology of "separative" vs "soluble" from theologian Catherine Keller, *A Broken Web* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

[8] Dani Rodrik, "Ruling Out National Development? States, Markets and Globalization," remarks made on the occasion of his receipt of the Leontief Prize at Tufts University, on November 21, 2002. **ase.tufts.edu/gdae/about_us/rodrik_remarks.html**, accessed May 2, 2003.

[9] Alice Amsden, "Ruling Out National Development? States, Markets and Globalization," remarks made on the occasion of her receipt of the Leontief Prize at Tufts University, on November 21, 2002. **ase.tufts.edu/gdae/about_us/amsden_remarks.html**, accessed May 2, 2003.

What will Happen to Kenya's Sugar Producers?

George Arende

One of the effects of unfair trade under economic globalization is evident in the sugar industry in Kenya. Kenya has five sugar factories, producing 400,000–450,000 tons of sugar annually. The country needs to import an additional 200,000 tons each year for its domestic consumption. Large transnational companies and importers want sugar to be imported into Kenya on a free market basis. But if large quantities of imported sugar flood the market, local producers lose out.

The situation is compounded by the fact that the sugar barons who have formed cartels in the lucrative import business have powerful political connections, making it difficult for the government regulatory authorities to do their work effectively. But as was said by a government minister, who had been threatened if he did not allow this flow of imported,

We cannot allow a few importers to mess up the livelihoods of over five million citizens who depend on the sugar industry […]. We have registered more than 100 local importers, allowing more people to participate in the business of sugar imports. If you make it a free-for-all affair, one of these merchants is capable of bringing in the whole of the 200,000 tons in one month. The local factories will not be able to move sugar and consequently fail to pay farmers on time. We have to harmonize imports with local production.

The large importers have mounted a major campaign either to circumvent the orderly system introduced to monitor imports or to have the regulatory board thrown out altogether.

Voices from some LWF Member Churches

A feature of this LWF study process has been to encourage member churches to indicate the effects of economic globalization in their context. Many responses have been shared through this process, a few of which are excerpted here.

From a response by the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Slovakia:

> Globalization […] dramatizes the interdependence of people […] however it also has its dangers. Supra-national actors, who are not accountable to anyone, may use knowledge to their own advantage. Commercial competition has begun to influence the traditions of Slovakia. The mass media present a picture of a certain lifestyle, influencing people to perceive these as "needs." Yet we recognize that our only choice is between going along or being left behind. Our country continually seeks ways to benefit from globalization. Loss of cultural uniqueness can mean loss of human dignity […]. Globalization increases our worries about the brain drain—it is tempting for people to go where they can find jobs and better pay. In the past, educational institutions concentrated more on science, but today on business management.

From a response by the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Czech Republic:

> The small firms are being edged out by large chains. Foreign investors come and give our people jobs. Agriculture is disadvantaged because, unlike other European countries, it receives little subsidy from the state.

From a teacher in Medan, Indonesia, from the Simalungun Protestant Christian Church:

> Economic globalization has brought a profound sense of hopelessness in many aspects that continue to bring suffering, misery and death for millions. People who cannot develop their human potential will be left behind. They cannot compete with others. Many children from poor families in the rural areas cannot afford to go to school.

From a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia:

> Transnational companies are putting national industries out of business. This along with drug trafficking constitutes the main effects of economic globalization, which our people view as a form of "terrorism."

From a member of the Lutheran Church in Nigeria:

> Under globalization, our government is subsidizing our domestic industries so they can compete on the global market.

From a pastor/teacher of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana:

> In many developing countries, globalization has led to the rise of ethnic-based movements, and trends toward fundamentalism, as people are now forced to depend on traditional systems for support and survival. In some cases, structural adjustment programs have led to serious economic and social upheavals supported by at least three decades of externally imposed militarization during the Cold War.

From a member of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church:

> The major obstacle I see hindering the church from critiquing what is occurring is fear. Our church leaders are afraid of openly condemning bad actions and policies, for fear that they will be killed.

From "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All," a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

> As a church we confess that we are in bondage to sin and submit too readily to the idols and injustices of economic life. We often rely on wealth and material goods more than God and close ourselves off from the needs of others. Too uncritically we accept assumptions, policies and practices that do not serve the good of all. […] Who we are in Christ places us in tension with priorities given to money, consumption competition, and profit in our economic system.

From a report on consultations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada:

> Overall, there is a sense that our societies in Canada and in the world are out of balance, that the insatiable drive for unfettered growth and profit by large corporations is too dominant while the important decisions affecting our relationships to each other, whether across the street or around the world, are less impacted by the values of social and ecological justice.
>
> The effects of economic globalization in Canada are reflected in employment (e.g., while two-thirds of the labor force worked full-time a generation ago, now only about half the workforce have full-time work) in eroding wage/salary levels, declining purchasing power of income, a drop in spending for of public goods and a greater concentration of wealth.
>
> In communities where there is high unemployment and possible further job losses, a lot of people feel impotent and powerless which is turn leaders to resentment and anger. When internalized, it can lead to illness, nervous breakdown and family conflict and breakup.
>
> Economic globalization has weakened the bonds that hold people and communities together. In the face of tremendous pressures to reduce all relationships to economic ones, there is a role for the churches to play in insuring the public space for safeguarding our important relationships, for renewing the ones that are broken, and in vigorously asserting the importance of relationships as necessary to our humanness.

From a seminar of international students at the Wittenberg Center of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in Germany:

> Anything that benefits one culture over another is not globalization but domination […]. Increasing global competition results in a decreasing sense of solidarity. By acting on the basis of the preferential option for the poor, the church can develop a critical and dialogical approach in political activity and together with the marginalized at local, national and global levels, engage in dialogue with the leading actors in economic globalization.

From "Towards the Common Good," a 1999 statement by the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (1999).

> The present situation is a cause for concern. The concept of justice, which was crucial for the builders of the welfare state, has had to give way to the freedom emphasized by free market liberals […]. The traditional ethics of responsibility has disappeared and been replaced by a short-term ethics of results, whereby an act is judged according to the gain produced and damage caused. Whereas according to the ethics of responsibility the human person has an inherent value, he or she is now being turned into an object which has merely instrumental value. Such value is used as a measure in everyday situations, for example in hospitals and in the care for the elderly, and everywhere where money is at stake. The ethics of results does not allow space for the strengthening of the individual's personal identity, but increases emptiness and rootlessness. People lose the capacity for self-understanding and for contact with the environment and with others.
>
> The basic postulate of a market economy is that each market partner seeks primarily his or her own interest. This is considered economic rationality. Its blind spot is that it does not take into account the influence of individual or corporate actions on the welfare of others. Moreover, it presupposes that a human being is inherently selfish and seeks only his or her own satisfaction.
>
> To be human, however, is much more than to be rational in economic matters and to strive for one's own interest. In the first place, it rests upon the natural interaction of a person with his or her fellow human beings, upon being heard and accepted and upon being able to serve others. An unselfish need to share and to assume responsibility for common causes and for the lives of others is a deep-seated element of being human.
>
> Markets do not give the individual much chance to put himself or herself in another person's place. […] Markets are by and large very little interested in the requirements of justice and of a life worthy to be called human […].
>
> A weak point in neoliberal thinking is the assumption that the freedom of all can continually increase. In reality, this is not the case. A market economy as such cannot prevent the freedom of some increasing at the expense of others. A market economy makes it possible to buy freedom. When some purchase more of it than many others, the latter are more tightly restricted. They become the means by which the wealthy

realize their ambitions. Those who cannot benefit from the markets are unable to be free and active partners within the system. The increase of the well-being of an individual at the expense of others is in conflict with the moral foundation of society, with the Golden Rule. It is an expression of selfishness and greed in so far as it leads to the deterioration of the living conditions of others.

According to neoliberalism, no one has the right to interfere with the property, health and well-being of another. You must not harm another person […]. Have not the rights of many people to make their living been harmed in recent years in the name of economic growth and gain? The rights of people have been violated first by irresponsible economic activity and then by making them pay the bills for these "business deals." We can ask whether even the minimum requirements of negative rights have been respected. Many people's jobs have been eliminated and living conditions have worsened, while at the same time for others—fewer than before—well-being has continued, and even increased. Positive rights, which include the right to earning one's living, the right to education and to healthcare, are as important as negative rights. When fundamental rights are at stake, negative and positive rights must not be separated.

It is difficult for individual enterprises to behave ethically, if the whole system of the market economy simply ignores responsibility for the state of society and the environment. Responsible behavior becomes a practical expression of the meaning of the Golden Rule by showing that no section of society and no part of creation may use other parts for their own benefit. Every part must contribute, by its own behavior, to the common good […]. Economic growth and competition do not in themselves further the common good.

The basic structure of the welfare state is important for our church, not least because it is rooted in our tradition. Early in the period of the Reformation programs were launched in our towns to eradicate poverty and marginalization. Before that era it had been the common understanding that each individual should strive for the highest good, under the best conditions supported by the people closest to him or her. The pattern of thought was individualistic and moved from the bottom upwards. The discovery of the Reformation was that God distributes the gifts of creation to humanity. The direction was from God downwards. It was the social responsibility of Christians to follow the same principle. As a community they had to eliminate poverty and marginalization and to transmit the good received from above to those in need according to the principle of love of one's neighbor.

In the beginning, Lutheran social thinking included two key themes, which are still valid. The town or local commune forms a whole. All of it, under the leadership of its civil servants and officials, serves the common good and follows the Golden Rule, i.e., tries to place itself in the situation of the people in need. This is best realized when all activity is motivated by love for one's neighbor, which in turn stems from the gospel.

The point of departure for the principle of public authority is that most people, being inherently selfish, think first of their own interest. The community, i.e., the state and the commune, are called to combat such selfishness and to care for the deprived and those who are neglected. The Creator thus uses the public authority in order to ensure that the common good is distributed to as many as possible. Human selfishness tends to allow the accumulation of the good in the possession of a few.

A vision of life in community and the recognition of the role of public authority must again be brought into our common consciousness.

From the "The Bukoba Statement" by the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (2004):

[…] We urgently advise the government to plan a multi-sector approach in educating the masses about globalization through NGOs, the private sector and religious bodies. We have come to the bitter realization that due to the inadequate preparations on how best to deal with globalization, Tanzanian communities have become market places of all sorts of foreign commodities including bad and destructive cultural values.

We are also worried that knowledge of the philosophy of globalization is limited to élites and a few rich people in urban areas. Outside those groups, the language of globalization has become mere rhetoric in the speeches of political leaders and élite.

It is evident that globalization has contributed to weakening the efforts of poor people to free themselves from poverty. This is because, while it is being said that globalization has facilitated free market and economic growth, it might be said also that globalization has alienated others (especially in the developing countries) from the alleged achievements. We recognize that globalization as a game has its rules. Ev-

ery player of this game must be versed with the rules. Globalization rules are set and determined by the few who benefit from them and they do not incorporate others in setting those rules. As a result, the rules of globalization are seen to benefit the few players, protecting them against liabilities of globalization.

Globalization has come with people, their culture and their ethical codes. Communication networks, televisions, literary works and other modes of mass communication are facilitating this. Hence, our society is rapidly changing at a pace not manageable by any traditional means. Since most Tanzanians are not well versed with the rules, they end up blindly imitating foreign cultures […]. Hence, our national identity and pride are rapidly being eroded.

Although globalization is seen to be inevitable, we are proposing that the government and all institutions in the country should invest in building the capacity of our people to withstand global pressure and minimize the negative aspects of its impact on our people and society. Taking care of those who have been victimized by globalization can do this. It can effectively be implemented through school curricula from primary school through higher education. The church is ready to cooperate with the government in carrying this out.

From the Church of Norway, Council Ecumenical and International Relations (2002):

Economic development requires not only capital, but also accountability and predictability. Too much capital in countries with weak public institutions for redistribution can actually contribute to increased inequalities, increased corruption and increased social tensions. […] Responsible handling of resources and wealth is as important in a poor country as in a rich country. We […] warn against the externally enforced "free market economy" prescriptions which many developing countries have sought to implement. […] Rich countries themselves only to some extent actually practice the policy they demand that other countries should exercise. […] We must work for an economy that aims to improve the situation for the poorest among us, and that adapts to the vulnerability of nature.

For us here in Norway, enormous oil resources, as well as predictable public policies have contributed to a level of wealth that we have not witnessed before. How-

ever, still some in Norway suffer from the lack of efficient mechanisms for distribution that can balance the emphasis on market based solutions that create high vulnerability for some. There must be public dialogue on how to set certain limits for economic growth in Norway. Moderation, temperance and self-denial are crucial values both in Christianity and in the labor movement in Norway. In an age of excessive consumption, such values are under pressure.

We urge the Government of Norway […] to seek to implement:

International fees that can generate new capital to finance development.

Confirm that access to clean water is a human right.

Promote and fund debt cancellation for the poorest countries.

Assure that human rights and environmental conventions are given priority when negotiating and implementing trade and related agreements, including in regulating patents.

Assure that transnational corporations operating in developing countries do not exploit the lack of adequate legislation, but keep high standards for working conditions and for the environment.

Promote access to capital for poor people in order to build new communities that do not foster economic dependence.

We demand that the current unjust structures of the global economy be transformed in order to serve the needs of the poor. We want to work with others in our call to depart from an economic system that contributes to concentration of power and capital among the few and the exploitation of the resources of the world.

Economic Globalization as Experienced by the Poor in India

Chandran Paul Martin

India is currently living on a three-lane highway of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Although these fast lanes posit the ace of economic growth, the vast majority of people have been left untouched. While wealth has certainly increased, it has also become more concentrated. Globalization has worked well for a few, but for millions social, economic and political justice in the global village remain an unrealized dream.

India continues to have the largest number of people living below the poverty line and the greatest number of children suffering from malnutrition. The three fast lanes have failed to provide safe pedestrian crossings for those who lack power.

An entire Indian government and its allies lost an election on the twin economic slogan of an "India shining/feel-good factor" campaign. Basic economic issues decided the elections. For the poor, starvation, poverty, suicides of farmers in several parts of the country and unemployment were the core election challenges. The question is not whether poverty has increased or decreased, but why poverty still exists.

There is an intrinsic relationship between the globalization of poverty and the processes of globalization. Economic globalization is linked to the creation of wealth and affluence at the expense of the abject poverty of the majority. According to John Mohan Razu, this symbiosis (interconnectedness) between poverty and globalization has long been evident in the widening gap between the privileged élite and the deprived classes. Churches must face the challenge of drawing a wealth line (what is too much) and not only a poverty line.

Globalization has been spreading its tentacles through forms of production and the capital market, especially through the operations of multinational corporations and multi-lateral financial institutions, where profit is the key word. This results in divisions in society between the "haves" and "have-nots," as well as in the unbridled exploitation of human and natural resources.

India is an appealing target for economic globalization because of (1) the availability of cheap labor, (2) the size of the Indian market, and (3) lax environmental and public health regulations and laws.

Even water has been privatized, commodified and exploited. One of the emerging critical challenges is water, as was highlighted at the 2004 World Social Forum at Mumbai. The conditionalities of the international financial institutions have paved the way for enhancing the value of private investments, in some cases up to seventy percent. The entry of private investment into the realm of water has created a huge, competitive "water market." Water now needs to be bought at a price. Water has become an important, increasingly scarce commodity; scarcity is one of the premises of modern capitalism.

New forms of corporate "landlordism" have resulted in growing anti-farmer and anti-labor policies and practices, which fundamentally negate the basic principles of land and labor reforms. Financial institutions direct the new policies and private investment is therefore increasing in the agrarian sector.

There has been a steady decrease in the state's investment in health and education, which essentially means that health and education have become private issues. Two important aspects of improving health care of any society are primary health care and public health care measures. In India today, these two aspects are directed by changes brought about by globalization. A market-oriented health care system has been aggressively introduced and the government is gradually alienating the poor from primary health care by the government. There is a gross neglect of rural heath care. More than a third of the Indian population is malnourished and in poor health.

Impact on the livelihood of Dalits[1]

With the privatization of education and the growing demand for management graduates and computer professionals on the job market, the Dalits have even less of a chance to receive vocational training. This is compounded by the discrimination they have long faced in Indian society. With the introduction of the contract system under privatization, even the Dalits' traditional occupations are being taken over by the highest bidder. There has been a serious reduction of jobs,both in the public and the private sector, and aggressive dis-investment policies and practices. Consequently, jobs for the Dalits are disappearing. Their economic future and social security are worrying. Economic liberalization offers limited or no prospects, only inadequate safety nets and palliatives in the form of anti-poverty programs, as pedestrian crossings on the three-lane highway.

Impact on Adivasis[2]/Tribals/Indigenous Peoples

The expanding nexus between state, international, financial institutions and market forces leading to the expansion of mega industries, large-scale mining, land consolidation, commercial cultivation, urban expansion and the transfer of waste lands for industrial use has resulted in the displacement of Adivasis from land and livelihood. Furthermore, this has led to the increased marginalization of women.

Adivasi identity is at the crossroads, due to their alienation from the forest, traditional knowledge and rapidly expanding urbanization. This alienation process also entails declining food security as more emphasis is being placed on cash crops instead of food crops.

There is also a conflict between individual rights and community rights which have traditionally governed the tribal communities. Their habitats have been relegated to the background. The process continues to rob the poor of their right to life and livelihood. Several million Adivasis have been displaced and dispossessed of their land and livelihood.

The mining of bauxite, uranium, zinc coal and other minerals, the construction of dams, theme parks and eco-tourism have left several millions homeless and uprooted. Several projects have deprived people of the fundamental rights to life. The three-pronged right to *Jal* (water), *Jungle* (forest) and *Jamin* (land) has been grossly violated. Also, through globalization, a consumerist monoculture has spread.

The integration of the Indian economy with international capitalism began with the structural adjustment programs—a set of conditionalities prescribed by the international financial institutions and processes. There has also been a withdrawal of subsidies and protections in the fields of agriculture and agrarian industries. A spate of "farmer suicides" has been triggered by this withdrawal. Conditionalities (SAPs) have resulted in more poverty, hunger and human rights abuse.

Some theological reflections

We seek justice for the poor. We affirm that we are one and united in Christ and hence, when one part of the people of God suffers, the image of God (*imago Dei*) is distorted. The pain and suffering due to injustice and inequalities must be on the agenda of the church.

Our theology of sharing (or justice) is based on the affirmation that all global resources are meant for all God's creation. The disparities are against the Christian principle of how God's resources should be distributed. The biblical precepts of the Jubilee are based on this affirmation. This is founded in our understanding of the Jubilee.

We cannot serve both God and mammon. Mammon fosters a spirituality of consumerism. The *ecclesia* as the assembly of God is in danger of being replaced by the global market. Luxury and spirituality become compatible, resulting in the endorsement of a theology of consumerism and a spirituality/theology of prosperity.

For the sake of maximum returns, churches have made unethical investments. Investments in companies dealing with armaments, agribusiness, genetic engineering, biotechnology and related industries should be carefully scrutinized.

We are called to be stewards who protect the environment. There needs to be a process of repentance (*metanoia*). This process of confession creates true fellowship (*koinonia*) and such a process necessarily results in true service (*diakonia*).

We discern the church's hesitancy to participate in people's struggles. In many instances churches have amassed huge fortune giving rise to the fundamental question, Can a wealthy church be on the side of the poor? Can there be rich Christians in an age of hunger?

More questions than answers

We are told that economic globalization is irreversible. In this case, must we accept and transform it in order to make its potential benefits available to the poor. Can a dynamic strategy be developed to deal with global trade and cash/capital flows to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth? Can the movement of global finance promote growth, redistribute resources, and increase employment and livelihood opportunities in the economy? Can there be a genuine and equitable globalization for the greater common good, shaping values and global democracy to ensure more accountability, transparency and justice? Can we through globalization redistribute opportunities and wealth leading to decreasing socio-economic inequalities? Growth associated with progressive distributional changes will have a greater impact on poverty than growth which leaves distribution unchanged.

We need to move in the direction of human globalization, a new vision of an inclusive globalization that works for everyone.

Notes

[1] Dalits in India have been the victims of the Indian caste system. They were termed as "untouchables and unclean." They make up more than seventeen percent of the Indian population. For several thousand years they have experienced discriminations based on exclusion as well as violation of their human rights. Dalits, according to the caste system, are ascribed vocations that has been associated traditionally with scavenging, as well as jobs associated with dealing with the skin and the dead. Economically, they continue to depend on the "caste" village for their life and livelihood. Atrocities continue to be committed against the Dalits day in and day out. A majority of the Dalits live below the poverty line.

[2] Adivasis, are also called the Tribals and at times referred to as Indigenous communities. They are traditionally associated with living in the forest. They have for centuries protected and nurtured the forests. They are entirely dependent on the forest for their life and livelihood. There are several Tribals/Adivasis communities in India.

Debt and Trade from a Latin American Church Perspective

Juan Abelardo Schvindt

Excerpted from a presentation at the 2004 North American consultation at Stony Point, USA.

To speak about poverty and riches, of social exclusion and inclusion, is to speak about a disadvantageous relationship. On the one hand, there are those who have concentrated technology and knowledge in a post-World War II framework of economic and political stability; on the other hand, there are those living under ongoing political instability and who have been subjected to aggressive external indebtedness.[1]

This process reveals two distortions. In the first place, the external debt has been generated by a financial process disconnected from the indebted countries' ability to pay. International trade was not committed to accept the products of those countries in order to secure their economic stability so that they could repay the debt. Secondly, Latin American countries constantly transfer their resources to service a debt, the principal of which they have already paid, but because of high interest rates, the debt never seems to be liquidated. As an instrument of exchange, trade becomes insecure and unfavorable to countries of the South. This is compounded by the technological divide and the brain drain, or emigration, from impoverished, indebted countries because of unemployment.

In the case of Argentina ...

The tremendous social, economic and political crisis in Argentina in 2001 represents a paradigmatic case. We saw wounded and dead persons on account of the army's brutal repression of the just claims of the civil society. Five presidents in less than fifteen days were followed by currency devaluation, defaulting on the debt and the loss of people's savings. The country was bankrupt. The international financial institutions, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) did not pay suffi-

cient attention to the signs that had anticipated this collapse—neither in Argentina, nor in other Latin American countries (Mexico, Brazil) or other parts of the world (such as Korea or Russia). At most, they responded by loaning them more money (thus, increasing the indebtedness) or by delaying the collection of payments, thus jeopardizing their own development. External debt became a sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. There are two aspects to this crisis, which originated in the 1976 military dictatorship: the external indebtedness and the forced disappearance of some 30,000 political and civil leaders. This means that in 2003, Argentina, a country of 37 million persons, 15 million of whom live below the poverty line, and with a twenty percent rate of unemployment, had a debt amounting to 140,655 million U.S. dollars.

Response of the church

In 1995, the Synod of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate, a church with congregations in Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina, noted that:

> The economic situation is a factor which every day has greater significance for the daily life of the families of our church. Unemployment, underemployment, and marginality are words that point not only to the need for diakonia, but also reflect our daily pastoral reality. We especially want to highlight the consequences of the socio-economic model on the elderly, who lack the minimal services to live with dignity, and on children who are abandoned and dispersed. Migration, family instability, lack of access to education, health and a full lif—these are not only problems we observe but are "the hard bread of tears with is on our tables.
>
> Frustration and hopelessness are expressed—in our families, in the increase of delinquency, in indifference towards corruption (institutional or personal), and in the increase in the so-called "social ailments" of alcoholism, drugs addiction and HIV/AIDS.
>
> The economic, political and social transformations are global in scope, through technology, the idolatry of efficiency, competitiveness, the dehumanization of business and production relations, and how these have affected all human activity.[2]

With regard to the situation Argentina faced in 2001, the ecumenical community responded to a 2002 roundtable called by the presidents, bishops and

moderators throughout the River Plate region of CLAI (Latin American Council of Churches). According to ACT/Action by Churches Together criteria, the crisis in Argentina could not be considered as a health and food "emergency." There was the expressed desire to have churches and agencies from the North join the church in speaking and taking actions in relation to governments and multilateral credit and trade institutions. The crisis in Argentina was not only caused by internal factors within the country, but also had a lot to do with growing external indebtedness, an unfavorable trade situation, and the country's inability to pay. Consensus is still being sought.

As the South/South Forum of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches stated in 2003 in Buenos Aires:

> The ideology and the domination of neoliberalism cause so much suffering, life sacrifice and irreversible destruction of the creation. They do this through the mechanism of the global capital market and both create and operate as a system of exclusion.[3]

Churches urgently need to face this new dogmatism of neoliberal pseudo-theology, not only in the economy but also on the cultural field which surrounds us, and to encourage a confession of faith, placing the gospel values of the Kingdom of God in favor of a full and abundant life for all human beings and the natural environment over all other things.

Notes

[1] According to the ANSA agency (8/6/2003): Over the last twenty years the Latin American countries have paid 1.4 billion U.S. dollars to service the external debt, five times more than the sum of the original debt initiated in the beginnings of the 1980s.

[2] *Cf*. IX Ordinary General Assembly and XXXII Synodal Conference of the Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata, 1995, p. 369,370 – Message of the XXXIII Synodal Conference and IX Ordinary General Assembly of the Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata to the Congregations – Nueva Helvecia, October 18-22, 1995, Colonia, República Oriental del Uruguay.

[3] From, *Faith Stance on the Global Crisis of Life*, 2003.

Hearing from LWF Field Programs

LWF World Service (WS) field programs are located in many of the most impoverished and tension-filled areas of the world, thereby providing an "on the ground" glimpse of the effects of economic globalization. Field programs see and respond to these in their daily work, and their experiences are shared through local and international networks.

This operational work of the LWF provides good examples that bear witness to the actual results of policies and practices of international financial institutions (e.g., WB and IMF), UN-related agencies, national governments and international business, and for holding them more accountable. Field programs in such places as Eritrea, India, Nepal, Peru, Swaziland, Uganda, Rwanda and Zimbabwe participate in networks that monitor Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs (PRSPs) of the WB and IMF.

At a hearing in Geneva, field representatives of these programs provided examples of how their settings are affected by economic globalization. What follows is an edited composite of what they said.

Communication technologies

This is a key example of the positive effects of globalization. The increasingly widespread use of mobile phones enables field programs to carry on work in remote places under difficult circumstances, in ways that would not have been possible previously.

Local production undercut

- In Kerala, India, where coconuts are abundant, green coconuts are now being imported from Malaysia and sold at lower prices than the locally grown ones.

- In Zambia, farmers have been put out of the cotton business by countries such as China. They are also now importing seed for corn, but fear the effects of genetically modified seeds.
- Each year, many Cambodians have insufficient supplies of food for months at a time. Yet, Cambodia was one of the first of the "least developed nations" to join the WTO, which emphasizes exportation to the global market. Subsistence farmers cannot compete on the global market. Respect for indigenous knowledge and contextual solutions are important. The government looks instead to a land concession approach to clear cut land, and displaces farmers in the process.
- Unfair agricultural subsidies, pesticide dumping, and genetically modified seeds remain challenges, along with land tenure and "land-grabbing" issues, lack of irrigation, and under-developed markets.
- Economists know that overproduction leads to lower prices. Why then did the WB encourage the overproduction of coffee in places like Vietnam? This has had disastrous effects on local producers in such places as Tanzania and Kenya, who must now try to survive only on subsistence farming, rather than also growing for export. A few companies now control most of the coffee trade.
- In Haiti where imports are cheaper than domestic production, upport strategies have been developed to increase local production, such as identifying markets for gourmet coffee.
- In Bangladesh, the LWF-related field program established a silk factory and trained local women to grow silk worms as an income generating activity. But now cheaper silk yarns are being imported from other countries, making this no longer economically viable.
- In many settings, literacy, marketing and production skill training are steps to help rural women compete on the global market. Creative ways need to be found to establish more sustainable markets for what they produce.

Can trade be made fairer?

- Government subsidies in the North make trade unfair. Whereas weak countries must lower trade barriers, the strong ones typically have not.
- Mozambique has great sugar production potential, which could help lift it out of poverty. Through a special European Union initiative

(Everything But Arms), Mozambique has had opportunity to sell sugar at nearly four times the world market price, thereby providing livelihood for many. According to a recent Church of Sweden investigation, questions remain regarding the labor standards, social and environmental impacts, i.e., whether increased production will mean further deforestation.

Exploitation of natural resources

- In Liberia, the rich resource of diamonds and timber are exported but the money from this is not being used for the development of the country.
- Angola's income from oil is comparable to that of Kuwait, but after years of war and investment in arms, the income is mortgaged. There has been outside pressure for the revenue from oil to be disclosed, but this was not followed up. What is the government doing with all the money?
- In Peru, the biggest gold mine in South America has been opened, in an area that previously was the fourth poorest in Peru. Four years later, this area has become even poorer. Now mining has extended to a mountain very important to the people, and is expected to damage the adjacent lake, the main source of drinking water. Two-hundred thousand people could lose their land, due to contamination. The people are protesting this exploitation of their natural resources.

The migration of people

- People migrate primarily in search of jobs or other means of livelihood. When women are asked why, they respond that they only want to see that their children will be better off.
- Previously people had the right to migrate in order to survive economically, but now this is severely restricted. And yet, cheaper products from elsewhere continue to be dumped on these same countries.
- In Guatemala, smuggling people and drugs have become major economic activities, along with receiving income from those who have migrated to the U.S.

- There is a serious brain drain of those who are educated and who then move to other countries, especially because of higher incomes or better living conditions.
- "Boat people" from Africa take enormous risks to reach to Europe. They pay huge sums just to get out. But the root causes of why they are leaving are not touched.

Privatization and democracy

- The WB and IMF impose conditionalities, such as that governments should no longer run public services (e.g., post offices, trains, utilities). These are sold to outside private companies, who do not hire previous government employees. This leads to higher unemployment.
- LWF field programs have been asked by governments to help prepare their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The WB sets up the criteria, to which governments need to respond. But the government needs to respond both to donors and to local communities.
- If democracy means people deciding, why is it that rules and standards are imposed on them from outside? That's not democratic! What kinds of African democracy might develop instead?
- In Rwanda, while the international community is making the government jump through hoops, the local communities have not been involved. There is no trickle-down effect; there remains a need for basic services.
- In Bangladesh, globalization has resulted in an increase in vested interests. The government tries to keep donors happy: the WB and IMF prescribe divestment and privatization. For example, the recent closing of jute mills has resulted in 30,000 unemployed. The WB requires the government to collect more taxes, but the WB pays no taxes. On the positive side, the WB has started village immersion projects giving their staff first-hand experience. The WB is starting to listen, but grassroots advocacy work remains key.
- In Angola, civil society has become more vocal with regard to human rights issues and in challenging the government regarding why there has been no investment in the social sector. However, the government has suppressed the opposition. How can it be held accountable? The most difficult is getting the government to hear people's voices.

Youth Perspectives: "Transformation through Participation"

For two years, youth from throughout the world participated in an LWF Youth in Church and Society program, "Transformation through Participation," in which they pursued local projects related to economic globalization. At their final meeting in Indonesia, they were interviewed by Ann-Christine Sievers regarding how they had been changed through this program. Excerpts from her interviews are featured here.[1]

Christine Mangale is a youth leader in a Nairobi congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya:

> "I am now more interested in the economic situation of my country and in things I never thought about previously. I now act accordingly […]. I only buy domestic products when I go shopping, so as to help the economy of my own country. Now that I know more about globalization, I see that change has to start with myself."

She described passing on her knowledge of economic globalization to the young population of Kenya as a great challenge. "Illiteracy had been a major problem." "The term 'globalization' is completely unknown. This is why we had to search for examples in our local area in order to make it comprehensible to them." She therefore attempted to clarify the problem of the local economy being destroyed by international competition and protectionism by using an example: "If you cultivate your field and harvest your crop to sell it on the market, but you notice that nobody wants to buy it because international fruit on the world market with the same quality standard is far cheaper, this is a negative consequence of globalization."

Her visit to Batam Island/Indonesia reminded her in many ways of the situation of the youth in her own country. Unemployment among the younger generation in spite of good qualifications, badly paid temporary jobs, and travelling long distances to work for just one U.S. dollar per day.

Roberto Carlos Albarracin from Buenos Aires, Argentina, is a student of political science:

> "Globalization is the new face of traditional colonialism, where power lies in the hands of multi-national businesses that oppress the lives of many people. Even governments cannot defend themselves, given the competition between business locations and variable conditions for investment […] people are dehumanized and degraded to objects of the capitalist system of economic accumulation."
>
> "In our country, people previously were rather passive and tended to seek a scapegoat they could blame for their woes." However, now he is seeing "people getting increasingly involved in politics and participating proactively in social movements and protests." The population of Argentina has become increasingly aware of its own situation, and how the adverse effects of neoliberal globalization are influencing this.

Ms. Benny Sinaga, has been a vicar in a congregation of the Protestant-Christian Batak Church, North-Sumatra, Indonesia:

> "I cannot simply stay at home and read the Bible. I need to get outside and take a look at the situation people are faced with, and see what is happening in this world right now, in this struggle for survival."
>
> The high cost of education is a major problem in Indonesia. It makes university studies for children from poorer backgrounds an unattainable luxury. Education is the most expensive aspect in the life of an Indonesian. A way out of poverty would be difficult without the Indonesian government implementing a structural change in the educational system to provide education free of charge for everyone. Education makes it possible for young people to take control of their lives; this is the only way to overcome passivity resignation to fate. "If you have wealth inside your house, it may be stolen from you, but nobody can steal the wealth you have in your mind."

Tim Barr is active in a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Houston, Texas:

> It is particularly important in the USA "to highlight issues so that people can start questioning […]. Generally speaking, people in the USA are pleased with the benefits of economic globalization, which they see as positive because they cannot see the

> disadvantages in other parts of the world. When they see the drawbacks, they blame these on laziness and corruption […]. A structural correlation between social status and personal success is still being denied […]. Life in the USA is still too good, and people are happy to continue their daily routines as they have always done […]. However, the disparity between rich and poor is becoming increasingly larger in the USA as well, and the danger of falling through the social net and living in poverty no longer limited to socially disadvantaged groups.
>
> When I in the news now see events that are happening in India, Bangladesh, Norway, or Liberia, I feel an inner urge to find out more and to get a better insight, because I know people in this program. Developing relationships is changing me more than anything else."

Harald Gunderson, from the Church of Norway, is an economics and political science student:

> "I believe that an academic approach and economic models are important, but economic globalization has until now almost exclusively been explained with these concepts. I think that this is wrong; it is important to say that people are the real issue here, and not the trade or financial systems. All of us need to see ourselves as active players in the process of economic globalization, and need to recognize that the developments in our own local context are part of the entire process, which in turn affects our own local context. In future, I would also like to see other young people increasingly questioning and challenging the power structures and their representatives, such as leading political, economic, social and church-related figures. They should demand an active role with the same rights and obligations, and make their voices heard."

Notes

[1] For the full interviews and more on publications from this program contact **berthelin@lutheranworld.org**.

Youth Perspectives: Unplugging Unemployment

From August 26 to 31, 2004, young people of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) met in Geneva, Switzerland for the Pre-Council Youth Workshop to explore the theme "Unplugging Unemployment: Youth Perspective." *The unemployment[1] situation of youth in the world demands critical attention and specific action within our communion.*

Why are we concerned about unemployment?

We discussed in light of the LWF Council theme, "*Growing Together, Growing Apart,*" and identified unemployment as contributing to people's growing apart. Differences in education, lifestyle, income or wealth resulting from unemployment lead to widening the gap between us. As Christians, we are called to point to the in-breaking of God's reign in the world. Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1–6) illustrates this point. All were given an opportunity to work, and although they worked for different amounts of time, they were all paid a wage sufficient to meet their basic needs.

Today, many struggle to find work or enough work to ensure their basic needs are met. Unemployment affects people of all religions, ages, races and classes, but it places a disproportionately heavy load on many young people. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 47 percent of the unemployed globally are between the ages of 15 and 24.[2] As young Council members and stewards, we have had personal experiences with unemployment and seen its devastating impact on our lives and communities, irrespective of region. We highlight the relevance of this issue for carrying out priority work dealing with, for example, globalization, human dignity and other specific related priority areas of the LWF through member churches.

What is the reality?

Unemployment among youth is an unrelenting problem everywhere. It contributes to political instability, higher crime rates, low self-esteem, psychological distress, and lack of food, shelter, health care and education.

The purpose of employment is reflected in two important and distinct dimensions:

- The fundamental need to have basic necessities met (most often through fair wages for workers), and
- The need to fulfil one's vocation or calling, which is not necessarily linked to paid employment.

Lack of work and low wages often have a spiraling effect, beginning with an individual's psycho-social trauma and finally resulting in the suffering of a whole community. It is a complex problem with significant financial and socio-economic implications. It is also the effect of economic globalization and strong corporate influence.

As a communion of churches, we are called to preach the gospel while advocating care and support for those who are suffering. Therefore, unemployment demands our consideration and actions.

Unemployment has many faces and its impact varies from country to country, but it has damaging effects everywhere. Therefore, we advocate attending to these differences by developing solutions and approaches appropriate to each context to manage and resolve this issue.

How should the church be involved?

We live in communion and are called to respond to the needs and suffering of our brothers and sisters. As Christians, we are called to preach the gospel. We encourage our churches to preach the often forgotten biblical texts that offer alternative models and viewpoints of work, labor and employment.[3]

The churches are also called to preach the Word that all of us are God's children, loved and created by God, and the recipients of God's grace through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, all people are precious, regardless of their employment, financial or any other status. On such

biblical and theological bases, the youth ask the churches to incorporate the following as part of their ministry:

- Becoming informed about the different situations members of the LWF communion are facing. This includes making room for the voices of the voiceless, specifically the voices of the unemployed, within our congregations and communities.
- Helping all people, especially young people, to recognize their call or life vocation, and encouraging them to live out, as much as possible, that call through voluntary work, as well as formal employment.
- Identifying and supporting the unemployed, accompanying them on their journey and connecting them to the necessary resources.
- With these steps, we hope to witness by word and deed to the in-breaking of God's reign in the world.

Notes

[1] Unemployment is defined as those currently looking for work. It does not include those who are students or those who have opted out of the labor force.

[2] *Global Employment Trend for Youth 2004*, International Labour Organization, 11 August 2004.

[3] Examples include: Jesus calling Simon, Andrew, James and John as disciples, Mk 1:16–20; responsibilities of servanthood, Lk 17:7–10; parable of the buried talents, Mt 25:14–30; choosing of the seven, Acts 6:1–7.

A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization

Communion, Responsibility, Accountability

This Call (here slightly revised) was affirmed by the LWF Council on September 16, 2002, with the request that it be distributed to member churches, agencies and institutions, urging them to give attention to the theological, ethical, vocational and advocacy challenges raised by economic globalization, and to forward their responses for consideration at their regional pre-Assembly meeting in preparation for further action on these matters at the 2003 Assembly. The Assembly affirmed this Call.

For many years, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and member churches have been addressing concerns for economic justice. For example, the 1990 Curitiba Assembly ("I Have Heard the Cry of My People") called churches, governments, transnational corporations, banks and other institutions to work for a more just economic order.

