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GLOBALIZATION AND THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL MISSION

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[The author argues that the Church's social mission has always been historically, socially, and culturally contextualized and that the current context is aptly described as globalization. With the help of some social scientists, he then analyzes the recent phenomenon of globalization and draws out from it various implications for the Church's social mission today.]

AS RECENTLY AS 1979, when Karl Rahner offered his now famous theological analysis of Vatican II as the emergence of the global Church, the term "globalization" was hardly in use. It was not until the mid 1980s that it was recognized as a significant concept in academic circles.[1] The term has come into common usage in the mass media, most recently referring to the globalized economy, as experienced in the Asian economic crisis, the rapid transfer of capital across national boundaries, the relocation of manufacturing plants in places with the cheapest labor, and the manipulations of currency speculators. For theologians, our growing awareness and analysis of this phenomenon is part of the ongoing reading of the signs of the times. In the 1970s and 1980s we were increasingly occupied with the notions of culture and inculturation, realizing how different local cultures are from one another and how that affects the life of the Church and the practice of theology. But concomitant with the resurgence and revaluing of cultures long suppressed by Western colonialism or Soviet imperialism has been the phenomenon of increased global interdependence and intercultural fertilization, giving rise to something akin to a global culture. We are faced with a new situation that calls for new analysis and conceptualization. Robert Schreiter's insightful and stimulating book,

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[1] Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992) 8.

The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local (1997) has brought this to the attention of the theological community.[2]

In this article, I want to explore some of the implications of this recent phenomenon for the Church, specifically for its social mission. First, I recall that the Church has (or is) a social mission, and I argue that this mission is and always has been socially and culturally contextualized. Second, I discuss the contemporary phenomenon of globalization, its history and characteristics, and the role of religion in globalization. Finally, I suggest possible challenges and implications for our thinking and rethinking the social mission of the Church in the light of this new global context.

THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Caring for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger has been part of the Judeo-Christian tradition from the beginning. The community we call Church has taken responsibility for the poor, the marginalized, the outcasts as a direct consequence of the kingdom of God as preached by Jesus. Thus, the Church has understood salvation to pertain not only to individual "souls" but to the transformation of the social, political, and economic order, indeed to the whole cosmic order until such time as the "[t]he wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them. . . . They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:6–9). The kingdom of God is the symbol for this reign of peace, justice, and harmony among humankind, with God, and with all of creation. Preaching and witnessing to this kingdom was the mission of Jesus and it is continued by his Body, the People of God. This has come to be called the social mission of the Church.

As a consequence of this self-understanding, the early Church was concerned with the origin, accumulation, and distribution of wealth.[3] They considered material possessions to be good in themselves since they were created by God, but their superfluous accumulation and an inordinate attachment to them was evil (one cannot love God and the mammon of iniquity). They understood that God intended all wealth for the common

[2] Robert J. Schreiter, C.PP.S., *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997).

[3] Justo L. González, *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990); William J. Walsh, S.J., and John P. Langan, S.J., "Patristic Social Consciousness—The Church and the Poor," in *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change,* ed. John C. Haughey, S.J. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 113–51.

good and therefore to be shared. The private ownership of goods is a result of the fall, and if some were wealthy it was in order that they could take care of others. This was done by almsgiving, which meant not just giving away loose change but keeping for oneself only what was necessary and giving the rest to those in need.

This was in considerable contrast to the attitude toward wealth and poverty common at that time in the Roman Empire. In a society hierarchically structured according to wealth, poverty was regarded as vile, dishonored, and ugly. Wealthy Romans held the poor in contempt and considered them to be practically immoral—they had no respect for the gods, were grasping, corrupt, liars, and were the basic cause of social disorder and rebellion.[4]

Into such a society Christianity brought a social ethic of personal dignity, and an equality that transcended social status—no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female (Galatians 3:28). Indeed, the sociologist Rodney Stark has argued that this distinctive *social* ethic was one of the major factors in the spread of Christianity in the Empire.[5] Christians extended their command to love one another beyond the boundaries of their tribe or ethnic group to all who call on the name of Jesus, and beyond that to all who suffer (the Parable of the Good Samaritan). Thus, in times of persecution or of plague, Christians stood out for their self-sacrificing love in caring for the neighbor.[6] Following Christ was not merely a private or individual form of discipleship; it had public social consequences. The kingdom of God was their symbol for the ideal social order and their mission was to announce and witness to the coming, indeed, incipient presence of this kingdom. My first point, therefore, is that the Church understood itself as having a social mission from the beginning.