> Christian discipleship demands that we reject unjust economic systems […]. We in the LWF will, together with our ecumenical partners, seek to develop appropriate and realistic means by which definable injustice can be addressed. A just economic order includes the right of people to control their own resources so that all have the possibility to live a dignified life.[1]

Today, the complex realities of economic globalization challenge us as a communion to move to a further stage of commitment, spiritual resistance and responsibility.

The overall aim

Within an ecumenical context, to raise up and together to pursue the spiritual and theological challenges posed by economic globalization, and to encourage member churches to participate in transforming economic globalization through a growing globalization of solidarity.

The scope of this call

What is economic globalization?

In general, globalization refers to the increasing interdependence of people and organizations around the world, which the church has long affirmed and encouraged. Trade and other interconnections between countries are not new, but since the end of the Cold War, a new stage has been reached through Internet technologies and the dominance of the neoliberal paradigm.[2] On the one hand, globalization describes a stage in the historical evolution of humanity while on the other, economic globalization has become a political project steering the world economy in a particular direction.[3] Driven by neoliberal theory, economic globalization places priority on the free movement of investment capital, profit maximization and growth, and the increasing reliance on market forces.

Prominent features of this form of economic globalization include:

- **Mobility across borders**: There has been an escalating movement of goods, services, capital (trade and investment) and speculative money across international borders.
- **Deregulation:** Regulations are dropped or liberalized in order to enable this movement to occur more freely.
- **Corporate power**: A growing portion of the world's large economies are actually large corporations which are unaccountable to the public.
- **Privatization**: Many public goods and services, such as water, electricity, health care and education are being privatized.
- **Commodification of life:** A monetary value is being placed on more and more areas of life, which can then be marketed worldwide.
- **Homogenization:** While Western consumer-oriented ways of life are marketed around the world local products and cultural practices are eventually disappearing.
- **Speculative investment**: Buying and selling money instruments for the purpose of high short-term gain outpace trade in actual goods and services and long-term investment in production-oriented economic activity.
- **Loss of sovereignty**: In the face of these trends, governments increasingly feel there is little they can do to protect their people and resources.

What is especially disturbing is how the mandates of economic globalization are promulgated as if they were the "gospel truth," universally applicable to all people throughout the world. For example, structural adjustment plans (now, "poverty reduction strategies") are imposed on developing countries to manage their debt, but often at severe social costs. In trade agreements, the rules typically do not account adequately for the consequences on human rights, communities and the environment. Neoliberal theory assumes equal partners with equal access to information, technical expertise and trade conditions, but that is a far cry from the harsh disparities in the real world.

The multiple dynamics of economic globalization have divergent consequences for different people and lands. For some in our world, economic globalization brings economic growth and with it economic benefits. This has lifted people out of poverty and has created an abundance of goods and services, and even soaring standards of living for some. Nevertheless, on the whole the prevailing model of economic globalization is widening the gap between the wealthy and the rest of humanity at an alarming rate and threatening the earth's life-support systems. The positive effects of globalization are far from being realized globally; globalization in **not** global in its benefits. Wealth and power are more concentrated than ever. Over three billion people try to survive on less than 2 U.S. dollars a day, whereas the three richest persons have more than the GNP of the 48 poorest countries (according to the 2002 Social Watch Report).

What tends to be sacrificed through processes of economic globalization are spiritual values, cultural identity and diversity, and other aspects of life that cannot be measured in economic terms. The poor or otherwise disadvantaged are especially vulnerable. These sacrifices—for the sake of economic growth or profit—today pose a central theological and moral challenge which the churches cannot ignore.

What does "transforming" economic globalization imply?

Economic globalization is not static, but continually undergoing transformation. As Christians, we are called to play a role in this multi-faceted transformation, especially in light of the commitments and values we hold. Some insist that economic globalization must be decisively denounced, while others seek to reform or redirect certain aspects of it. Still others focus on restraining its harmful effects on human beings, communities and creation. "Transforming" implies at least this array of meanings.

This call to transform economic globalization is focused on the basic challenge: the disempowerment or sense of hopelessness and helplessness that most people, churches and countries feel in the face of policies and practices related to economic globalization. Most people feel that there is little or nothing they can do to counter or change these forces, which seem inevitable or even "the end of history." This powerlessness or hopelessness reflects a spiritual crisis that needs to be countered from the heart of what it means to be people of faith, to be church, to be engaged pastorally with people.

As a Lutheran communion, we are united in a common confession. We trust in God's justifying act of salvation in Jesus Christ, rather than in the assumptions, logic and outcomes of the neoliberal paradigm. At an ecumenical gathering in 2001, representatives of central and eastern European churches declared:

> In challenging economic globalization the church is confronted with Jesus' words: "You cannot serve God and mammon (Mt 6:24)." Will the churches have the courage to engage with the "values" of a profit-oriented way of life as a matter of faith, or will they withdraw into the "private" sphere? This is the question our churches must answer […] or lose their very soul![4]

We are therefore called to a renewed sense of what it means to be the people of God, living out our discipleship in a world continually being transformed by the forces of economic globalization.

Many churches are already working for a more just economic system through various activities, programs and emphases. But churches also risk being compromised by neoliberal thinking. This occurs, for example, when in their zeal to reach people with the gospel, churches focus primarily on what will succeed, compete or be marketable (e.g., through "prosperity theology"), in ways that can run counter to their biblical calling. When this infects how churches view themselves and pursue their mission, a *metanoia* (conversion) is needed.

As the people of God, we are justified by God's gracious love and not by the justification of greed for endless accumulation of wealth, possessions or power. Economic globalization influences not only the economic but also the cultural aspects of our lives and identities. Spiritual, cultural, social, political and economic aspects are involved. This needs to be made more conscious and intentional if spiritual resistance to the predominant logic and practices of economic globalization is to be nurtured and developed. Ongoing grassroots processes of awareness building, education and organizing are crucial. This

process begins with a transformation of how we perceive what is going on, how we analyze or reflect on it, and how we live with another.

How are we empowered through the communion?

As people of hope we are grounded in faith convictions, and live in this world with commitments, values[5] and an empowering vision that are in direct tension with the greed and quest for more that drives economic globalization. Thus, in light of our faith, we are called to think differently about who we are and what we are doing.

- By raising questions and critically analyzing what is going on
- In and through our churches and development programs
- Through how we personally are involved in, or excluded from, economic activity
- Through our advocacy and other work in society.

For example, we are compelled to ask:

- How does what we are doing already in our ministries and programs connect with the wider political and economic scheme of things—with what's going on, with how economic realities are structured?
- Who benefits and who loses, and how are these related to the bigger picture?

Through Holy Communion, we are interconnected, and according to Luther, "changed into" our neighbors throughout the globe, many of whom suffer, cry out and die as a result of the dynamics related to economic globalization. Others in this communion are in strategic places to affect its course and outcomes. The communion is the sacramental and ecclesial reality that together grounds our identity, how we view one another, and the horizon of our actions as individuals and churches.

Through this communion, a different kind of ability to act (moral agency) begins to emerge. Rather than as an unquestioned reigning power, economic globalization begins to have faces and voices with whom we are related, who call us to act responsibly, and who hold us accountable for the decisions we make and the actions we are able to take in our everyday economic lives. Thus, we are moved to act out of a sense of relatedness (communion or solidarity), responsibility (for the effect our decisions and actions have on oth-

ers) and accountability (holding other members of the communion, as well as political and economic institutions accountable to the values we affirm).

A globalization of solidarity

This "globalization of solidarity" contrasts with how the impersonal forces of economic globalization tend to set people against one another. This is what the church as a global communion, with its many interrelationships around the globe, is distinctively called and empowered to live out.

Thus, we are moved to act in responsive and proactive ways that are consistent with who we are as a communion, called to pursue God's priorities through what we do in daily life—as we seek to make a living, or at least survive, as we participate in families, congregations and civil society, as we seek ways for our work, money and investments to serve human beings, as we advocate for the sake of justice and life for all. In these and other ways we are empowered through the communion to participate in transforming economic globalization.

In December 2001, churches in Argentina, in the midst of a severe financial crisis, called on the churches of the North to implement concrete signs of solidarity with those who are suffering: "The concept of communion offers the possibility and the duty of building solidarity networks which embrace the whole earth."

The theological substance

A globalization of solidarity is grounded in what it means to be a communion in which God in Christ sets us in relationship with one another. We are transformed into one another, and through God's Spirit empowered to speak and act whenever our neighbors are harmed or held captive by the powers that shape our world today. Through our Baptism, we are called to decide and act with a sense of mutual responsibility toward our global neighbors in economic and other arenas of life. Further, we seek to hold the institutions of our common life in this world more accountable to human beings, their communities, the rest of creation.

- Communion shapes who we are and our perspectives. We are in relation to others. Thus, the central ethic is focused on what will benefit rather than harm our global neighbors with whom we are related through the communion. Com-

munion provides an ecclesial/theological basis for challenging the neoliberal logic at the heart of economic globalization, and for holding others in the communion more accountable. How can this ecclesial basis be further and more fruitfully developed as the spiritual core of the overall strategy?

- Through Baptism, we are called to live out our vocation in society through economic life (as well as in other arenas). How should Christians be formed for this responsibility in ways that can transform some of the assumptions, practices and outcomes of economic globalization? How is this responsibility toward our global neighbors actually lived out? How does this draw upon, challenge and provoke further development of a Lutheran doctrine of vocation?
- Although Lutherans have developed theological perspectives on how government is a means by which God's work is done, most of this has been developed in much different contexts and realities than those prevailing today under economic globalization. In many places today, governments are experienced as the enemy or have lost much of their sovereign power, such that it is quite difficult to hold them accountable. How can we as churches be more effective in preparing members to participate as citizens in political life, and to engage in public policy advocacy with and on behalf of our global neighbors? How can churches, with civil society, hold governments more accountable?

Some ethical benchmarks

This core of this Call, as set forth below, involves

- **Convictions**: Based on the faith we confess.
- **Analysis**: How do our convictions challenge assumptions and effects of economic globalization?
- **Action**: In light of the above, What are we as a communion of churches called to do?

From radical individualism to communion

- **Human beings**: God has created all persons with inherent dignity and worth. We are in relation to others for the sake of loving, sharing and

enjoying what each individual can contribute to the whole community. Structures and policies in society need to be challenged when they distort or violate this.
- Economic globalization tends to weaken those very bonds that theologically are constitutive of who we are in relation to others. Vast inequities are troubling because of this relational nature of human life. This understanding transforms radical individualism into community with others, ruthless competition into cooperation with others. Production that uses others is transformed into participation in the life of others.

On this basis, we are called to challenge and resist, whenever

- Some members of the human community are excluded from what they need to live, or treated as if they were disposable.
- Life is measured in monetary terms or commodified, rather than its inherent value and diversity celebrated.
- Needed public goods and services are privatized in ways that make them less accessible or affordable to all.
- Economic globalization tends to push aside other values, leaving a deepening spiritual void.

- **Economic life**: From an ethical perspective, the primary purposes of economic life are to sustain and promote the well-being of just and sustainable communities the world over, rather than to maximize wealth or increase consumption by those who already have more than they need.
- Economic globalization must be transformed to serve the well-being of human beings and the rest of creation, rather than human beings and the rest of creation being sacrificed for economic ends.

Therefore, we are called to challenge and resist

- Those ways in which processes of economic globalization put profit seeking over what is needed for human life to flourish.
- Speculative financial and investment practices that lead to even more wealth for a few, and jeopardize the livelihood of many.
- Financial and economic policies and practices that widen the gap between the wealthy and the rest of humanity.

- Conditions for receiving financial assistance imposed on a society that will lead to the further impoverishment of those most in need.

- **The scope of the communion**: What holds us together—despite what may be our significant economic differences—is the transforming, relational power of God's Spirit. Members in privileged economic positions are linked with and held accountable by those living in situations of impoverishment.

There are countless ways in which 60 million members of the Lutheran communion are involved in economic life and under economic globalization have access to decisions that affect people in much different parts of the world. Those of us who are adversely affected by policies and practices of economic globalization must speak out and expect others in the communion to act in solidarity with us. Those of us who are relatively well off cannot ignore but must address economic (and other) practices which adversely affect those with whom we are deeply connected in this communion, and through them, the rest of the world. We cannot ignore the cries of others because God has made them a part of us and us a part of them. Private and public interests come together in new ways. We need to be in dialogue with one another across the economic and political chasms that separate us, and through which transformative possibilities—and hope—can emerge.

Therefore, we are called to live out what it means to be a communion by advocating for specific policies and practices that are

- Just and inclusive especially of those who are poor
- Responsible for the sake of the well-being of all, and
- Accountable to human beings, their communities and the rest of creation.

From helplessness to responsibility

- Through our baptismal vocation, we are empowered to act in relation to what matters in our lives and world, in light of a vision of God's inclusive justice for all. The life and power of God are focused in what we receive, so that we in turn might serve or work for what will benefit others. Having received God's love through grace alone, we respond by embodying God's love for others, thus seeking the justice or well-being of the whole community, with priority given to those most in need. We

are called to challenge and transform economic policies and practices that undermine this well-being or common good.

- Our economic decisions, lifestyles and actions can no longer be considered as private or "my own business." We continually need to ask how our economic decisions and actions can play a role in transforming economic globalization, especially for the sake of our global neighbors who are adversely affected by its consequences. Prayer, common reading of Scripture and worship inspire our hope, and are the basis out of which the church as the people of God can act faithfully and powerfully.

Therefore, we need to consider,

- How a deeper sense of vocation can shape member's ethical decisions and actions, be they in situations of economic privilege or impoverishment. How can this be done more intentionally through Christian education processes in local settings?
- Through the linkages or relationships we already have with one another around the world, how can we work for changes that will bring positive economic changes in the lives of others? How can we more responsibly live out the implications of these relationships?
- How are churches preparing people to take responsible economic and political decisions for the sake of others? How can this occur through educational institutions, conferences or workshops involving those in a given area of work?
- How can those who suffer from practices of transnational companies call upon and expect members with access to those companies to challenge their policies and practices (e.g., through corporate social responsibility initiatives)?
- How can investments better serve the values we espouse? Many member churches, and the LWF, have developed guidelines for ethical or socially responsible investment of church-related funds. What else should be done?

Martin Luther declared in his explanation of the Commandment against stealing: "It is the responsibility of the princes and magistrates to restrain open wantonness. They should be alert and courageous enough to establish and maintain order in all areas of trade and commerce in order that the poor may not be burdened and oppressed and in order that they themselves may not be responsible for other people's sins."[6]

From impunity to accountability

- If economic globalization is to be transformed in ways that will further and sustain human beings, their communities and the rest of creation, effective and accountable governmental and intergovernmental policies and practices are a crucial means through which this needs to occur. Government must challenge and redress patterns of exclusion, injustice and exploitation that occur under economic globalization.
- Today a growing portion of the world's large economies is unaccountable to the public as a whole. This is especially the case for transnational corporations and financial institutions. The current system of economic globalization limits the ability of people, governments and nations to insist on respect and negotiation of conditions when an outside company comes in to use their natural resources, infrastructure and their workforce. Poor and other vulnerable people must be able to participate with dignity in society, while being protected from arbitrary, unaccountable actions by governments, multinational corporations and other forces.

We are called to hold government and economic actors more accountable through public policy strategies[7] that seek to

- Apply international human rights instruments as an important means for holding economic globalization more accountable.
- Promote more democratic participation and transparency in multilateral institutions and decision making, especially involving those from the developing world.
- Challenge patterns of corruption within governments and in their relation with other interests in society through more transparent and democratic processes.
- Support social policies that assure an adequate livelihood and income for all people and protection of the natural environment.
- Question the legitimacy of the external debt of some countries on the basis of factors such as whether it was incurred under democratically elected leaders, the justice of the conditions of the loan, how it was used, how much has already been paid back, and how the life of the nation's people will be affected.
- Cancel the unsustainable debts of severely indebted and impoverished countries, to hold their governments accountable for how funds made

available through such cancellation will be used, and examine how cycles of indebtedness can be transformed.
- Develop and implement effective means of deterring excessive, often destabilizing speculative movement of currencies and investments.
- Negotiate more just international trade agreements and policies, especially in ways that benefit poorer countries.
- Mobilize additional finances for development, particularly from the wealth generated by neoliberal policies.

Possible ways of holding government accountable include the participation by the LWF and member churches in ecumenical regional consultations and efforts on economic globalization, as well as in various civil society movements and meetings aimed at developing alternatives to neoliberal economic globalization.[8]

Notes

[1] *"I Have Heard the Cry of My People," Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly, LWF Report 28/29* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1990), p. 86.

[2] U.v. Weizsäcker, for example, describes three causes of globalization: the end of the Cold War, the Internet revolution and the promoting of the neoliberal paradigm. The term "globalization" as it is being used in this Call, has become common usage only in the past ten years.

[3] This distinction was made by the Copenhagen Seminar for Social Progress, building on the results of the UN-Summit Conference on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. See also, Konrad Raiser, *For a Culture of Life* (Geneva: The World Council of Churches, 2002), p. 6.

[4] "Serve God, not Mammon," Message from the joint consultation on globalization in Central and Eastern Europe, 24–28 June 2001, Budapest, p. 5.

[5] For example, a paper of the Conference of European Churches proposes the following Christian values as a basis for evaluating globalization: dignity, justice, freedom, peace, sustainability, responsibility, solidarity, subsidiarity, sustainability.

[6] Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), p. 419.

[7] "Global governance" refers to attempts to accompany and shape the process of globalization politically, in ways that will guarantee more democratic participation in its processes. This includes a fair trade system, standards for global justice and equal access of all people to public goods like water, food, land and education.

[8] Such as the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, ATTAC and the World Social Forum.

"For the Healing of the World"

Excerpts from the 2003 LWF Assembly Message

Part IX: Transforming economic globalization

Economic globalization has brought a profound sense of hopelessness to so many. Instead of the promised prosperity, many aspects of economic globalization continue to bring suffering, misery and death to millions. In spite of the increase in food production, the unequal distribution of wealth and goods leaves more than one billion people under the spell of endemic hunger. Many nations of the South find themselves under the unbearable burden of economic debt. The historical reasons for the debt are deeply connected to colonialism and the unfair development of the modern system of trade and finance. The harsh burden of globalization falls in greater measure upon women; they not only suffer its direct effects but also are called upon to care for others abandoned due to the consequences of globalization.

Through our diverse experiences, we are facing the same negative consequences of neoliberal economic policies (i.e., the Washington Consensus) that are leading to increased hardship, suffering and injustice in our communities. As a communion, we must engage the false ideology of neoliberal economic globalization by confronting, converting and changing this reality and its effects. This false ideology is grounded on the assumption that the market, built on private property, unrestrained competition and the centrality of contracts, is the absolute law governing human life, society and the natural environment. This is idolatry and leads to the systematic exclusion of those who own no property, the destruction of cultural diversity, the dismantling of fragile democracies and the destruction of the earth.

We find negative global effects of economic globalization within all parts of our communion, but particularly in the South and in central and eastern Europe. Economic globalization has resulted in the following:

- A growing gap between the very rich and the poor that particularly adversely affects women, youth and children.

- Increased marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, excluding them from their right to their land, self-governance, resources, indigenous knowledge and their culture.
- The international debt has become an instrument of domination; the rates of interest charged amount to usury; many of the debts are illegitimate (including "odious debts"); the efforts undertaken by governments and international financial institutions so far have failed.
- The globalization of information that connects people in many parts of the world is denied to the majority who lack access to it.
- Churches have shrinking resources as support decreases because more people are struggling to survive.
- Unemployment and under-employment are reducing the ability of people to earn a living and are forcing many into dehumanizing activities (e.g., trafficking in women and children, prostitution, criminal activity).
- While capital and goods are freely traded across borders, people left desperate by weakened local economies are often prevented from migrating.
- Governments are becoming powerless and less willing to safeguard the well-being of their people.

As a Lutheran communion we call for the development of an economy that serves life. We affirm the LWF document, "A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization," upon which we commit ourselves to work, based theologically on what it means to be a communion. We also emphasize, with Martin Luther, that economic practices that undermine the well-being of the neighbor (especially the most vulnerable) must be rejected and replaced with alternatives. Luther also reminds pastors that they are obliged to unmask hidden injustices of economic practices that exploit the vulnerable.

We recognize that this vision of an economy that serves life will need to be pursued ecumenically. We join with the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and other church families in a continuing ecumenical process focused on how economic and ecological injustice challenges us as churches.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- Participate in transforming economic globalization and to engage in partnerships with civil society, particularly in efforts that recognize the churches' prophetic role in promoting justice and human rights.

- Help empower members by raising awareness of the issues of economic globalization and equipping them to take concrete actions.
- Address issues of economic globalization that include trade, debt, militarization, corruption, corporate social responsibility, gender equality and migration.
- Build and strengthen ecumenical partnerships, multifaith cooperation, and participate in civil society alliances (i.e., the World Social Forum).
- Create opportunities and arenas for dialogue, discussion and moral deliberation between various economic actors, policy makers, citizens, stakeholders and communities.

Part X: Healing creation

- […] Challenge practices where the gifts of God for all are made into commodities in unjust and unnecessary ways, which especially impact the poor. This includes the privatization of water and all other natural resources that are basic for human life and the patenting of seeds for crops and of other living organisms.
- Work for a more just sharing of the goods of creation, mindful that for many people, how they relate to nature is a matter of daily survival, and that some of us consume far more than others. Together we must work against climate change and the greenhouse effect, by acting to decrease the consumption of fossil fuel and use renewable energy resources

From resolutions adopted by the Tenth Assembly

Trade and development policies

Advocate for trade and development policies which uphold the objective of enhancing human well being to which the international human rights instruments give legal expression. This may involve the following:

- Initiating an international campaign, involving member churches, communities and individuals, to promote access to Global Public Goods (e.g., basic goods and services). In particular the LWF should promote

trade and development policies, which secure access for all to safe water, adequate nutrition, shelter, health care including medications, primary education. The LWF should encourage their churches to hold international financial institutions, governments and corporations accountable to respect these fundamental human rights.

- Working to prevent the commercialization and commodification of water and other basic necessities for life.
- Encouraging support for more just trade rules and movements working for fair trade.
- Addressing the impact of liberalized capital and currency flows, recognizing the need for regulations and controls including the issue of a tax on currency transactions.
- Continuing its campaign to support actions and advocate with their governments to insure access to treatment, medicines and public health programs for people living with HIV/AIDS and other diseases, specifically as they relate to Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), trade rules, and the responsibility of governments to insure these are provided.

International debt

- Continue to call for the cancellation of the debt of Severely Indebted Poor Countries.
- Raise the question which portion is illegitimate/odious debt, support those victims and their lawyers who are filling court cases for reparation in national courts and the International Court of Justice, and challenge the governments to cancel the illegitimate debt both bilateral and multilateral.
- Support the development of an independent arbitration mechanism for middle income countries.
- Monitor the debt crisis in countries and globally, encourage networking and the sharing of resources.

Corporate social responsibility

- Strengthen and expand their advocacy for greater accountability by corporations and more corporate social responsibility.
- Support efforts to eliminate corruption and insure greater transparency.

A public statement of the Tenth Assembly

Illegitimate debt

When the Lutheran communion gathered in Curitiba thirteen years ago, it stated that the churches should "search for solutions to the debt crisis which is bringing such devastation to the underprivileged part of the world."

Now, as representatives from the global Lutheran community are meeting in Winnipeg, the debt burden has increased and is today a major barrier against eradication of poverty and fulfillment of basic human rights for all.

Since Curitiba, the international community has accepted, among others as a result of the global mobilization in the Jubilee 2000/Jubilee South campaign, the need to reduce the debt burden. But the measures taken are insufficient in financial terms.

In our assessment, the present financial external debt can only be understood if seen in relationship to the historic exploitation of colonialism. External debt has in fact become a modern tool for domination.

Moreover, research has shown that substantial parts of the external debts of countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean are illegitimate. Loans were freely offered to illegitimate and undemocratic governments which then contracted these loans. In many cases, the contracted debt was misused or diverted, both by illegitimate and legitimate governments. Only a minor part has been actually used for social development.

International Financial Institutions (IFIs), which are ruled by the dominant nations in the world, knowingly and even actively promoted this irresponsible lending to illegitimate and/or corrupt governments. Even when the financial resources were used properly the supported projects and programs often did not meet the need for social development. The IFIs and the dominant nations in the world have to accept their responsibility for the bad policies, decisions and practices, which led to the current debt crisis.

In line with this assessment the LWF calls upon:

- The IFIs to accept that part of the debt is illegitimate or odious. This debt has to be cancelled.
- The member churches in the industrialized countries to challenge their governments to advocate for the cancellation of illegitimate or odious debts.

- The member churches in the indebted countries to actively participate in social auditing of the debt and in budget monitoring by utilizing mechanisms developed by civil society.
- The member churches to support initiatives which are filing court cases in national and/or international courts suing people and institutions involved in criminal or illegal acts related to debt contract and use.
- The member churches to challenge commercial banks, which are or have been involved in illegitimate lending to take their responsibility and cancel their claims.

The Assembly further recognizes that there is an urgent need to develop mechanisms at an international level in order to find ways of a justice-oriented debt management. This mechanism should ensure full and active participation of indebted countries, securing that the lenders take their responsibility.

Deepening the Theological, Pastoral and Ethical Reflections

Ecclesial Entry Points

Communique of an Ecumenical Consultation (2002)[1]

Economic globalization poses tremendous challenges in our world today, which we as churches cannot avoid facing. Many of its assumptions and outcomes challenge how we understand God, human beings, life in community, and our spiritual and ethical calling as the church. In the face of forces that exclude, impoverish and destroy life and hope, we as churches affirm God's promise of life and wholeness for the entire creation as the *oikos* (household) of God.

Churches around the world are already deeply involved in struggling with and addressing these realities. Many are participating in continuing ecumenical processes, such as the interrelated regional consultations initiated by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). At these consultations, churches have shared, analyzed and spoken out against the negative effects of economic globalization as experienced in their particular contexts. The distinction was made between globalization as a long-term historic process and the current political-economic project driven by the neoliberal paradigm. Through these ecumenical encounters there has been growing recognition of the need to bring together and deepen our understanding of the different ecclesial entry points in order to read the signs of the times, resist, engage constructively, and nurture practices of transformation.

From 11 to 14 December 2002, at a consultation in the Swiss village of Cartigny, near Geneva, theologians and some economists exchanged and probed ecclesial entry points associated with Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed traditions. We discussed how understandings of covenant and confession, Eucharist, the indwelling Christ and communion are helpful in empowering resistance and alternatives to the logic of neoliberal economic globalization. We also explored how expressions for mystical realities such as the family of God and the body of Christ could provide new insights into what it means to be the church in face of economic globalization. Some of us focused on the transcendent, mystical reality of the church, corresponding to an emphasis on the immanent Trinity. On the basis

of an understanding of how the Triune God continues to act in history, others of us focused on how historical changes affect the churches and may lead to its distortions.

We were particularly keen to find out how our respective approaches and understandings are seen by others and were excited to discover how our various perspectives can complement each another. In learning from and questioning each other's approaches, we realized that what is at the heart of these complementary entry points is a common focus on the quality of relationships that human beings and communities have with each other and with the earth. As relationships have become distorted under some of the processes of economic globalization, we agreed that these processes need to be challenged systemically.

What we share in common is the quest for greater solidarity, love, compassion and justice in the face of enormous power inequities. This common vision needs to be further and more concretely developed at the core of alternatives to economic globalization.

The church's preaching and the celebration of the sacraments can be compromised when we are complicit in systemic injustices and the exploitation of life. We realize how the Eucharist, rightly understood and practiced, embodies and enacts reconciled and just relationships and a foretaste of fulfilled life for all in community. Whenever the Eucharist is celebrated without regard for its transformative power, its integrity and potential is denied. In a similar way, the language of covenant, communion and confession are to remind us of the need to work for the transformation of distorted relationships and life-threatening processes. Without this, their language is rendered meaningless. From this perspective, engaging in clarity, critique, alternatives, and practical action is not adiaphoral but integral to the church's very being and witness.

We frequently reminded ourselves of the efforts that have already been made in this area, for instance in the WCC study *Ecclesiology and Ethics*[2] regarding the link between Eucharist and covenant. Churches not only have an ethic but ethical engagement is intrinsic to the very being of church. Are churches being fully church if they are not together engaging in the burning issues of the world?

This discussion needs to be expanded to include additional voices and traditions:

- In clarifying other ecclesial entry points
- In further developing the links between different ecclesial entry points

- In deepening the understanding of the complementarity of the traditions
- In expressing more clearly and concretely how solidarity, love, compassion and justice inform and shape alternatives to economic globalization.

We expressed our eagerness for others not present at the consultation to share and develop ecclesial entry points that are relevant to the challenges, and to explore relationship between them.

In the midst of the deep despair, seeming lack of alternatives and powerlessness that overtake so many today, we proclaim and embody a hope that is grounded in faith in the Triune God.

Notes

[1] An LWF, WARC and WCC Consultation on Ecclesiology and Economic Globalization, December 2002, Cartigny, Switzerland (slightly edited here).

[2] Thomas F. Best and Martin Robra (eds), *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997).

Some Relevant Lutheran Theological Emphases

Wolfram Stierle

An excerpt from Wirtschaftliche Globalisierung, *published in 2003 by the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation in response to the LWF publication*, Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion.

Introduction

The Reformation linked to the name of Martin Luther was a process of renewal within the one universal church. When the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) makes a statement regarding globalization, this implies such is based on Luther's Reformation theology. As a global Lutheran communion, we ask questions such as the following:

- How does globalization impact the Lutheran tradition, and vice versa? Might globalization cause us to recall this tradition, gratefully and responsibly, in order to generate discussions within the Lutheran communion as well as to dialogue with people of other confessions, religions and ideologies?
- To what extent is globalization a challenge for the church, calling congregations to take a stance in their proclamation, social ethics and structures?
- Are there insights from Lutheran theology and past experiences of those in the Lutheran communion globally that could serve as Lutheran perspectives in the current debate regarding globalization?

Here we refer to typically Lutheran impulses. Some of these thought-provoking emphases are mentioned below and could be considered in greater depth. They could be focal points of a specifically Lutheran approach to the challenges resulting from economic globalization. They could be starting points for a discussion between local congregations in various parts of the world that are involved in the globalization process in very different ways, but nevertheless remain affiliated with the Lutheran tradition.

What principles of Lutheran theology are useful as a theological impetus in the debate about globalization?

- Lutheran theology starts with the **Word of God** in its various understandings. God encounters human beings through the Word in the Holy Scripture, in the work of Jesus Christ, in sermons, in the sacraments and *per mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*[1] (mutual conversation and consolation). The latter is precisely what could be reinterpreted in relation to the experience of globalization. Those participating in the Eucharist enter into the sacramental communion with Christ and thus also with one another. By receiving the body of Christ through the Eucharist, various people are brought together beyond earthly boundaries into an eternal communion with Christ's church. National, racial, gender and other differences are overcome. God builds the communion through Baptism, the sacrament of mission, which intentionally integrates the baptized into the communion of the church of Jesus Christ. This is strongly emphasized among Lutherans, by baptizing children, with God's grace always ahead of our human endeavors.
- **Biblical exegesis** plays a central role in the life of Lutheran congregations. In interpreting and applying the Word of God, there are attempts to encounter and provide impetus for one's personal faith and life. The texts of the Old Testament pertaining to legislation on trade and debt are worth reading for their theological and economic content. Jesus' message is by no means abstracted from liberating earthly experiences, as shown for example in his inaugural sermons starting in Luke 4. The well-being of the weak and poor in society is particularly emphasized. The Early Church was clearly aware of this message in how it exercised its responsibility for the handling of money.
- **The doctrine of God**: Luther's interpretation of the First Commandment points out that worship of God and the worship of idols could be alarmingly similar. Luther noted that the question as to whether we serve God or an idol is determined by the way we live our daily lives. A comprehensive theory of secularization would question Lutheran thinking in which talking about God can imply talking about money. Therefore, the impact of globalization should be questioned from a theological perspective as to whether, or to what extent, it supports the worship of idols.
- Lutheran churches strongly emphasize **the benefits of Christ** in Christology—what God has accomplished for us. From a Lutheran point

of view, christological thinking can never cast aside the positive meaning of God's commitment to the world through Christ—to creation and human beings. Luther successfully created a theological link between everyday life and theology, something that others have yet to accomplish. The *pro nobis* message of the suffering borne by God is described in detail in the *theologia crucis*. That is, human suffering should never be interpreted as God having forsaken or remaining distant from humankind. God's identification with death is the triumph of life.

- **Ecclesiology**: the role of ministry in the congregation is to serve the Word. The typically Lutheran esteem of the local congregation is manifested in the priesthood of all believers. According to Lutheran understanding, the church exists as a communion of saints (*sanctorum communio*), where two or three people come together to speak and to hear the Word of God. As global issues always reach the local level, the voices from various local congregations of the Lutheran communion have an ecclesial importance that should not be underestimated. Ethics and ecclesial teachings should not be separated. It is no coincidence that Bonhoeffer analyzed the sociological structure of the church with dogmatic questions. The economic role of the church in the context of globalization still needs to be ascertained from a systematic theological perspective.
- Anthropology and **the doctrine of justification**: Luther recognized that human beings could not be justified before God on the basis of their achievements ("works"), and saw the danger of falling into a self-justification that seeks to make ourselves right with God. In his Ninety-five Theses in 1517, he primarily opposed indulgences, i.e., paying money for the remittance of sins. Trust in the power of money can lead the church and its leaders onto the wrong path.
- **The freedom of a Christian** is not realized in political terms, but brings about a free, liberating way of dealing with social and political circumstances, as in the Bible. The Lutheran doctrine of the three estates analyzes areas of responsibility based on this freedom in particular contexts. This combination of freedom and responsibility is a specifically Lutheran interpretation of the Torah given to ancient Israel, precisely to preserve this freedom in the face of political and economic pressure. It goes without saying that world leaders need to act responsibly before God and humankind.
- **Law, gospel** and the **two kingdoms** or regiments**:** the social ethical thinking that to some extent earthly issues can be settled through earthly

good sense, without immediately having to argue about their theological aspects, is part of the Lutheran approach. God has more than one way of carrying out God's will.

- **Spiritual healing:** Lutheran theology is strongly characterized by spiritual healing based on its christological, or as Latin Americans would put it, "pastoral" approach. More important than abstract correctness is that salvation reaches human beings in their actual lives and that they can then speak of salvation and live accordingly. It is no coincidence that time and again Luther made a point of discussing the social and economic situation of his time along with the responsibilities of the rulers, without undue regard for possible consequences.
- In Lutheranism, the two complimentary developments, **orthodoxy and pietism**, aim to validate theological rigor on the one hand and a pious openness to the world on the other.

Notes

[1] *Cf.* Martin Luther, "The Smalcald Articles," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), pp. 295 ff.

"Let the Children Come"

A Baptismal Sermon[1]

René Krüger

> Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs (Mk 10:14).

Brothers and sisters,

We live in a society marked by contradictions. While we worship eternal youth and have created a dazzling commercial world focusing on children and adolescents, there is also a peculiarly careless attitude toward youth, that formative stage of life requiring such sensitivity. There are endless examples of this carelessness.

One of the most tragic phenomena of the modern world are the so-called street children. The reasons for this phenomenon are industrialization, migration from rural to urban areas, the disintegration of the family unit, child neglect, unemployment, increased crime and the exploitation of beggar children. Daily, this situation is further aggravated by the international neoliberal socio-economic model benefiting a few while impoverishing many. The sad phenomenon of street children is a shameful stain on our society and one of its most terrible features. Through no fault of their own, these children are thrown out of their homes and deprived of a good education, happiness, health, and above all their parents', siblings' and grandparents' love. They are deprived of the opportunity to be brought up in an environment where they can get to know Jesus and form part of a Christian community. Being isolated from God in this way is catastrophic, because it denies children a solid foundation on which to build their lives. This is an extremely important point, because if many people are indifferent to religion and neglect the gospel and Christian values, people might get the impression that faith and the church are secondary, that they are neither essential nor vital, and that nothing matters.

These truly infanticidal tendencies have serious repercussions on the entire younger generation and today, at every Baptism, we look for an answer in the words of Jesus:

> Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

What does that mean? How can we obey this command when much in society tempts us to do the same, to become indifferent to everything, to allow people to do as they like, with no commitment to anything positive or an interest in anything of substance?

But this is precisely the key. We must overcome inertia, widespread indifference and the tendency of society to isolate and exclude. We must encourage ourselves and others to go against the flow. We must oppose this model which had promised to alleviate poverty, but has merely produced a greater number of poor people on every continent, more street children, who are marginalized, starving and dying. To go against the flow alone is very difficult; we can easily get tired and give up. This is one of the reasons why we need the faith community, the church.

Twenty centuries ago, the first followers of Jesus, the first Christian church, understood exactly that: they needed to form a community that went against the flow. They understood that they needed to challenge many things that were clearly wrong and had direct, harmful effects on people's lives. They knew that they could not intervene in everything, but that they needed very carefully to evaluate everything around them.

The first Christians endeavored to create a different life, one built on their faith in Jesus. They knew that Jesus had risked and given his life for them. They also knew that the sacrifice had been worthwhile, and that God had confirmed this by raising Jesus from the dead.

Their faith encouraged them to be critical of their environment, to evaluate everything happening around them with good judgment, to embrace good and to challenge evil. It inspired them to live differently and not to go with the flow. From the testimonies of many sincere and honest Roman and Greek authors, who lamented the countless evils of their time, we know that their society was truly wretched and harmful.

This idea of a different life continues to be valid today. If we have faith in Jesus and dedicate ourselves to the ideal of God's kingdom, it is possible, even today, to challenge any harmful or deadly current in our society. It is possible to live differently; it is possible to work toward something different. We must strive for change so that the children who are born, whom we baptize and who grow up can live protected by love and not under the constant threat of violence or isolated from the beautiful things in life, excluded from what they need to survive.

Baptizing children is a great commitment. Parents, godparents and the whole community commit themselves to protecting the child, to Christian

discipline and love. We say to the children: we love you; we will always be there for you and support you. We will put into practice what God is doing for you in your Baptism: drawing you into the body of Christ's church.

We will protect you from the consequences of this shameful system that has been imposed on our societies and that devastates so many people. We will guide you and show you the way with prayer and through our own example. We will talk to you about Jesus, so that you come to know him as your Lord and the Lord of us all. We will guide you in your faith.

We will show you that Jesus is against death, destruction, exclusion and marginalization. We do not want forgotten what God began in your life today. We do not want this delicate little plant that has begun to grow today to wither. We want you to be blessed in your earthly and eternal life, and we have made a commitment to putting your life above our own so that this may be so. We do not want to be responsible for having prevented you from coming to Jesus.

We also tell you that we are not perfect, but that we need God's help and guidance in our daily lives.

In some respects children can teach us many things, and we must learn to be like them. I am not talking about their presumed innocence, because we know very well that they are neither innocent, nor that they possess any kind of special goodness. I am talking about their dependence, their openness, their willingness to let themselves be guided. They have total trust in their parents and are devoted to them, because without them, they are completely helpless. This is a metaphor, a symbol, for our own dependence on God. That is what Jesus taught us with the enigmatic words:

> For it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Amen.

Notes

[1] Sermon preached on the occasion of Franco Schamli's Baptism, Central Parish of Buenos Aires, IERP, 8 February 2004.

Communio and a Spirituality of Resistance

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda

Spirituality is often associated with a particular dimension of life: piety or devotional practices that aim at connecting one to God. Spiritual life is, thus, held apart from the physical, the political and the earthly arenas of life. Let us rid ourselves of that misconception. Spiritual is not to be held apart from the physical, the political and the earthly.

The word "spirituality" draws on the Hebrew *ruach*, the life-breath or wind, the unseen force that animates or gives life. Spirituality, then, refers to what motivates, empowers and sustains the life of a person, community, movement or tradition. Within Pauline anthropology, flesh and spirit (*sarx* and *pneuma*) do not refer to a body/spirit dualism or an earth/spirit dualism or a political/spiritual dualism. Rather, they refer respectively to life isolated from the Spirit of Jesus Christ and to life flowing from that Spirit. Let us consider the spirituality of a faith community or of a resistance movement to be its life-breath, the force that gives it life—its motivating, yearning, empowering, guiding, sustaining force and the everyday practices that embody that force. What is distinct about Christian spirituality is that its life-breath is the living Spirit of Jesus Christ.

In the face of neoliberal globalization, our various ecclesial traditions may draw people into faithful resistance that has as its motivating, life-giving force the living Sprit of Jesus Christ. To get at that concern, I urge us to examine the following question. From our varied understandings of what it means to be church, how might faith in Jesus Christ enable moral-spiritual power (a) to resist (that is, to unmask and counter) global economic arrangements that contradict the two Christian moral norms of "justice-making, self-respecting, neighbor-love" and "regenerative earth-human relations," and (b) to forge economic alternatives more consistent with those norms?

My response is based on the Lutheran tradition. I invite others to consider sources of moral-spiritual power for resistance from other traditions. My hunch is that we will find them overlapping and complementing each other in a splendid and mysterious tapestry of faithful resistance.

My sense of Luther is that *communio* itself, in three inseparable forms—as Eucharist, as solidarity and as the communing community—is a wellspring of subversive moral agency for resistance to whatever thwarts the gift of life abundant for all, and for forging alternatives. We explore that notion through constructive encounter with Luther and in particular with five interrelated theological gems running through his work. They are: his eucharistic economic ethics, his theology of Christ indwelling creation, his call to certain practices, his refusal to minimize the pervasiveness of human beings as self curved in on self, and his insistence that in brokenness and defeat the saving God is present and draws forth power. While my comments focus on the first two, I shall also touch on the other three because without them the first two do not work well. Brewed together, these five theological strains form a window into *communio* as a source of moral-spiritual power for resistance to neoliberal economic globalization.

Eucharistic economic ethics

First is Luther's eucharistic economic ethics. According to Luther, economic activity is, ontologically, an act in relationship to neighbor, and all relations with neighbor are normed by one thing: the Christian is to serve the neighbor's well-being, while also meeting the needs of self and household. Widely accepted economic practices that undermine the widespread good or the well-being of the poor are to be denounced theologically by preachers, defied in daily practice, and replaced with radical alternatives.[1] About this, Luther is vehement and specific. Note that for Luther, neighbor-love in economic life entails not only social welfare provision, but also denouncing economic exploitation and forging alternative economic norms and practices. Preachers, he declares, are to preach (that is, speak the living Word of God) against exploitative economic practices.

Luther's economic ethics and his eucharistic theology are inseparable. The fruit of the Eucharist, "properly practiced," is a *communio* of moral agency that attends to human needs and privileges the needs of the vulnerable. Economic practices flow from the Eucharist. Hear Luther speaking about the sacrament that we call "communion" or Eucharist:[2]

- "[...] by means of this sacrament, all self-seeking love is rooted out and gives place to that which seeks the common good of all."

- "When you have partaken of this sacrament [...] your heart must go out in love and learn that this is a sacrament of love. As love and support are given you, you in turn must render love and support to Christ in his needy ones […]."
- "The sacrament has no blessing and significance unless love grows daily and so changes a person that he is made one with the others."
- "In times past this sacrament was so properly used, and the people were taught to understand this fellowship so well, that they even gathered food and material goods in the church, and [...] distributed among those who were in need [...] this has all disappeared, and now there remain only the many masses and the many who receive this sacrament without in the least understanding or practicing what it signifies [...]. They will not help the poor [nor] intercede for others [...]."

Economic life as practice of neighbor-love, according to Luther, transgressed the emergent capitalist order of his day. In his treatise "On Trade and Usury," two norms and two rules are derived by Luther from neighbor-love. Contemporary Christians are well advised to see them in light of neoliberal globalization.

- One norm: because selling is an act toward neighbor, its goal should be not profit but rather serving the needs of the other and making "an adequate living" for self and household.[3]
- Another norm: economic activity should be subject to political constraints.[4] Quoting Luther, "Selling ought not be an act that is entirely within your own power and discretion, without law or limit." Civil authorities ought to establish "rules and regulations," including "ceilings" on prices.[5]

According to these norms designed to protect the poor, Christians are to follow firm rules in economic life. They include:

- Do not buy a commodity when cheap and then sell when the price goes up
- Do not sell at a price as high as the market will bear.[6]

Today, structures and practices denounced by Luther, for the sake of neighbor-love, also underpin economic globalization in its dominant form. So close is the coherence that, were Luther's norms adopted as guiding principles for contemporary life, they would subvert the prevailing paradigm of economic globaliza-

tion. Luther's economic norms challenge specific dynamics inherent in that paradigm including: (1) elevating "profit," rather than "an adequate living" as the goal of economic life; (2) pricing commodities as high as the market will bear, where so doing undermines the well-being of the poor; and (3) severing economic activity from political constraints. Note that the third of these is perhaps the most controversial and dangerous move in the "free" trade and investment agenda, which is the centerpiece of neoliberal globalization. Trade agreements increasingly allow global corporations to supersede governments in making policy.

In more general terms, Luther's impassioned economic ethics denounced unregulated market activity that enabled a few to make a profit at the expense of the common good or the well-being of the poor.[7] Many of his words speak directly to the global economy today, mirroring the claims of its critics.

I was reading Luther during the WTO protests in Seattle, and found to my great surprise that the words of Luther and of the protestors were, at times, the same! I tested my perceptions out at a lecture at a Lutheran college in the USA, reading quotes and asking people to indicate whether, in their opinion, the words were Luther's or the protesters'. The people could not tell!

My point is not to advocate a direct and uncritical application of Luther's economic analysis or norms to the contemporary situation. Given his inflammatory denunciations of Jews, peasants and Anabaptists, his social analyses and ethics are never to be adopted uncritically as normative. Doing so would lack intellectual and moral integrity. Nor is my point to imply that Luther was a "progressive" early anti-capitalist. The implication would be false, failing to acknowledge that his condemnation of emerging capitalism and his crafting of alternative economic norms and practices were not rooted in a bent toward progressive social change (which was not within Luther's conceptual world). His critique was rooted in his conservative defense of feudal social arrangements and prohibitions on interest.

Rather, the salient points are these: Luther's economic ethics had subversive implications in his context (which bore an uncanny resemblance to the context of economic globalization today). The subversive nature of Luther's economic norms, and the moral power for heeding them, derive from their theological foundation: neighbor-love, manifest in economic life, and empowered by Christ's indwelling presence. That point is crucial. Luther's economic ethic depends on his claim that God as the love of Christ actually comes to live within and among the community of believers. That indwelling Christ-presence is the power to love, and love is manifest in—though not only in—economic life.

Christ indwelling

To that indwelling presence we now turn. It is the second of five theological streams considered here. According to Luther, God indwells earthlings who trust God; in fact and in mystery God "must be essentially present in all places even in the tiniest leaf."[8] God is "present in every single creature in its innermost and outermost being [...]."[9] The finite bears the infinite. The God of unbounded love has made habitation in the community gathered and sent forth by the water, wine and bread, and in the creatures and elements of this good earth.

While the normative implications are fascinating, our focus is on the transformative, that is, the implications for moral-spiritual power. Consider one: as unmerited gift, Christ dwells within and among communities of believers and gradually transforms them—individually but only in community—toward a manner of life that actively loves neighbor by serving the neighbor's well-being in every aspect of life, and receives the same from neighbor. Luther writes,

> "this is [...] one of the exceedingly great promises granted to us [...] that we should even have the Lord Himself dwelling completely in us... ."[10] One in whom God dwells "makes daily progress in life and good works [...] is useful to God and [others]; through [that person] [...] [people] and countries benefit [...] such a [person's] words, life and doings are God's."[11] "For through faith Christ is in us, indeed, one with us."[12] "Christians are indeed made the habitation of God, and in them God speaks, and rules, and works."[13] They are "changed into one another and are made into a community by love."[14] Identity as "habitation" of Christ establishes the purpose of human activity, which is this: "The Christian [...] does not live for [self] alone ... but lives also for all [people] on earth [...]."[15] The Christian should be "guided in all [...] works by this thought and contemplate this one thing alone, that [she or he] may serve and benefit others in all that [she or he] does, [...] each caring for and working for the other [...]. This is a truly Christian life."[16]

The centerpiece of Christian moral-spiritual agency is the crucified and living Christ dwelling in and gradually transforming the community of believers, the form of Jesus Christ taking form in and among those of faith.[17] Christians as objects of Christ's love become subjects of that love. Faith is both "faith in Christ" and "faith of Christ." The indwelling Christ, mediated by practices of the Christian community, transforms the faithful toward a manner of life that actively loves the neighbor. "The moral life is simultaneously gift and imperative, a mystical as well as physical reality, ontologically communal while also individual, a necessary outflow of the sacraments."[18]

Evangelical resistance to hegemonic authority, where that resistance is life threatening, requires courage. For Luther, the most powerful courage known to humankind is generated by the Spirit and Christ living in the faithful. The Spirit may bring into its human creaturely abode "true courage—boldness of heart." "The Hebrew word for spirit," Luther preaches, "might well be rendered 'bold, undaunted courage.'"[19] That "bold, dauntless courage [...] will not be terrified by poverty, shame, sin, the devil, or death, but is confident that nothing can harm us and we will never be in need."[20] This empowering courage is, according to Luther, greater and more powerful than any human force on earth. In a sermon he declares,

> The Holy Spirit streams into the heart and makes a new [person], one who loves God and gladly does [God's] will [...] [the Spirit] writes a fiery flame on the heart and makes it alive [...] a new [person] is made who [...] has [...]a heart which burns with love and delights in whatever pleases God.[21]

This is the Holy Spirit's office: to rule inwardly in the heart, making "it burn and create new courage so that a man grows happy before God [...] and with a happy heart serves the people."[22]

Let us be clear: for Luther, becoming a dwelling place of Christ and agent of Christ's love cannot be earned by human effort, and cannot, in any way, earn salvation. Quite the opposite. Christ's indwelling and transforming presence is a pure, unearned gift, and a consequence of salvation by God's grace alone. The significance is moral and anthropological, not soteriological.

Note, too, Luther's insistence that the change toward neighbor-love is never fully completed in this lifetime.

> Christians are indeed called and made the habitation of God, and in them God speaks, and rules, and works. But the work is not yet complete; it is an edifice on which God yet works daily and makes arrangements.[23]

Luther's theology of God's indwelling creation hints at another source of moral power. Luther insisted that God's indwelling presence is given not only to human beings, but to all creatures and elements.

> "[...] the power of God [...] must be essentially present in all places even in the tiniest leaf."[24] God is "present in every single creature in its innermost and outermost being

> [...]."[25] God "is in and through all creatures, in all their parts and places, so that the world is full of God and [God] fills all [...]."[26]

God as boundless justice-seeking love coursing through creation implies that all creatures and elements may offer creative, saving, sustaining power toward creation's flourishing. To think theologically about the moral agency that flows from God inhabiting "every little seed" and "all creatures," is to struggle for and with a concept that barely exists in Western Protestant ethics. Luther's indwelling God opens that door theologically.

Considered by Christians in the context of neoliberal economic globalization, the claim that God's gracious power for the flourishing of creation resides within and among all creatures, provokes many questions. How may this indwelling God-power be realized by people of economic privilege to free us from immobilization in the face of neoliberal globalization, and free us for faithful resistance on behalf of the earth community and its cultures? And, if earth's life-giving and life-saving capacities indeed are being destroyed by our daily practices, as dictated by globalization in its prevailing form, are those ways of life—our ways of life—"crucifying" Christ?

Indeed, Luther offers profound theological resources stemming from a eucharistic notion of Christ-like loving within the *communio*, turning earthlings into subversive lovers on behalf of the widespread good, and especially on behalf of the vulnerable. (For Luther, the widespread good was human in scope, as was moral agency. Yet his cosmic sense of incarnation, wed to his splendidly contextual theological method and his indomitable conviction that Christ is present in life's broken places invites his theological heirs to expand both the good served and the Christ-power that serves it beyond the human community to the earth community.) This is important moral wisdom, especially for a Lutheran communion and our friends in faith. However, it must be admitted that we do not need Luther to arrive here. Some Orthodox and Anglican theologies, recent cosmic christologies, eco-theologies, and some feminist relational theologies also emphasize God indwelling all of creation and working through all creatures and elements to save, heal and liberate the entire household of life.

So, what is the provocative pull of Luther? What is the insistent tweak that says plumb the depths here, because there is more and the world is hungering for it? Three things, all of which nurture hope. They are the third, fourth and fifth, "theological gems" which we simply note here.

Practices, pervasiveness of sin, and the cross

Luther identifies concrete and ancient practices through which the living Christ is proclaimed and received, becomes incarnate in the community of believers, and there calls forth moral power for swimming upstream against torrential and dangerous social forces. Those practices include the Eucharist, prayer, and the practice of being with and for those who suffer, that is, solidarity. In fact, for Luther, communion as Eucharist and communion as solidarity go hand in hand. To reconsider seriously these practices, and to do so in line with Luther's theo-ethical method, is to uncover vital insights into the roots of subversive moral-spiritual power for resisting neoliberal globalization and forging more life-saving alternatives.

Luther's sense of profound moral agency flowing from the indwelling Christ is met with his equally strong insistence on the pervasive presence of sin, the humanly insurmountable reality of "self curved in on self." That we are *incurvatus in se* is a strikingly descriptive and deeply truthful account of reality in the globalizing economy for the global North. According to Luther, it is not possible for us to do the moral good as fully as we try to do it. Luther's paradoxical moral anthropology speaks directly to the heart of life for economically privileged people. Collectively, we are selves curved in on ourselves. We may long to live according to justice-making, self-honoring love for earth and neighbor. That is, we may yearn to live without exploiting neighbor or earth.

But look at the United States: we are a society so addicted to our economic ways that we close our eyes to the death and destruction required to sustain them. We do not see clearly the vision of Mozambique's bishop Bernardino Mandlate, that our economic privilege is bought with "the blood of African children." Needing expanding markets, short-term financial gains, fossil fuels and inexpensive goods, we will lie, kill and beef up brutal regimes (e.g., the Taliban in their war against Russia, Saddam Hussein while he was gassing the Kurds) in part because of our need to access and control fossil fuels, other resources, markets, and more recently labor. The drive to dominate and exploit others is a drive of "self curved in on self," the polar opposite of serving the needs of others and particularly those who suffer.

Luther's insistence that we are "selves curved in on self," unable to be otherwise, is a necessary counterpart to his claim that the indwelling Christ empowers moral agency. Holding these two paradoxical convictions together is crucial to evangelical resistance for people of economic privilege. For them,

a principle task of Christian spiritual resistance is to see two realities in one gaze. One is the socio-ecological realities in which we live, including our implication in economic violence. We run from this "critical seeing" with body, heart and clever mental manipulations. This running—through avoidance, denial and retreat into private morality—enables economic brutality (in "cruel innocence") to continue. "Critical seeing," given the magnitude of what is to be seen in economic globalization, is too threatening. "Critical seeing" burns people up, unless it is also wed to seeing, in the same gaze, a second reality. It is the life-giving, life-saving, life-sustaining power of God coursing through the *communio* and through all of creation, a God whose love for this world cannot be thwarted by any force on heaven or earth.

Finally, Luther's paradoxical moral anthropology lives within a theological claim that where God seems hidden, there God is. As expressed by Larry Rasmussen,

> [...] the only power that can truly heal creation, is instinctively drawn to the broken and flawed places in life, there is most fully known, and precisely there draws forth power that you did not know you had.

God is drawn into brokenness in this world—including the bondage of some to ways of life that brutalize, and the brutalization of others—and there becomes life-saving power incarnate. Luther's theology of the cross, held together with God indwelling and empowering the *communio*, renders the promise. Without the promise we would drown as we open our eyes to the "data of despair." That "Christ [...] fills all things,"[27] and is present particularly in sites of suffering, enables us to acknowledge soul-searing economic brutalities that must be faced if we are to resist neoliberal economic globalization, and convert to economic ways that enable just and sustainable communities and earth community for generations to come.

In closing

We have entered mystery, the ancient faith claim that God's love in Christ is flowing and pouring into the *communio.* The *communio* is gathered and sent forth by wine and bread for justice-making, self-honoring neighbor-love in all aspects of life. That claim—explored by holding together Luther's eucharistic

economic ethics, his theology of Christ indwelling creation, his call to certain practices, his refusal to minimize the pervasiveness of human sin, and his insistence that in brokenness and defeat the saving God is present and draws forth power—points a way toward spiritual power for resistance to global economic arrangements that breed injustice and suffering. According to Luther, in the *communio*, the incarnate God embodies as justice-making, self-honoring neighbor-love, manifest powerfully in economic life. Such neighbor-love in the context of neoliberal globalization is faithfully subversive.

May these reflections on one tradition open now into reflections on our sources of spiritual power for resistance, empowered by the One who lives with us and within us so that all may have life abundant.

Notes

[1] Luther, "Trade and Usury," in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), pp. 244–308.

[2] The following four statements are from Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body and Blood of Christ, and the Brotherhoods," in Timothy Lull (ed.), *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), respectively on pp. 260, 247, 251, 250.

[3] Luther, "Trade and Usury, *op. cit.* (note 1), p. 250.

[4] In contrast to the contemporary neoliberal move to "free" economic powers from political constraints.

[5] Luther, "Trade and Usury," *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 249–50.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 261. See also pp. 247–51.

[7] Luther, "Large Catechism," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2000), p. 397. In "Large Catechism," see also comments on First, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Commandments.

[8] Luther, "That These Words of Christ, 'This is My Body,' etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 37 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 57.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[10] Luther, "Third Sermon on Pentecost Sunday," in John Lenker (ed.), *Sermons of Martin Luther*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), pp. 316–7.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

[12] Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation," in Lull, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 47.

[13] Luther, in Lenker *op. cit.* (note 10), p. 321.

[14] Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body and Blood of Christ, and the Brotherhoods," in Lull *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 251.

[15] Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," in *ibid.*, p. 616.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 617.

[17] This sense of ethics as the form of Christ taking form in and among the faithful is consistent with Bonhoeffer's third approach to ethics, "conformation with the form of Christ," as seen in his *Ethics*. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, edited by Eberhard Bethge (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), ch.III.

[18] Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Healing a Broken World: God and Globalization* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), p. 74.

[19] Luther, in Lenker, *op. cit.* (note 10), vol. 8, p. 275.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 275–6.

[21] Luther, in Lenker, *op. cit.* (note 10), vol. 3, pp. 316–7.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

[24] Luther, "That These Words of Christ …" *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 57.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[26] Luther, the *Weimar Ausgabe* 23.134.34, cited in Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 129.

[27] Luther, "The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ," in Lull, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 321.

Rehearing Colossians 1:15–20 in a Context of Global Consumerism[1]

Brian J. Walsh

In an image-saturated world
a world of ubiquitous corporate logos
permeating your consciousness
a world of dehydrated and captive imaginations
in which we are too numbed, satiated and co-opted
to be able to dream of life otherwise
a world in which the empire of global economic affluence
has achieved the monopoly of our imaginations
in this world
Christ is the image of the invisible God
in this world
driven by images with a vengeance
Christ is the image par excellence
the image above all other images
the image that is not a facade
the image that is not trying to sell you anything
the image that refuses to co-opt you
Christ is the image of the invisible God
the image of God
a flesh and blood
here and now
in time and history
with joys and sorrows
image of who God is
the image of God
a flesh and blood
here and now
in time and history

with joys and sorrows
image of who we are called to be
image-bearers of this God
He is the source of a liberated imagination
a sub-version of the empire
because it all starts with him
and it all ends with him
everything
all things
whatever you can imagine
visible and invisible
mountains and atoms
outer space, urban space and cyberspace
whether it be the Pentagon, Disneyland,
Microsoft or AT&T
whether it be the institutionalized power structures
of the state, the academy or the market
all things have been created in him and through him
he is their source, their purpose, their goal
even in their rebellion
even in their idolatry
he is the sovereign one
their power and authority is derived at best
parasitic at worse

In the face of the empire
in the face of presumptuous claims to sovereignty
in the face of the imperial and idolatrous forces in our lives
Christ is before all things
he is sovereign in life
not the pimped dreams of the global market
not the idolatrous forces of nationalism
not the insatiable desires of a consumerist culture

In the face of a disconnected world
where home is a domain in cyberspace
where neighborhood is a chat room
where public space is a shopping mall
where information technology promises
a tuned in, reconnected world
all things hold together in Christ
the creation is a deeply personal cosmos
all cohering and interconnected in Jesus

And this sovereignty takes on cultural flesh
And this coherence of all things is socially embodied
in the church
against all odds
against most of the evidence
In a "show me" culture where words alone don't cut it
the church is
the flesh and blood
here and now
in time and history
with joys and sorrows
embodiment of this Christ
as a body politic
around a common meal
in alternative economic practices
in radical service to the most vulnerable
in refusal to the empire
in love of this creation
the church reimagines the world
in the image of the invisible God

In the face of a disappointed world of betrayal
a world in which all fixed points have proven illusory
a world in which we are anchorless and adrift
Christ is the foundation
the origin
the way
the truth
and the life
In the face of a culture of death
a world of killing fields
a world of the walking dead
Christ is at the head of the resurrection parade
transforming our tears of betrayal into tears of joy
giving us dancing shoes for the resurrection party
And this glittering joker
who has danced in the dragon's jaws of death[2]
now dances with a dance that is full
of nothing less than the fullness of God
this is the dance of the new creation
this is the dance of life out of death
and in this dance all that was broken
all that was estranged
all that was alienated
all that was dislocated and disconnected
what once was hurt
what once was friction
is reconciled
comes home
is healed
and is made whole
because Grace makes beauty out of ugly things[3]

everything
all things
whatever you can imagine
visible and invisible
mountains and atoms
outer space, urban space and cyberspace
every inch of creation
every dimension of our lives
all things are reconciled in him

And it all happens on a cross
it all happens at a state execution
where the governor did not commute the sentence
it all happens at the hands of the empire
that has captivated our imaginations
it all happens through blood
not through a power grab by the sovereign one
it all happens in embraced pain
for the sake of others
it all happens on a cross
arms outstretched in embrace
and this is the image of the invisible God
this is the body of Christ

Notes

[1] Taken from *Colossians Remixed* by Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat. Copyright © 2004 by Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Gove, IL 60515, **www.ivpress.com**.

[2] The "glittering joker dancing in the dragon's jaws" is an image found in Bruce Cockburn's song, "Hills of Morning" from the album *Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws* ©1979 Golden Mountain Music Corp.

[3] Images borrowed here from U2's song, "Grace," on the album *All that You Can't Leave Behind* ©2001 Polygram International Music Publishing.

Neoliberal Globalization: A *Casus Confessionis*?

Guillermo Hansen

In many Latin American Lutheran churches the challenges of globalization have recently been linked to the act of confessing. In declaring this to be a confessional matter, many Lutherans claim to be following a tradition which goes back to the time of the Reformation. The confessional aspect has also been emphasized by many in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), most recently in the Buenos Aires Declaration (2003) and the Accra Confession (2004).[1] Be it *casus*, *status* or *processus confessionis*, the main focus is to highlight the threat posited by economic injustice and globalization for the integrity of faith, as well as the well-being of humanity and creation.

The notion of confession undoubtedly stimulates the ethical dimension of Protestantism, which in turn focuses the churches' and agencies' attention on the challenges posed by neoliberalism. However, beyond the rhetorical aspects, the question is whether these references to the language of *confessio* are related to its historical use, and whether this points to an effective strategy for facing the challenges posed by globalization. We will see that the hermeneutical framework of the two-kingdoms doctrine is needed to "place" the act of confession in its true social dimension, that is, by clearly distinguishing and relating the proper ecclesial and political praxis.

A brief history

The Lutheran tradition understands the act of confession as an intrinsic aspect of the Christian faith. From a biblical perspective this faith, as an action of the Spirit, is an integral reality expressed not only in praise and adoration, but also in discipleship, vocation, mission and in the church's *diakonia.* Adding to this rich conception, however, Lutheranism introduced another meaning, namely, the case of confessing (*Bekenntnis)* in times of persecution and tyranny.[2] Although the entire life of a Christian and the church is a time of confession (in its primary sense), there are historical situations which require a public defense of the gospel and the integrity of faith (*im Fall der Bekenntnis* or *quando confessio fidei requiritur).*

When the *Formula of Concord* was written, this idea of *confessio* originated within the framework of a dispute about matters referred to as *adiaphora.* The case in point was the validity of reestablishing in the Lutheran churches some ceremonies (related to the Mass) and orders of the ministry that had already been abrogated and were not *per se* ordained by God. The party associated with Flacius argued that in times of scandal or persecution, issues that were formerly secondary to the faith become matters of primary confession in order to defend the integrity of the gospel.[3] This position was opposed to Melanchthon's more congenial attitude, and was eventually reflected in the text of the *Formula*: those issues considered *adiaphora*, or secondary to the faith (*Mittelding*, *res media et indiferentes)* become primary issues when their imposition violates the evangelical conscience centered on justification by faith.[4] In this way a threat to evangelical freedom represents "a case for the confession of faith" (*im fall der Bekenntnis; in casu confessionis)*, as indicated in this text:

> We believe, teach and confess that in time of persecution, when a clear-cut confession of faith is demanded of us, we dare not yield to the enemies in such indifferent things, as the apostle Paul writes, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:11) […]. In such a case it is not longer a question of indifferent things, but a matter which has to do with the truth of the gospel, Christian liberty, and the sanctioning of public idolatry, as well as preventing offense to the weak in faith. In all these things we have no concessions to make, but we should witness an unequivocal confession and suffer in consequence what God sends us and what he lets the enemies inflict on us.[5]

This provides the following guidelines for *confession* in emergency situations:

1. Confessing as a public act of engaging the central affirmations of faith is closely linked to a context of political and religious persecution. It is necessary when the gospel truth (centered in justification by faith) is threatened either by ecclesiastical tyranny or through the arrogance of state power.
2. Confessing is necessary when there is a threat of falling into idolatry, as well as losing the freedom given by the gospel.
3. The confession should be clear and direct, for the sake of those who are "weak in faith," that is, who could easily be confused by matters that are not central to the faith (*adiaphora)*.

A time for confessing is given to the believers and the community in anticipation of eschatological tribulations, whose signs are persecution and suffering. Confessing is closely linked to unjust suffering and the cross. In short, it implies a *martyrial* and communitarian act, a defense of the oppressed and persecuted because of the faith, and is a way of restricting the hold of other authorities over the gospel.[6]

In the later history of Lutheranism, the accent on confession changed. After the Peace of Westfalia (1648), the term *confessio* was utilized as a demarcation between churches rather than signifying a situation of persecution. Confession became synonymous with territoriality. During the nineteenth century, after the union of the Lutheran majority with the Reformed minority in Prussian territories, the category of *Bekenntnis* reemerged.[7] The term *Bekenntnisstand (status confessionis)* was used in regions suffering serious denominational conflicts. It was the basis for maintaining sacramental, liturgical, catechetical and devotional practices which had been jeopardized by the alleged "unification." But this notion of *status confessionis* had more to do with doxological matters than with open "persecution."

Bonhoeffer and subsequent developments

The concept of confession was used again in the well-known twentieth-century *Kirchenkampf*, that is, the German Protestant struggle against Nazism. This has had enormous repercussions on subsequent theological developments. While participating in theological discussions leading to the stance taken in the *Barmen Declaration* (1934), Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote an essay entitled "The Church and the Jewish Question"(April 1933). Here he argued that the church faces a critical situation when its very essence and proclamation are affected by the state excluding baptized Jews from Christian congregations, or prohibiting missionary work among Jews. According to Bonhoeffer, in such a case the church is *in status confessionis*, since the state's racist and discriminatory laws pose a threat to an essential aspect of the life of the church as *koinonia*.

Up to this point Bonhoeffer follows the tradition of the *Formula of Concord*. But, conscious of the new historical situation, Bonhoeffer retrieves a surplus of meaning from the sixteenth-century formulations. Facing the Nazi threat, Bonhoeffer described the two possible scenarios in which the church can declare itself *in status confessionis*. The first is when the state exceeds its powers and becomes a tyrant (*ein Zuviel an Ordnung und Recht*). The

second is when the state is deficient with regard to its responsibilities for social order and the law (*ein Zuwenig an Ordnung und Recht)*. "Both too much law and order and too little law and order compel the church to speak."[8]

It is important to note that Bonhoeffer understands this within the hermeneutical presuppositions of Luther's political theology. Bonhoeffer clearly relates the church's time of confession with the problem of misunderstanding God's two regiments. When they are confused, or when they do not fulfill their divine mandate, or when one domain pretends to exert tyrannical power over the other, we are in *status confessionis*. According to Bonhoeffer, this is the case

> […] when it [the church] sees the state unrestrainedly bring about too much or too little law and order. In both these cases it must see the existence of the state, and with it its own existence, threatened. There would be too little law if any group of subjects were deprived of their rights, too much where the state intervened in the character of the church and its proclamation, e.g., in the forced exclusion of baptized Jews from our Christian congregations or in the prohibition of our mission to the Jews. Here the Christian church would find itself in *status confessionis* and here the state would be in the act of negating itself. A state which includes within itself a terrorized church has lost its most faithful servant.[9]

Bonhoeffer's line of interpretation focuses both on the abuses within or against the church, which directly threaten the clear and distinctive proclamation of the gospel and administration of the sacraments, as well as on the abuse and irresponsibility of the state. This interpretation reemphasizes the importance of the distinction between the two realms, in order to accentuate the different but convergent moral and social roles of both state and church.[10] Thus, when the state fails to maintain order and justice, the church has three options. It can demand that the state "take responsibility," it could "bandage the victims under the wheel," or it may have "to jam a spoke in the wheel."[11] This last action would, according to Bonhoeffer, be "a direct political action of the church."

This concept greatly influenced both Lutherans and Reformed during the post-war period. For example, in Germany during the 1950s, marked by the tensions resulting from the Cold War and nuclear rearmament, the expression *status confessionis* was used to call the church to take sides vis-à-vis the ethical and political challenges of the moment. Another example is the declaration made by the LWF in Dar-es-Salaam (1977), in which the category of *status confessionis* was linked to the emergency situation created by the South African policy of apartheid. Apartheid is contrary to the very founda-

tion of faith; prohibiting whites and blacks from celebrating together the Holy Supper violates the unity and *koinonia* of the church. Thus the problem is placed on the ecclesiological level: what it means to be the church. Yet, by identifying the situation of apartheid as a call to confession it points to the excesses or deficits of state power in the ordering of society. Hence, apartheid is a threat to the church as much as to the whole of society.

We see then that the use of the category *casus* or *status confessionis* permitted Lutheranism to oppose ecclesiastically and ethically Roman Catholic medieval absolutism, Nazi fascism and the racist policies of South Africa. These examples shaped this confessional tradition, giving it a strong profile signaling freedom and resistance. But while the rise of the language of *casus* or *status confessionis* was characterized by deep theological and ecclesiological struggles, today's scenario is much more uncertain. The issue is not whether or not we should confess our faith, but how appropriate it is to turn to the concept of *status confessionis* to guide us in the problems we face today. The effectiveness of this language rested in the visible threat of counter-theologies which undermined not only the existence of the (evangelical) church, but also the truth of the gospel. But, where do these counter-theologies appear today? Could we point to neoliberalism and globalization as their contemporary incarnations?

The situation

Some argue, with good reason, that neoliberal globalization erodes not only the state's role toward the common good, but also the stability and the very existence of societies as well as the integrity of the gospel. The tremendous offensive of transnational capital, the proliferation of neoliberal prescriptions, the disease of unemployment, the decline in state social assistance, corruption, the fleeing of local resources to service the foreign debt—all these seem to indicate that this is a "time of confession." But do they really endanger the truth of the gospel and the very integrity of faith? What is really at stake?[12]

This is a concern shared by many in the ecumenical world. The German Lutheran theologian Ulrich Duchrow, along with the declarations from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Kitwe (1995), Debrecen (1997), Buenos Aires (2003) and Accra (2004), have called the churches to a time or process of confession in the face of neoliberal globalization. It is argued that the ideology and neoliberal practices represent either a violation of the First Commandment

of the Decalogue (Duchrow, following Luther), or an affront to the covenant and sovereignty of God (following Calvin, the Reformed churches).

While they are rightly alerting the churches to the dangers involved in neoliberal economic policies, it is valid to question the appropriateness of approaching this problem by appealing to an emerging *status confessionis;* this seems to ask too much in the wrong place. Duchrow, for instance, concludes his analysis of global capitalism with the utopian-messianic proposal of emulating the biblical testimony in the book of Acts with its small alternative communities.[13] This posits a kind of model which could be applied to economic and political practices. Also, in the Declaration of Buenos Aires, Reformed churches from the South sealed its statement with a fuzzy conception of "God's economy" as a counter-proposal to the neoliberal economic model of the global market.[14] Certainly, its emphasis and position challenge us to search for new solutions, but that should not prevent us from asking if this adequately reflects the complexity of our present moment. Does this provide an orientation for viable practices which take into consideration the complicated variables in our ever more complex world? If, following Bonhoeffer, our aim is "to jam a spoke in the wheel" of neoliberalism, prescriptions like the former ones do not provide us with the necessary mediations, that is, the effective means with which to jam the wheel. The "feathers" of enthusiasm are not enough.

The problem is neither the pertinence of the theme considered, nor the commitment of these documents and authors, which we support. Instead, the quandary is two-pronged: the interpretation and definition of the phenomenon of globalization and the subsequent theological hermeneutics of that reality. The first would determine our reading and definition of the phenomenon called globalization, the second, the reformulation of our positions and practices. Although saying so may not be popular, frequently our efforts to search for answers fall into some kind of moralization of the crisis, and an enthusiasm devoid of tactics. So what we often call reality is the result of opinions rather than analysis, superficial theological ideas (substituting social analysis for biblical categories), or a semantic mixture that does not help much to focus and clarify the problem.[15]

Let us pursue the first direction, using some analytical tools stemming from the realms of sociology, cultural anthropology, political science and economics. Most of the studies dedicated to the subject (García Canclini; Hobsbawm; Giddens; Harvey; Negri and Hardt) indicate that the era of "globalization" cannot be understood mono-causally, for instance, just focusing on economic neoliberalism. Globalization is a truly systemic complex shaped by multiple factors and dimensions whose basic structure is the superposi-

tion of different logics and networks. Some of the factors which make up this framework are: exploding scientific knowledge; the acceleration of transport and communications (bringing distant places closer together); cultural changes and how subjectivity is perceived; the emergence of new social subjects; the crisis of the nation-states; the growing mechanization and computerization of production; massive migration to urban centers; the pluralization of identities and worlds; and, of course, the new ways in which business, trade and finance are brought together for speculative purposes and immediate profit.

The structural roots of this situation can, indeed, be traced back to the transformation of capitalism which became an uncontrollable reality in the 1970s (with the accelerated transnationalization of corporate activities and new modes of production). This unleashed a growing gap between rich and poor countries and the social polarization within them between globalized élites and localized masses.[16] Furthermore, it is true that the growth of capitalism, in its neoliberal form, erodes the cultural substratum within society, and also the state's role in regulating and redistributing economic benefits.[17] Yet it is also true that these phenomena developed new crisis spheres that can no longer be satisfactorily addressed by redressing economic policies. Let us think, for example, of the growing culture of indifference and the primacy of the individual. These developments accompany and legitimate the neoliberal tide. Yet they denote also cultural and anthropological camps from where different forms of sociality may be imagined and practiced. As a result, such diverse themes as subjectivity, desire, gender, art, ecology—to mention only a few—become spheres where neoliberalism may not be openly and immediately confronted, but where its core tenets may be steadily eroded by considering different values and ways of relating in the world.

In this way the central problem is not simply located in the mechanisms of "empire" or economy, but includes social, cultural and political processes, which are both susceptible to the expanding dominion of the neoliberal logic as well as being places of tacit resistance.[18] Therefore, it is not so much the strength or seduction of neoliberal ideology that must be feared, nor its advance as a totalitarian ideology, but the expansion of its ideas and logic into spaces that are vulnerable due to an unprecedented political and social crisis. This crisis appears in the religious foundations of the Christian faith as well as in the ideologies and institutions of modernity. Thus, if as Christians we are talking about resistance and confrontation, this should not consist of direct "assaults" with alternative economic proposals, but rather be based on a "war of positions" in the various domains of society and culture, including the church. In other words, it is a struggle

around symbols and representations which may not touch the economic core directly, but which may certainly erode its cultural presuppositions.

We live in uncertain and "liquid" times; never before have we encountered such a volatile and complex situation. In light of this complexity, a one-dimensional analysis of the problem of globalization would result in a limited contribution of the Christian church to this multi-dimensional phenomenon. If globalization is only confronted in terms of its economic dynamic, then old structuralist interpretations are repeated which tend to isolate phenomena that in daily life are linked to the logic of culture, society and institutions. Romantic prescriptions of "the small messianic communities" or what is allegedly "God's economy" have symbolic value, but result merely in short-term strategies for a select group of people. In a plural, complex world, affected by diverse interests, is this recommendable or practicable? One thing is certain: the flutter of some moral feathers will not detain the advance of the neoliberal *Juggernaut*.[19]

Jamming the wheels of the Juggernaut? Church, politics and citizenship

As tempestuous as these dynamics are, the theoretical and ethical despair that abounds in our societies and churches should not surprise us. This calls for interdisciplinary and multidimensional mediations for interpreting the dynamics of globalization in order to provide a clearer picture. This reaffirms the methodology of liberation theology.[20] But although the social analysis is crucial, churches have to go further. As heirs of the tradition of the *status confessionis* we know how to react to political oppression and persecution and to build resistance from there. But a situation where there are no open attacks on the gospel or the church, as was experienced in totalitarian states,[21] disorients us. In the public arena, language of "idolatry" and references to the threat to "God's sovereignty" does not carry significant weight. The crude reality is that economic neoliberalism associated with globalization does not depend on a totalitarian strategy in the sense of a political program of confrontation and domination, since it acts as the very negation of politics. Its force lies in the ability to penetrate the interstices and fissures of societies undergoing serious economic, political and cultural crises. This is why many find it difficult to analyze something which appears so fluid, flexible, elastic, but which nonetheless keeps undermining cultures and traditional political institutions. As sociologist Zygmunt Bauman posits,

> In order to acquire a true capacity of becoming an entity, resistance needs an efficient and persistent attacker. However, as a consequence of the new mobility, capital and finances almost never find themselves in the occasion to conquer the inflexible, sort out the obstacles, or overcome or mitigate resistance […] capital can always leave in search for more peaceful scenarios […] why confront that which can be avoided?[22]

In light of this, let us return to the three criteria from the *Formula of Concord* and ask, How pertinent is it to interpret our present situation theologically as a time of *confessio*? The first criterion, persecution, presents us with an obstacle: transporting into our times a language that was devised to counteract persecution and abusive practices requires a clear identification of today's totalitarian referents. Yet, as Bauman points out, today we face situations that are more elusive; they can only be "imagined" as totalitarian, but the "core" of the system is always in flux. It is as though the *pax neoliberalis* makes us imagine things in order to divert our attention. Aren't some of the churches' social statements somewhat quixotic? If the noble Spaniard saw enemies where there were only windmills, today the troubled consciences of many churches and theologians reify as idolatrous multiple and multidimensional processes that in fact do not have any single "center" on which to focus effective resistance.