Contextualization

This social mission, like the Church itself, has always been conditioned by the context in which it was exercised. The attitudes of the Roman Empire toward wealth and poverty, toward slavery, toward sickness all contributed to the distinctive response of the early Church to these realities. Without tracing all of church history, one can see this contextualization most clearly in the modern period of the Church's social mission.[7]

[4] Richard Saller, "Poverty, Honor and Obligation in Imperial Rome," *Criterion* (Spring/Summer 1998) 12–20.

[5] Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997) 212.

[6] Ibid. 76–88.

[7] I have developed this point in "The Social Mission of the Church: Its Changing Context," in *The Gift of the Church,* ed. Peter Phan (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000).

When Leo XIII wrote *Rerum novarum* (1891) the question of the hour was the "labor question." The context was that of the new and rapid industrialization and urbanization of Europe in the late-19th century. This produced a society of two classes, the capitalist bourgeois entrepreneurs who owned the means of production, and the working class or urban proletariat. The pope felt compelled to address the injustices entailed in this new system. By the time his successor, Pius XI, commemorated Leo's encyclical in *Quadragesimo anno* (1931) the "question of the hour" was not so much the condition of the working class as it was the real alternative to a Christian social order posed by state socialism or communism. The issue was how to avoid the classes forming battle lines, and the Church looked back wistfully to a more corporatist form of economic organization such as the medieval guilds or associations. By this time the capitalist system had become so pervasive that it allowed the accumulation of "immense power and despotic economic dictatorship" in the hands of a few (*Quadragesimo anno* no. 105). Hence, the Church first clearly articulated the principle of subsidiarity.

After World War II and the period of decolonization, the social, political, and economic context had changed dramatically. When Pope John XXIII articulated his vision of the Church's social mission in *Mater et magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in terris* (1963), the social question was no longer confined to industrialized Europe, nor merely to issues between labor and capital nor between individuals and corporations. This was the period of the Cold War, nuclear weapons, and space exploration. The "questions of the hour" had to do with international problems posed by the discovery of nuclear energy, the lack of balance between agriculture and industry in the economy of nations, the disparity of wealth among countries, the end of colonialism and the political independence of the peoples of Asia and Africa. The outstanding characteristic of these encyclicals was their international perspective. John XXIII understood himself as the "father of all peoples" and the Church as the "mother and teacher of all nations" (*Mater et magistra* no. 158; *Pacem in terris* no. 117). Hence, he enunciated the principle of the solidarity of the human race and the need for the nations to address together such issues as the population explosion and the need for international aid.

This international and universalist perspective carried over into Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes* (1965), the most authoritative articulation of the Church's social mission to date. The context at that time, the council noted, included the social and cultural transformation wrought by modern science and technology, a more dynamic and evolutionary sense of reality, the great affluence of some industrialized nations and the lack of development in others, and the increased interdependence of humans on one another and on society, with

the result that the common good now had a universal quality and involved rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. The idea of human solidarity, of a single world community, pervades the document. The Church's social mission is in service to all humanity (*Gaudium et spes* no. 3).

The social encyclicals of Paul VI and John Paul II have continued this international perspective. Marking the 100th anniversary of *Rerum novarum,* John Paul II in *Centesimus annus* (1991) notes that now it is not the condition of the worker that is at the heart of the social question nor the issue of private property and accumulated capital; "today the decisive factor is increasingly man himself, that is, his knowledge, especially his scientific knowledge, his capacity for interrelated and compact organization as well as his ability to perceive the needs of others and satisfy them" (no. 32). Communism is no longer a viable alternative to liberal capitalism, but that does not mean that the capitalist system is an unqualified good. Now the consequences of capitalism—materialism, consumerism, continued poverty of underdeveloped nations, external debt, and ecological threats—must be addressed by the world community.

The relationship of the Church's social mission as articulated in its official documents to the changing social, political, and economic context has also occurred on the more national and regional levels.[8] The most obvious and well-known case is that of Latin America, where, at the two major meetings of CELAM at Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979), the Latin American hierarchies read the signs of the times for their continent and boldly proclaimed the social mission of the Church to be a "preferential option for the poor," to refocus the Church's efforts to address the massive poverty and dehumanization of the vast majority, to address the needs of the "non-person" rather than the "non-believers" of Western Europe. This analysis of their context awakened the rest of the Church to its complicity in the situation of the two-thirds world. Other examples of such regional or national contextualization of the Church's social mission could be cited, such as opposition to apartheid in South Africa.