Trying to identify clear profiles in a diffuse and multidimensional reality may help to recreate the climate which in the past characterized some theological postures, but at the cost of expending all energies to counter a liquid flux of power. In the era of globalization, economic interests and forces have the supreme capacity not only to slip away when directly attacked, but also to ensnare vulnerable areas in the political and cultural spheres. Hence, it is useless to accuse neoliberalism of being idolatrous or sinful, not because from a Christian perspective this is "untrue," but because it creates the illusion that this sinfulness can be overcome by means of some kind of conversion or moral offensive with a clear target. In this vein it is an ineffectual maneuver to affirm—as the Buenos Aires Declaration does—that neoliberal ideology entails a theological as opposed to a biblical vision. Neoliberalism is not a theology, much less a counter-theology, but simply an a-theology.[23] Therefore building resistance cannot rest on these foundations.

With this we advance to the second criterion from the Formula of Concord, idolatry. Idolatry, mammon and rampant selfishness are correctly identified as being ruthless realities in our present context. But, to be frank, who is shaken by accusations of idolatry, or calls to reestablish God's sovereignty? Does the re-

vamping of the *status* or *processus confessionis* really affect the economic and political dynamics of our societies? The fact is that in a pluralistic and institutionally secularized context, this type of call to *confessio* does not have in itself the power to unleash a praxis that can actually challenge the powers that be.

As for the last criterion—clear and unambiguous confession because of the "weak in faith"—is this perhaps an urgent need? It is, especially if we are mindful of the theological anthropology of *simul iustus et peccator*. However, in light of the above, we suspect that the reiterated call for *status confessionis* seems to be more a reaction from the "weakness of faith" in our contemporary world, than a clear affirmation of the gospel for the sake of others. The undoubted crisis which churches experience today may be accompanied by a more profound theological crisis. To take refuge in new biblicisms (including "popular" and of the "left") will not take us very far. At most, it will lead us to combat windmills, to dilute ourselves in messianic utopianisms or to launch a hunt for heretics (today, in the "ethical" sense after Uppsala '68). But they will not lead us toward the fundamental cultural and political task which the new time requires: to reconstitute the institutional and social web as an effective resistance and counter strategy against the onslaught of transnational capitalism (*cf*. Hardt and Negri).

In short, the present call to a *status confessionis* against economic neoliberalism is not appropriate. The language of confession was intended to confront situations affecting the integrity and the truth of the gospel. It was a call to witnessing, not a platform from which to launch effective political action. If we adopt a broad vision of what the gospel means, we may agree that we live in an emergency situation; but we should do so without confusing the promise of the gospel with that of its social realization, i.e., the gospel and the law. Scandalous though it may sound, neoliberal globalization is not a direct threat to the gospel. Rather, globalization undermines the dimensions that Bonhoeffer saw as being essential to assure the space for living together—the public sphere and the state. Mediations, such as the law and political order, are divine-human means of action seeking to secure peace and justice, expressing the values of the gospel in an external and temporal form. These mediations must neither be confused with the gospel itself, nor become an extension of the church. Consequently, what is at stake is neither the gospel, nor the "sovereignty" of God, nor the church. What is affected are the world, and the human capacity to develop cultural and political strategies of resistance and change. In other words, it is the dimension that Lutheranism has depicted as the "temporal" sphere, built on love and expressed through the *usus politicus legis*.

A theology that emphasizes these aspects could only point us to the real danger we face: the burst of the logic of capital into those other spheres which make life a proleptic manifestation of the promise of the gospel. What should be given priority in current theological work is the slow fracture of the public space as the realm of political decisions inspired by certain moral convictions, rather than the so-called "alternative" economic order which Christian communities might embody once they become aware of their *confessio* heritage. As Eric Hobsbawm indicates, today humanity's destiny depends on restoring the authorities and public structures.[24] The public space of politics and power, of compromises and negotiations, is the place *par excellence* where Christians and non-Christians are being united by a divine call to exercise their citizenship in favor of an order that guarantees and promotes a peace, an equality and a justice able to prevent us from the worst effects of asymmetrical power.

The two kingdoms revisited

Proposals to combine the language of *confessio* with the problems of globalization fail for three reasons: they are articulated on the basis of a political theology that does not explain how God relates to the political realm; they support a moralizing solution to deep structural, cultural and social problems; they do not promote the urgent need for exercising citizenship in heterogeneous spaces with the goal of redressing a rising yet unequal tide. These proposals confer a "spiritual" logic on the "temporal," forgetting the proper mediations which govern these two spheres. It is not sufficient to list biblical quotations or to embellish "confessional" language with moral content, expecting that this will mobilize a kind of counter-offensive or a particularly Christian alternative to neoliberal globalization. In the long term, it will create a climate of suffocation and even of ethical and spiritual cynicism. What is at stake is too important to fall into these traps.

We need a theological vision that can help us to visualize not only all the dangers neoliberalism poses for the gospel, but mostly for the world. Consequently, a good theological interpretation should account for action by the church as well as by citizens in their different spheres. For the Christian conscience, both spheres are closely linked, but even so, they have to be differentiated. Without the gospel, which forms the *ekklesia*, there would be no record of the promise that awaits creation. From there we engage in a world from a vision and from values of an order based on God's peace and justice; this nourishes our public

engagement.[25] Nonetheless, from a political perspective, the church is not an apt instrument for efficiently working out these values. It is not that the church cannot do so institutionally when the situation allows it, but because the core of its existence, the gospel, is not in itself an efficient means for realizing this political project. Here we see the importance of political and civic vocation, without which there would not be any chance to implement the human and social values we consider essential. Theological discourse should emphasize the peculiar world that the Christian practice of faith and love creates. It can also highlight the necessary political and civic mediation to realize these values, while acknowledging the variables in spheres in which so many interests converge. Theological discourse creates an essential space for socialization through narratives and stories which offer meaning and a sense of identity, while the political is affirmed as an indispensable instrument to realize collective goals.

Once more, we can learn from Luther and Bonhoeffer, whose perspectives maintain at the same time the unique role of the gospel and the church, as well as the relevance and mandate of social and political action. They knew that the "spiritual" and the "temporal" are means by which God does his work in order in Christ to recapitulate all things. But while in the "spiritual" sphere the means of action is God as Holy Spirit, in the secular field divine action is mediated and refracted through social institutions and orderings. In the spiritual field, there are no ambiguities, since the task is that of communicating *agape* as an eternal attribute. In the temporal field, the law exists as an instrument to harmonize divergent human interests; justice is furthered in the midst of people's asymmetric demands. The political and public organizations are institutional mediations for implementing the goals of such justice.

In this way a dynamic theory of the two kingdoms[26] would permit us to maintain the radicalism of the call of the gospel, so that Christianity is not diluted into a kind of moralism that is really useless for both church and world. In this aeon we cannot solely live out of the gospel; nor can we exclusively seek to restore God's "sovereignty" or project ecclesial practice on the whole of society. But a dynamic vision of God's twofold regiment calls Christians to live out their political life by exercising citizenship, which always implies the use of power according to ends that agree with the heart of the evangelical promise.

When we lack the appropriate theological framework, s*tatus confessionis* or similar language appears to become associated with proposals that are somehow disproportionate and cannot become effective in history. In the real world, there is no direct line from our (Christian) values to their socio-

political mediations. We cannot transpose our alleged "holiness" onto the world, nor find an appropriate political expression for our commitment to and love for the poor. Without recovering a faith that is mediated through political action, we will continue attempting to jam the destructive wheels of neoliberal globalization with weak, yet colorful, feathers.

If we do not recover this call to public life and citizenship, we will fall into one of the most dangerous traps of this *Juggernaut:* disappointment with politics, saying—as Argentines frequently tend to do in times of turmoil—"let all of them [politicians] go away." True, politics is in crisis, but to ignore it and withdraw from commitment because "all politicians are corrupt" is to play with the specter of authoritarianism and/or to favor the wantonness of neoliberal strategies. Politics should be legitimated anew as a field for searching for solidarity and equitable goals, but without false illusions or utopianism. In such circumstances, and especially in the midst of crisis and corruption, not to be engaged in militant citizenship means to work "against love" (Luther).

The categories of the two regiments thus liberate us from the anxiety and anguish of believing that all alternatives should be borne on Christian shoulders, or to believe that all that happens in the world seems to be a plot against Christian values. Likewise, it gives us a new framework for interpretation, emphasizing the world of politics. The public arena is the space where we live out our Christian and civic vocation, and where the counterproposals against disillusion could be channeled. In this way, we avoid falling into the same logic which imposes an economic-reductionistic interpretation of globalization. We reaffirm, with Hobsbawm, the importance of motivating a new ethical commitment within public institutions and democratic political parties—the only means of stopping the pillage. This requires a cultural revolution, not moral hysteria. A revolution which embodies new forms of citizenship—even on a global scale.

Lastly, the theory of the two kingdoms allows us to place the language of confession along the lines suggested by Bonhoeffer. If the epoch of Nazi totalitarianism meant too much state (*Zuviel)*, our times are characterized by too little state (*Zuwenig)*. This implies by no means a call for a bygone omnipresent state, nor limiting our conception of state to the "nation-state" model. Rather, it is a call to engage with the very idea of state and public realm and its multiple requirements and contributions to civil society, globally as well as locally. A strengthening of democracy, citizen's participation, intermediate organizations and a positive appreciation of politics, are the indispensable tools to combat the growing ruptures and social inequalities. It is legitimate to claim that a weak

state poses a *status confessionis* for the church inasmuch as we affirm that God is acting in the world not only through the church, but also through the state and public institutions to support spaces for life and equity. A call for a *status confessionis* should clarify that the challenge of the neoliberal *Juggernaut* obliges the church to speak out, not because its essence is under direct attack, but because the field of public institutions is under the pressure of an avalanche of unprecedented proportions. Our *confessio* is a call to collaborate in promoting citizenship and to reject the illusion that of being consumers of the twenty-first century in the garb of citizens of the eighteenth.[27]

Notes

[1] See, *Toward an Economy in the Service of Life. A Report of an Ecumenical Journey*, pp. 51ff. in this publication.

[2] "Formula of Concord, Article X (1577)," in Theodore G. Tappert (ed.), *The Book of Concord*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959).

[3] See Eugene TeSelle," How do we recognize a *status confessionis*?," in *Theology Today* 45/1 (April 1988).

[4] See Martin Schloemann, " The Special Case for Confessing: Reflections on the *Casus Confessionis* (Dar es Salaam 1977) in the Light of History and Systematic Theology," in Eckehart Lorenz (ed.), *The Debate on Status Confessions. Studies in Christian Political Theology, LWF Studies* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1983), pp. 55ff.

[5] "Formula of Concord, Article X," *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 493.

[6] See Robert Bertram, "Confessing as Re-Defining Authority: Ethical Implications of Augsburg's 'Time for Confessing'," in Lorenz, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 95ff.

[7] Schloemann, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 55.

[8] Geffery B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson (eds), *A Testament to Freedom. The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), pp. 138–139.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 139–140.

[10] Guillermo Hansen, "La crítica cristológica de Bonhoeffer a la hermenéutica 'pseudoluterana' de las dos esferas," *Lumen: Revista de estudos e pesquisa da religiao* VI/1 (Jan–June 2003).

[11]Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 139.

[12] A good example, although taken from the Reformed camp, are the declarations of the chairperson of the "Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Latin America" (AIPRAL), the Rev. Germán Zijistra. His opinions are shared by many Lutherans. See *Nuevo Siglo* (Quito) 4/8 (agosto 2004) p.9. Let us notice however that the churches within the LWF have not called to a *confessio* against globalization, but to a double strategy: the strengthening of the practice of the Lutheran global *communion* as a space of ethical formation, and to engage in practices and policies of citizenship affirming just and equitable systems. See, "Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion" in this publication, pp. 21ff.

[13] Ulrich Duchrow, "El Cristianismo en el contexto de los mercados capitalistas globalizados," *Concilium* 57/2 (1997), p. 261.

[14] Foro Sur-Sur de las iglesias miembro de la ARM, "Declaración de fe sobre la crisis global de la vida," *Mundo Reformado* 54/1 (March 2004), pp. 45–57, here p. 50.

[15] *Cf.* Clodovis Boff, *Teología de lo Político: sus mediaciones* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1980), pp. 67ff.

[16] See Zygmunt Bauman, *La globalización: consecuencias humanas* (Buenos Aires: FCE, 1999), p. 8.

[17] See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1989* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), pp. 343 and 408.

[18] This is one of Michel Hardt's and Antonio Negri's thesis, in Multitude: *War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

[19] The *Juggernaut* is an image that Anthony Giddens borrowed from Hindu mythology in order to describe the situation of uncontrolled instability and catastrophe which characterizes modern societies. The *Juggernaut* or *Jagannath*—which carries the image of the god Krishna—was taken in procession and many faithful threw themselves under the wheels as a sacrifice to the deity. Anthony Giddens, *Consecuencias de la Modernidad* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1993), p. 58.

[20] *Cf.* Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Mirar lejos," in *Páginas* 93 (1988), pp. 63–97.

[21] Of course there are other types of "attacks" and "dangers" but they have to do with the postmodern and culturally pluralistic social context in which we live. But it would be an exaggeration to speak of a deliberate attack on the gospel.

[22] Bauman, *op. cit.* (note 16), pp. 19f.

[23] The notion of neo-liberalism as theology was popularized in the 1990s by the historian Eric Hobsbawm. But many fail to identify the irony with which he "theologizes" neoliberalism: for Hobsbawm neoliberalism is "theology" because it lacks the scientific basis and hence it cannot be refuted in the sense of Popper's criteria. Hobsbawm by no means suggests that the liberal economists have quasi-religious pretensions or even that theology would be a praxis that would free or transform the hard objective realities. See Hobsbawn, *op. cit.* (note 17), pp. 547f.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 577.

[25] See Guillermo Hansen, "La comunidad cristiana: el encanto de una práctica," *Cuadernos de Teología* XVIII (1999), p. 38.

[26] Ulrich Duchrow has been one of the most important theologians recuperating this theory derived from Luther. However it is strange that it is not used more vigorously in his recent discussions about the church and globalization.

[27] See Néstor García Canclini, *Consumidores y ciudadanos: conflictos multiculturales de la globalización* (México: Grijalbo, 1995).

Pursuing Neighbor-Love through Economic Activity

A Statement from an LWF Consultation (2004)

As part of the ongoing theological ethical address of economic globalization, a small consultation under the theme, "Globalizing Vocation and Neighbor-Love," was convened 17–19 June 2004 in Stuttgart, Germany by the Department for Theology and Studies of the LWF. Participants from LWF member churches included pastors, theologians, ethicists and those involved in public policy, economics and business. Background papers were shared ahead of time; some of the perspectives and insights discussed are indicated below. These are not comprehensive or fully developed, but intended to "plant some seeds" for further discussion and action in different contexts. Although the focus at this consultation was especially in relation to business, it was linked to the various other discussions and actions related to the LWF "Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization" and with other ecumenical and civil society efforts.

Some theological points of departure

As Christians we do not stand outside the dynamics of economic globalization, but are caught up in them. This is especially the case for those in positions of access to economic and political power, as well as for others who are attracted by the allure of economic globalization but largely left out of its benefits. The life of faith is lived out in the midst of this tension.

Christians are invited to approach ethical dilemmas that emerge through economic activity from a deeply formed sense of baptismal vocation to further what will be good for neighbors around the globe, especially those who are economically marginalized. How can their interests be more directly factored into economic decisions and actions? How can the good of the most vulnerable neighbors—close by and around the globe—best be served through the decisions that are made and actions that are taken in economic life?

The criterion of neighbor-love goes against the grain or resists the neoliberal assumptions embedded in economic globalization. In these ways, the gram-

mar of the church and that of the prevailing economic theory and practices are in tension. But for the most part, this tension and the conflicts it generates within believers as well as within the wider society are not made explicit or addressed. Christians who work in business are left to struggle with this for themselves, rather than the church being a place for this deliberation.

The hands and fingers of action

In the face of the powerlessness that people often feel in relation to economic globalization, it is important to point to the different kinds of action they can take, as expressions of "neighbor-love." At the consultation, this was envisioned in terms of "fingers" that are connected as part of the hands of one body—i.e., the body of Christ in the world. As a communion, these are not separate actions but connected with what others are doing. These "fingers" include, for example,

- **Worshipping**: receiving God's gracious gifts through Word and sacrament, being "formed" to live out our baptismal vocation in the world.
- **Praying**: interceding for and standing in solidarity with those especially harmed by economic practices.
- **Living our daily lives**: what we consume or boycott, how we produce, exchange and relate to one another and to the rest of creation.
- **Sharing** our resources and giving to others.
- **Raising awareness** of what is occurring and why.
- **Organizing** people and communities.
- **Protesting** injustices and their causes.
- **Pursuing** economic alternatives that are more sustaining of life.
- **Advocating** the corporate social responsibility of businesses.
- **Seeking** public policy changes for the good of all.

What does it mean to pursue neighbor-love in different arenas?

Neighbor-love must be viewed contextually; how economic globalization is experienced varies greatly across contexts. At this consultation, examples

from Kenya showed how the local sugar industry had been destroyed due to trade policies inspired by economic globalization. In each case, there must be an accurate description of the problems at stake, comparing these with criteria emerging from our faith (e.g., human rights, distributive justice and care), weighing up the courses of action and acting.

Furthermore, we live out neighbor-love differently, depending on the arena or level. In the arena of personal or individual ethics, what it means to "love the neighbor" in word and deed is usually rather obvious and direct. Here is where the churches' moral formation has tended to focus.

More challenging, and often overlooked, has been discerning what "neighbor-love" means in organizational ethics, especially in businesses that must make a profit if they are to survive. Here neighbor-love is lived out within the constraints of certain structures, which requires deliberative reflection. Neighbor-love needs to be translated into additional "bottom lines," such as protecting or enhancing conditions for the most vulnerable, distributive justice, environmental sustainability, and restraint in the use of power. The corporate culture of an organization plays an important role, along with how responsibility is understood and lived out by those involved. Exchanges are "fair" if they add value to all those involved in the exchange. This applies, for example, when a company enters a host country. Without this, there is no viable relationship with the neighbor. "Love" is expressed corporately by building up all kinds of assets—for all affected—rather than by depleting the resources of some. The corporate social responsibility movement has pursued adherence to criteria such as these through dialogue and persuasion.

A third arena or level is that of structural ethics, which focus on the framework, policies, laws and regulations by which organizations or sectors are expected to operate. This is where public policy advocacy work has tended to focus. The challenge increasingly raised today is the need for enforceable international standards or laws, given the increasingly global reach of economic activity. Lacking this regulation at the global level, it is even more important for responsibility to be exercised at the organizational level.

Some corporate social responsibility challenges

In recent decades, churches and related organizations have given more attention to encouraging and furthering corporate social responsibility: by investing in socially responsible companies or funds, dialoguing with corporations

regarding their practices and, in select cases, organizing boycotts against them. Many sets of guidelines, principles and benchmarks have been developed. Four "gateways" through which greater social responsibility can be pursued are through market demand (e.g., intentionally buying or refusing to buy certain products), through nurturing a culture of social and environmental responsibility in a company, through government regulations, or through legal action.

As corporate social responsibility is pursued, further dilemmas and challenges arise, such as:

- If public protest is organized against a transnational company because of the bad working conditions of those it employs, the company may shut down its operation ("cut and run"). Not only does this expose workers who may be in the country "illegally," but they lose their source of livelihood.
- With today's increasing practice of outsourcing, long-term agreements between transnational corporations and local producers are absent; the quest is for ever lower cost production. It is important that corporations be held responsible for working conditions in their whole supply chain.
- When a beverage corporation in India extracted groundwater to produce its well-known soft drink, it not only reduced the groundwater available to thousands of local farmers, but in addition, waste distributed for use as fertilizer further contaminated the water. Because companies need to be held responsible for multiple negative effects of their practices, legal action was pursued and compensation sought for those who suffered.
- We can dialogue with those companies willing to be socially responsible, but what of those violators who are unwilling to comply, or who do not care? Many companies claim to be socially responsible, but without meaningful, effective monitoring processes, compliance is difficult to ascertain. In addition, actions are needed to deal with those who do not comply.
- Companies need to be advised and equipped to engage in more ethical trade, through dialogue and possibly confrontation.
- When even governments fail to protect people's rights, where can people go, given the lack of enforceable global mechanisms?
- How can corporate social responsibility be globalized beyond the North, with an agenda not primarily driven by the North, or misused for its own protectionist interests?
- Promoting social responsibility in large transnational corporations is very difficult. A globalized world needs a globalized civil society.

For continuing discussion and action

It is important that churches boldly proclaim God's prophetic word of critique and, at times, judgment on unjust economic practices. At the same time, they need to be more hospitable and open to people sharing and discussing the tensions they face in economic activity and to process these in light of the Christian faith. This involves being more attentive to the language used, which sometimes is polarizing and alienating. It is important that faith-based criteria be translated into terms that are meaningful to those in business and vice versa.

Consider the following as discussion starters in your setting:

- The market economy is not to be equated with economic globalization. Some market systems can work for the good or ill of others, depending on the terms and relative power of the parties involved.
- The era of industrial production has been devastating, by extracting the earth's natural capital. How can natural capital be included in the accounting, for the sake of the sustainability of all of creation?
- Measuring growth in terms of money only is limited. Other kinds of growth should be emphasized, for the sake of the flourishing of communities and the rest of creation. The planet itself is unable to sustain high growth-oriented globalization.
- People's sense of ownership and participation is key. They need the freedom to develop rules and structures that make sense for them in their own context.
- It is not necessarily bad when companies move to other locales; people there also need jobs. What is troublesome are the terms under which companies typically do so; these can have devastating effects.
- If a company enters a host country, its activity there is only just if it adds value to both sides, does not deplete the human or ecological resources in the short or long term, and carries out the commitments it makes to the host country.
- There are important reasons for churches to favor and encourage the development of small businesses: their size is appropriate for developing countries, they are likely to be more responsive and accountable to the communities in which they operate, and they create most of the new jobs. Cooperatives and business incubators using new technologies can also be important in helping small businesses to get started and be sustained.

- Attention needs to be given to how, in a given context, social capital is generated and sustained, both through institutional arrangements and informal networks of reciprocity and goodwill.
- Because organizations can focus power and resources in ways individuals cannot, it is crucial that organizations exercise restraint in how they use these.
- Companies must move beyond focusing on short-term growth gains, and account for externalities that affect human and ecological well-being. Financial planning and strategies must take into account the natural life cycle for producing their product or service.
- Churches should support persons who experience the gaps between their values, those a company espouses, and how it actually operates.
- When injustice is structured into our lives, we need to ask (1) what is going on (who loses, who benefits); (2) what is normative (what beliefs, criteria); (3) what constructive alternatives are there; and (4) how are we empowered spiritually and morally to act?

How can your congregation be involved in supporting members as they seek to pursue neighbor-love through their economic activity? In helping small entrepreneurs? In contributing to the economic development of communities?

Nurturing Responsibility in a Congregation

Sandra Bach and Susanne Edel

Globally connected congregations

It is a perfectly normal Sunday service in a congregation on the outskirts of Esslinge, southern Germany, at the start of the summer holidays. But there are two unfamiliar faces among the people gathered around the altar for the Eucharist. They are visiting their partner congregation, and when the service ends, they will deliver greetings from their Lutheran congregation situated in the northwestern part of Tanzania. Suddenly everyone's attention is drawn to people who survive on 250 Euros per year, who lack educational opportunities and who strenuously walk seven kilometers to the next water point. There is a request for help in constructing a training facility in the village.

Part of what it means to be linked globally as Christians—our solidarity through faith in Jesus Christ, as celebrated during the Eucharist—becomes perceptible on this morning during the worship service. As Paul pointed out to the congregation in Corinth (1 Cor 11), the solidarity in the body of Christ also includes caring for the well-being of our brothers and sisters. The people around the table of Jesus assume responsibility for one another. On this Sunday morning, this is manifested in the offering intended for the training center in that particular Tanzanian village.

Yet the question still remains as to whether Christian welfare, which is well established in many congregations, ought also to include the political and social dimensions of our global economic interconnections.

A vision of congregations who see themselves as shapers of economic globalization

In many of their statements the churches express their concern about the negative aspects of economic globalization. Resisting these aspects is advised, as is the

need to shape globalization. The task consists of "developing a theologically based vision that endorses the interrelatedness of humankind, made possible by the process of globalization, while simultaneously condemning the social exclusion this process is causing."[1] From experience Christians recognize that people around the world depend on each other. Against this background, they are called to take action when many people are excluded from the benefits of global economic interconnections, or are deprived of their basic means of survival. The kind of action that needs to be taken has yet to be determined.

How can members of Christian congregations recognize, grasp and perceive their responsibility in these processes? What prevents people in our congregations from addressing issues related to economic globalization from the perspective of the Christian faith? What would be the best approach to move ahead?

Through the light of God's love and the hope graciously given in Jesus Christ, many Christians feel personally distressed about places and situations in which people and the rest of creation suffer. However, instead of highlighting this awareness, they take little notice and more or less dull their sensitivities. They raise such questions as, What is the point of noting these conditions and bringing them to public awareness if we cannot provide solutions? Can we trust our perception at all? Everything is so complicated that nobody really knows what is right or wrong.

In light of such doubts, it is important to encourage Christians to interpret the suffering they perceive as a very personal and significant contribution to shaping the world, without seeking further meanings. Highlighting suffering before God and humankind is a major step toward elucidating human dignity, in the light of faith, love and hope. This can be seen as a first step in the process of forming personal opinions about economic issues. Perceptions of situations in which a life of human dignity is not possible need to be discussed openly, mindful of our Christian faith; further clarification of the problems and their solutions can follow later.

Tensions between ethical and economic language

Ethics and economics function according to different languages, rationalities and thought processes. The call of Christians to brotherly/sisterly love and to imperatives which apply to economic contexts (e.g., reap the highest benefits

with the least possible effort, and beat the competition!) are at first sight incompatible. However, mechanisms based on the market economy, such as the principle of profit and competition, can contribute positively to the common well-being when they provide goods and services for the community.

The members of our congregations are constantly faced with both ethical and economic rationalities in their daily lives. This applies not only in the workplace, but also in the church. In view of the decreasing resources that churches face, many congregations ask themselves how they can carry out their work in a positive and proactive manner. Individual members of the congregation are also continuously exposed to such worries. For example, the manager of a large company is very committed to his local congregation, sparing neither trouble nor expense to ensure that the training project for a partner congregation moves ahead. But during the week, he has to act according to economic criteria which, depending on the circumstances, call for decisions that do not correspond to his perception of compassion for others. Many people keep wondering how to deal with the tensions such situations generate.

It is important for congregations to address these tensions. Christian insight into ethical business practices could be helpful in highlighting fundamental ethical principles in economic relationships. This implies influencing the basic conditions and processes of economic structures, as well as supply and demand through appropriate consumer practices. Meanwhile, the basic role of the congregation is to bear in mind the people excluded from economic processes, and to speak up for their rights.

Power and powerlessness of individuals, organizations and beliefs

What change can we bring about on our own? Feelings of powerlessness frequently hinder the contributions we might make to global economic processes. As individuals we may have neither a comprehensive view of daily production processes in order to decide what to purchase (or not) on the basis of our moral criteria, nor a set of guidelines for global trade relations. We cannot do everything simultaneously. Nevertheless, individuals are not powerless. It is therefore important to give people clear insights as to what action they can take in order not to feel discouraged. The scope of action at the level of individuals, governments, international laws and agreements, and

the responsibilities of organizations and businesses (corporate social responsibility) are the matters at stake.

Ethical principles are needed to question the basic economic conditions at all three levels according to the following criteria: Are the working conditions fair, sustainable and in compliance with human dignity? Are the basic conditions organized in such a way that makes "fair play" possible for all concerned? These questions can be studied in depth at all three levels, and all individuals can intentionally raise these in the appropriate situation.

A congregation or church organization can set up a forum to seek clarification on these questions through mutual exchange. For example, an action group consisting of members threatened by unemployment can be formed within a congregation. Here, people can network and support each other, obtain information about possibilities for negotiating with companies, and about political ways of influencing events and, above all, give each other moral support. At higher church levels linking together individual congregations, an action forum can seek answers to such questions as, How shall we invest money? What are we seeking through our discussions or confrontations with the businesses in our region? Furthermore, cooperation with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is very important, as well as with the businesses in which church members earn their living.

Church members seek strength from their faith and spiritual practices during these efforts, and can rejoice in the experience of global solidarity that undergirds and empowers their thoughts and actions. This is particularly emphasized when global ecumenical guests come together for the Eucharist. People share their sorrows, their life situations and, above all, their hope for a future that is worth living. We can shape our own lives and that of others through the strength of our faith.

Notes

[1] Jörg Hübner, *Globalisierung: Herausforderung für Kirche und Theologie. Perspektiven einer Menschengerechten Weltwirtschaft* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2003), p. 289.

On the Theological Added Value of Money

"Make Friends Through the Unjust Mammon"

Wolfram Stierle

An excerpt from Wirtschaftliche Globalisierung, *published in 2003 by the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation in response to the LWF publication*, Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion.

Speaking about God and money

Speaking about money means speaking in theological terms. Upon hearing such a statemen, even those who would rather spontaneously declare not having a musical ear for religion, will hardly deny that fanciful terms are used in the cash economy. Creed has its pendant in creditor and credit, debt in debtor, cultic acts in cult marketing, and there is even supposed to be a banker's trust.

Little wonder then that Martin Luther felt compelled to act when he learned that Tetzel, by preaching indulgences, claimed to be able to send souls to heaven for ready cash. What made sense for the Dominican from Leipzig, to Luther seemed to make too great a claim on money—and clearly too little on God. From then on, Luther discussed the relationship to money ever anew: not in ethical terms—as in theft—but strictly in theological terms. According to the Berlin theologian Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt, Luther's interpretation of the First Commandment in the *Large Catechism* literally reversed the opening sentence: to speak about God means to speak about money.

Opinions differ when it comes to money. In common parlance, fun and friendship stop at money. But, does this not mean paying too much respect to mammon? In theological, emotional, psychoanalytical and economical terms, this topic is highly charged. Some order must be put into the categories of the curse and blessing of money. For Luther being able to distinguish was a cardinal virtue, well suited to all believers.

On the curse of money

Exegetes agree that, over the centuries, people in Israel were exposed to the threatening consequences of imperial and economic accumulation of power. As many prophets and also the Deuteronomic cultic reformers around King Josiah realized, the freedom bestowed upon Israel with the flight to Egypt was threatened wherever rich people acquired field after field, and poor people lost house and home and their freedom the moment they became enslaved to debt. Differentiated and protective laws on pledges prove the ruthlessness of debt collection. Deuteronomy 24 lists some of these laws: when looking for a pledge, creditors must not search the house and a cloak must not be pledged overnight. For the people of God, money or life must never be an alternative: "No one shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for that would be taking a life in pledge" (Deut 24:6).

The laws governing the Sabbath, as well as the regulations modified over the years concerning the fallow and the Sabbath years, show a categorical desire to interrupt the economic logic of debt. Wherever money in the form of accumulated wealth on the one hand, or in the form of mountains of debt on the other, threaten life and freedom, money's power becomes so hostile to life that it can only be called idolatrous. This must not happen among the people of God. Thus, the background to many admonitions addressed to the rich (*cf.* only Deut 8:12ff.) and the prohibition of usurious interest. It is often noted critically that in the Old Testament the Jewish people are allowed to take interest from foreigners, but not from their own brothers. The people of God are to have laws of their own that promote life and are exemplary; otherwise it is "business as usual." The wisdom learned from experience also advises extreme caution and discusses money and the way it disturbs the relationship to God: "Many have committed sin for gain" (Sirach 27:1).

Against this background, it is no accident that in the Lord's Prayer Jesus taught us that debt and daily bread play an eminent part. It is both a theological and an economic insight that the forgiveness of sins—remission of debts—produces new life. But there are always fears of contact in this respect. The prophet Amos, as well as Germany's post-war history, bear witness to this: it is a crucial but practically unknown fact that the London Debt Agreement of the fifties was a start-up for the Federal Republic. At the beginning of the German *Wirtschaftswunder* [economic miracle] was the remission of its debt.

In this sense the well-known "either-or" is very close to life: "You cannot serve God and wealth" (Mt 6:24). For Luther, money is the basis of reality:

> There is many a one who believes to have God and enough of all when he has money and goods, relies on it, and boasts he does not count on anything or anybody else. Look, he also has a God whose name is Mammon, that is to say money and goods, on which he has set his heart and which is the meanest idol on earth.

For Luther, the trust placed in money determines what governs people's lives.

Conflicts emerge which began earlier in the history of the church. The poverty movement of the Middle Ages—with its symbolic figure Francis of Assisi—created a permanent productive unrest. The dispute over investiture between Gregory VII and Henry IV was fomented by benefices and simony (so called after Apology 8:18ff). The breeding ground for the monacal reform efforts were dubious consequences of the churches' and monasteries' wealth. Money, money, money—in the course of the history of the church this has always been more than merely a minor matter.

Over the centuries, interest poisoned the relationship between synagogue and church. Money was also at stake at the Reformation's beacon, the dispute over indulgences and Peter's Pence (a donation to the pope for charity). And yet, Luther with his rejection of interest was closely connected to Roman Catholic teaching. Should we today rank the taking of interest among the curses of money? It depends. Are there not Christian banks, an ecumenical development bank "Oikocredit"? Again we have to distinguish. Luther meant usurious interest which made capital out of other people's need and was no longer limited to what debtors could do and produce with the money lent to them.

Interest is usury if it does not take account of the social and economic conditions. However, if it serves the social and economic improvement of life, who is to condemn it? And yet, can lent money promote life? Development theories would unanimously agree. Developing countries in the throes of the debt crisis do not consider it quite like that. There will always be an incentive for the banks to make lending money a blessing and not a curse—favored by the concept of moral hazard—once they seriously share the risk of success of the money invested with their debtors. So far, they do not necessarily have an interest in the success of their debtors: they have their securities precisely for the case of failure—a curse upon the debtors.

On the blessing of money

Money as a curse? *Audiatur et altera pars* (one should also listen to the other party). According to Jesus' interpretation of the parable in Luke 16:9, money

helps to make friends. This evangelist deals remarkably often with rich people, poor people and money, beginning with Jesus' so-called inaugural sermon in Luke 4:17ff. Incidentally, have you noticed how unmistakably Luke emphasizes that the Good Samaritan was quite well-off? It is only objectionable that Jesus tells this parable as an answer to the lawyer's question, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk 10:25). "Become smart money changers," according to New Testament research is a true saying of Jesus' which just missed canonization and yet conveys essential aspects of Jesus' message.

"One doesn't speak about money, one has it." Never would the Apostle Paul have subscribed to this sentence. Among other things, he speaks about money in a passage that is central for ecumenical community building in 2 Corinthians 8:14 or 9:12. As a gift of grace, love and blessing, money may express the communion among the congregations and the communion with God. In any case, Paul the Gentile acted with the intention of initiating a popular pilgrimage to Zion with his collection. Old Testament research has clearly shown that the concept of the people of God particularly in the Deuteronomic cult reform, must be connected to the concept that solidarity and money management are to be pursued by the people of God in accountability to Yahweh.

Early Christianity dealt with money with a kind of self-assurance absent today. The church historian Staats writes,

> The second-century sources speak a clear language: the Sunday collection becomes a demonstration of Christian self-understanding. Ireneus shows an unbroken relationship to the sacrality of the religious cash donation when he reports on the collection Christians put down: they put a pecuniary sacrifice for the poor on the altar from which they all receive.

Economic prosperity, according to Staats, strengthened the church's communion, gave a firm basis to the success in mission and, in envious Roman emperors, awakened the desire to plunder. Solvency, spending policies and the financial trustworthiness of the Early Church became a liturgical *leitmotiv* of Christian worship and a powerful argument in contemporary policies against the heretics. Money in the church acted as a *depositum pietatis*, and thus had a missionary function in furthering the proclamation of the gospel.

The relationship between money and God was not based on a notorious theology of penance. Money has nothing to do with human guilt but was cause for celestial joy. Or, to put it even more strongly, it is not Christians who are

indebted to God but God is indebted to the financially prospering church. The spending policies of the church make the church the creditor and God the debtor. What a change! What a liberated handling of money! The church has a debtor whose solvency is quite matchless. In his polemics against the heretics, Ireneus says, "Whoever takes pity on the poor lends to God at interest." John Chrysostom jubilates: "No money lender is as overjoyed to have debtors as Christ is overjoyed to have creditors."

In short here we find another world and an unexpected outcome: church, money and poverty are not considered from a moral, invocatory or legal point of view, but from a theological, liberated and evangelical perspective. It is not the church that by sharing its resources settles its debts, but God is the debtor of his creditors, the believers. God's self-offering in the Eucharist corresponds to the concise and astonishing fact that the church's spending policies are based on God being in its debt. Money becomes love. The theological rating of the debtor which makes that possible could put us in a confident mood. This somewhat unusual take on church history should suffice as an incentive. It is not so surprising that the World Council of Churches in the seventies founded a development bank which today operates under the name Oikocredit.

Of course, much more could be said on the theses concerning the holy origins of money or Weber's interpretation of Calvin. But since with regard to funding and marketing the churches today are engaged in a process, in which they will not last have to redefine their relationship to money and do this in a self-assured way, it is unnecessary to say everything at once. Some thought-provoking remarks must be enough. For the time being, the conclusion is that money can be a blessing, too.

The new freedom

Some principles have become clear:

One should not expect the Bible to yield a theory of money, but rather a reflection on a form of financial transaction that promotes community life. According to biblical analysis, money is more than a lubricant for the economy. Money encroaches on several areas of life, and for this reason it needs to be taken seriously. When money takes the form of capital or debt these dynamics become very clear. It is up to us whether money becomes mammon or leads to a growing friendship.

By putting a salutary stop to the logic of money where its effects are inimical to life, we have the biblical answer to the capital temptation of human beings, namely to gamble away their freedom before God and the world. Whenever money's tendency to become the idol mammon is broken, we witness a beneficial liberation.

From a theological perspective, freedom is the decisive criterion for a just organization of the economy. Money can free for participation. Critics of church statements on the economy who themselves have some economic knowledge may find comfort in the fact that Nobel Laureate in Economics Amartya Sen has made the freedom of the marginalized a criterion for an economy that serves humankind.

The UN Global Compact: A Web of Social Responsibility?

Elisabeth Gerle and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson

In January 1999, at the World Economic Forum, UN Secretary General Kofi A. Annan challenged world business leaders to "embrace and enact" the Global Compact, both in their individual corporate practices and by supporting appropriate public policies. Corporations were asked to follow nine principles that cover human rights, workers' rights and the environment: (1) support and respect the protection of international human rights within their spheres of influence; (2) make sure their own corporations are not complicit in human rights abuses; (3) uphold freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; (4) Eliminate all forms of forced and compulsory labor; (5) The effective abolition of child labor; (6) Eliminate discrimination with respect to employment and occupation; (7) support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; (8) undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; (9) encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies. A tenth principle was added in 2004: businesses should work against all forms of corruption, including extortion and bribery.

Under the leadership of Secretary General Kofi Annan, the United Nations has formed extensive programs aimed at mobilizing and integrating transnational corporations as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into its operations. One such initiative is the Global Compact, in which business leaders are asked to promote and apply within their corporate domains ten principles applying to the fields of human rights, labor standards and the environment. Business corporations are asked not only to apply these norms in their own businesses, but also to spread them around the globe. The Global Compact is presented as a way to make globalization work for all the world's people and to eradicate poverty.

The Global Compact initiative has attracted considerable attention but has also been widely questioned and criticized as it has mobilized corporations, NGOs, other international organizations and states to action. It has been promoted as promising far-reaching results: to eradicate poverty, to help create more ordered and secure markets and societies. What consequences, if any,

can the Global Compact initiative have for the poor and the powerless? Can the initiative bring about the far-reaching gains claimed by its proponents?

The initiative rests on the assumption that everyone has something to gain from association with the Compact; it compels toward as well as builds on the formation of universal values about corporate roles and human rights. Depending on how transnational corporations and NGOs act, and depending on how networks connecting them are woven, the Global Compact may develop into something that reduces poverty, powerlessness and oppression. However, from a local, regional as well as a global perspective the world is asymmetric. In a world characterized by conflict, exclusion and marginalization, the Global Compact may not only be ineffective at achieving these lofty goals, but may even help strengthen élites and their values, and hence contribute to further marginalization and exclusion.

The initiative is to be pursued as follows: transnational companies are asked to announce publicly that they support the principles and that they are willing to help support and pursue them. These companies promise to translate the principles into corporate practice: to advocate the principles in their policies and mission statements and to announce their participation publicly by issuing press releases and to report on their activities.

A more systematic accounting of these aspects of business developed in what is called "the Global Report Initiative" and several organizations are working on developing and selling standards for corporations to follow and be measured by. Moreover, companies are asked to form partnership projects—with other companies, voluntary organizations or public service organizations—aimed at supporting development in developing countries. Companies that have supported the initiative publicly are also asked to spread the message and to involve additional actors, such as companies and other organizations, and to implement plans aimed at advancing the goals of the Compact.

The initiative rests entirely upon voluntary compliance There is no system for sanctioning or holding accountable those who do not comply with the principles and announced plans. Instead, the initiative assumes that a broad range of organizations—including business corporations, banks, rating agencies, NGOs and the media—will monitor and report on corporations that break with the stated principles. It also puts the élites at the center of the picture: they are expected to act and mobilize the rest of the world and to propel the globalization of common norms. The UN has explicitly and repeatedly written that this initiative is no substitute for government action, but that the eradication of poverty requires more direct involvement from whole networks of organizations.

The Global Compact initiative is an example of a tendency in many parts of the West to emphasize "low politics" where new rules, standards, norms and reporting systems are advocated as ways of coordinating or facilitating collaboration and coordination without challenging the sovereignty of individual actors. The Global Compact does emphasize that it is not a regulatory framework. Yet, every group that joins the Global Compact is expected to comply with and actively spread the norms. Such forms of soft governance and network building have spread throughout the world over the last few decades. We find similarly structured relations among states in regional bodies such as the EU,[1] and in attempts to collaborate and to find common norms between religious communities,[2] and in other networking activities linking states, companies, and civil society.[3]

The Global Compact initiative follows on previous initiatives aimed at regulating TNCs and making them more socially responsible. Many such initiatives have met with resistance and opposition. In the 1970s, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC), among others, began drafting international codes of conduct to regulate and monitor the activities of TNCs with the aim of advising developing countries on how to deal with TNCs. In the 1980s and 1990s, partly reflecting the influence of neoliberalism, UN policy towards TNCs changed course. Instead of seeking to act together with states to regulate and monitor TNCs, new agreements were designed that spoke directly to the corporations. These agreements were premised on the voluntary collaboration of TNCs in developing softer forms of self-regulation and self-monitoring, and to facilitate the access of developing countries to investments and markets.

What distinguishes the Global Compact initiative from other attempts to regulate the social conduct of TNCs is not only that it is voluntary, but that it assumes their active participation in forming agreements and relations, in translating the norms into practical action, in reporting on initiatives and their consequences, and in spreading the norms throughout the globe. The cultural fabric is characterized by the concept of corporate citizenship, while the regulatory fabric is characterized by soft governance.

Who is included and who is excluded?

Empirical data presented by the Indian author Arundhati Roy[4] indicate that some 50 million poor people from central India have been forced to move because of collaboration between the Indian state and foreign companies in developing the

large rivers. Outside observers do not know where these poor displaced tribal people and peasants have gone, so they will not even become UN statistics on displaced persons. The Indian government has no official rehabilitation policies concerning housing and new work for the evicted; instead, their reasoning seems to be that some people must be sacrificed for long-term goals. The development of the Narmada River system, which involved 3,200 large or small dams, led the World Bank to withdraw its support as far back as 1993 because of the human and environmental costs. One of these, the Bariga Dam, is now complete, but at ten times the planned cost, and covering three times the planned area. Ironically, this dam irrigates exactly as much area as it has flooded. Not one of the 114,000 people forced to move has received any new ground to till.

Many such stories from around the world tell of the violation of human rights and democratic principles and the dislocation that can result from globalization; progress in human rights is not always part of globalization. Furthermore, these stories illustrate how globalization can exclude as well as include. Solidarity is important: when actors join networks and see each other as sovereign actors with common interests and also whose judgments and views matter, they seek to appear as responsible world citizens to each other.[5] This is a system of solidarity among those interacting in the network. But when the network only encompasses the élite, this solidarity may well prove to be a very effective system of exclusion.

Many activists in the West have pointed out that consumers have much more power than they generally assume. By boycotting corporations that have unethical standards, consumers may be able to tarnish the branding and good reputation of such companies. Tracking various human rights records is, however, not easy and it is difficult to focus on many companies simultaneously. Furthermore, consumer power is limited to people with the economic power to be strong consumers. This kind of power belongs to perhaps twenty percent of the inhabitants of the global village. Others are forced to consume without much power of choice. As a strategy to include the really poor, it is thus rather weak. The main question is whether it is possible for a long-term understanding of one's own enlightened self-interest to convince members of the club of commerce and leaders of TNCs to behave more inclusively towards the poor.

Various human rights groups with ambitions to speak for the most excluded may be capable of highlighting perspectives and knowledge that often are marginalized by the global élite. However, as liberation theologians and others point out, it is difficult and problematic to speak for others. Hence, the best

examples are those human rights organizations that work closely with the poor and are able to include their perspectives and voices in the analysis.

From a human rights perspective, the main issues have to do with the rights to life (Art. 3, UDHR) and sustenance, as well as respect for personal autonomy. As the Nobel Laureate in Economics Amartya Sen[6] has shown in his research, personal entitlement is crucial to the achievement of human rights. When major decisions on development, such as those mentioned above, involve close collaboration between governments and big corporations, it is relevant to ask broader questions concerning democracy and human rights. The Global Compact initiative seems unable to cope with these broader concerns. It may be one of many important steps in the direction of personal entitlement as a prerequisite for deepening democracy and human rights. But the further question is whether initiatives such as the Global Compact actually help reduce poverty, or instead further marginalize the poor.

The solidarity which is invoked in the Global Compact may encompass the companies that have signed the Compact and their stakeholders; however, even from a stakeholder perspective, the poor and powerless are often left out of the picture. The really poor, for instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa, are outside. They may be affected by business, but since corporations are not dependent upon them, the position that corporations take vis-à-vis these tends at best to be one of charity.

There are two ways through which the Global Compact seeks to bring the poor and powerless into the picture. The first is that the Global Compact seeks to create more stable and better functioning markets and more stable political conditions on which companies depend around the world, by bringing ethical and social issues to the core of business. Such reasoning, of course, assumes that corporations regard all parts of the globe as at least potential markets. Again, the argument may be used two ways: to include those who are currently excluded, or to support further marginalization of those who do not belong. The "localized poor" are no longer needed as a reserve of potential employees, but merely as consumers; and poor people are not good consumers.[7]

A second way in which the poor and powerless can be brought into the picture builds on the importance of reputation. To avoid being subject to criticism or large-scale consumer boycotts, corporations seek to appear socially responsible. One way of doing this is to engage in activities or projects that actively aim at alleviating poverty. In this vein, corporations take an active part in developing various aid projects.

The first argument is one of solidarity, and it leads to the crucial question of how far solidarity reaches. The second argument is one of charity, and leads to the crucial question of whether this will preserve or reduce the distance of the disenfranchised from power.

Co-option or is anybody outside?

Eradication of poverty is referred to in the Global Compact but the poor seem to be present more as objects than as subjects with a capacity for agency. They may be too distant to be of real interest to the élites, or conversely, there may be a lack of distance. As the Global Compact is encouraging collaboration between various actors such as states, corporations and NGOs, it is important to question whether there is impartiality and independence. If everybody belongs, who then is able to be an external scrutinizer or auditor, able to evaluate efforts independently? In comparison with the various forms of contract ethics that also permeate the human rights' sphere and the concept of conventions between parties, there may be a risk of co-option here. If everybody is included there are no independent critics.

The principles of name and shame assume that there are independent observers who watch and scrutinize the actions taken and who can point to those who are to blame. This role has been assumed by NGOs and, of course, by the independent media. Just as important as it is to include actors in the network, soft governance assumes that actors in or around the network are on the watch to ensure that agreements and rules are being followed. Soft governance, in other words, points to the relevance of inclusion and agreement, but also to the relevance of distance and critical scrutiny. In recent decades, NGOs have become increasingly important in pointing out government violations of human rights. Future plans for the Global Compact suggest that NGOs will be invited to act as independent scrutinizers or auditors of whether TNCs are living up to their social responsibilities. For a system of auditing to be effective, it is important to find ways to strengthen the independence of the auditing NGOs from the audited TNCs. The initiative mentioned stresses the importance of building networks that transcend the boundaries between civil society, states and business. Moreover, we have pointed to blurred boundaries and changed identities among these organizations. All these developments seem to lead to increased interdependence between transnational corporations, NGOs, states and intergovern-

mental organizations. The challenge seems to be that while the spreading of global norms emerges from the idea of inclusion, it is as important to secure some formal distance between these organizations, to secure effective audits and scrutiny.

Whose justice?

Contemporary moral philosophers have pointed out how moral values and norms are shaped in a community that accepts some basic, similar rules.[8] But what principles are being emphasized here? One of the ten principles has to do with freedom of association, a freedom that includes the right to form independent labor unions and the right to collective bargaining. This basic right is usually forbidden in the *maquiladoras*—export assembly plants—in the free-trade zones that have spread worldwide.[9] Hence, such a right would be crucial in enabling the poor to become subjects and agents in their own lives. To treat women and men as individuals with equal rights is potentially a revolutionary principle. However, to ensure that the tales of adherence and implementation of the principles are more than platitudes, necessitates continuous independent monitoring, critical discussion and scrutiny. Further, as many of the poor are today left out of the formal labor market, they may only indirectly be affected by regulations concerning work conditions.

As with most initiatives that aim for consensus, there is a risk that the goals being pursued are too limited. If a large number of corporations, states and NGOs are able and willing to comply with the Global Compact norms, the standard might have been set too low. Liberal ethics is often based on a minimal ethics. As a first step, this might be valuable and also effective; in this context, however, it leads toward a more delicate issue—hegemony and neo-colonialism.

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was accepted as a resolution by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1948, most of the member countries were from the West. This was before the decolonalization process which radically transformed the UN into a global community. Since the early years of the UN, human rights as a discourse has often been accused of being "Western" in terms of its value orientation. The emphasis on the individual and on freedom of thought and assembly has been said to be connected with the Western Enlightenment heritage that dominated the UN at the time. As modernity spreads over the globe, however, many of these values are ceasing to appear only Western, and are gaining

advocates in all countries and regions of the world. Yet, the most relevant critique of atomistic individualism and the negligence of social, economic and cultural rights often come from people in the South.[10] Hence, the United Nations as a global forum today—much more so than in 1948—has the capacity to bring together people and groups with diverse emphases in discussions and negotiations. This has made the overall discourse of human rights more sensitive to a range of perspectives. The Global Compact, however, has selected only a few basic principles from these discussions. Is this a strategy to become more effective or merely a way to avoid some of the more ambitious rights? Or is it even a way to avoid certain principles that might be more important for people from the South than for those from the North? Such questions warrant further study.

Such old dichotomies as the North–South geo-political conflict might be misleading in a world that is today characterized by more intertwined global as well as local networks. The United Nations encouraged business leaders to participate in the Global Compact by arguing that it would "help strengthen the social pillars within which any market, including the global market, must be embedded if it is to survive and thrive." How important, then, are the social pillars for the global market? Globally, it might seem that "a race to the bottom," eradicating environmental, wage and employment security standards, is the main interest of a strictly business perspective. Yet, the reference to social pillars does not imply mere altruism; rather, the conditions for the survival and well-being of the market are also connected to the strength of the social pillars.[11]

Despite the very real risk of hegemony where the strong in the world, as always, have more influence and power than the weak to pursue their aims, the UN is invoking shared interest as if the world were already a community. Though in some respects this might be true, in others the world is still very regionally divided. For Sub-Saharan Africa this may mean that the main impetus to strengthen the social pillars of the region has to come from within. Many political strategies seem to be aiming for investment from abroad. However, most of the care for the social pillars that can provide a safe investment environment may have to be initiated by the people of the region themselves.

From a local, regional as well as a global perspective, the world is asymmetric. If, however, people around the world were able to form labor unions and to claim gender equity and environmental safety in their workplaces, this would strengthen what Bas de Gaay Fortman calls primary entitlements. While states are able to create subsidiary entitlement by taking positive measures to

implement social and economic rights, a focus on primary entitlements enables people to become subjects in their own lives. This gives people "access to resources and rights to goods and services on the basis of their integration into the community rather than as compensation for their marginalization."[12] For corporations belonging to a region this is crucial; for corporations intending to move away from all claims, such entitlements might seem frightening.

Only if the emerging global ethic is strong enough to limit contemporary tendencies to "race to the bottom" will corporations have any real incentive to comply with these rules. The Global Compact may be one important initiative on this path toward a new world order. However, it remains to be seen how this new world order enfolds, and whether it contributes to a better world and a globalization that works for all.

Notes

[1] Nils Brunsson and Bengt Jacobsson, *A World of Standards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000

[2] Elisabeth Gerle, "Världsreligionernas parlament och global etik," in Svensk Teologisk Kvartalsskrift, vol. 76 (2000); Elisabeth Gerle, "Participatory Democracy and Human Rights for Women in Globalization—New Possibilities and Challenges," in Diana Amnéus and Göran Gunner (eds), Mänskliga rättigheter—från forskningens frontlinjer—Human Rights—From the Frontiers of Research (Uppsala: Iustus, 2003).

[3] Ulrika Mörth, *Soft Law* (Cheltenham: Edgar Elgar, 2005), in press.

[4] Arundhati Roy, *Power Politics* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2001).

[5]Leaders of large corporations are invited to special courses at the Raul Wallenberg Institute in Lund to learn about human rights, with reference to the UN's Global Compact "Pengar i potten för företag som följer de mänskliga rättigheterna" [There is money to gain from observing human rights] is the title of an article in *Dagens Forskning*, 4–5 February 2002, No. 3.

[6]Amartya Sen, *Development is Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999).

[7]Zygmunt Baumann, *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 1998b).

[8] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); Michael Walzer, *On Toleration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[9] David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (London: Earthscan, 1995), p. 129.

[10] Bas de Gaay Fortman, "Human Rights, Entitlements Systems and the Problem of Cultural Receptivity," in An-Naím, Gort, Jansen Vroom (eds), *Human Rights and Religious Values* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995).

[11]George Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered* (London: Littleton, 1998).

[12] Fortman, *op. cit.* (note 10), p. 72.

International Business and the Formation of Social Capital

Stewart Herman

As developed by Karen L. Bloomquist, the terms "communion," "accountability" and "responsibility" point to the high level of mutual expectations that members of a faith communion might develop of each other.[1] Social scientists have a functionally similar, although far less exalted, term for characterizing the thickness of texture in social relations: "social capital." This term provides an apt vocabulary for measuring how economic globalization either benefits or harms the communities which host foreign-owned corporations. In effect, social capital provides a useful way of thinking about how our neighbor is helped or hurt by globalization.

Five types of capital

Social capital should not be seen in isolation, for there are actually five distinct kinds of capital involved when international businesses invest in host countries. Thinking in terms of all five kinds of capital highlights both what companies may import or contribute, and also what they may take out. Similarly, introducing the different forms of capital into moral reflection about accountability and responsibility calls attention to how a host country may be safeguarding, developing, or squandering its own resources. It is important, therefore, to consider the vantage point of both the international corporation and host country in order to arrive at a rounded moral appraisal of globalization.

From the perspective of a host nation or community, five kinds of capital are needed. Financial capital is generated through banking credit received and revenues on exports. Natural capital must be neither depleted nor degraded through the productive activities of international business corporations. Productive capital is the technology and know-how needed to transform those resources. Human capital is developed as citizens empower themselves by acquiring skills. It is the government's political responsibility

to ensure that these resources are developed rather than exploited, and that a fair return be sought for their use.

While each of these resources is necessary, perhaps none is more essential—or elusive in measurement—than social capital. Economic development, particularly through the internationalizing market system, requires a resilient social fabric. According to U.S. sociologist Robert Putnam, social capital refers to the institutional arrangements and the informal networks of "generalized reciprocity" which enable individuals and organizations to pursue their ends efficiently.[2] Broad and resilient networks of trust and cooperation are needed for development, particularly where the social fabric of a nation or community has been rent by civil war, invasion, occupation, colonization or other forms of major civic trauma.

Following a helpful distinction offered by Ismail Seragelden and Christiaan Grootaert of the World Bank, I will suggest that two levels of social capital formation are particularly important.[3] The first pertains specifically to what governments can accomplish. At the "macro" level, social capital takes the form of institutionalized permission, encouragement and protection of the legal system and governmental policy: the rule of law, transparency and the other institutions of good governmental policy and regulation. All these conditions can be intentionally structured into an economy in order to facilitate individuals and firms in pursuing their projects. At the second "micro" level, social capital is created—or destroyed—through the interactions of all social actors. It is particularly evident where relationships are characterized by constructive reciprocity and spontaneous gestures of goodwill: where people and organizations develop habits of action which others can rely upon. Where such habits and expectations are absent, social relations express generalized mistrust. Like human capital, social capital increases with use, and it atrophies through disuse; as such, it is simultaneously a renewable and a depletable resource.

International business and the generation of social capital

The five measures of capital also provide international business corporations a way to determine their value for host countries. Advocates of "corporate social responsibility" have sometimes argued that businesses ought to be generous in their charity—a viewpoint now found in developing countries as well. Corporate social responsibility requires much more: that these corporations conserve, replenish, transform, or improve the capital they work with, rather than depleting

or degrading it. Such, indeed, may be the measure of justice appropriate to business enterprise, and one which the corporations themselves can measure. Economists can look at balance sheets to determine the flows of financial capital into and out of the corporation and the host community or country. Social psychologists in human resource departments can conduct surveys to measure the balance of human capital: whether the skills and resources which employees bring to a corporation are being utilized, improved or degraded, and with what fairness in remuneration. Scientists and other resource specialists can observe and catalogue whether the natural capital of inputs is being consumed or replaced. Managers and engineers can identify the productive capital—technological resources—which are brought to bear, and with what result.

Here I will focus on how international business corporations can help generate social capital—or fail to—through the relations they construct with the governments and communities in countries which host them. A recent Canada-based study of multinational practices in a dozen different countries found a wide variety of ways in which corporations either enhance or degrade the social capital available in their host countries.[4] The question which drove the study was how broadly their business strategies were shaped. Were these businesses focused narrowly upon profit margins through a "cost-minimization" strategy, keeping their capital investment (in all five forms) to the least necessary for extracting profit? Or did they pursue a "capacity-building" strategy, where they sought to build up the assets of their host countries—not for charity, but to enlarge their own resource base?[5] What became evident through the study was that corporations possess a remarkable capacity in a focused way to bring capital to bear on specific developmental challenges. When that power is used carelessly or irresponsibility, these host communities and countries can lose capital on some or all fronts. When that power is used judiciously, the contributions to overall capital development can be noteworthy. Host communities and countries can be left better off than they were before, with increased stocks of financial, natural, productive, social and human capital. The following case studies move from one end of the spectrum to the other.

A case in Guyana: the destruction of social capital

The Canadian study included cases from Guyana, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Nunavik (Canada) and Vietnam. This article will describe several of these cases, with particular attention to the challenges of forming and conserving social capital. Two

cases, involving Guyana and Nigeria as host countries, illustrate how a corporation can destroy such capital through a short-term policy of resource extraction.

The Barama Company Limited, a subsidiary of the Samling Group in Malaysia, gained the right to log 1.6 million hectares, or eight percent of Guyana's forests in 1992, amounting to forty percent of the nation's annual harvest of timber. Over the course of approximately ten years, the logging contributed little financial capital to the nation of Guyana. In 1993, for example, the royalties paid amounted to less than one-tenth of a percent of the value of Barama's exports, and mitigating investments were spare, to say the least. There was little benefit in terms of human capital, as local employment swelled and collapsed on a rhythm of boom and bust. Social capital was crushed at the local level as gold prospectors used newly cut logging roads to stake out thousands of claims in what had been inaccessible native land. Social capital eroded at the institutional level, as the Amerindian natives were unable to establish legal rights to their rapidly degraded land. In the final step of its cost-minimization strategy, the Barama Company simply left for a new forest zone, once the resource of timber in its first area was exhausted.[6]

Case studies in Nigeria, Uganda and Ghana: mixed results

A less egregious but more widely known case of cost minimization is provided by the Royal Dutch/Shell Group in Nigeria. Shell began commercial production in 1958, but was forced to share the financial benefits with the Nigerian government as its operation was nationalized. Shell, which despite its minority ownership continued to operate the venture, committed itself to generating social capital at the institutional level by being a good corporate citizen—obeying the laws and meeting its tax obligations. The company also built schools and health clinics, helped local farmers and hired local workers. But the natural capital was being both depleted as oil was extracted and natural gas was wastefully flared and degraded and as air and water pollution increased. Local communities were disrupted and, by the 1990s, were experiencing net losses in income, as the oil wealth flowed to élites outside the oil region. Acts of vandalism and sabotage increased, and in the mid-1990s, Shell remained silent when political dissidence against the brutal Nigerian government was suppressed. Like other companies, it had taken the formation of social capital for granted.

Stung by criticism of its silence in the 1990s, the company expanded the scope of its "good citizen" strategy to encompass more active partnerships

with communities in Nigeria. It committed itself to conserve and increase the stocks of natural, human and social capital in those communities, by cleaning up spills, repairing roads, rebuilding clinics and schools, and so forth. Most significantly, Shell decided to shift its engagement from a charity model, which creates dependencies, to a business model, where Shell serves as a partner in economic development. It appears to have moved decisively towards an "asset-building" strategy which encompasses all forms of capital formation.[7]

Shell's comprehensive strategy requires the bottomless resources that few industries are capable of, or willing to, provide. Two more modest examples of corporate engagement from the continent of Africa illustrate how international business can either serve to preserve and enhance the social capital of a region, or to aggravate its erosion.

British American Tobacco (BAT), one of the global giants in cigarette production, has major operations in Uganda and Ghana. In Uganda, the company enjoys a monopoly position—not only controlling ninety-three percent of the domestic market for tobacco products, but also by being the most viable market for the 65,000 farmers who contract to supply it with tobacco. Its impact upon these farmers has been ambiguous. On the one hand, it provides them with a steady outlet for their production, and has provided valuable extension services. On the other, it pays its farmers an average of 150 U.S. dollars per year, well below even Uganda's average per capita income of 216 U.S. dollars. Its buying practices reinforce the bigamy and child labor that has been particularly destructive to the social fabric of its farmers who are migratory rather than settled. And it has tolerated these migratory farmers engaging in the most environmentally destructive forms of tobacco growing and curing.[8] In all fairness, it should be noted that BAT in Uganda has to cope with an even more difficult history, in which significant civil unrest continues to flare up.

In Ghana, by contrast, BAT appears to have constructed more mutually beneficial relations. It nurtures a core of 2,000 farmers who are required to restore the resources they consume (principally the forest wood burned to cure the tobacco). By virtue of their privileged relationship with BAT, these farmers can earn up to 15,600 U.S. dollars per year. To gain community support, BAT actively advertises against smoking by youth—contributing to social capital by reinforcing, rather than undercutting, the struggle of Ghanaians to rebuild their civic culture following the recent tumultuous political and economic history.[9]

The comparison between the two BAT subsidiaries suggests that international businesses can pursue an asset development strategy only to the extent that the local context permits the flourishing of initiatives in community

building. Still, the very business of a corporation sometimes can have a dramatic impact on social capital formation.

MTN, a global cellular provider based in South Africa, established a subsidiary in Uganda. In a few years, MTN Uganda has lengthened and enriched social and business networks throughout the country in a remarkable way. MTN Uganda began in 1998 and rapidly outgrew the government owned landline company. By 2002, it signed up 300,000 subscribers, or three-fifths of the current market for cellular services. Having invested more than 100 million U.S. dollars, and employing 6,000 franchise operators in 600 service outlets, MTN Uganda has demonstrated how a new technology can substantially increase the financial, productive and human capital of Uganda. Its most dramatic impact has been upon the lives of its subscribers, particularly women. Telephone technology has enabled them to develop new businesses, gain access to more distant markets, and on the domestic front, to arrange family care more effectively and to run their households more efficiently. For young people, cell phones have become indispensable to their growing social networks.

To be sure, this picture of blossoming benefits is marred somewhat by inequities: the cost of monthly service (3 U.S. dollars) still effectively excludes much of Uganda's population, while the few expatriate managers receive salaries which are wildly inflated relative to the salaries of local managers. Ugandan managers are irritated not only by such patent unfairness but also by the claim that foreign staff are needed in the first place. Clumsy managerial practices such as nepotistic hiring contribute further to resentments which erode social capital within the firm.[10] It is ironic that a company whose technology has contributed so much to social capital formation throughout Uganda should continue practices which destroy social capital within its own structure.

A case study in Nunavik (Canada): social capital by negotiated agreement

During the 1990s, Falconbridge Ltd. opened a nickel and copper mine north of Quebec Province, in the Nunavik territory of the Inuit people. The mine was built at a cost of 300 million U.S. dollars, and is being operated by a subsidiary named SMRQ, known in English as the Raglan Company. Raglan had begun consultation with the Inuit in 1992, and by 1995 had negotiated an agreement with the Makivik Company, a native enterprise, to ensure Inuit participation in the construction and

operation of the mine in a way that provided them jobs, protected their environment and fostered their culture. The arrangements for fostering collaboration have worked well, thanks to efforts on both sides. The Inuit have been treated like owners of the land, and respected partners in the enterprise. In effect, the Inuit traded their natural capital—the mine has an anticipated life span of only twenty years—for the opportunity to develop their own productive and human capital. Yet cultural misunderstandings have occurred; Inuit turnover in jobs at the mine has been high and economic development has been slow. The Inuit remain dependent on the mine for income.[11] The Raglan venture is generating social capital in the form of meaningful and admirable cooperation between Inuit and outside Canadians, but whether that social capital can survive the mine remains unclear.

Cases in Vietnam: generating "bridging" social capital the Vietnamese way

The Raglan case points out how much effort an international firm must invest even to generate social capital within its workforce, and how much attention is need to sustain even modest gains where cultural differences are great. The remainder of this article is devoted to the question of how international corporations might generate and sustain social capital within their own structures. While this surely is only a very small subset of the overall challenge of economic globalization, it is an inescapable issue for the growing numbers of local people who are absorbed into foreign-owned enterprises. The question is, Can these enterprises be a positive force for cooperation, even reconciliation, within populations that have suffered from decades of social corrosion, whether due to colonial oppression, conflict between élites and everyone else, or even civil war?

Here, as with Ghana and Uganda, the influence of a particular history has to be noted. In the words of one poet, Vietnam has suffered a thousand years of Chinese domination, a hundred years of Western colonialism and thirty years of civil war—followed by a decade of centralized planning.[12] The residue of this difficult history is a domestic culture infused with mistrust. In the West, the work of nourishing social capital has traditionally fallen on a host of independent associations, including businesses. The growth of independent associations was effectively stunted in Vietnam.

Here a distinction between two kinds of social capital is useful. Vietnam generates much "bonding" social capital, the kind produced by kinship and other groups based on identity, for social relationships revolve more closely around

family in Vietnam than in other Asian countries. This kind of social capital finds expression in millions of "household enterprises," informal ventures organized along lines of kinship and other proximate loyalties. Yet the reach of bonding capital is effectively limited; what Vietnam needs is "bridging" capital, the bonds of cooperation and trust which stretch beyond kinship and ethnic ties.

Here international businesses can make a distinct contribution, by providing employees a relatively more stable environment than the more turbulent Vietnamese private sector for cultivating the skills needed to build and sustain "bridging" capital. The giant U.S.-based "Goodproducts" (a pseudonym) illustrates the promise and liabilities of building such assets in Vietnam. Its "Vietsani" subsidiary (another pseudonym) manufactures a humble product of indispensable social usefulness from raw materials that are abundant in Vietnam.[13] At the macro level, it has established constructive relations with the socialist government of Vietnam. Originally forced to accept a government partner in a joint venture, the company has thrived on the connections that relationship has engendered. At the micro level, Vietsani generates "bridging" social capital by cultivating the capacities of its managers to work with each other towards shared economic objectives. Since starting production in 1997, the company embraced "process management," a style of management which de-emphasizes hierarchy in favor of close communication and coordination. Managers and employees gain not only very marketable skills, but also the habits and practices of mutual reliance and cooperation.

In sum, the Western way of generating social capital within the enterprise appears to be working in Vietsani, in the sense that the enterprise is functioning efficiently and profitably. Still, the Vietnamese managers reported in interviews in 2001 that they missed the traditional style of Vietnamese management, where bosses cultivate the loyalty of subordinates by demonstrating a commitment to them as persons. These Vietnamese managers longed for the feeling of being treated as family, where the lofty chief takes the time to visit their homes at crucial rites of passage, whether to participate in weddings, or to present gifts at funerals. In other words, the managers longed for bridging capital to be transformed into bonding capital.[14] Yet if the organizational culture of Vietsani were to revert to this traditional Vietnamese model of patrimonial loyalty, the risk of nepotism and inefficiency would run high.

Social capital of the "bridging" kind is necessary if Vietnam is ever to grow the enterprises which can compete effectively with international businesses on Vietnamese soil. Vietsani may make only a limited contribution to forming the social capital most familiar to Vietnam. Perhaps a more viable model is provided by "Viet

Kieu"—refugees from the 1945–75 American war who have chosen in recent years to return to Vietnam to found and operate their own firms. Their small-scale enterprises permit a distinctive kind of patrimonial relationship to develop between entrepreneur and employees, one which fosters strict mutual accountability, as became evident through interviews with four such firms in 2000-2001. The founding spirits of these enterprises find it necessary to train and socialize workers to the particular kinds of discipline needed for corporate business undertakings. They communicate stringent expectations regarding a variety of behaviors: design and production, collective hygiene, and the maintenance and repair of machinery. At the same time, they pay close attention to keeping their employees happy. Vietnamese employees have a keen sense of justice and so are exactingly adept at comparing rewards and expectations. They keep close tabs on each other and on management. Owners therefore set wages with close attention to what is seen by their employees as fair. The wages involved are not great; but such regularity and fairness of procedure are very important. This serves to foster "transparency" at the micro level. Entrepreneurs feel compelled to enforce strict equality of opportunity in their workplaces, and to establish wage ladders with public criteria for promotion and regular performance review. Such "mutual surveillance" forms social capital by rendering owners and employees transparent and reliable, and thus conducing to a mutually satisfactory exchange. Mutual surveillance enables all sides to monitor and exert pressure upon each other, and it is that constant pressure is the medium through which mutual trust is sustained.[15]

Conclusion

In a globalizing economy, building up capital may be the most appropriate way to attend to the neighbor's needs. Building up social capital, in particular, involves strengthening and enlarging the networks of social trust—enriching "civil society" which gives flavor and satisfaction to our lives as social creatures. While suspicion of the overweening power of many international businesses is warranted, what is more generally needed, I believe, is a church led movement to call international businesses to account in full for the capital flows they generate. The key question to ask is whether their business strategies are dominated by the pinched strategy of cost minimization, or by the more ample strategy of asset building. If they can demonstrate that they have developed the human capital of their host communities and countries, not bled their hosts of

financial capital, contributed, and shared productive capital, conserved or restored the natural capital and, perhaps most importantly, have left their hosts richer in social capital than when they began, they will have made a case that their business indeed has served the neighbor in a responsible way.

Notes

[1] Karen L. Bloomquist, in this publication, pp. 261ff.

[2] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), pp. 19–22.

[3] Ismail Seragelden and Christiaan Grootaert, "Defining Social Capital: An Integrating View," in Partha Dasgupta and Ismail Serageldin (eds), *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000), pp. 43–65.

[4] The "Global Responsibilities Project" is located at Concordia University in Montreal, and funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This article draws upon its first volume of case studies: Frederick Bird and Stewart W. Herman (eds), *International Businesses and the Challenges of Poverty in the Developing World: Case Studies on Global Responsibilities and Practices* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004).

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[6] Gail Whiteman, "Forestry, Gold Mining and Amerindians: The Troubling Example of Sampling in Guyana," in *ibid.*, pp. 181–205

[7] Fred Bird, "Wealth and Poverty in the Niger Delta: A Study of the Experiences of Shell in Nigeria," in *ibid.*, pp. 34–63.

[8] Sam Sejjaaka, "From Seed to Leaf: British American Tobacco and Supplier Relations in Uganda," in *ibid.*, pp. 111–123.

[9] Bill Buenar Puplampu, "Capacity Building, Asset Development and Corporate Values: A Study of Three International Firms in Ghana," in *ibid.*, p. 64–74.

[10] Ida Mutoigo and Sam Sejjaaka, "Seeking a Better Connection: Mobile Telecommunications Network and Social Responsibility in Uganda," in *ibid.*, pp. 124–39.

[11] Bird, Fred and Robert Nixon, "The Ragland Mine and the Nunavik Inuit," in *ibid.*, pp. 206–223.

[12] The first half of this sentence is borrowed from a popular song ("When my land is at peace, I will go visit") by Vietnamese troubadour Trinh Cong Son.

[13] The company permitted interviews, but would not consent to be identified in the published case study.

[14] Stewart Herman, "Developing Social Capital Through Human Resources: 'Vietsani' and the Future of Western Management," in Bird and Herman, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 164–180.

[15] Stewart Herman, "Forming Social Capital from the Bottom Up: The Emergent Private Sector in Vietnam, 1986–2002," in *ibid.*, pp. 152–163.

Reclaiming the Vocation of Government

A Statement from an LWF Consultation (2004)

Introduction

How Lutheran churches relate to governments is not a new focus:

- In his *Large Catechism*, Luther taught that through civil authorities and government "God provides us daily bread […]. They should be alert and courageous enough to establish and maintain order in all areas of trade and commerce in order that the poor may not be burdened and oppressed […]."[1]
- *Lutheran Churches–Salt or Mirror of Society?*[2] presented case studies of how churches in different parts of the world were relating to governments, and corrected how the "two kingdoms" tradition has often been misused.
- *Church and Nation Building*[3] examined the churches' role in newly emergent governments.
- In other publications, as well as in numerous statements and resolutions, the LWF has repeatedly called governments to account for their actions or lack thereof, especially with regard to human rights and peacemaking.
- The Message of the Tenth LWF Assembly (2003) observed that, under economic globalization, "governments are becoming powerless and less willing to safeguard the well-being of their people."

The LWF "A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization" (affirmed by the 2003 Assembly) states as one of the key challenges today:

> Although Lutherans have developed theological perspectives on how government is a means by which God's work is done, most of this has been developed in much different contexts and realities than those prevailing today under economic globalization. In many places today, governments are experienced as the enemy or have lost much of their sovereign power, such that it is quite difficult to hold them accountable. How can we as churches be more effective in preparing members to

> participate as citizens in political life, and to engage in public policy advocacy with and on behalf of our global neighbors? How can churches, with civil society, *hold governments more accountable?*

To address this challenge, the LWF Department for Theology and Studies convened a small consultation in Geneva, 22–24 January 2004, of representatives from LWF churches in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and North America. In their deliberations, they concurred that the underlying challenge today is that of "Reclaiming the Vocation of Government."

Governments today

The crises of governments today, in quite different locales and political situations, must be honestly named and faced. For example:

- In countries that have been occupied, colonized or subjected to totalitarian rule, democratic or civic cultures have been difficult to develop.
- Some countries struggle with virtually no government, or with fragile ones that are ineffective, or they are "governed" by those engaged in illicit drug trade or other "business."
- Lack of transparency and persistent corruption characterize governments in many parts of the world.
- In many countries, a government is little more than a political party, serving the self-interests of its party members, but not the common good of all who live there.
- Those who actually run a government typically are the un-elected government functionaries who are not accountable to voters, and who often remain even when elected leaders change.
- With the increasing privatization of the public domain, the private sector is sometimes paid to carry out the functions of government.
- Strong, stable governments have increasingly become pressured by powerful economic special interests from within and beyond their borders; these governments struggle to maintain the social contracts they have honored in the past.
- Some challenge the whole concept of a nation-state as it has developed over the past 400 years.

Throughout the world, beginning in local communities, governments continue to be important players, expected to protect and further the common good. Yet, their ability to do so has waned significantly due to policies of economic globalization, such as privatization, deregulation and debt restructuring. Governments face multiple, conflicting obligations. They have a responsibility to protect and further the well-being and security of their people and natural resources. They are under increased pressure to adhere to the requirements of international financial institutions and other lenders, investors and trading partners. In situations where governments and democratic traditions are fragile and ineffective, fulfilling these obligations can seem impossible.