From this cursory survey of the social mission of the Church in modern times I hope it is clear that this mission has changed as the social, economic, and political context has changed. There are always "new things." The signs of the times must be continually read anew.

GLOBALIZATION

Beginning with John XXIII, as has been described, the social mission of the Church assumed an international and universalist perspective. At Vat-

[8] In my study cited in n. 7 I briefly discuss the examples of Latin America, South Africa, and the U.S.

ican II the Church saw itself in service to all humanity. The perspective emphasized the increasing interdependence of humans upon one another and the interrelationships of nations and societies. Within the last ten to fifteen years, social scientists such as Immanuel Wallerstein, Roland Robertson, Anthony Giddens, and Peter Beyer have studied this situation and crystallized their reflections under the term "globalization." I use their description and analysis in order to stimulate our thinking, to provide some categories of analysis, and to help us to read the signs of the times. Theologians need to appropriate insights from other disciplines critically and not let them become normative for theological reflection.

My main argument here is that the changing context in which the Church carries out its social mission must now take account of the phenomenon of globalization. The term is most frequently applied in the economic sphere but the process involves much more than the economy; it has implications in the political, social, and cultural domains as well. There exists a growing body of literature on globalization.[9] However, here I give a synthetic overview emphasizing those aspects which might contribute to reflections on the social mission of the Church.

Descriptive Definition

A working definition of globalization might be "the extension of the effects of modernity to the entire world, and the compression of time and space, all occurring at the same time," along with "the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole."[10] Schreiter describes the effects of modernity *positively* as "increased material prosperity, better health care, expanded opportunities for formal education, an increase in personal freedom and individuality, and a liberation from many traditional constraints,"

[9] In addition to the works of Schreiter and Robertson (which include extensive bibliographies), I recommend Malcolm Waters, *Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Mike Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1990); Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1994); Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Roberstson, ed., *Global Modernities* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995); Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1994); Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995); and, on a more popular level, Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1999).

[10] This is a synthesis of Schreiter, *The New Catholicity* 8 and Robertson, *Globalization* 8. Anthony Giddens proposes a similar one: "Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (*The Consequences of Modernity* [Stanford: Stanford University, 1990] 64).

and *negatively,* as materialism, consumerism, an anomic individualism, and the relativization of values.[11] These effects are spread throughout the world by means of communication technologies, e.g. satellite television, computers, faxes, modems, and the Internet. Not only do we now have stock exchanges functioning around the world 24 hours a day, but science and medicine have the same expectations and standards across countries and cultures. Higher education seems to follow a similar pattern. These are "powerful homogenizing systems" that are reinforced by the hyperculture of consumption coming from the U.S., represented by such cultural icons as Nike, McDonald's, and Coca-Cola. These are not totally homogenizing, however, since local cultures reinterpret and modify them in a variety of ways.

The same technological developments that have extended modernity around the globe have also compressed our sense of time and space. Many people experience events half a world away simultaneously; they can be in almost instant communication by e-mail with persons almost anywhere; people fly to Europe or Asia for a weekend meeting or social event; and citizens of one country live and work in another (the European Union is perhaps the most obvious example). Mass migrations of peoples for economic betterment and massive tourism are other expressions of this compression of space.

The "intensification of consciousness" is the subjective side of the globalization process. It applies both to individuals and to collectivities. We are conscious of other societies beyond our national territorial boundaries and may identify with and have allegiance to groups around the globe—for instance, protests by Serb nationals in the capitals of the NATO countries during the bombing of Yugoslavia, or the solidarity of feminists across national boundaries. We are aware of ourselves as part of humanity as a whole whose very existence is threatened by the possibility of a nuclear holocaust or environmental disaster originating in a distant land, such as Bhopal or Chernobyl. Individual and collective identity is also called into question by the impact of global culture, especially on recently created nation-states who lack a stable national identity. Global consciousness is also creating a small but influential class of cosmopolitan professional, corporate elite who have more in common with their counterparts in other "global cities" than with the low-wage workers of the same city.[12] Robertson has noted that "[i]n an increasingly globalized world there is a heightening of civilizational, societal, ethnic, regional and, indeed individual,

[11] Schreiter, *The New Catholicity* 9.

[12] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1991) esp. chap. 9; see also *Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (New York: New Press, 1998) chap. 7.

self-consciousness. There are constraints on social entities to locate themselves within world history and the global future. Yet globalization in and of itself also involves the diffusion of the *expectation* of such identity declarations."[13] Thus in describing the contemporary phenomenon of globalization the subjective aspect is as important as the objective one.

Sources and Historical Development

Globalization as just briefly described is considered by most authors to be a relatively recent phenomenon: "there can be no denying that the world is much more singular than it was as recently as, say, the 1950s."[14] But authors do not agree about its historical origins or the factors contributing to its development. Immanuel Wallerstein, in a basically Marxist analysis of the world-system, sees it as economic in origin, beginning with the expansion of commerce and the rise of capitalist agriculture in Europe between 1450 and 1640,[15] followed by the mercantilist system in the next century and a half. Capital accumulated in the hands of merchants in towns and cities who then established trade with regions well beyond their territories.[16] These territories became part of a world-economy though not part of a single political domain. In fact, Wallerstein argues that this European world economy "created its own geographical divisions: core, periphery, and semiperiphery" depending on their position in the world division of labor, the core areas being where capital is concentrated, the periphery supplying raw materials and cheap labor, and semiperiphery areas sharing some characteristics of each of the others. (This is basically the dependency theory expounded in the 1960s.) This world economy conditioned the way political units were formed, and nation-states are a dependent function of the world economy. Thus, for Wallerstein, the modern world-system *is* the capitalist world economy.

Anthony Giddens understands globalization to be a direct consequence of the tendencies inherent in modernity: the separation of time and space, the development of disembedding mechanisms, and the reflexive appropriation of knowledge.[17] The key to the separation of time and space was the invention of the mechanical clock and its widespread diffusion so that time could be reckoned without reference to place (sunrise, midday, sun-

[13] Robertson, *Globalization* 27. [14] Ibid. 57.

[15] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic, 1974) 68, 127–29, and passim; see also his *The Modern World System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750* (New York: Academic, 1980).

[16] Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage, 1994) 16–19.

[17] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* 16–45.

set), and the ability to represent space without reference to a particular place (an *axis mundi*) exemplified in charting of the globe and universal maps. By "disembedding" Giddens means "the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" by such mechanisms as symbolic tokens as money and by "expert systems" of knowledge on which we rely in our everyday lives such as architecture or medicine. By "the reflexive appropriation of knowledge" he means that "modern life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices"; the sociological study of the process of globalization is a classic example. He summarizes in another place: "Globalization concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations 'at distance' with local contextualities. We should grasp the global spread of modernity in terms of an ongoing relation between distanciation and the chronic mutability of local circumstances and local engagements. Like each of the other processes mentioned above, globalization has to be understood as a dialectical phenomenon, in which events at one pole of a distanciated relation often produce divergent or even contrary occurrences at another. The *dialectic of the local and global* is a basic emphasis of the arguments employed in this book."[18]

While appreciative of Wallerstein's contribution to the discussion, Giddens argues that "[n]ation-states, and the nation-state system, cannot be explained in terms of the rise of capitalistic enterprise, however convergent the interest of states and capitalistic prosperity have sometimes been."[19] Rather, he sees the world capitalist economy as only one of four dimensions of globalization, the others being the nation-state system, the world military order, and the international division of labor.[20] Granted the immense economic power of transnational corporations, they still do not control territory or the means of violence; industrial corporations are not military organizations.[21] Nation-states are the principal "actors" within the global political order, but corporations are the dominant agents within the world economy. By the "world military order" Giddens means the connec-

[18] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1991) 21–22; emphasis in the text.

[19] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* 62.

[20] Ibid. 70–71.

[21] Thomas L. Friedman recently wrote: "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps" (Friedman, "A Manifesto for the Fast World," *New York Times Magazine,* March 28, 1999, 96).

tions between the industrialization of war, the flow of weaponry and techniques of military organization from some parts of the world to others, the system of military alliances, and, of course, world wars. The fourth dimension of globalization Giddens sees as industrial development and the "expansion of global interdependence in the division of labor since the Second World War," and the "worldwide diffusion of machine technologies."[22] Underlying each of these four institutional dimensions of globalization is cultural globalization brought about by the technologies of communication, though he does not elaborate on this.