It is no wonder that mistrust, cynicism and anger over government seem to be deep and widespread. Political apathy and disenfranchisement are pervasive. Some go so far as to discredit and demonize all government.

Why should churches care?

It is tempting for churches either to ignore or to give up on the role of government. Many Lutherans have wrongly assumed that their faith only has to do with private life apart from the public realm of political, economic and civic life. As state churches or through "civil religion," some churches have lost their prophetic voice and ability to challenge government. Other churches have experienced repression or been silenced by ruling regimes. Many live in multi-religious contexts where as Christians they are in a distinct, sometimes persecuted minority, and are hesitant or afraid to speak up.

Challenging as these situations are, they cannot be the last word, especially for Lutheran churches. We stand in a theological tradition, based on an understanding of God's twofold rule, that insists that government is to be an important means through which God is acting to maintain and promote justice and peace, and to keep life human. Sixteenth-century Lutheran preachers criticized rulers when they failed to carry out their responsibilities and called them to account for such failure. Christians do not claim to have special insight into policy matters, but they must be sufficiently attentive to such in order to assure that government serves the good of all people and creation, and not only special interests. "The church does not invent or control the function of government; it does however vigilantly proclaim what that function is."[4]

The vocation of government

In the Lutheran tradition, government has been referred to as one of the "orders" or "mandates" of creation through which God's intended purposes are to be carried out, but often with static or uncritical implications. "Vocation" has usually applied to how Christians live out their baptismal calling in specific places of responsibility, for the sake of the neighbor.

Proposing that government has a "vocation" is intended to counter the tendency to see government as totally separate or alien from Christian life. The God-given purpose for government must be reclaimed, a purpose that is actually secular in scope: to protect and promote the common good of all. Rather than a law unto itself, government is "institutionally accountable to the moral direction (not legislated directives) of the universal will of God the Creator and Preserver for the common good […]."[5] It is an important arena of life in which "neighbor-love"—for multitudes of "neighbors"—is realized.

Theologically, this vocation of government is necessary because of the ever-present reality of sin. This is manifest, for example, in blatant self-interest and misuse of power at the expense of the common good. Government is intended to restrain such effects of sin, but also itself becomes corrupted by sin. All human institutions are imperfect and, at most, approximate what God's law and justice require. The institutional church is not exempt from these realities of sin.

It is not that churches are to "christianize" governments, but to hold them accountable for what they should be about, and to work for changes to assure that governments serve the good of all, especially the most vulnerable. Christians pursue this based on the premise that government is a means through which the providence of God is at work for the sake of a more just ordering or governance of society, expressed as the "common good."

Governments are to exercise public stewardship of the common good. Their vocation is to protect and further the quality of life of people, communities and creation, by defending and promoting:

- The human dignity of all persons (e.g., human rights)
- Ecological sustainability (e.g., protection of the "global commons")
- Economic justice (e.g., responsible, equitable distributive measures)
- Cultural integrity (e.g., of Indigenous Peoples)
- Participation in political and economic processes
- Religious and other freedoms.

These basic commitments imply certain obligations of government that include:

- Safeguarding and fostering human security
- Protecting people's livelihoods, cultural integrity and the "public commons"
- Fostering a civic culture of truthfulness, transparency, fairness, trust building
- Promoting solidarity with all those who are vulnerable, especially the poor
- Furthering the participatory, holistic development of communities
- Regulating business, markets and finance in the public interest.

Governments must ensure that basic human needs are met,[6] although non-governmental actors may provide some of the actual services. Because of the broad scope of economic globalization and the interdependence of all life, governments have responsibilities that go beyond their borders. Compliance with existing human rights agreements is necessary, as well as the development of new, effective inter-government policies and agreements.[7] At a minimum, international financial institutions and trade organizations[8] need to be reformed.

Public space and the church

The public space is where various actors in a society engage with one another in shaping the common good. At the time of the Reformation, this space was ruled by church and government. Today these actors include a wide variety of religious (e.g., church and other faith groups), civil society (e.g., non-governmental organizations [NGOs]), economic (e.g., corporations, business associations), academic and media organizations. Together they can preserve and promote a greater sense of human security, collective well-being and a sustainable future.

Whether or not they choose to, churches are actors in this public space. They neglect their responsibility in society when they refuse to engage with other actors in the process of seeking the common good. Here the churches' public witness gives concrete diaconal expression to the Word of God for the life of the world today.[9]

Processes of globalization have changed this public space dramatically. As economic powers and processes have permeated societies, privatizing and commodifying more aspects of life, the public space has tended to shrink or close down. Apathy and cynicism increase. Economic globalization tends to priva-

tize what should remain public and commercialize what should remain private. In the face of this, one of the important callings of churches is to preserve and ensure that there continues to be public space where people are able to affect those policies and practices that keep life human and serve the common good.

Churches holding governments accountable

Churches are called to hold governments accountable to their vocation

- Through critical solidarity with marginalized or excluded people
- Naming the issues and root causes of injustice and poverty
- Encouraging truth telling and transparency in public life
- Supporting local efforts to increase civic literacy and involvement
- Raising up new models for the development of communities that are participatory, sustainable and people-centered.

Churches need to be honest in confessing that they too may embody some of the ills reflective of governments in their contexts, such as being compromised by powerful political or economic interests, the self-interested pursuit of power, and lack of transparency. Churches also need to be held accountable.

At the same time, the basis for the church's involvement is different from that of most other NGOs. The church is far more than a political party or interest group; its advocacy is far more than lobbying for its self-interests. The church's catholicity means that it is deeply incarnated in its particular locale and at the same time universal in its scope and outreach, for the sake of the whole household of God (*oikumene*). The church proclaims and bears witness to the reign of God as revealed in Jesus Christ that is more definitive and ultimate than the allegiance any earthly government demands. Grounded in this promise, the church is authorized and empowered to hold governments accountable, acting out of hope and courage when others succumb to cynicism and despair.

Therefore, it is recommended that churches:

- Pray regularly for governments at all levels and those who serve in them, that they might faithfully carry out their vocation. Support and affirm the specific ways in which they do this.

- Nurture and equip members (through sermons, liturgies, Christian education, etc.) so that they might truly live out their baptismal promise "to strive for justice and peace in all the earth"[10] through their participation and possible service in political life.
- Engage pastorally with church members (and others) who serve in government.
- Discuss with political leaders and others in civil society what they expect of the church, and what the church expects of them.
- Support and implement diaconal initiatives that model people-centered approaches to the delivery of services and care.
- Train members to be able to talk and negotiate with those in government.
- Discern what is entailed in reclaiming the vocation of government in their respective context.
- Prophetically challenge those in government when they fall short of their vocation.
- Propose constructive alternatives as to what policies should be supported and implemented.
- Designate and support persons with particular competencies and responsibility for public policy work with and on behalf of the church.
- In theological education, develop sensitivity and basic competency in clergy and other church leaders for this aspect of the church's witness in the world.
- Organize well-informed advocacy efforts that stay focused on select, prioritized issues.
- Join campaigns, alliances and networks to work for new policies consistent with the above commitments.

Notes

[1] Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), p. 419.

[2] Ulrich Duchrow (ed.), *Lutheran Churches—Salt or Mirror of Society?* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1977).

[3] *The Church and Nation Building. Report of an International Consultation, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1983).

[4] Mary Jane Haemig, "The Confessional Basis of Lutheran Thinking on Church-State Issues," in John R. Stumme and Robert W. Tuttle (eds), *Church and State: Lutheran Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), p. 11.

[5] William H. Lazareth, *Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), p. 71.

[6] For example, through social "safety nets," "rehabilitation packages" or other social security provisions.

[7] For example, between communities or states, by means of international covenants, agreements and codes of conduct, and through international organizations.

[8] The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), all of which are inter-governmental institutions.

[9] See the report of the 2002 LWF consultation, "Prophetic Diakonia: For the Healing of the World" (available from **cf@lutheranworld.org**).

[10] "Affirmation of Baptism," *in Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), p. 201.

Churches and the Vocation of Government in Africa

Fidon R. Mwombeki

Introduction

In our increasingly complex world, what is meant by "government" and "church"? In this essay, we define "government" as that group of people who have the authority to lead, rule or control and direct public affairs of a country as a whole or certain parts of it. Some governments are legitimate, others illegitimate; some are popular, others notorious; some are there by consent of the people, others by force; some are democratic, others are not. Nevertheless, they are all governments.

Different countries have different structures of government, from the grass roots to the national levels. Most governments today include administrative, legislative and judiciary sections. While these are supposed to function rather interdependently, ideally there is a clear separation of power at all levels. Sometimes governments, for specific reasons, group themselves into regional bodies (i.e., the East African Community, Southern African Development Community), continental bodies (the African Union, the European Union [EU], the Association of South East Asian Nations [ASEAN]) and even international and intercontinental bodies (such as the United Nations [UN], the G8, the African, Caribbean and Pacific States [ACP]). There are inter-governmental bodies dealing whith different matters in the world, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and many smaller bodies under larger bodies (e.g., the UN system with agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP, UNFP, etc.). Sometimes these bodies operate like independent NGOs at country level; in fact they are part of the government systems. There are other institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), two very powerful financial institutions. These are all governmental institutions since their "shareholders" are governments who determine their policies.

In this context, church is the institutional community of Christian believers, organized in congregations, synods or dioceses and national churches.

Their leadership structures and levels depend on their history and theology, but they keep changing. Churches are organized in ecumenical bodies nationally and internationally. In many countries in Africa, there are ecumenical councils (such as the Christian Council of Tanzania, National Council of Churches in Kenya, etc.), which bring the mainly Protestant churches together to deal with matters of common concern. Some ecumenical bodies are denominational such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) while others are interdenominational such as All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The vocation of government

What then is the vocation of government? In today's rapidly changing, globalizing world, the role of government is being redefined. There is confusion as to what governments are for, and what their role might be. With many players in the field, there is a danger of diminishing the responsibility of government. In many countries, governments are failing to do even the minimum expected. It is surprising that some African countries such as Somalia have survived for years without any formal government, while in others, like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Burundi, formal governments control only of some sections of the country. The question of whether we really need formal governments has been raised. Some governments do not care about anything other than their own survival. In this situation, there is a danger of forgetting the vocation of government, which the church needs to reclaim.

The question regarding the vocation or role of government is a tricky one. There has never been universal agreement by churches regarding what the vocation of government really is. Even the Lutheran two-kingdoms doctrine has been viewed quite differently depending on time and context.[1] From an historical perspective and the experiences in the Federal Republic of Germany, the former German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Norway, Denmark, Namibia, South Africa, Brazil, and the USA, the differences in the interpretation and praxis of the two-kingdoms doctrine are clear.

Worldwide, the power, influence and authority of government seem perpetually to be undergoing dramatic transformation. It is no longer possible to talk about the power of government overall. The power to influence and lead people has been intruded upon by other players that did not exist in Luther's times.

One very powerful actor or power broker is the so-called "donor community." Very few African governments are economically independent. Because of this economic dependency, the existence and vibrancy of most African governments depend on the will and manipulation of the donors who finance major chunks of activities in government budgets and national development plans. We have witnessed the power of the so-called "international community" which can fiercely wield its "purse power" and thus effectively bring any poor government to its knees if it does not "behave" the way this elusive "donor community" wants.

Recently, the Tanzanian government was being lectured and chastised by some "donors" for deciding to buy a new presidential jet to replace an aging and dangerous one. Some countries even withheld funds after the government had paid for a new radar system which a cartel of "donors" judged to be too expensive. Thanks to disagreement within this community, Tanzania survived the ordeal.

We have also witnessed the very vibrant Kenyan economy deteriorate rapidly when "donors" decided that President Moi would have to step down. By stopping to finance the Kenyan government, the whole economy was brought to a standstill. In addition, immediately after Moi left, the funds in terms of loan access (which were blocked at the WB and IMF) were released and grants increased, and the government was buoyant again after a short time. So, who would this government be answerable to in the last resort? "Whoever pays the piper, calls the tune."

The Tanzanian government has been a very good example of a government that "behaves" well. In only three years, Tanzania moved from a budget which was twenty-eight percent donor-supported in 2001, to one which was forty percent donor supported in 2003. The independence of any government that depends on others to such a considerable extent is very limited. Understandably, the Tanzanian government explains more to the "donor community" than to its own citizens. Donors are paying for it, and they can effectively stop its operations by withholding funding at any time. All over Africa, we have observed that:

> […] African governments are compelled to accept aid as a result of their continued weakness and economic vulnerability and in view of their urgent short-term needs […]. While aid should bring development to Africa, in reality both aid and debt are working as instruments of control and domination of African countries by developed countries. Debt servicing continues to drain public budgets, leaving aid investments without adequate support in form of counterpart funds and additional domestic resources to operate and maintain facilities.[2]

It is common knowledge that international aid is conditional, and depends on the wishes and policies of the donors, which African governments must deal with and work towards pleasing. Tanzania has been working to rationalize the flow of aid. During the 2002/2003 financial year alone, there were 301 missions from several countries which came to make reviews, appraisals, evaluations utilizing their officials or consultants, many of whom had provided their own unique monitoring tools.[3] Therefore, citizens would be mistaken if they did not acknowledge the donor community as a very significant power in their lives.

The second important player is the media. In the era of globalization, with the Internet and mobile phones accessible and available in the remotest parts of this planet, the media have greatly influenced the government's power. Information is power, and it is now more accessible than ever before. Governments in Africa are struggling to see how best to manage the information flow. While in the past African governments were notoriously secretive, now the World Wide Web has opened up new avenues for getting information without working through complicated closed information systems.[4] Increasingly there are possibilities to pass information on and mobilize communities through the power of information sharing.

The third player is big business. While the wealthy have always been influential, it is difficult to believe the wealthy have ever been as organized or have wielded as much power as they do now. As a consequence of the globalization of "good governance" ideology, it is almost universally agreed that governments are not good players in economics.[5] The dominant ideology is that businesses must be run by private enterprise rather than by government. As a result, big businesses have exercised a great influence on national governments, on people's living conditions worldwide, and on national planning priorities. The so-called "invisible hand of the market" (Adam Smith) presumably regulates the distribution of resources fairly according to people's gifts, abilities and opportunities. It is very significant to note the caution by many critics that,

> […] we cannot leave people-focused development to the serendipity of market forces. Rather than retreat, the state must forge new smart partnerships with the private sector and the institutions of civil society.[6]

This phenomenon affects the government's vocation in different ways. It may lead the government to abdicate its traditional roles of ensuring the citizens' sanctity and value of life. Many African governments, unable to finance their

own budgets, find it practical to privatize everything they possibly can. Public goods like water, energy, fishing rights, access to the lakes, minerals, forests, have fallen into private hands whose main interest is making money. Many people have lost their livelihoods, and many who remain must work for these businesses at pitiful incomes in order to survive.

Governments seem to be impotent especially where there are complex, ubiquitous transnational corporations (TNCs), or where governments are shareholders in companies which in practice are national only by registration, not by ownership or benefit. With the unprecedented emphasis on attracting foreign direct investments (FDIs), countries have hit rock bottom, virtually eliminating or ignoring human rights in order to keep the investors.

One classic example is Nigeria, the fifth largest producer of oil worldwide. People here have lived in grinding poverty for generations while their wealth has been siphoned off by big businesses. It is the same with Tanzanian minerals, as well as Lake Victoria. Those who have lived around the lake, using fish from the lake as their most important source of vitamins are now standing by as big businesses overfish our lake, depleting the most wanted species, and exporting the fish to developed countries. As the government commends these "investors" who are bringing in "foreign exchange," it is deplorable that the majority of local fisherfolk have no job. Their families are at risk because they have almost been driven out of the lake by big businesses.

Governments are chastised by the donors if they protect the rights of their people. They are dubbed "protectionist," and aid is reduced because of the ideology that these businesses will do more to benefit the country than official development assistance. It is tragic that the prescriptions of the rich countries to the poor have not delivered the expected results.[7] Once they no longer benefit from generous tax breaks, many businesses irresponsibly close shop and relocate to another needy country.

Big businesses have an unprecedented power to influence legislation through illegal or legalized corruption.[8] We have witnessed how government agencies in Tanzania have changed timetables for implementing policies or even legislation when relating to big businesses. Such businesses have the power because of their international ubiquity and their ability to move their operations irresponsibility to other countries when it is to their advantage.

The fourth major player is civil society. Civil society has grown both in numbers and influence as globalization rolls on. Civil society (especially NGOs) have recently gained influence, and have been invited into governmental commit-

tees and given seats at UN processes. Their power to mobilize people and give alternative information to the public is making them a force for governments to reckon with. Churches in many places understand themselves as part of the larger civil society. Given the reluctance of churches to see themselves as NGOs, they are more recently being referred to as faith-based organizations (FBOs).

While the power of civil society can be seen in different forms, it is also important to note that in most African countries this power is subject to the will of the state. In Zimbabwe, we have recently seen what a ruthless government can do to civil society. It can terrorize it and simply reduce it to frightened, small, fragmented groups that are virtually impotent. This can also be done in relation to other "powers," including big businesses and media.

What then is the vocation of government? Government is called to ensure life for all, to promote and protect it in all forms, including playing a mediating role among competing forces in society. What we have seen above is that there is the danger that governments may have lost the vision to lead, and sometimes abdicate their responsibility, succumbing to the temptation to leave civil society, business and media to do what governments should be doing.

The vocation of the church

I would posit that the vocation of the church in relation to government is to be prophetic. Most of the time it is assumed that "prophetic" is mainly to be confrontational and critical, correcting what is wrong. However, I would like to recapture the full meaning of the function of prophecy.

Prophets performed different functions at different times. There is prophecy for encouragement in times of distress, danger, or disappointment. When there is stiff opposition to a good government, the church is called to provide encouragement to the government. When a good government resists an unfair conditionality from the donors, the church is called to offer a message of encouragement to the government, rather than only behaving like members of the opposition.

There is prophecy in providing a vision or clarifying a blurred vision.[9] This may even be called the vocation to educate the people. There are times when the government must listen to the church to hear if there is a word from God. This may be in times when the government must make difficult decisions. The church is called to weigh in and draw upon its theology and its custody of values, to say very clearly what it discerns to be God's will.

There is prophecy for criticism or condemnation. When the government is wrong, or perpetrating violence against its own people, or when it is not fulfilling its obligations, the church is to call the government to repent and return to the values needed. This may lead to antagonism and even suffering, as most of the biblical prophets experienced.

Engaging government at different levels

Governments like the church are operating at different levels. At the international level, churches must and normally do play their part in calling on governments internationally to take up their responsibility. The church does that best by operating internationally as well. In engaging with large international governmental structures, the church must work ecumenically. We have seen the effectiveness of international church bodies such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in engaging the United Nations, EU, WTO, WB, IMF and similar institutions. This is necessary because engaging these structures in matters of policy requires a specialized approach. The churches need financial and human capacity to be able to analyze critically the policies and actions of these institutions and effectively engage them at the same level of discourse. When the churches are united across various denominations, they present a more solid and concerted voice, which can exert a significant influence.[10]

At this level, the means used include debates, dialogues and discussions,[11] public statements and publications, as well as participation in different processes. For this reason, it is crucial to maintain physical presence at different headquarters in order to follow up matters as they develop rather than wait to protest later.[12] It includes also joining other non-church actors with the same goals, as was clear in the Jubilee 2000 campaign against debt.[13] This level of engagement needs to be highly strategic, professional and tactful in relation to international diplomacy. History shows that we have been effective here.

The national level is very significant because of the different situations countries face. National policies and actions do affect people more directly than international ones, and national strategies and modalities for making them accountable could be more important than international ones. But at the same time, at the national level, it is easier for legitimate governments to control whoever is regarded as challenging their authority. It remains debatable whether the legitimacy of a government is by

election or by virtue of its integrity and fulfillment of its vocation. However, we have experienced that governments can make the church's life difficult if they intrude too much into government affairs or pose too much of a challenge.

Advocacy at the national level could easily take the same shape as at the international level, but deal with more specific issues. The churches in Tanzania were very critical and greatly influenced the first multi-party elections in 1995 by issuing public statements as Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)[14] and ecumenically through the Christian Council of Tanzania. The Roman Catholic Church also issued a statement. Believers rallied behind their leaders and the influence created by these statements was enormous. However, the going was tough for the leadership, and there was considerable friction as the new government regarded the churches as opponents. Immediately after the election, the churches started to take deliberate steps toward mending the relationship.

It is good when church leaders are accorded great respect by the government and when the church is awarded such privileges as tax exemption. Fear of losing these privileges has resulted in close proximity between the churches and government, and perhaps is the reason why since 1995 the churches in Tanzania have not issued any statement against the government. Instead, they have issued statements in support of sometimes questionable policies.

While the churches have not issued critical public statements, it is noteworthy that the leaders have quietly shared their opinion with government leaders, especially when they are members of their churches. This, of course, is one means of advocacy, through members of the churches who work or have positions of influence in government.

Another way has been to invite leaders to church meetings to discuss certain thorny issues. Letter writing to officials is not used very much, but could be very effective. A further way has been to join forces with other non-state actors who have the same goals. For this reason, the ELCT mobilized and has been leading the Tanzania Coalition on Debt and Development (TCDD), particularly as we approached the new millennium. The ELCT was among the first to study and raise alarm at the problem of national debt as early as 1989[15] and it became clear that the struggle was energized by pooling resources and working together. The impact of TCDD has been remarkable nationwide.

The churches are not doing a great deal at the national level because they fear being stigmatized and losing benefits and privileges. Moreover, only very few churches have the capacity to follow up on such issues as new legislation, economic policies, budget allocations, and to come up with informed arguments or statements. In order

to do so, the churches would need to establish and equip small expert teams that will effectively and professionally follow up on these matters and make them available to churches. The little that is available often does not go beyond bishops or other church leaders, who may have different interests. There are still too many bishops and Christians who believe that churches and good Christians should not meddle in politics. Many do not believe in the effectiveness of advocacy and therefore stay out of it altogether. In order to avoid these problems, specialized church offices must have a certain level of autonomy in order to deal with these matters without being obstructed by notoriously slow church bureaucracies.

Very often, we fail to recognize that many decisions directly affecting daily life are made at the lower levels of government. Town and district councils receive significant funding which they are supposed to use to improve people's daily lives. Many times, however, these funds are mismanaged. Local leaders do not want people to ask about them, but instead refer them to the national government. In fact, in such areas as education, water distribution, health funds, noise control, security policing, taxi operation, local taxes and the like, the decision-making power lies with local governments. Most people are not aware of this nor know how to influence these decisions.

Most people do not know that the general meetings of the town council are open to the public, and that everyone is free to follow the proceedings. This is where they should supervise the performance of their respective representatives and press them on the issues affecting their daily lives. Many town councilors and other officials think that the education budget disbursed by the central government is confidential information, even though the law mandates it to be published.

Here is where we need to work more diligently as churches. We need to show our members that advocacy works, and that knowing your rights is beneficial. People need to know that a government is for the people, and that government officials actually should work for the people and not vice versa. They need to be convinced that it is a vocation of the church to reclaim the vocation of government, and hold their government accountable. In order to do so, we need to make sure that the church itself is clean. If the church is not clean, it will have neither the courage nor credibility to hold the government to certain standards.

Notes

[1] Ulrich Duchrow (ed.), *Lutheran Churches—Salt or Mirror of Society? Case Studies on the Theory and Practice of the Two Kingdoms Doctrine* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1977).

[2] AFRODAD, *Reality of Aid—Africa Edition 2002* (Harare: AFRODAD, 2002), p.1.

[3] United Republic of Tanzania, *Tanzania Assistance Strategy: Annual Report Financial Year 2002/03* (Dar es Salaam: URT, 2003).

[4] National reports to institutions like the WB and IMF have been treated as very confidential government information. But now that they can be accessed through the Web sites of these institutions, people are appalled at the nature of argumentation on critical issues like the privatization of public institutions. It is here where one can read with dismay that the government was asking for leniency for failing to sell the popular bank, and for delay in leasing out the water supply system in our capital. It was under pressure even though this was never made public.

[5] Having lived through the tragedy of government owned monopolies in Tanzania, it is difficult for me to support the concept of government running businesses. While most people in civil society oppose privatization almost wholesale, I have always kept a more modest opinion, after concluding that public businesses simply do not succeed.

[6] World Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalization, *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All* (Geneva: ILO, 2004), p. 18.

[7] According to the ILO report, despite the prescriptions, little of the foreign investment which was promised following liberalization ever materialized leaving governments in Africa very frustrated, *ibid.*, p. 15.

[8] I make this distinction because while developing countries are criticized for corruption, other countries even register lobbyists in national capitals which essentially do the same things as those considered illegal.

[9] See for example, South African Council of Churches and South African Catholic Bishops Conference, *Un-blurring the Vision: An Assessment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development by South African Churches* (Johannesburg and Pretoria, 2002).

[10] An example of this is the "ecumenical team" during the United Nations' processes, where international ecumenical teams from different parts of the world and different denominations work together in preparatory processes of UN major policy issues like small arms, financing for development, sustainable development, etc.

[11] See for example the discussions between the WCC and IMF/WB, and the publication, *Lead us Not into Temptation: Churches' Response to the Policies of International Financial Institutions—A Background Document* (Geneva: WCC, 2001).

[12] Many church organizations maintain presence at the UN in New York and Geneva, as well as Brussels.

[13] While it was the churches which started the concept of Jubilee 2000 as we approached the new millennium, the campaign was energized by many other civil society actors across the globe to give it a real public image, and it shook even the powerful WB and IMF.

[14] ELCT, *The Bagamoyo Statement* (Arusha: ELCT, 1995).

[15] ELCT, *Report of the ELCT Study on the Debt Crisis in Tanzania, 1989* (Arusha: ELCT, 1990).

Government Concessions and the Good of its Citizens?

A Liberian Case Study

T. Jerry M'bartee Locula

Liberia acquired its independence on July 26, 1847, making it the oldest independent country in Africa. With all of these years Liberia has passed through, it is still lagging far behind other countries, despite all of the developments and investments major Western powers have made in the country over the years.

This lack of progress has largely been due to the short sightedness and unwillingness of governments to make prudent decisions for the present and the future. Other causes include the self-interest or personal gains sought by some individuals and major stakeholders in government. Another big factor is "imperialism in disguise," when Western corporations come under the pretense of development. Such is the case of the world's largest rubber company.

In 1926, the government of Liberia entered into a concession agreement with the Firestone Rubber Plantation Company, based in Akron, Ohio, USA, to operate in Liberia for ninety-nine years. Shortly after signing the agreement, the President of Liberia Charles D. B. King, declared rather optimistically that the introduction of modern industrialization—like electrical appliances, ice-making machines, water towers, machine shops, office buildings, and fleets of trucks and automobiles—would lead to Liberia's future as a commercial center in West Africa.

Seventy-eight years later, these prophecies have not been realized. Rather, living conditions of more than 350,000 native laborers have remained low. Housing has not improved, and electricity is limited to some select districts, especially there where most of the white staff reside. Local employees receive pensions only after twenty-five years of hard labor.

As the end of the lease agreement draws closer, the company continues to clear new land and actively to cultivate rubber, which is shipped across the Atlantic Ocean for processing. Finished products are then returned for sale in Africa. Liberia's lack of factories to carry on manufacturing compounds the problem of unemployment.

What will happen after the ninety-nine-year concession ends in 2025? Many Liberians are carefully watching the government and plan to advocate for the employment of Liberian youths who will live to see 2025 . We also must seek other developments, such as improving infrastructure, housing and the general living conditions of the people.

As a church we need fearlessly and constructively to urge our governments to make prudent and relevant decisions, not decisions that will benefit the government officials but that are in the interest of the citizens and will help improve their daily lives.

Stewards of the Public Commons: A Vocation for Government and Church

David Pfrimmer

Introduction

The Plaza de la Constitución, more commonly known as the Zócalo in Mexico City is a most fascinating place. The Zócalo is the second largest public plaza in the world (only the Red Square in Moscow is bigger), covering over thirteen acres. It is where people gather to meet, to marvel, to remember their history (it contains the pyramids and palaces of Montezuma and was the exact center of the Aztec empire), to sell their goods, to protest, to celebrate national events (Independence Day is observed there on September 15), and simply to stroll on its marvelous expanse. On one side is the Presidential Palace, on another the Metropolitan Cathedral. Still on the other sides are a commercial area, museums and art galleries. Mexicans describe it as capturing the very "heartbeat" of Mexico. Similar public centers exist in many other countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany, the United States and Russia to mention only a few. These public spaces are more than just tourist attractions. They symbolize the values, the institutions, the worldview of these societies and the complex web of religious, social, political and economic interactions of the societies, which have created them.

The Zócalo is a physical space but it offers a metaphor that symbolizes the wider public space—more conceptual than physical—where groups, organizations and institutions meet to create, maintain and sustain societies. This notion of public space is where identity, purpose and meaning are generated. These are places where various sectors—political, economic, social and religious actors and organizations—encounter one another to create their culture and common life. Societies need such public spaces as crucibles for the creative engagement of the collective energies of their people to forge a community.

But this public space is disappearing as economic globalization has dramatically been reengineering our world and our communities to make the

impulses of the market supreme. The neoliberal economic policies of curbing government spending, privatization, deregulation, entrenching property rights, trade liberalization, liberalizing interest rates, competitive exchange rates and opening economies to more foreign direct investment have either been voluntarily adopted by governments, imposed through various international financial institutions or by means of various trade agreements. Many of these policies are not new but old economic ideas. Their conceptual antecedents can be traced to the period of early European industrialization. However, in combination with new technologies and the global nature of economic activity today, they are having a profound impact.

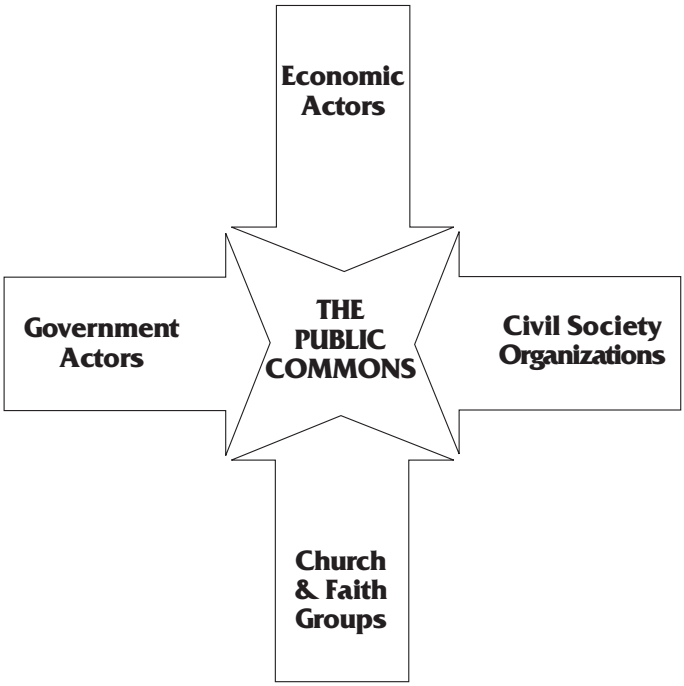
Nowhere has this impact been more pronounced than in the role governments play in our common life. The relentless pursuit of a minimalist role for government has been prescribed for both rich and poor nations alike. Corporations with global reach have assumed a powerful place that has often supplanted government. Governments too have increasingly adopted the business organizational culture with an executive style of governing that centralizes decision making among a smaller group of leaders. Governments themselves are no longer as they once were.

This leads us to ask, What is to the role of government today? What is the role of the church in public life and in helping reclaim the vocation of government? This article posits that the current neoliberal expectations of government are disabling and inadequate. What is required is nothing less than preserving and reclaiming what I have chosen to describe as *the public commons*, as the arena for charting the future of the earth community. The current minimalist political expectations—often ineffective and inefficient in themselves—pose a serious threat to the public commons and our ability to make choices that enable life to flourish. A truly "public church" along with other faith communities and civil society organizations, can be important in advocating for governments to reclaim their vocation as guardians of the public interest and exercising stewardship of this important public space.[1]

The importance of the public commons

There are many ways to describe this public space where citizens, neighbors and friends engage one another.[2] In pursuit of the common good, economic actors, government actors, civil society organizations and churches/faith com-

munities engage one another in what I call, the "public commons."[3] Like a wind turbine driven by the balanced impulses of the various actors, the public commons generates the power to establish the common good. This public commons is that dynamic social or public space where, together in the spirit of collaboration, ideas are contested, directions established, consensus sought, identity conveyed, compassion and sharing exhibited, culture expressed, values defined, symbols revered, relationships made, history celebrated, crises addressed, recreation engaged, citizenship expressed and learning happens. It is also a place where justice is done, peace sought and creation sustained.



Although characterized by collaboration, the public commons is not without conflict. Alienation, fear of the other, difference, self-interest, competition and even hatreds can also be destructively expressed in the public commons. It is easy to romanticize the nature of the public commons. A Lutheran understanding of human sinfulness must always lead to a healthy skepticism vis-à-vis utopian and romantic claims for our human efforts or projects, even those presented by altruistic organizations.

The public commons is also complicated. The actors—people, groups, organizations and institutions—may simultaneously be occupying multiple roles. For example, those in government may also be part of civil society organizations as volunteers. Those in business can often be members of churches/faith communities. Churches/faith communities or their agencies also can function as major economic actors and in some cases as public officials. To recognize these multiple roles is also to recognize our interconnected responsibilities—and in cases of suffering and oppression, our culpability—to seek justice and the common good.

The public commons summons the various actors to unavoidable participation. Some actors try to avoid this engagement. Some governments have argued that allegations of human rights violations are "internal affairs" and that therefore they do not need to respond to their critics. Some corporations advocate for securities regulations that mean they would be free to conduct their affairs without any consideration for their stakeholders and in some cases, shareholders. Eclipsing the very participation they advocate, there have been civil society organizations which themselves have failed to honor the participation of those they serve. Churches/faith communities too, have argued that they have no responsibility in the public commons. Asked if he made public statements against government policies, an African bishop responded, "I have to, otherwise everyone would think I am too close to the government or worse, that I am corrupt." Ironically, when churches/faith communities try to insolate themselves, they may make an even stronger public witness that contradicts the very beliefs they profess. These examples serve as a reminder that not accepting the summons to engage other actors in the public commons is in fact avoiding responsibility.

In this much more complex and interconnected world, a new "politic" is emerging in the public commons. Whether because of the domination of the market or the abdication of governments, politics has become too important to be left to formal political institutions. The former categories of public/private or church/state no longer adequately describe the arena of our collective decisions. While legislation, the rule of law, treaties and intergovernmental agreements remain crucial, it will increasingly be the encounter and engagement of these various actors in the public commons that will generate the directions for the earth community. Nurturing, sustaining, safeguarding and, in general, exercising responsible stewardship for this public space of creative encounter will be central to the vocation of government. It will also be important for resituating the churches' public witness.

Threats to the public commons

> The law locks up the man or woman
> Who steals the goose from off the common
> But leaves the villain loose
> Who steals the common from the goose.[4]

From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, a series of legal and social actions, known as the "enclosure movement," dramatically changed the landscape of rural England, introducing laws to take common agricultural lands and turn them over to private ownership and management. The community no longer had any rights to these lands. This had profound and often adverse consequences on the way of life in rural communities. Economic historians argue that these changes enabled more efficient production and averted widespread starvation. Other scholars have not viewed these developments as necessary or good. Karl Polanyi argued that,

> Enclosures have appropriately been called a revolution of the rich against the poor. The lords and nobles were upsetting the social order, breaking down ancient law and custom, sometimes by means of violence, often by pressure and intimidation. They were literally robbing the poor of their share of the common.[5]

The enclosure movement, with its privatization of public lands, accompanied and made possible the industrialization of England. Similar initiatives took place elsewhere in advance of industrialization.

As industrialization has given way to economic globalization, many of the old neoliberal economic presumptions have resurfaced as the economic dogma of our times. A new enclosure movement has appeared that threatens the public commons. Benjamin Barber has summarized the threat in his characterization of globalization as "McWorld," noting that,

> Western beneficiaries of McWorld celebrate market ideology with its **commitment to the privatization of all things public** and the **commercialization of all things private**, and consequently insisting on total freedom from government interference in the global economic sector (*laissez-faire*). Yet, total freedom from interference–the rule of private power over public goods–is another name for anarchy. And terror is merely one of the many contagious diseases that anarchy spawns.[6]

Privatizing things public[7] and commercializing things private[8] has accompanied and in many ways facilitated economic globalization. Commercializing things private is altering our understanding life and humanness and is enclosing the biological commons.

While these efforts at privatization discredit governments and international institutions in that they seem to serve the interests of the few, privatizing things public and commercializing things private also threatens the public commons by seeking to replace it with the "market." It often marginalizes and too often trumps the encounter on the public commons where various people, groups and organizations collaborate with one another to articulate the public interest and pursue the common good. Judith Maxwell, former chairperson of the Economic Council of Canada, reflects this concern in asking how the public interest is served.

> Our challenge in a globalizing world is to recognize the role of the guardians of the public interest. Governments have acquired a bad name because of some of the excesses of the past fifty years. But it would be hard to think up another institution that can be the guardian of the public interest in the global, high-tech world we expect to see in the decades ahead. Markets do have their limits.[9]

Preserving, nurturing and stimulating the encounter in the public commons serves the public interest. Privatizing things public and commercializing things private, forecloses on possibilities to address the failings of globalization and their intended and unintended consequences for the future.

Civil society organizations—allies in the public commons

Albert Einstein is reported as having said that, the problems of this world cannot be resolved by the same level of thinking that created them. Where will "new thinking" come from? I would suggest in the encounter of various sectors in the public commons, which is why it is so important for the future of the earth community.

The sixteenth-century categories of church and state are no longer adequate. Luther essentially saw church, state and family as the essential institutions of society. Increasingly, civil society organizations are playing a role in society never envisioned by Luther and the reformers.

As evinced by their exponential growth, civil society organizations today are increasingly critical of the functioning of the public commons, which is

intended to be generative and life-giving. As allies with churches/faith communities, they will be an important force in summoning governments to accept their responsibilities.

Civil society organizations have not only grown but have expanded their focus, the range of their activities, the number of people participating, the breath of issues they address, and the scope of their work.[10] They have become a major force in shaping public opinion and developing new approaches to problems.

The Growth in Non-Governmental Organizations 1990 to 2000

Purpose	1990	2000	Growth (%)
Culture and Recreation	1169	2733	26%
Education	1485	1839	23.8%
Research	7675	8467	10.3%
Health	1357	2036	50%
Social Services	2361	4215	78.5%
Environment	979	1170	19.5%
Economic Development and Infrastructure	9582	9614	0.3%
Law, Policy, Advocacy	2712	3864	42.5%
Religion	1407	1869	32.8%
Defense	244	234	-4.1%
Politics	1275	1240	-2.7%
Total	**31,246**	**37,281**	**19.3%**

As evidence one need only look at how civil society organizations organized the largest anti-war movement in history with demonstrations involving tens of millions of people worldwide to oppose the war against in Iraq in early 2003. Though the war proceeded, political leaders were forced to address the challenges that were raised. Former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien stated that public opposition, mainly organized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and churches, bolstered the Canadian government's decision not to participate. This opposition led the New York Times to describe international civil society as the world's "second greatest superpower."