Roland Robertson, one of the most thoughtful and insightful theorists of globalization, is critical of both Wallerstein and Giddens for not being sufficiently attentive to the cultural factors in globalization. He sees its development as multidimensional and involving five phases:[23] (1) the germinal phase, in Europe from 1400 to 1750, including the incipient growth of national communities and the downplaying of the medieval "transnational" system, expanding scope of the Catholic Church, heliocentric theory, spread of Gregorian calendar; (2) the incipient phase, again mainly in Europe from 1750 to 1875, including idea of the homogeneous, unitary state, legalizing international relations and regulations, individuals as citizens, and international exhibitions, issue of admission of non-European societies to "international" society; (3) the take-off phase, from 1875 to 1925, giving rise to the four reference points which become key to Robertson's analysis: national societies, generic individuals, a single "international society," and a conception of humankind; globalization of immigration restrictions, increase in speed and forms of global communication, ecumenical movement, global competitions, e.g. Olympics and Nobel prizes, First World War; (4) the struggle-for-hegemony phase, from 1925 to 1969, including establishment first of League of Nations and then the United Nations, the principle of national independence, conflicting conceptions of modernity (Allies vs. the Axis), the Second World War and the Cold War, questions about prospects for humanity posed by Holocaust and atomic bomb, crystallization of the Third World; and (5) the uncertainty phase, late 1960s to the present, including heightened global consciousness, moon landing and picture of earth from space, end of Cold War and bi-polar world, global institutions and movements and means of communication greatly increase, problems of multiculturality and polyethnicity, civil rights become a global issue, resurgence of Islam, global environmental problems recognized, and Earth Summit.[24]

In summary, Robertson's main point "is that there is a general autonomy and 'logic' to the globalization process, which operates in *relative* indepen-

[22] Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* 76.
[23] Robertson, *Globalization* 57–59. [24] Ibid. 58–59.

dence of strictly societal and other more conventionally studied sociocultural processes. The global system is not simply an outcome of processes of basically intra-societal origin or even a development of the interstate system. . . . [It is] much more complex than that."[25]

Analysis and Consequences

If the process of globalization refers to more than the world capitalist economy, and more than the nation-state system, if it is complex and multidimensional, how are we to understand it and what are its consequences? We have seen that Giddens, though he began with reflections on the rise of the nation-state and its monopoly of the means of violence,[26] enlarged his analysis to include the other institutions of modernity—the world capitalist economy, the world military order, and the international division of labor—as the four dimensions of globalization. We have briefly described his understanding of these above.

Robertson's analysis of the present process of globalization involves the dynamic interaction of four components, reference points, or focal points (he uses these terms interchangeably) which have gradually taken on sharper form since the "take-off phase": nationally constituted societies, the international system of societies, individuals, and humankind. It also refers to cultural and subjective matters. He has developed this "global field" and some of its consequences more fully than Giddens. I will highlight only a few aspects.

First, he argues that each of the components has a relative autonomy but that each is also constrained by the other three, and overemphasis on one at the expense of the others is a form of "fundamentalism." He urges the moral acceptance of complexity.[27] Second, his perspective on globalization has a cultural focus, meaning that, important as economic matters and transnational relations are, they are "considerably subject to cultural contingencies and cultural coding," that "cultural factors enter into the domain of *Realpolitik* much more than has been conceded by many," and that "we are in a period of globewide *cultural* politics."[28] He contends that "cultural pluralism is itself a constitutive feature of the contemporary global circumstance and that conceptions of the world-system, including symbolic responses to an interpretation of globalization, are themselves important factors in determining the trajectories of that very process."[29] He reminds us that cultures are dynamic and need to be understood as such.

[25] Ibid. 60.
[26] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985).
[27] Robertson, *Globalization* 28. [28] Ibid. 4–5.
[29] Ibid. 61.

Third, in his model, globalization entails processes of relativization—of societies, of self-identities, of citizenship, and of societal reference, but also of cultures, doctrines, and ideologies. By using the term "relativization" he means "to indicate the ways in which, as globalization proceeds, challenges are increasingly presented to the stability of particular perspectives on, and collective and individual participation in, the overall globalization process." This is so because globalization involves the comparative interaction of different forms of life.[30] Thus, for example, he says that the more radical Islamic movement can be understood as a form of protest and resistance against the "conception of the world as a series of culturally equal, relativized, entities or ways of life" of which the Islamic is only one.[31]

One of Robertson's most helpful insights is that, while "the trends towards the unicity of the world are, when all is said and done, inexorable,"[32] this does not entail the disappearance of the local or the homogenization of the particular. Indeed, the relationship between the universal and the particular is central to our understanding of the globalization process. He contends that in the late-20th century we are engaged in "a massive, twofold process involving *the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism.*"[33] Thus particularism and universalism are not merely simultaneous; they directly interpenetrate. For example, the consumerist global capitalism of our time is "wrapped into" the connection between the universalistic supply and particularistic demand in such a way that a worldwide McDonald's tailors its menu offerings to suit the local culture, a practice called micromarketing. He suggests that Japan is an outstanding example of the particularization of the universal because of "its very long and successful history of selective incorporation and syncretization of ideas from other cultures in such a way as to particularize the universal and, so to say, return the product of that process to the world as a uniquely Japanese contribution to the universal."[34] This can be seen as an example of the universalization of the particular, namely that Japan offers a "unique geocultural or geomoral contribution(s) to world history."[35] The fast-food enterprise, that particularly American cultural artifact, has been universalized. It is not a question of one or the other. Globalization involves the simultaneity of the universal and the particular as expressed in the term *glocalize,* from the Japanese word *dochakuka,* meaning roughly "global localization" in reference to micromarketing. Globalization itself produces variety and diversity, not homogeneity.

Finally, Robertson stresses what many others do not, that is, the inten-

[30] Ibid. 27–29, 87.
[31] Ibid. 102.
[32] Ibid. 26.
[33] Ibid. 100.
[34] Ibid. 102.
[35] Ibid. 130.

sification-of-consciousness aspect of globalization. "When we speak of contemporary globalization we are very much concerned with matters of consciousness, partly because that notion carries reflexive connotations. Globalization does not simply refer to the objectiveness of increasing interconnectedness. It also refers to cultural and subjective matters. In very simple terms, we are thus talking about issues surrounding the idea of the world being 'for-itself.' The world is not literally 'for-itself' but the *problem* of being 'for-itself' has become increasingly significant ... global consciousness has partly to do with the world as an imagined community."[36] How we think about the world, ourselves, our countries, and the relationships between them is part of what we mean by globalization. This is why globalization is so important for how we think about the Church and its social mission.

These various theorists of globalization intend their analyses to be value-neutral, and they are not necessarily advocating it. For them, it is just a fact, not necessarily a "nice thing in and of itself."[37] It entails the relativization of individual and collective identities, which is threatening and prompts various modes of resistance. It disrupts once established patterns of political and economic relations. It engenders cultural conflict by juxtaposing different forms of life. In short, globalization poses problems and challenges to nations, to the international order, to individuals, and to humankind.

Globalization and Religion

Thus far in my survey of the development and analysis of the components of globalization, there has been little if any mention of religion, institutional or otherwise. Wallerstein regards all cultural factors, including religion, as epiphenomena or dependent functions of the economic domain.[38] Giddens does not deal with religion as a factor in his discussion of globalization, but elsewhere recognizes that there has been a "resurgence" of religion in late or radicalized modernity.[39] Secularization "does not seem to result in the complete disappearance of religious thought and activity.... Yet most of the situations of modern social life are manifestly incompatible with religion as a pervasive influence upon day-to-day life. Religious cosmology is supplanted by reflexively organised knowledge, governed by empirical observation and logical thought, and focused upon material technology and socially applied codes."[40] Thus, for Giddens, religion would not seem to be a major player in the globalization process.

[36] Ibid. 183. [37] Ibid. 6.
[38] See Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* 21.
[39] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* 195, 207.
[40] Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* 109.