Though used widely in earlier times, the recent concept of civil society traces its roots to the Scottish Enlightenment of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here there was a crisis in the social order with the "the commercialization of land, labor and capital; the growth of market economies; the 'age of discoveries' and 'revolutions'."[11] Civil societies were those "mediating institutions" that stood as a bulwark between the state, with its overwhelming power that could threaten the well-being of communities, and individuals.

Today we too face a crisis of global disorder. The Lutheran World Federation recognized this in choosing the theme, "For the Healing of the World," of its Tenth Assembly in 2003. At a time when the threat to individuals and communities is the abuse of economic power, civil society organizations allied

with churches/faith communities have a role to serve. They are to defend against intrusive abuses of economic power that destroy relationships and communities and to ensure that governments understand and are accountable to fulfill their responsibilities.

Helping governments be governments

How does our tradition as churches speak to these changed global circumstances? The world today is much different from the sixteenth-century European realities of Luther's time. Luther's much debated doctrine of the "two kingdoms" and "two governments"—spiritual and secular—does not speak to the more expansive arena of the polis today. It does provide some useful affirmations concerning the important role of government.[12] Walter Altmann points out that, Luther distinguished three tasks [for government] and that the sequence of tasks was not coincidental:

> (1) to guarantee the free preaching of the gospel—critical, prophetic preaching; (2) to defend justice and the rights of the weak and abandoned; (3) to guarantee order, peace and protection of the poor.[13]

Luther argued that rulers did not have the right to exercise their office in a way that served their own interests, but had a particular responsibility toward those most in need. While recognizing its imperfections, Luther would not accept a minimalist view of government. Luther was also clear that all people were called to live lives in service of their neighbor. Thus, in advocating today for more democratic societies, all members and not just "rulers" share this responsibility. Democracy is important because it is a means for people to participate and to exercise their moral agency for the sake of others.

Advocates of economic globalization often argue that liberalizing markets and liberal democracy go hand in hand. However, there is little evidence that this is more than a convenient belief. Indeed, there are market economies accompanied by democratic institutions. However, it is not the case that more competitive markets necessarily lead to democracy; much evidence points instead to the reverse. Felix Rohatyn suggests that, "there is a brutal Darwinian logic to these markets. They are nervous and greedy. They look for stability and transparency, but what they reward is not always our preferred form of democracy."[14]

The freedom and liberty advocated by markets, is a freedom to consume and acquire rather than a freedom to serve others. Jean Bethke Elstain believes that, "If we are to sustain […] democratic culture, we depend on civil society."[15]

It is also important to take account of the different histories, cultures and contexts that may result in varied expressions of the vocation of government. There are places where no governments exist, where autocratic rulers have dominated, those run by militaries or criminal elements, others where one political party is equated with government, monarchies, or those where majority religions share political power. Similarly, post-colonial contexts include still different dynamics. Many governments have accepted more centralized forms of governance, relying more on the executive rather than the legislative branches of government. The experience of Northern industrial liberal democracies, with their own deficiencies and diversity, cannot simply be applied as a universal template for all. The new politic requires creative forms of democracy in the public commons in order to allow for different approaches that understand these differences to be discussed, explored and realized.

Today, helping governments to be governments is an important contribution of churches/faith communities and civil society organizations. Governments have a role that is greater than merely facilitating commerce. While governments do need to make laws and preserve peace, they have an additional role—the stewardship of the public commons. In addition to protecting human rights, working for economic justice, securing peace and preserving the environment, governments need to serve as stewards that nurture and safeguard the public commons from which they will draw their vitality, effectiveness, authority and, in the end, their legitimacy.

A public theology for a public church in the public commons

If governments are to be stewards of the public commons, what role does the church play in this new configuration of the global polis? As Leslie Newbigin reminded us, the churches have "a public truth to tell" that challenges the reigning assumptions of our collective life.[16] In this task, the churches need to articulate a public theology that empowers its witness as a public church to participate with others in the body politic on the public commons.

Within the churches, there have recently been many efforts to revisit our faith tradition to develop a "public theology" that takes seriously different con-

texts, new voices—particularly those from the global South and of women—and varying approaches to social change to strengthen the churches' public witness. A public theology helps Christians speak in intellectually credible ways about their deepest faith convictions in a language that the world can understand and which is constructive of the common good. Public theology is a critical theology that takes place at the intersection of theology, ethics and our various contexts.

Among the churches themselves, it is important to note that public theology is often articulated and debated on a contested and sometimes conflicted terrain. Gregory Baum offers one example of how this is being done in reviewing various understandings of Lutheran doctrine of "justification by faith." He notes that there are at least " […] six different theological approaches, all of them claiming fidelity to the Lutheran tradition."[17] Each of these approaches takes what Lutherans believe to be the core of the gospel and applies this conviction somewhat uniquely to the realities it encounters. In order effectively to participate in the public commons, churches need continually to work to articulate a public theology, which for Lutherans honors our confessional heritage and asks, What does this mean for us today, here?

A public theology acknowledges that the church is fundamentally a public church. Much has been written about being a "public church." In response to Robert Bellah's arguments about "civil religion," Martin Marty described the "public church" as "[…] family of apostolic churches with Jesus Christ at the center, which are especially sensitive to the *res publica* that surrounds and includes people of faith."[18] More recently, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda argues that a public church is " […] what it means to be Christ's body—a people of the incarnation—in public."[19] What is important for our discussion here is the need for churches to understand their public character and their possibilities for their ministry in the public commons.

Often churches have abdicated their public role. On occasion, the churches also have been complicit with the principalities and powers in furthering oppression and marginalization. Also, churches can be culturally captive to their contexts, confusing a "public theology" with a "civil religion." To avoid such pitfalls, biblical study, theological dialogue, social analysis and joint efforts must inform an ongoing dialogue among churches and with other faiths, to remind us of who we are and to insure a more authentic public theology.

What are some of the implications for the churches' witness to summon government to a more honorable vocation? Recognizing the limitations mentioned, churches have nevertheless played constructive roles in summoning

governments in particular and society more generally to their higher calling of service to others in the face of the minimalist expectations of neoliberal economics. Some of the helpful contributions churches can make include:

- Churches can **embody a justice-based worldview**. What you see depends on where you are standing. Insofar as churches have been able to stand with the least, the last and the lost, they offer those in power a different view of what is happening in the world. This perspective is also guided by a long-term moral horizon—the Reign of God—that can provide direction toward a more hope filled future.
- Churches can be **centers of resistance** against the arbitrary or abusive use of power. The long history of the churches' work in helping to develop human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and their persistent efforts to document cases in order to defend human rights is an important contribution to helping governments act more responsibly.
- Churches can engage in **public truth telling**. The notable work by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is one example that sought to bring about reconciliation by exposing and acknowledging the brutal and evil reality of apartheid. There have been other similar efforts in countries with histories of conflict and repression.
- Churches can be an imaginative source of **new ideas and strategies** to address problems and challenges. Recently, the Jubilee Campaign mobilized 17 million people to petition governments to cancel the debts of the most highly indebted poor countries. While only some debts were actually cancelled, this campaign made debt cancellation an issue for the governments of rich nations and presented them with very specific ways to address complex questions that were raised.
- Churches can be **centers of moral formation, deliberation and action**. At their best, governments reflect the values of their citizens, but they do not create them. Communities of people are the crucible in which values are identified and shared. Churches can help articulate the ethical questions that must be addressed.
- Churches can **motivate political participation and reformation**. Politicians often describe public service as a calling. Churches support the political process by encouraging their members to participate in the public debate of issues, to serve in public office and to fulfill their civic

responsibility to vote. Churches can provide pastoral support and counsel to those in public office, and support changes in the political system to insure participation and integrity. Churches can play a role in increasing the "civic literacy" of their members. For example, in Chile, in the 1988 attempt to enable General Pinochet to remain president for life, churches undertook a massive popular education campaign. They helped people understand the plebiscite question, taught them how to cast their ballot and then monitored the results to ensure a fair result.

- Churches can **articulate and enforce higher standards of corporate social responsibility** and stakeholder participation in the decisions of corporations. In managing their own investments, churches have over the past forty years led the way in being active shareholders. They gave birth to the growing social responsibility movement among investors and have articulated codes of conduct and benchmarks for corporate social responsibility that have been used by organizations and investment funds worldwide. These efforts have pushed back market encroachment of the public commons and reaffirmed the regulatory responsibilities of governments.
- Churches can be a means to **strengthen the bonds of human solidarity** and to build more inclusive communities. Churches have facilitated many visits, delegations, exchanges and "companion" church programs between people from very different parts of the world. In addition to the ideas, perspectives and even the joint work on projects or programs that are shared, when disaster strikes or human rights violated, faces and names come to mind that break down the "fear of the other" and affirm our common humanity.
- Churches can facilitate appropriate responses to **public moments of celebration and grief.** For example, in the wake of a tragic Swiss Air crash off Nova Scotia in 1998, Canadian churches prepared "Guidelines for Religious Ceremonies Involving More Than One Faith Tradition." These have been used to plan appropriate public religious observances across the country.
- Churches can defend the **freedom of religious belief** and **the right to dissent**, to differ and be different from the dominant culture and belief. Stephen Carter, argues that insuring freedom of religion from the intrusion of the state helps avoid tyranny by insuring religion is an independent center of power.[20] Many of the churches in Eastern Europe and in Latin America created these spaces during the dark times of repressive regimes.

- Churches can provide a **means to serve the needs of the "neighbor"** across the street or around the world. In North America for example, religious conviction is one of the principal motivations for charitable and philanthropic financial gifts and for volunteers serving in their communities. Churches are one of the largest and most effective providers of social services and international relief and development assistance.
- Churches can be **"storytellers" who preserve the social memory** of our collective history. Tragically, our national stories can also fuel the memory of bitter hatreds and divisions. Nevertheless, churches know the value of what it means to be part of an unfolding community building story in ways that forms of mere "nationalism" often forget. Helping people find their place in the human story of the earth community makes better citizens who in turn help governments fulfill their vocation.

The degree to which these and other efforts build a more inclusive and more sustainable earth community is the measure of the churches/faith communities' contribution. Churches can help governments in their vocation to insure that human dignity is respected, the environment protected, social security guaranteed, livelihoods protected, economic justice pursued, cultural identity recognized, participation encouraged and the excluded included. This is what God's justice requires of us together. Thus, churches exercise a stewardship over the public commons, summoning governments to their responsibilities when they abdicate them and creating public space when they fail to fulfill them.

In closing

How can churches help governments reclaim their vocation? I have argued that the minimalist economic expectation of governments is unacceptable and, conversely, the sixteenth-century theoretical framework of "church and state" is no longer sufficient in the current situation. Economic globalization threatens the public commons through the privatization of the public and the commercialization of the private.

Governments are to exercise a stewardship that safeguards the public commons —the new polis—and looks to it for its vitality, purpose and legitimacy. Along with civil society organizations and churches/faith communities summon governments to resist the domination the economic principalities and powers

that seek to replace the public commons with the "market." Furthermore, they can press governments to accept their responsibilities and ensure that people are respected, their needs met and the earth community can flourish.

In these turbulent and brutal times, churches have both a prophetic and pastoral contribution to help governments reclaim their purpose. The churches' public task may be marked not so much by our urge to speak, but more in how we listen. The churches' public ministry may not so much be characterized by our eagerness to direct, but more in how we accompany people and communities. The churches' public witness may not so much be characterized by our status or size, but in how we serve others. And our fidelity to the gospel may not be so much in how we hold onto the past, but rather how the past focuses our gaze on the future Reign of God and its meaning for us and our institutions today. These will mark the way for our contribution as churches to a politics of hope in the public commons.

Notes

[1] While the focus of our discussion is on the vocation of governments and the role churches can play in public life, these considerations should not be unmindful of the important relationship between churches and the other major faith traditions. While, tragically, religious conflict has been all too prevalent in the history of human affairs, Christians share with other faiths a common interest in the world. Inter-faith dialogue and multi-faith efforts offer some hopeful signs. See, e.g., the programs and publications of the LWF/DTS on the Church and People of Other Faiths.

[2] This "public space" has been described as the "public square" or "civil society." Both these terms present some difficulties. The "public square" can connote the engagement of citizens only with their government institutions, which is too limiting. On the other hand, "civil society" has been defined in very broad terms as "a vast, interconnected, and multi-layered social space that comprises, many hundreds of thousands of self-directing or non-governmental institutions and ways of life." See Robert Wuthnow, *Christianity and Civil Society—The Contemporary Debate* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), p. 41. This broad definition is open to many different meanings and interpretations. For our purposes here, I speak more specifically of "civil society organizations" as those voluntary and non-coercive associations that are non-state and non-commercial actors.

[3] Whether or not churches are "civil society organizations" is also open to some debate. The eighteenth-century political philosopher Edmund Burke argued "We know, and what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society and the source of all good and comfort." See Wuthnow, *ibid.*, p. 41. I suggest that while churches in many ways look a lot like those of civil society organizations, churches in their theological self-understanding are distinct from civil society organizations. For example, Lutherans teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. "The Church is the congregation of saints where the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered" (*The Augsburg Confession*, Article VII). So while there is much that churches do in their diaconal work that resembles the work done by these organizations, churches as an institutional expression claim a divine mandate that distinguishes them somewhat from civil society organizations.

[4] This is part of a poem written anonymously that is critical of the enclosure movement.

[5] See James Boyle, "The Second Enclosure Movement," in James Boyle, *Law and Contemporary Problems* (Duke University School of Law, Winter/Spring 2003), p. 35. This article by James Boyle quotes Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944).

[6] Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, *Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1995), p. xvii, author's own emphasis.

[7] The pressure to privatize things public is well documented. The sale of "state-owned enterprises;" the private management of airports, schools, health care, hospitals, airports, water services, electrical utilities, prisons; and the outsourcing of government services such as welfare administration, driver testing and license applications, and other jobs formerly done by civil servants; the use of

private contractors as part of the Iraq war effort, to mention only a few. Upon more serious analysis of the economic merits of their particular situation, many of these schemes have been discredited. Citizens have rejected these policies as an unacceptable abdication by governments of their responsibilities as witnessed by the recent elections of Norberto Kirchner in Argentina and Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula) in Brazil.

[8] Commercializing things private may be less obvious but it too is a drive that accompanies economic globalization. Among the more noteworthy examples is the drive to protect "intellectual property rights" which deprived indigenous communities of access to traditional knowledge that has been handed down to them over centuries as a trust for generations yet to come. Another example is the 1980 Supreme Court ruling in the United States that "[…] defined living forms as "machines or manufactures'." As a consequence, the court ruled that living beings can be patented." See Jordi Pigem, "Barcoding Life," in *The New Internationalist* (September 2002).

[9] Remarks made by Judith Maxwell on "Commentary," a radio program of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), February 1, 2002.

[10] See Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor, in *Human Development Report 2002* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[11] See Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 15.

[12] There has been a much-contested debate over the years about Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine. For our purposes here, it is important to note that Luther took seriously the importance of government and endeavored to articulate an appropriate role for government in his own times.

[13] Walter Altmann, "Reinterpreting the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," in Dow Kirkpatrick (ed.), *Faith Born in the Struggle for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), p. 151.

[14] See Barber, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 7. Barber cites Felix Rohatyn "When Money Talks, Governments Listen," in *The New York Times*, (July 24, 1994), p. 3. Felix Rohatyn has been a governor of the New York stock exchange, chair of the New York municipal authority, and U.S. ambassador to France.

[15] Jean Bethke Elstain, *Democracy on Trial* (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 1993), p. 8.

[16] Leslie Newbigin, *Truth to Tell*, *The Gospel as Public Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991).

[17] Gregory Baum, "Critical Theology in the Lutheran Tradition," in *The Ecumenist*, vol. 38, no. 4, (Fall 2001), p. 2.

[18] Martin Marty, *The Public Church* (New York: The Cross Road Publishing, 1981), p. 3.

[19] Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Public Church: For the Life of the World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004).

[20] See Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief*, *How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993).

Economic Globalization and Human Rights

Peter N. Prove

> Trade liberalization must be understood as a means, not an end. The end which trade liberalization should serve is the objective of human well-being to which the international human rights instruments give legal expression.[1]

This statement by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (and which the Lutheran World Federation had a hand in drafting), encapsulates the case that this article will try to elaborate: the proposition that human rights law provides a framework for better governance of the processes of economic globalization. And in doing so, it will explain why human rights is taken as a point of reference in so much of the LWF's advocacy on economic globalization.

International human rights law is itself the expression of positive globalization, in which fundamental elements of the dignity which all human beings share have been legally defined and accepted as law by the vast majority of the nations of the world, and embraced by victims of oppression and abuse from all cultures and creeds.

To appreciate the connection between economic globalization and human rights, it is first necessary to understand that human rights law encompasses economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. Modern human rights law attempts to ensure not only freedom of opinion and expression,[2] freedom from torture,[3] the right to vote[4] and other well-known civil and political rights, but also such economic, social and cultural rights as the right to food,[5] the right to education,[6] and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.[7] In fact, taken together, the canon of human rights law represents the legal definition of a broad range of the requirements for human dignity in society. And they cover a comprehensive range of the elements of human dignity commonly thought of as threatened by globalization (e.g., an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing,[8] education,[9] health,[10] work[11] under just and favorable conditions,[12] freedom from slavery and servitude,[13] and self-determination[14]).

All these human rights are, or are supposed to be, indivisible; that is to say, they are all part of a unified legal structure that may not be carved up according to personal preference. This indivisibility is in fact reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the foundation of modern international human rights law, in which no distinction is made between civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. The fact that such a distinction has since been expressed is the sad consequence of the Cold War, during which the human rights discourse became a stage for confrontation between the competing political ideologies. The psychological impact of this shadow war remains, with the economic, social and cultural elements of human rights now recognizable to most people only as elements of "Communist" political ideology. Indeed, the whole human rights movement has become identified, and generally identifies itself, with left-wing politics. This is a mistake on both sides, and is not at all true to the apolitical roots of human rights in the recognition of the value and dignity of every human being.

It is from this recognition that the principle of the universality of human rights arises. According to this principle, all people are possessed of certain fundamental rights and freedoms inherent in their humanity. In the international human rights instruments, we find "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family,"[15] the declaration that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,"[16] and the prohibition against discrimination (stipulating that everyone is entitled to all human rights "without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status"[17]).

Furthermore, human rights are legally binding obligations.[18] Human rights law is now expressed in a series of international treaties, which in most cases have been ratified by the vast majority of the international community.[19] They are no longer general ethical abstractions, but specific legal duties of the same character, if not indeed of a higher order, than the international agreements that provide the basis for economic globalization. Human rights provide a set of minimum standards agreed upon by the international community as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations."[20] They are fundamental principles of international law, and their promotion is among the foundational purposes of the United Nations. Moreover, the vast majority of the world's states, at the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, recognized the absolute primacy of human rights by declaring that the

promotion and protection of human rights is the first responsibility of governments, and cannot be subordinated to other priorities.[21]

The process of economic globalization, meanwhile, relies for its social justification on the trickle-down effect; the idea that some of the increased wealth generated by economic liberalization would in time trickle down to even the poorest strata of society, or, to use another metaphor, that the rising tide of wealth would lift all boats. But, as the UN Human Development Report already observed in 1997, some of these metaphorical boats

> are more seaworthy than others. The yachts and ocean liners are indeed rising in response to new opportunities, but the rafts and rowboats are taking on water—and some are sinking fast.[22]

The evidence for the trickle-down effect is in fact very slim and circumstantial. In some places and for some sectors, economic liberalization does indeed appear to have resulted in higher living standards for considerable numbers of poor people. However, the relationship between economic liberalization and increased well-being for the more vulnerable sectors of society (which in this context includes the majority of the people of the world) appears to be largely a matter of happenstance rather than a necessary correlation.

There is a certain semantic association that encourages us to give economic liberalization the benefit of the doubt. "Liberalization" sounds libertarian, and "free" trade evokes the notion of freedom. However, word association does not make for policy coherence. And the evidence is mounting of the anti-libertarian freedom-diminishing impacts of economic neoliberalism on many sectors of societies, both in the South and the North, and especially on the poorest and most vulnerable communities. As the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has said,

> Trade liberalization [or any other type of economic liberalization] must be understood as a means, not an end. The end which [economic] liberalization should serve is the objective of human well-being.[23]

This is not to say that economic globalization is inevitably and invariably negative in its social outcomes. It has, in fact, demonstrated an undeniable capacity for the creation of wealth. The problem is that such policy frameworks as have been created for the management of this process are founded

on exclusively economic objectives, and leave social outcomes largely to chance and the illusory beneficence of the trickle-down effect. The challenge of achieving coherence between economic objectives and social welfare has been, in most cases, deliberately avoided.

What is required to restore coherence and balance in the globalized *oikos* are standards and mechanisms of accountability that are based on the objective of increased human well-being for the whole society. Even when this need is recognized, it is often lamented that such standards and mechanisms do not exist and that their creation is politically and practically an impossibility. However, my view, and the view frequently expressed by the LWF in its advocacy on these issues, is that such standards do exist, in the form of international human rights law. These standards address both economic, social and cultural concerns raised by the consequences of economic globalization (in the form of obligations concerning economic, social and cultural rights), and concerns related to the democratic deficit of this process (in the form of obligations concerning civil and political rights). They are universal, and apply to all human beings everywhere simply by virtue of their humanity. Accordingly, they do not accept as an unfortunate inevitability that some will lose out in this process, but require a policy response to protect and support especially the most vulnerable members of society. And, moreover, they require this as a matter of legal obligation, under clear and binding treaty commitments.

It is sometimes argued that despite their formal expression in international treaties, human rights—especially economic, social and cultural rights—are simply too vague to be of use in the formulation of specific policy prescriptions. This is mostly just a pretext for refusal to implement these obligations. Let us take the example of the right to health. While the state clearly cannot assure good health to everyone, the right to health must be understood as a right to the enjoyment of a variety of facilities, goods, services and conditions necessary for the realization of the highest attainable standard of health. International trade policies and agreements that impact negatively, for example, on the availability of or access to needed pharmaceuticals must be examined against this obligation. Similarly, the right to food does not imply a right to be fed, but requires that every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. Like other economic, social and cultural rights, this right is not necessarily expected to be assured overnight, but to be realized progressively. But the corollary of

this is that policies that would reduce existing access to food or to the means for its procurement would *prima facie* be a violation of this right. International trade policies that might negatively affect food security could be challenged on this basis.

The duty bearers under international human rights law are primarily states. But an individual state, especially one of the poorer states, might reasonably argue that its capacity to fashion policies according to the requirements of human rights law is restricted by the economic and political obligations it is under by virtue of its membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) or as a result of the requirements of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In that situation, human rights standards can provide a basis for demonstrating the complicity of members of the international community in the violation of human rights in the country concerned, contrary to the obligation to cooperate internationally for the realization of human rights.

The issue of coherence, and accountability to human rights standards in international economic policy making, is no academic abstraction to be discussed only in the ivory towers of New York and Geneva. First and foremost it is a very practical issue to be insisted upon at the national level. It is national governments that bear the obligations created under international human rights law. And it is national governments that, together, make the policies and agreements that provide the framework for economic globalization. In forming the positions that the representatives of each government take to the international table, human rights obligations should be respected and taken into account.

In practice, hardly any one of the bureaucrats and diplomats who formulate those positions and negotiate agreements at the international level know anything about the human rights obligations of their respective countries. They are typically drawn from the trade or economic ministries of their governments, but the level of communication and cross-fertilization between them and other government ministries—especially those dealing with social policy questions—is generally very poor. The vast majority of government representatives attending WTO ministerial conferences, WB meetings or similar international economic forums may be experts in their narrow economic spheres, but cannot claim any knowledge, let alone expertise, on the preexisting human rights or environmental obligations of their countries. And in the larger and more diversified permanent missions in Geneva, the diplomats responsible for WTO policy discussions rarely interact with their own col-

leagues who cover the human rights portfolio. (Ironically, it is often some of the poorest countries, who lack the resources for large and diversified delegations in Geneva, who perforce do the best job of integrating different policy streams.) It is at these very practical national and administrative levels that the struggle for coherence and accountability is already won or lost. As in most cases of human injustice, as much is explained by incompetence as by bad faith or conspiracy. It is therefore apparent that mechanisms are required in order to promote coherence and ensure accountability.

Some mechanisms are already available at the international level through which the human rights impact of economic globalization can be examined, and accountability to existing human rights obligations promoted, if not ensured. For example, each of the major UN human rights treaties is accompanied by a monitoring mechanism, in the form of an independent expert committee responsible for reviewing regular state reports on the implementation of the treaty obligations. Almost all of the existing human rights treaty monitoring bodies could potentially have a role in addressing the human rights consequences of economic globalization. But the one that has been most active in this area is the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Apart from the statement to the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle quoted at the beginning of this article, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has frequently challenged economic neoliberalism where its prescriptions have undermined the promotion and protection of the rights under the Committee's purview, in the course of its review of individual state party reports. It has questioned government representatives on the extent to which their government's policy positions in international economic forums are consistent with the duty to cooperate internationally for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, And it has also provided the launching pad for the elaboration of draft human rights guidelines for poverty reduction strategies, in which the global economic policy framework is also addressed.

One issue that remains an open and very difficult question is that of the "social clause." At the time of the first WTO ministerial conference in Singapore in 1996, there was considerable controversy among members of the WTO as to whether WTO agreements should include a "social clause"—explicitly protecting labor rights. The ministerial conference, however, ultimately and very firmly rejected any such proposal, referring issues of labor rights to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) jurisdiction. More recently, some civil society groups have revived the "social clause," or even an expanded "hu-

man rights clause," as an advocacy objective. However, this approach requires great circumspection. Many developing countries totally reject such a proposal, due to fear that it could be misused by more powerful economies for protectionist purposes (rather than due to genuine human rights concerns). It must be said that this fear may very likely be well-founded. In addition, it has to be asked why such a clause is necessary, given that human rights obligations apply whether or not a clause of this type is introduced. This may be a fight that we do not have to have.

However, stronger mechanisms of review and accountability are certainly required, at both the national and international levels. The human rights treaty monitoring mechanisms, and other avenues in, for example, the Commission on Human Rights, are relatively weak—certainly when compared to dispute settlement processes in the WTO. In the future, advocacy efforts must focus on the strengthening of existing mechanisms and the creation of additional mechanisms where gaps exist, in order to promote coherence in policy processes at the national and international levels and accountability to obligations in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Given the current political climate of unilateralism and declining respect for the rule of law internationally, this is likely to be a long and difficult struggle.

It was in 1998 that the LWF, together with some partners in the international NGO community, undertook its first sustained advocacy on these issues in the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The Sub-Commission is a think tank of the Commission on Human Rights, and the body responsible for drafting many of the present UN human rights treaties and other instruments. The result of this advocacy was a resolution that encapsulated the essence of the approach in its title: "Human rights as the primary objective of trade, investment and financial policy."[24] This resolution broke the pattern of reticence that the international human rights bodies had previously displayed in addressing matters of international economic policy, and led to the current flowering of policy discussions on these issues. These discussions have demonstrated that human rights, far from being irrelevant to discussions on economic matters, can help provide a legal framework to guide economic policy in the direction of solidarity and community, rather than competition and individual profit.

From the perspective of our faith convictions, churches must always insist that human dignity take priority over economic advantage, and that the economy serves no other purposes than that of the well-being of the whole

human family. Lutheran tradition calls for regulation of economic power and the channeling of those dynamic forces in order to serve the common good. Human rights law takes the same position, and provides the churches with tools and a framework of analysis for holding governments and other actors accountable in an era of globalization. In emphasizing the obligation of recognizing and realizing these "rights" for all people, human rights closely match church teachings on the principles of neighbor-love, and the God-given dignity of every human being. When globalization threatens the principles of human rights, it threatens these faith commitments, and vice versa. As churches, we minister locally and nationally and are at the same time part of a global communion. Together with all people of faith and goodwill, we have the responsibility to claim human rights and to use them on behalf of our own communities and on behalf of the whole human family, in order to restore right purposes to the process of globalization.

Notes

[1] UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Statement to the Third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, Seattle, Adopted 26 November 1999.

[2] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), article 19.

[3] ICCPR, article 7; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

[4] ICCPR, article 25.

[5] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), article 11.

[6] ICESCR, article 13.

[7] ICESCR, article 12.

[8] ICESCR, article 11(1).

[9] ICESCR, article 13.

[10] ICESCR, article 12.

[11] ICESCR, article 6(1).

[12] ICESCR, article 7.

[13] ICCPR, article 8.

[14] ICCPR, article 1(2); ICESCR, article 1(2).

[15] Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), first preambular paragraph.

[16] UDHR, article 1.

[17] UDHR, article 2. See also ICCPR, article 2(1), and ICESCR, article 2(2).

[18] Treaties are binding upon those states that have signed and ratified them. "Customary" international law, which is less easily defined, binds all states. The precise content of customary international law is always uncertain and subject to judicial interpretation, but certainly includes basic human rights principles.

[19] As of 1 October 2004, the ICCPR has been ratified by 153 state parties, the ICESCR by 150 state parties, the Convention on the Rights of the Child by 192 state parties, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women by 178 state parties, the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by 169 state parties, the Convention Against Torture by 138 state parties, and the new Migrant Workers Convention by 26 state parties.

[20] UDHR, preambular paragraph.

[21] Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, para. 1.

[22] Human Development Report 1997(UNDP), p. 82.

[23] UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the Third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, Seattle, 1999, E/C.12/19999/9.

[24] E/CN.4/SUB.2/RES/1998/12.

Communion, Responsibility, Accountability

Karen L. Bloomquist

In this concluding essay the theological-ethical challenges posed by economic globalization will be addressed in terms of,

- The relationality intrinsic in what it means to be part of a **communion**, and how resistance is nurtured through Word and sacrament.
- How Christians are empowered for **responsibility** to seek what is good for the neighbor.
- Why institutional "actors" must be held **accountable** and to what.

A Communion within God's *oikos*

Communio *as a counter to neoliberalism*

Communio is lived out as those in member churches of this communion advocate and act out of this sense of relatedness, responsibility, accountability to others in the communion, and through them, to the rest of the created world. As a Lutheran leader from the global South put it, "If churches in the North understand how we in the South are affected by this, they would act differently."

Communio has significant implications for how we are formed morally, for the expanse of our moral vision, for how we deliberate over our differences, and for the scope of our action.

Communio goes back to New Testament perspectives of the church, where the related word, *koinonia*, is especially prominent.[1] Since then, it has had a long and complex history, reflecting how it has developed in different Christian traditions. Over the past half century, repeated references have been made to there being different "communions" of churches, belonging to the same tradition and conscious of living in fellowship with one another.

In 1947, the First Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation called believers around the world "to join with us in accepting the responsibilities of

this unity in faith, this fellowship in blessing, and this community of suffering."[2] Especially since 1990, the LWF has defined itself as,

> a communion of churches which confess the Triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship. Through Word and sacraments every local church is bound into the wider communion of churches.[3]

In 2003, the Tenth Assembly added "communion" to the title of the LWF to make explicit that it is "A Communion of Churches." Furthermore, the Assembly stated,

> As the justified people of God, we are a communion in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are called to share our resources and perspectives with each other, as well as to challenge and provoke one another to new horizons of faithfulness that go beyond what we can see or do as individual member churches […]. Misuse of institutional power is evident in our churches, as well as in societies, legal and economic systems, political and international organizations. [4]

> Our mutual participation in Christ leads us to challenge all those cultural, economic and political forces that define and tend to divide us. Thus, communion can make us uncomfortable as assumptions and practices that we take for granted are challenged and we are pushed to consider questions that we would not as separate churches on our own. These tensions, which can at times be threatening, are also a sign of vitality; they can deepen the realization of what it means to be a communion. We give thanks to God that our communion is blessed with diversity.[5]

Here, communion is considered in terms of how it contrasts with and is a real, embodied alternative to the neoliberalism undergirding economic globalization. What it means to be formed as church and to live this out in the world, if grounded in light of the faith we profess, will inevitably set us in tension with many of the assumptions, logic and outcomes of economic globalization. For example, one prevailing assumption is that everyone must seek to make a profit or get ahead on their own, regardless of the effect on others. However, this directly counters the central teaching in Scripture to "love your neighbor as yourself"(Lk 10:27). Seeking the welfare of others is the clear, consistent call throughout Scripture.

Being part of a communion shapes who we are and our perspectives, in distinction to the anthropological assumptions of economic globalization. Rather than being autonomous persons, we are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). We are

created in relation to God, other people and the rest of creation, for the sake of loving and sharing what each can contribute to the whole. The problem is that economic globalization tends to weaken those very bonds of family and community that, theologically, are constitutive of who we are—in relation to others. Instead of community, individualism is emphasized; instead of cooperation, competition; instead of participation in the life of others, production that uses others.

A Christian formation of our perspectives—through Word, sacraments and other "practices" of the church—shifts how we view what is occurring under economic globalization. For example, rather than lower-paid workers in other countries being seen as threats to "my livelihood," they become sisters and brothers whose lives are connected with mine through a spiritual reality that empowers us to ask deeper questions about what is occurring. We must struggle with the dilemmas this raises for all involved, rather than assuming that there are quick and easy answers.

In the case of farmers in the global South whose livelihoods are jeopardized by the agricultural subsidies that farmers in the North consider their "right," being in communion with each other encourages us to challenge the morality of such subsidies. Furthermore, if the financial gain from a foreign investment is used only to line the pockets of those in power, we must join with others in protesting and working to end the resulting corruption.

The differing impacts of economic globalization matter. They complicate and often confound what can be generalized prescriptions to be applied in the same way to all. It is because we are interrelated in one body—rather than as competing rivals—that we are pulled into more complex analyses of what is really going on. We are "encouraged" to raise uncomfortable questions which we might not otherwise.

The equality of all persons and their intrinsic interrelatedness is basic to a Christian theological anthropology. Life is not life unless it is shared with others in community. In Africa and in many other places around the world, you cannot be a person without God or at least a god; there is continuity between God and human beings' destiny. Human life and wholeness derive from God's creative work. The disposition and ability to do good come from God but this becomes corrupted or perverted through human sin, which disrupts our relationship with God and one another. On our own, we are unable to restore these relationships. But our gracious and forgiving God persistently yearns for and acts to restore right relationship with and among us.

By providing the basis for a much different kind or moral agency than one based on imperatives, the communion that is God's gracious gift pro-

vides an ecclesial basis for resisting the neoliberal logic at the heart of economic globalization. We are freed from being obsessed with "doing right," or from trying to measure up, or acting mostly out of guilt over the stark economic inequities in our world; all these can work against us and destroy community, leaving us feeling ever more frustrated. Yet through the gift that is *communio* we are implicated in a calling or task—to live out this reality beyond the church, throughout God's world.

Traditionally, this has occurred especially through the diaconal work of churches, ranging from local congregational efforts to institutions and international diaconal work. Recently, more emphasis has been put on the prophetic, public or advocacy dimensions of diakonia.[6] But in addition to diakonia, it is through the basic Word and sacrament ministry of the Church that neoliberal globalization can and must be countered.

Nurturing a spirituality of resistance in congregations

> Spirituality stands for the active presence of the power of God in human life which aims at enhancing life for all and defends those who are being excluded, the poor, the strangers and those who have been declared outcasts. Therefore, spirituality will have to challenge prophetically any form of power which sets itself absolute and is not legitimized by serving the common good. It will have to unmask false claims of authority and must seek ways of resisting policies and practices which serve to increase the power and wealth of the few while neglecting the basic needs and the right to life of the many […]. At the same time, a spirituality of resistance must guard itself against falling into the trap of self-righteousness by claiming absolute moral and spiritual authority and demonizing those who exercise power, ascribing to them evil intentions.[7]

Love of God is lived out in the world, in resistance for the sake of the world. How then can this be nurtured through what is central in the life of congregations, drawing on some distinctive but not exclusively Lutheran emphases, so as to engender a spirituality of resistance over the long haul?

If what occurs through congregational life—in the preaching, worshipping, teaching and long-term formation of Christians to live out their baptismal vocation—does not raise up and prepare members to deal with the tensions involved in being "in but not of the world," church members are likely to embrace uncritically, for example, the neoliberal assumptions, logic and

outcomes of economic globalization, even when they go against assumptions, narratives and teachings that are central to Christian faith.

Formed by narratives

In local congregations, faith formation occurs especially through the use of narratives—including biblical and other stories, liturgy, art and the lives of human beings. The emphasis is on who people are formed or shaped to be, rather than on what they are to do. Through narratives, we are able to understand and interpret our lives; they form and inform our values, our dispositions, how we see the world.[8] In fact, they may be the most important means of moral formation; we live by stories more than rules.

> Once the stories of the Bible and from our traditions interact with our own stories, then moral consciousness, the ability to distinguish the 'is' from the 'ought,' and the choices this involves, can be nurtured.[9]

To be a member of the Body of Christ means "the formation and transformation of personal moral identity in keeping with the faith identity of the community."[10]

This means, first of all, reading Scripture over and against how we continually are being formed through the media, advertising and other influences related to globalization. Scripture is not to be read by or for ourselves. Rather, it is Scripture that, through the Spirit, "reads us" over and against ourselves when those selves are being shaped by forces and persuasions other than those of God. This challenges the presumptions we bring to the text. It is, as Bonhoeffer suggested, a reading that interrogates us, and in so doing, invites reaction. It is a reading whose story replaces a false story, and enables its hearers to become practitioners of the way of life to which Scripture points.[11] The task, therefore, is to create within the Christian community possibilities for critical reflection that can effectively challenge the language and vision of "a new world order" that is being shaped according to the neoliberal mandates of globalization. Through such critical reflection, grounded in an eschatological horizon, new practices in the church for the sake of the world begin to be fostered.

The difficulty, of course, is that in many places Christians tend to be formed much more by neoliberalism and market ways of thinking than by this *communio* formation, such that the church too easily succumbs to rather than questioning what is occurring. In some parts of the world, "marketing" the church has

become a profitable business. Priority setting in the church's mission is sometimes inordinately driven by what will result in the most financial resources.

Therefore, a crucial but difficult pastoral-prophetic task is that of "conversion": converting people from an unquestioned allegiance to the mandates and allure of economic globalization to a vision of what God intends for life in community. One of the primary ways this occurs is through preaching.

Preaching that "converts"[12]

Preaching sets forth a public, visible stake in God's determined, eternal claim to be present and to speak to the ongoing life and schemes of the world. Through preaching come the articulate and saving words of the gospel, proclaimed as resistance to the "babble coming from the world's bully pulpits."[13] From preaching come authoritative words that follow and guide the people called church as they encounter the world. This is done in the context of a specific community that confesses not only its own sinful falleness, but also the world's falleness, and the "false stories" by which it too often operates. To be sure, the Word is preached, but it is also heard, discussed and lived out by the people of God in the world.

In the face of the dominating effects of economic globalization, what then does it mean to preach God's Word to a people living in captivity to its forces? Preaching must contribute to the long-term formation of people, spiritually and morally, so they might see and live differently from what the powerful interests in our day dictate. This can become the basis for organizing with others, rather than only helplessly lamenting about "how things are." This occurs through basics of the faith that call us away from the traps of economic, as well as political and religious, fundamentalism. Preaching within a community that together reads the Scriptures, prays and communes, breaks the script of the world so as to empower people to become more thoughtful citizens of the whole household of God throughout the world.

"Eucharistic sharing"

"Preaching and Eucharist are, in the life of the community of faith, the linguistic and ritual enactment of the bounty of the divine bearing toward the world."[14] The embodied communion—where we can taste and see with one another—is a foretaste of this ultimate vision.

The fruit of the Eucharist, "properly practiced," is a community of moral agency that attends to human needs, especially to those of the vulnerable.[15] This is in

sharp contrast to an economic focus on wants. The Eucharist goes together with the "sacrament" of solidarity with those who suffer. "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it: if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it" (1 Cor 12:26). We are bound to everyone's well-being. When solidarity is not practiced, this significance of the Eucharist is lost. It is a feast of unconditional acceptance by God, but which sometimes has been misused by humans for moral control over others, by excluding them from receiving the sacrament.

We need to ask then, what is the "right practice" of the sacraments when some in the communion are economically affluent and others impoverished? In the New Testament, the Eucharist was combined with an actual meal in which those who were rich shared with those who were poor. In medieval times, the spirituality especially of lay movements of women and men was grounded in a sense of the mystical presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which in turn led them to seek renewal of the church and to exercise diaconal responsibility in society.

The Eucharist models an economy of sharing, in contrast to an economy of greed. Greed is a turned-in attitude rooted in fear. The Eucharist is a sign of the need to share what we have; otherwise, it can become a dead ritual. We are called to live out God's word of justice and peace as embodied in the Eucharist. Eucharistic hospitality, in this sense, means living so that all can eat.

Communicating amid our disparate relationships

We are formed in communion,with God and others, in ways that call for faithful responses in relation to those whose lived realities are quite different from our own. We cannot fall into the assumption that others share our assumptions. We are held together by God in Christ in a way that makes it possible for us to talk together about our different ways of seeing and experiencing realities without this degenerating into shouting matches, power struggles, or mere restatements of our own positions. We are pulled into each other's realities and seek to understand them more deeply. What it means to be and act as part of a global communion considerably broadens the scope of our relationality, the complexity and also the richness of the moral terrain and possibilities. Simplistic condemnations of the positions of the other will not suffice.

The sharing of spiritual and material gifts, implicit in communion, cannot be isolated from examining the causes of inequities in wealth and joining with others to change such.[16] Under economic globalization, relationship building

across the chasms that separate rich and poor is very difficult. The economic, political, ideological and cultural walls separating us are too great. It can be nearly impossible for the "winners" and "losers" to communicate honestly with one another, much less stand together in any kind of solidarity that does not quickly lapse into paternalism and dependency. Distinctions, such as between donors and recipients, tend to be maintained. Donors set the terms by which recipients can receive the funds they need—through certain application or reporting procedures, by requiring the development of poverty reduction strategies, by privatizing certain services, by standards of professionalism, and the like. These distinctions and patterns of relationships are based on presuppositions quite different from those imbedded in what it means to be a communion.

What may open up new possibilities for personal and institutional transformation of unjust, often disparate relationships is a realization that what holds us together is not the convergence of our self-interests, of what is to our own advantage or disadvantage under economic globalization, or even of what we feel or think about each other. We are not held together by our own efforts—including our most determined efforts to resist globalization—but by the transforming, relational power of God's Spirit, who forms us into a communion or "a holy community."[17] Rather than transcending the material differences (e.g., with idealistic platitudes about how we are all one in Christ), this provides a kind of "glue" that can withstand honest speaking and acting about the actual realities of our lives.

Talking with one another about the different ways we experience globalization (or other challenges in the world) is itself an important aspect of the church's witness in society. Diversity becomes the matrix in which the gift of the church's catholicity can be more deeply realized. This catholicity is appreciated not primarily through theological concepts but through shared life experiences across all that would divide us. The character of our communities and the power relationships within and among them become theologically and ethically significant. Those who are "other" from us challenge us when we mistake our reason and experience as universally being the case for all people. As we do so, we might begin to move beyond stereotypes, and to hold one another accountable in new ways.

Through this process,

> Rather than as an unquestioned reigning power, economic globalization begins to have faces and voices with whom we are related, who call us to act responsibly, and who hold us accountable for the decisions we make and the actions we are able to take in our everyday economic lives, as part of our baptismal vocation. Thus, we are

> moved to act out of a sense of relatedness (communion or solidarity), responsibility (for the effect our decisions and actions have on others) and accountability (holding other members of the communion, as well as political and economic institutions accountable to the values we affirm).[18]

Is this only a utopian vision? Or might it truly become an embodied, living reality with the power to make an effective difference amid forces of economic globalization?

Ecclesial resistance for the sake of the world

The church is a new creation, the sign of a new humanity where all persons matter, a promise of how things are going to be, a gift that makes it possible to see reality differently. Baptism "rehumidifies" the dry 'adam.[19] The *ecclesia* is received as a gift, gathered and sent out. It bears witness by defiantly resisting practices of economic globalization that create divisions and inequality among God's children.

However, *communio* can become a closed, static reality. It can also embody oppressive realities of power. Its dynamic potential is in how it transforms asymmetries of power. If *communio* becomes too focused on Body of Christ imagery, questions of power and authority (and debates over who is the head) can dominate. The language of *communio* has its limits. We also need to find ways to speak in ways that affirm other forms of community in the wider *oikos*, beyond that of the church. The church must find ways to speak not only in "Lutheran" or "Christian" but also in "interfaith" and secular languages. But first of all, the church must be clear as to the source of its own empowerment to speak and act.

Defining the church mainly in sacramental terms can also be problematic, if it limits the prophetic calling of the church, whereby clear judgments against what is unjust need to be made. The church should not be seen as a sacramental reality or public in itself, apart from other actors in society. It is a community of life, in which none are to be excluded. Through the church community, we are connected with all who experience death and destruction—with the whole of creation. Here is the church's catholicity—"for all."

Rather than abstractions, the flesh and blood reality of our global neighbors becomes more apparent. We are connected with them through a sacramental reality, in ways that run counter to how we are connected through the

global economy—as owners and workers, investors and debtors, producers and consumers, donors and recipients. All these relationships are shaped by economic exchanges. Rather than by shifting fortunes based on markets, finance, trade and other processes of economic globalization, we are held together by grace, justification and promise.

The catholicity of the church—with its local and global aspects—has important potential for resisting what is occurring under globalization. It offers a different kind of power—that of the cross, brokenness and defilement. Suffering becomes one of the marks of the church. We can detect the crucified Christ living in the bodies of the excluded, and denounce the logic of exclusion. In the midst of the despair and brokenness, the church bears public witness to the justice and solidarity of God's promised reign. Living this out is what the church needs to encourage in all its members and in its advocacy to decision makers in economic and political institutions.

What then does it mean to be the church, living and acting faithfully in the midst of today's globalized world? In the conclusion of his comprehensive biblical theology, Paul Hanson sums it up well,

> The community of faith is thus a gathering of those responding to God's saving grace by devoting themselves to God's plan for the restoration of all creation. […] In their life in community, they are able to overcome partisan conflicts through a shared consciousness of a devotion to one Sovereign and a commitment to a cause that transcends the self-interests of any individual. Among them dissident voices are not silenced, but heard in the effort to discern God's will more clearly. Authority is not held up as a human possession, but acknowledged as God's prerogative intended to empower all humans with direction and purpose. In prayer and reflection, the guidance of the Spirit is sought, and the welfare of God's whole family is held up as the faith community's sacred vocation in the world.[20]

Responsibility

For Christians, relationality and responsibility are deeply intertwined: we live with one another and for one another. Living out an ethic of responsibility is grounded in and empowered by Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen One. In him, the duality of time and eternity, of the penultimate and the ultimate are brought together. In Christ, we simultaneously partake in the reality of God and the reality of the world.

This reality "becomes the sacrament of the ethical."[21] Responsibility emerges as the total and realistic response of Christians to the claim of God and the claim of their neighbors, lived in light of God's promised future.

The indwelling Christ empowers moral agency

The ethical question is not only what ought to be and could be, but also what hinders us from acting. Knowing there are injustices and exclusions that go against what we believe, or that changes are needed, is not by itself sufficient for ethical action. Thus, attention needs to be given to how moral agency is empowered, especially through the relationality grounded in what it means to be a communion.

Living before the rise of modern liberalism's moral subject, and in keeping with the above biblical perspective, Luther viewed human beings as ontologically relational. One Lutheran theologian has even suggested that "moral autonomy is doctrinal heresy."[22] The point is that the self is related or interconnected with God and with others, including the rest of creation. Luther focused especially on the tension between standing human beings before God *(coram Deo)* and before human beings (*coram hominibus*). His sense of moral agency contrasts sharply with the autonomous moral agent that is presumed under neoliberalism.[23] For Luther, moral agency becomes a function of communion—the moral power of the indwelling Christ, especially in the face of the human inability to act.

Human moral power flows from deep communion between God, human creatures, and the broader community of life. The sacramental communion is the *locus* of moral power. If indeed the compassionate, justice-seeking love of Christ wells up and works in us, why are we passive in the face of our neighbor's need?[24]

Human moral agency that is empowered by the indwelling Christ is undercut when a social order is seen as natural or inevitable. In Luther's time, orders of society were considered orders of creation. Today, the logic, practices and outcomes of economic globalization are considered inevitable in a similar way (although for different reasons).

Under neoliberal globalization, "economic human beings" tend to be viewed primarily as self-interested, rational, individualistic, competitive and materialist. The implicit anthropology is optimistic and egotistic: let economic forces prevail and the "common good" will be served. What is ethically objection-

able is how processes of economic globalization then tend to commodify more and more aspects of life.

Luther combined spiritual longings with people's economic longings, thereby undercutting what today tends to be a split between the personal and social dimensions of life. Relationality becomes the ground of moral power, through personal relationships that are intrinsically political. God in Christ incarnate in and among us becomes the *locus* of moral power—God present in relationships that are morally empowering.

Responding

The relationality formed in and through the communion is consistent with an ethical approach characterized by "responsibility." Responsibility ethics has often been contrasted with ethics that focus on being obedient to rules, on ends or consequences, or on ideals of what is good or virtuous. Ethics of responsibility involve accountability for actions and consequences in situations where adherence to absolute norms is not possible.[25] Responsibility ethics often emphasize freedom, conscience and decision making to determine what is appropriate or fitting in a given situation. This implies personal responsibility, which still needs to be emphasized, especially in the face of tendencies to blame only other people or structures for one's "victimization." At the same time, policies and structures must continue to be challenged and changed when they perpetuate injustice and preclude people from exercising this responsibility.

Theologically, the emphasis is on being made responsible, rather than on being held responsible (which will be considered later under "accountability"). Through God's acts of creation and redemption, God lays claim on us; what we do in response to God and in relation to one another is not necessarily what we would do on our own.

According to Bonhoeffer, responsibility is a total response of the whole person to the whole of reality. The call of Christ sets us free for genuine responsibility in the world. In Christ, we are offered the possibility of partaking in the reality of God and of the world.[26] The structure of the responsible life is that we are bound to Christ and thus to others, called to take their needs upon ourselves. The form of Christ takes form in the world, in the concrete situations ("mandates") in which we must decide and bear responsibility.[27]

Within the relational ontology discussed above, responsibility can also be seen as "being able to respond to the reality of others," especially those whose reality is different from our own. Besides operating in personal ethics, this also has broader global implications: our response must give serious attention to the significant power and other differentials between us. This calls for analysis and reflection that is sensitive to others' structural, cultural and other realities. Special interests, power inequities, affects of colonialism and paternalism, and lack of reciprocity need to be exposed.[28] Thus, we must ask such questions as, What are the impediments and possibilities, for those in privileged as well as those in disadvantaged life situations? How are the struggles for livelihood different, or the same? What moral choices can and must be made? What difference is there in making economic decisions that respond to the needs of the neighbor, rather than to financial gain alone?

Neighbor-love (agape)

Christian love, known as *agape*, is at the animating center of this ethic. Communion involves giving and receiving love. God has initiated and entered into relationship with us—through Baptism and the Word—and brings us together around the Table, where we receive and become the Body of Christ. The love we tangibly receive and are transformed by through these sacraments is lived out in love toward others as ourselves.

> In God's dealings with us, the reality of need is the necessity of love. In our dealings with our neighbors, the same formula applies. The ethical vocation of God's people is the reenactment of God's acts of love and justice.[29]

Agape is sustained by mutual giving and receiving. This includes an appropriate amount of self-concern: love of neighbor as ourselves. Neighbor-love is not unilateral, but in a circle of reciprocity creating mutual expectations for response, and the growth of relationships.[30] Although love as communion is first of all giving, it also anticipates reciprocity, claims and counterclaims, needs and responses. These become concrete through special embodied relationships, rather than through abstract "universal humanity." Instead of generalizing, we must take seriously the reality of those living in particular economic situations—such as in Tanzania, Latvia, Malaysia, Colombia, the United States or wherever—and how reciprocity might be lived out in relation to such persons.

Under modernity, the assumption has often been made that this basic Christian impulse of love has to be translated into secular, Enlightenment-based terms that can then be made more universal and acceptable to all "reasonable" persons, i.e., those who share the basic assumptions underlying such. Nevertheless, this tends to overlook that many throughout the world have been formed by different assumptions, not only by Christian but also by many other religious narratives, symbols and traditions in their formative cultures. These pervasive influences (which cannot be pursued here) need to be acknowledged and built upon, if an ethic is to be truly global.

In the case of *agape*, its primary and essential location is within the communion of believers. Here, *agape* is maintained as a mutual and reciprocal reality, rather than a principle acceptable "to all reasonable persons." The biblical and related narratives are necessary to sustain Christian love, which is a way of life among a people who form a storied tradition, based for example on the sharing described in Acts 2:44-46. Yet, this love must move out beyond the bounds of the communion for the sake of effectively furthering the good of neighbors regardless of their faith commitment. This occurs by living out our vocation under the guidance of neighbor-love.

The vocation of neighbor-love in economic life

From a Lutheran perspective, moral agency is grounded in justification, in what God in Christ has done, so that ethics is placed in perspective: it is a response to God's justifying grace that is lived out as vocation in terms of responsibility toward self and neighbor. For example, Luther drew upon the criterion of neighbor-love to critique merchants who sold for the highest possible price: "What else does it mean but this: I care nothing about my neighbor, so long as I have my profit and satisfy my need […]."[31]

Vocation is grounded in the sacrament of Baptism. It is living out our baptismal calling, in which we promise "to serve all people" and "to strive for justice and peace in all the earth."[32] God's gracious gift of justification through Jesus Christ is a continual reminder that we are to live out our vocation for the sake of others rather than for our own interests or self-justification.

> We are pardoned and empowered to love one another realistically, within all of God's mandated sectors of human existence […] participating in the structures and institutions of daily life […]sent into God's world to co-participate boldly in current struggles for peace, justice, and freedom, by meeting the varied needs of our interdependent

> neighbors within the Creator's mandates of societal preservation. Christians are called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to pray and work joyfully in critical cooperation with all persons of goodwill as God's coworkers in society.[33]

Vocation is the summons to act responsibility in these concrete places where we are. Not to do so, as Bonhoeffer realized, is to allow "the growth of autonomous institutions which have monstrously evil effects on human life."[34]

The command to love the neighbor does not restrict responsibility to the neighbor in terms of space.[35] The overarching question is, how can the good of the neighbor—close by and around the globe—best be served through the decisions and actions that are taken in economic life? How can this basic emphasis in Lutheran theology become more than just a general, pious platitude, but an hermeneutical key for pursuing Luther's question, What does this mean? What does love of neighbor actually mean in the midst of the competing demands and tensions posed by economic globalization today? How do our interrelationships within a global communion become an important "resource" in this, but in ways that also remind us of neighbors beyond this communion? How can this focus, which is at the heart of a Lutheran approach to ethics, be factored more directly into economic decisions and actions, including at a corporate level?

When profitability is the dominant concern in corporate decision making, real human beings are frequently the casualties. Love of one's neighbor "as oneself" with special attention to the needs of the world's poor are priorities easily orphaned.[36]

Probing more deeply into "what is the good of the neighbor" has the potential to evoke concrete criteria for what is considered responsible economic activity—in terms of its actual effects on the basic needs and quality of life for human beings in communities far away, as well as close by neighbors who are directly impacted by economic practices. This "good" cannot remain an abstraction: the neighbors must be listened to and heard. We cannot assume that economic prosperity will eventually come to them or let others determining what will be "good for them." This becomes more possible through the interrelatedness inherent in a Christian ethic grounded in but reaching out beyond the communion.

Under economic globalization, the effect on workers or communities in one locale tend to be played off against those in another locale, usually on the basis of where labor or production costs are lower (e.g., through practices such as outsourcing). If "neighbors" are seen primarily as those who are nearby, protecting their means of livelihood might be considered the ethical priority. But if the scope of attention includes the far more basic needs of the

neighbor in a distant locale, a Christian perspective of solidarity with the most vulnerable means that the good of these neighbors cannot be ignored.

The further question is whether it really is the good or the livelihood of people (be they near or distant) that is served through transnational economic activity. That often is the vague yet largely unfulfilled promise, but what is "good for business" too often ends up falling short of being good for the neighbor. Furthermore, such activity under the prevailing dynamics of economic globalization typically sets persons and communities in different parts of the world against one another, thereby tearing apart the web of "neighbor-love" that is God's global intention for life in community.

As Christians, we are invited to approach such ethical dilemmas from out of a deeply formed sense of our vocation to further what will be good for neighbors around the globe. These neighbors become very tangible through the one body we partake of in the Eucharist. Here we are "reconnected," given a renewed sense of relatedness or communion with God in Christ, and with one another. This communion within the body of Christ includes those who become dispensable, are commodified, made invisible in a world driven by competition and profit. They are "re-membered"—made "present"—and their presence becomes a powerful reminder of the biblical mandate to seek justice for the poor, excluded and vulnerable. How can their interests be more directly factored into economic decisions and actions?

Ethical discernment

If what happens to and through us around the communion table is to make a difference in our daily economic lives in the world, then dealing with what often are conflicting effects on diverse "neighbors" becomes a necessary and ongoing matter for ethical discernment. The criterion of neighbor-love goes against the grain or resists the neoliberal logic driving economic globalization. The point is not necessarily to oppose a market economy, but to resist the way this logic can overtake all other realms of life. In these and many other ways, the grammar of the church and that of neoliberal economic theory and practice are in tension. But, for the most part, this tension and the conflicts it generates within believers as well as within the wider society are not made explicit or addressed. Christians who work in business are left to struggle with this for themselves, rather than the church being a place for this deliberation.

The church's role in preparing and accompanying members for this kind of discernment is crucial, especially in light of the other forces that are so

powerfully driving decisions under the reign of economic globalization. Out of a faith-impelled sense of vocation, churches must more effectively prepare their members for participation in the decisions needed in economic life today. What will contribute positively to the good of neighbors, especially those who are most vulnerable, not only close at hand, but those far away, who are affected by global economic practices?

Decisions we make, or fail to make (and thus, sins of commission and omission) affect not only our own livelihood but also that of persons in far different parts of the world. The "neighbor" who benefits or is harmed usually is anonymous to us personally. As long as s/he is kept faceless, objectified or commodified, processes of economic globalization can proceed without interruption. But when these processes adversely affect those given and known to us as neighbors, whether physically close or distant, then we are impelled to raise questions about the morality of what is occurring. That "some will inevitably be harmed or disadvantaged" may realistically be the case. But going along with this truism does not make it morally acceptable within a *communio* framework. We are deeply affected by what happens to others; what harms them harms us. We cannot neutrally accept the harms wrought by economic processes as if they were inevitable or unavoidable. This becomes the moral nerve or motivating power for acting to change what is unjust.

What is just or unjust in a given situation cannot be determined abstractly. Loving others as you would have them love you is at the core of justice, but it is more than claiming or rendering what is due for the sake of fairness. Instead, it is the recreating of right relations among persons and social and natural processes so that all might enjoy the merciful abundance that God promises, bestows and intends for all. The imperative of responsibility is, in all actions and relations, to respect and enhance the integrity of life before God. Acting on this norm fulfills justice.[37]

Accountability

In relation to responsibility

Accountability is grounded in the relationality of communion and empowered by the mutuality of responsibility. Accountability complements or flows from responsibility, by moving from the explicitly Christian grounding and non-co-

erced nature of responsibility to a more public, enforceable accountability. Theologically, accountability is necessary because of the all-pervasive presence of sin, in persons and structures. Social responsibility on the part of economic actors or political policy makers is important and to be encouraged. But seldom are they held accountable where their decisions and actions fall short of this (i.e., "sin"), especially in terms of neighbors who are not close at hand. Moral intentions alone do not necessarily lead to moral consequences. People and institutions must be held accountable—for the outcome of their policies and practices, as well as for the means they pursue toward these ends.

Responsibility corresponds to "responding to others," as accountability corresponds to "being answerable to others," especially in publicly transparent ways. Accountability is akin to the realm of duties and obligations. The biblically based priority in both cases is in terms of those who are the most vulnerable or most in need. Thus, God is depicted in Scripture as holding accountable especially those who are in influential positions:

> The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of God's people: It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? (Isa 3:14-15).

Those who are excluded or unjustly impacted by certain policies and practices have the right and responsibility to hold others, especially those in positions of privilege or access, accountable to effect the needed changes. Especially those with whom we are related, as sisters and brothers in the body of Christ, should be expected to be more accountable to one another, in ways that "move beyond solidarity and accompaniment."[38] Standing with one another must be extended to taking actions that will make a difference in actually changing unjust realities. The power of the indwellling Christ in us as a communion is what empowers that to occur.

If neighbor-love is what provides direction for responsibility, justice is what gives direction to accountability. The two are deeply intertwined: love must be formed and informed by justice if others are to be loved for who they are. Rather than a formal criterion, justice is a response to the concrete realities of others, in a multidimensional sense. It is the moral bond that holds relationships together. [39] Although responsibility is the primary moral imperative for justice, it is "rights" that compel us to act in the face of injustices. Rights are claims resulting from legitimate expectations of relationships. The assertion of

rights by or on behalf of those treated unjustly reminds us of how intrinsically we are connected with the lives of others. This expands the scope of responsibility: we are not only responsible for those we choose to be responsible for.[40]

Furthermore, human rights are political safeguards for the dignity of people. They are a practical way of insuring a minimum threshold for respecting the dignity of people, all of whom bear the image of God.

"Rights" are sometimes suspected of coming out of Western traditions and resulting in a kind of moral imperialism imposed on other parts of the world. In societies with stable role relations, there may be a clearer sense of what people in that society owe to one another. But when these social bonds break down, as increasingly is occurring under the forces of economic globalization, the language of rights is becoming ever more necessary.

One way of conceptualizing these basic rights that need to be protected and furthered for the sake of the "commonwealth" (or community) of all created life is in terms of the tripartite rights of

- Bodily integrity (especially significant for women)
- Moral, political and religious choice (and thus cultural diversity), and
- Subsistence (meeting the basic needs of human beings and the rest of creation).[41]
- Each of the three must be simultaneously achieved and protected for a society to be just.

The contested terrain of creation

From a Christian perspective, institutions and actors in economic and political life are accountable for the well-being of human beings, communities, the rest of creation and ultimately to God. The way in which this accountability is intermeshed is more apparent in light of the relational ontology discussed earlier. It is not only persons but wider systems and institutions and how they "act" that are important, especially under the realities of globalization. The challenge is how governmental, economic and civil society agents can be more mutually accountable, with their respective responsibilities in today's globalized world.

Accountability necessarily moves out into the world, and is spelled out in terms the world can understand, rather than staying in the church or expressed only in "Christian" terms. The warrant for such action is grounded in First Article understandings—the realm of creation, of what God has created

as good (Gen 1) but that also has become fallen, distorted through sin. The relationality in that creation, intrinsic in what it means to be created in the image of a Triune God, both expands and enriches the moral terrain. But by focusing here on this as a matter of creation, the move is from an explicitly Christian ethic to one that can regularly engage the world in publicly recognizable terms, can enter into dialogue and negotiation for the sake of effective public action or advocacy. It is not an explicitly Christian agenda that is at stake but a human agenda for the sake of all creation.

As Lutheran churches we stand in a confessional tradition that, through a "two kingdoms" framework, has long affirmed the importance of government and economic activity as means through which God's ongoing work of creation is carried out. As Luther taught in the Large Catechism:

> It is the responsibility of the princes and magistrates to restrain open wantonness. They should be alert and courageous enough to establish and maintain order in all areas of trade and commerce in order that the poor may not be burdened and oppressed and in order that they themselves may not be responsible for other people's sins.[42]

> The greatest need of all is to pray for the civil authorities and the government, for it is chiefly through them that God provides us daily bread and all the comforts of this life…where dissension, strife, and war prevail, there daily bread is already taken away or at least reduced.[43]

Although rooted in God's creative activity, political and economic institutions are contested terrain, where sin is inevitably present. Luther's realism about sin and evil led him to reflect on relationships of power wherein the

> wolves, lions and eagles […] would simply devour the sheep […] the most vulnerable among us […] in such cases, temporal life and flourishing would eventually be reduced to chaos.[44]

According to Luther, the first and best place for Christians to put into practice the love bestowed on them through the Holy Spirit was in the human institutions, such as those of economic and political life. We are called to be co-workers with God in them. Today this must include examining their legitimacy, how they operate and the effects that they have on humans and others in God's creation, according to the criterion of what will protect and further

the good of all. When they fall short of this, as they inevitably do because of the reality of sin, these institutions need to be called into account and transformed for the benefit of the neighbor. Furthermore, there may be conditions under which churches must disassociate themselves from institutions or systems and participate in creating different ones. [45]

From personal to institutional accountability

When individuals are held responsible for their actions, and found guilty in legal terms or convicted of sin in theological terms, they are thereby held accountable. Although this typically is judged in terms of their illegal or sinful acts, what is basically at stake is the breaking down or violating of relationships. From a Lutheran theological perspective, this breaking down of relationships with one another and with God is the core of what sin is. Theologically, this being held accountable or convicted of sin is what the doctrine of justification especially addresses, with the gospel of God's gracious forgiveness, redemption and new life in Christ.

When we turn from the personal to the institutional or structural dimensions of life, matters of responsibility and accountability become more complex. Given the human agency that is intrinsic in responsibility, it is difficult to think of holding institutions responsible in the same way. Although shaped and directed by human beings, their policies, practices, size, scope and overall effect acquire a power that often seems to transcend human agency. The human responsibility exercised in and through them becomes faceless or anonymous. Even those in positions to make a difference often express feelings of powerlessness or of not being responsible. Such structures acquire a life of their own, an autonomous, dominating power, which holds human persons and communities captive to their own institutional mandates rather than to upholding and furthering the dignity of human beings and the rest of God's good creation.

In this sense, structures and institutions become like the powers and principalities described in the New Testament (e.g., Col 1:16; 2:15). Originating as part of God's good creation, they become pervaded by sin. They acquire a size and influence that makes them seem supra-human, even god-like in their power. For example, economic institutions instrumentalize human beings and the human values and purposes they were intended to serve. "The market tempts persons to dispose of themselves as persons"[46] in order to survive. It is contradictions such as these that must be exposed, along with tapping the power of organized

communities to transform these dominating realities—so that they might again serve life rather than holding lives captive to their mandates.

Today there is an increasing awareness of the critical role of a third force—that of civil society—in holding both political and economic powers accountable. Civil society (and within it churches) can serve to check excesses of both of these powers.

> As civil society companions, congregations have the best opportunity to answer God's call to an ethos of deliberative democratic citizenship and participate in the Triune God's creative agency of political authority in our era.[47]

Holding governments accountable

Churches have different experiences in trying to hold governments accountable. Some have been very involved in advocacy efforts, while others have been reluctant to do so because of their own minority status or the risk perceived in so doing. Churches may not feel strong or competent enough to take up the challenge. They may feel they lack access to government leaders or decision makers, even if many in government may themselves be church members. Members may fear offending those in government, and the possible repercussions this might have for the church. These and other factors too often serve as "excuses" for the church not speaking or acting, even though this is part of their God-impelled calling.

If economic globalization is to be transformed in ways that will further and sustain human beings, their communities and the rest of creation, effective and accountable governmental and intergovernmental policies and practices are a crucial means through which this needs to occur. Government must challenge and redress patterns of exclusion, injustice and exploitation that occur under economic globalization.[48]

Historically, especially in Western countries in the twentieth century, government has been seen as the key counter-balancing power to hold economic forces accountable and to meet the basic needs of those marginized or excluded from a livelihood under the dynamics of economic globalization. Yet, at the same time, the government's role and power have been called into question, and in many cases, compromised. This is further complicated in many parts of the world where, in the aftermath of various reigns of colonialism and imperialism, the building up of democratic traditions and govern-

ments, has resulted in fragile, often ineffectual governance. Increasingly, however, it is neither local nor national governments, even when they are strong, that are able to reign in and counter the negative effects of economic activity. As this becomes ever more transnational, governmental efforts are needed that are more multinational or international.

Transnational accountability

Today a growing portion of the world's large economies are unaccountable to the public as a whole. This is especially the case for transnational corporations and financial institutions. The current system of economic globalization limits the ability of people, governments and nations to insist on respect and negotiation of conditions when an outside company comes in to use their natural resources, infrastructure and workforce. Poor and other vulnerable people must be able to participate with dignity in society, while being protected from arbitrary, unaccountable actions by governments, multinational corporations and other forces.[49]

Although they may be primarily profit driven, when companies are embedded locally or at least nationally, there is at least some hope (often disappointed) that the common good for the people who live there would be factored into their sense of social responsibility. This becomes far more complicated under economic globalization, with transnational corporations that transcend national, political, legal and economic boundaries—and are no longer embedded in a nation's economy or culture. The usual bases for responsibility (for responding to) or accountability (answering to) no longer apply. Without some kind of restraint or accountability, they can become freewheeling in their quest for profit and growth at the expense of human beings, communities and the rest of creation. Ever greater spans of God's creation become instrumentalized, rationalized or commodified. In the process, the human values and agency to counter such are undercut or rendered voiceless. The corporations themselves become the creators and transmitters of transnational values, as primarily religions and languages were in former times.[50]

It is here where the real challenges confront communities of faith. Both transnational economic players and the churches as a global communion (a) transcend given, natural relations, (b) presuppose that human beings are historical agents, and (c) use "signs" (e.g., churches use narratives, corporations produce and use commodities) that express values and shape identities.[51]

A key difference, however is that the church should insist that the intrinsic worth of what God has created goes beyond what can be instrumentalized, commodified, or treated as a means to another end.

> We must ask: does the emergence and spread of global economic forces […] provide any means for sensing the claims of justice as basic to self-understanding and to a construal of the world? […] Any cultural force or social institution that nullifies our sense of the reality of justice and mercy is, practically speaking, atheistic and, theoretically stated, nihilistic. If that is true of our global situation, then Christians must advocate ways of containing and constraining transnational corporations. Conversely, if these economic powers do foster, or, at least, do not utterly destroy, a moral construal of the world, then Christian communities can find common cause with them and work for their transformation.[52]

Although in some parts of the world, there has been a growing movement of corporate social responsibility, compliance has been voluntary.[53] Although efforts of companies to be more socially responsible are commendable, given what has been discussed above, and the way in which sin pervades all such intentions, it is crucial that means be developed for actually holding them accountable and answerable to those many stakeholders who are affected by their policies and practices.

A possible action plan

Obviously, holding governments and large economic actors more accountable is a multi-faceted challenge, which we have only begun to explore here, especially because of how complex the challenges are in different contexts. Yet, arising out of our biblically-grounded faith, and the communion and responsibility framework set forth here, some key "benchmarks" can become the basis for addressing specific matters of accountability, in coalition with others in civil society.[54]

The following,which was developed by an LWF staff working team, draws upon what is distinctive to the LWF as a faith-based communion, with member churches, field programs, a secretariat and related organizations. Being such a communion is the basis for a globalization of solidarity. The primary stakeholders in this are member churches and field programs of the LWF, but it is intended for action with other ecumenical, interfaith and civil society

partners. It builds upon and reflects discussions generated through the LWF documents, *Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion* and *A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization* and commitments made by the LWF at its Tenth Assembly. You are encouraged to use this as a basis for strategizing as to how you and your church can be more active in transforming economic globalization.

"Confront": See and understand the realities of economic globalization

- Recognize and testify how economic globalization manifests itself in local contexts of the communion.
- Deepen the understanding of the dilemmas and contradictions economic globalization poses across the communion.
- Challenge economic globalization in light of the biblical vision of the fullness of life.

"Choose:" Life rather than death, God rather than mammon

- Challenge economic globalization from out of the heart of the Christian faith.
- Teach and preach in churches in ways that empower members to resist forces of economic globalization in their lives and world.

"Change:" Advocate for changes that will result in greater justice, inclusion, responsibility and accountability for the sake of the common good of all

- Change production, purchasing, consumption and investment practices to be more socially and environmentally responsible.
- Seek more democratic, responsible governance and effective policies that can regulate economic globalization and protect the most vulnerable.
- Challenge the ethical legitimacy of unsustainable debts of severely indebted countries, and cancel these debts.
- Implement effective means of deterring speculative movement of currencies and investments that destabilize local economies and increase inequities.
- Assure that trade agreements are negotiated that factor in human rights and benefit disadvantaged countries.

- Through relationships of the communion, challenge and hold accountable those who make economic decisions that adversely affect other parts of the world.
- Actively participate in ecumenical, interfaith and secular movements and campaigns for global economic, social, and environmental justice, as part of a globalization of solidarity.

What are or could you be doing to pursue commitments and actions such as these?

Notes

[1] See Heinrich Holze (ed.), *The Church as Communion*, *LWF Documentation 42/1997* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1997).

[2] *Proceedings of the Lutheran World Federation Assembly*, Lund, Sweden, June 30–July 6, 1947 (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1948), pp. 97ff.

[3] Constitution of the Lutheran World Federation (1990), Article III.

[4] *For the Healing of the World*, *Official Report*, *LWF Tenth Assembly,* Winnipeg, Canada, 21–31 July 2003 (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2004), p. 51.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[6] See, for example, the proceedings of a 2002 LWF consultation, *Prophetic Diakonia: For the Healing of the World* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2003).

[7] Konrad Raiser, "Spirituality of Resistance," a paper presented at the WCC Internal Encounter of Churches, Agencies and Other Partners on the World Bank and IMF, 12 September 2003, p. 7.

[8] Bernard V. Brady, *The Moral Bond of Community*: *Justice and Discourse in Christian Morality* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 1998), p. 1.

[9] Denise M. Ackerman in Carl-Henric Grenholm and Normunds Kamergrauzis (eds), *Feminist Ethics* (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 2003), p. 137.

[10] Bruce V. Birch and Larry L Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), p. 45.

[11] Stephen E. Fowl and L. Gregory Jones, *Reading in Communion: Scripture and Ethics in Christian Life* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1991), p. 156.

[12] This section is an adapted excerpt from "Preaching a Risen Christ of Resistance to 'Captive' Americans" by Karen L. Bloomquist and William R. Strehlow, in *Dialog* (Winter, 2003).

[13] Speech that serves the interest of those in power but obscures what is really going on or makes no sense.

[14] William Schweiker, *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics: In the Time of Many Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 34.

[15] Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Healing the World: Globalization and God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), p. 116

[16] Holze, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 13ff.

[17] Luther's explanation of the Third Article, in "The Large Catechism," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), p. 437.

[18] "A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization," in this publication, pp. 113ff.

[19] A phrase used at a December 2002 consultation. Much of this section draws upon discussions that occurred there, with thanks to N. Eto, A-K Hammar, A. Koranyi, C. Moe-Lobeda and V. Westhelle.

[20] Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 514–515.

[21] James Burtness, *Shaping the Future: the Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), p. 45.

[22] William H. Lazareth, *Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), p. 201.

[23] Moe-Lobeda, *op. cit* (note 15), p. 112. Much of this section is based on her work, which she articulates more fully here in her article.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[25] Schweiker referring to Max Weber, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 27.

[26] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, edited by Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 60.

[27] Albert R. Jonsen, *Responsibility in Modern Religious Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Corpus Books, 1968), p. 118.

[28] See, for example, Jorgen Lissner, *The Politics of Altruism* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1977).

[29] James M. Childs, Jr., *Greed: Economics and Ethics in Conflict* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), p. 28.

[30] Stephen G. Post, *A Theory of Agape* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell, 1991*)* p. 28.

[31] Martin Luther, "On Trade and Usury," in Helmut T. Lehmann, *Luther's Works*, vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962) p. 247.

[32] *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), p. 201.

[33] Lazareth, *op. cit* (note 22), pp. 233–234.

[34] Jonsen, *op. cit.* (note 27), p. 121.

[35] Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.* (note 26), pp. 226–227.

[36] Donald W. Shriver, Jr., "Two Cheers and Two Reservations," in David A. Krueger, *The Business Corporation and Productive Justice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), p . 110.

[37] Schweiker, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp. 37–38.

[38] *For the Healing…*, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 52.

[39] Brady, *op. cit.* (note 8), pp. 101ff.

[40] *Ibid.*, 103.

[41] Peter G. Brown, *Ethics, Economics and International Relations: Transparent Sovereignty in the Commonwealth of Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 20ff.

[42] Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," in Kolb and Wengert, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 419.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 450.

[44] Luther, *op. cit.* (note 31), p. 92.

[45] Ulrich Duchrow (ed.), *Lutheran Churches: Salt or Mirror of Society?* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1977), pp. 311ff.

[46] W. Schweiker, "Responsibility in the World of Mammon: Theology, Justice, and Transnational Corporations," in Max L. Stackhouse and Peter Paris (eds), *God and Globalization: Religion and the Powers of the Common Life* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000), p. 122.

[47] Gary Simpson, "Toward Lutheran 'Delight in the Law of the Lord': Church and State in the Context of Civil Society," in John R. Stumme and Robert Tuttle (eds), *Church and State: Lutheran Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), p. 49.

[48] See "Reclaiming the Vocation of Government," in this publication, pp. 215ff..

[49] From "A Call …," in this publication, pp. 113ff.

[50] Schweiker in Stackhouse, *op. cit.* (note 46), pp. 124f.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[53] See the discussion of the UN Global Compact in, Elisabeth Gerle and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson, "The UN Global Compact as a Web of Social Responsibility," in this publication, pp. 195ff.

[54] Those listed in "A Call…" in this volume are only a beginning. See for example the extensive study and recommendations by the International Labor Organization, "A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All" (2003).

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To encourage further responses to economic globalization, especially through the Lutheran communion, this book documents various processes and perspectives, and explores some strategic theological, ethical and practical implications of neoliberal globalization.

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