For Robertson, on the other hand, religion is a critical ingredient in the globalization process, and this in several ways.[41] Religion is included in the cultural focus which Robertson adopts in his analysis of globalization. It is one expression of particularisms that are a central aspect of globalization. As such it contributes to the way in which nation-states participate in the global situation. He cites the example of Japanese religion as a specific example of how religion contributes to Japan's view of world order and its form of global involvement.[42] His more general concern is to shift "attention away from questions of whether societies or regions are becoming less or more religious, toward interest in the characteristics and consequences of an increasingly globalized world."[43] He wants to get away from sociology's societal frame of reference and focus on how we think about the world as a community of human beings, a "humankind conception of the world," which, he acknowledges, has a "long history in theological and metaphysical thinking."[44] It is an image of world order that stresses humankind as the pivotal ingredient of the world as a whole. He explicitly cites the Roman Catholic Church, "the oldest significant globe-oriented organization," as one that has "recently become a particularly effective globe-oriented and politically influential actor across most of the world, claiming mankind to be its major concern."[45] He sees religion as crucial for rethinking the notion of community in a globalized world. Hence, for Robertson, religion is a critical factor not only for individual identity threatened by globalization but also for humankind as a global community.

Perhaps the most thorough and systematic treatment of religion and globalization has been articulated by Peter Beyer of the University of Toronto.[46] Recognizing that rapid change is characteristic of the contemporary situation and that "the global system corrodes inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities," he argues that "religion plays one of its significant roles in the development, elaboration, and problematization of the global system."[47] He explicitly addresses the question (which, with a significant qualification, is the one I am addressing here): "What are the abstract possibilities in today's world for religion . . . to be a determinative force in social structures and processes beyond the restricted sphere of voluntary and individual belief and practice?"[48] He is interested in the

[41] Robertson, *Globalization* 87. [42] Ibid. 85–96.

[43] Roland Robertson, "Religion and the Global Field," *Social Compass* 41 (1994) 121–35, at 133.

[44] Ibid. 129; see also *Globalization* 79–81.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization.*

[47] Ibid. 3. [48] Ibid. 12.

"public influence" of religion, which is another way of talking about the social mission of the Church.

Influenced by Niklas Luhmann, Beyer defines religion in general as "a type of communication based on the immanent/transcendent polarity, which functions to lend meaning to the root indeterminability of all meaningful human communication, and which offers ways of overcoming or at least managing this indeterminability and its consequences."[49] "Historically, there has been a close relation between group culture and religion," and just as particular cultures are faced with a different context, so is religion. But religion is not only cultural; it is also (at least potentially) systemic, and, like other systems of communication such as the political, legal, economic, or artistic, it can act as a subsystem of modern global society. "Religion ... is a social sphere that manifests both the sociocultural particular and the global universal."[50] The analysis of religion, therefore, "must proceed along a double track."

To do this Beyer uses Luhmann's distinction between how a subsystem relates to society as a whole (function) and how it relates to other social systems, especially other subsystems such as economics, politics, science, and technology (performance).[51] "[F]unction refers to 'pure' religious communication, variously called the aspect of devotion and worship, the cure of souls, the search for enlightenment or salvation. Function is the pure, 'sacred' communication involving the transcendent and the aspect that religious institutions claim for themselves, the basis of their autonomy in modern society. Religious performance, by contrast, occurs when religion is 'applied' to problems generated by other systems but not solved there, or simply not addressed elsewhere. Examples of such problems are economic poverty, political oppression, familial estrangement, environmental degradation, or personal identity. Through performance relations, religion establishes its importance for the 'profane' aspects of life. . . ."[52] Although I have doubts about the helpfulness of his terminology, the distinction allows us to name the tension that exists in religions between the purely religious activities and its mundane consequences for everyday life. Historically, some institutions have tried to separate the two but, as Beyer points out, "function and performance are also inseparable and mutually reinforcing." The distinction should not become a disjunction. He concludes that in the modern world the functional problem of religion is actually a performance

[49] Ibid. 6.

[50] Ibid. 67.

[51] Ibid. 80–81.

[52] Ibid. 80. Beyer cites Niklas Luhmann, *Funktion der Religion* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977) 54–55; see also N. Luhmann, *The Differentiation of Society,* trans. Stephen Holmes and Charles Larmore (New York: Columbia University, 1982) 238–42.

problem, and the "solution lies in finding effective religious 'applications', not in more religious commitment and practice."[53]

In this new context, Beyer sees two possible ways for religion to exert public influence in a global society. The first he calls the "liberal option" (again the terminology may be more confusing than helpful). Adherents of this position are ecumenical, tolerant, and religiously pluralistic. The central theological problem with this option is that "it makes few really *religious* demands: it conveys little specifically religious information that would make a difference in how people choose, or that people could not get from non-religious sources."[54] In terms of function, the emphasis is on helping services, celebration of important life passages, and the "cure of souls." The liberal option has "difficulty in specifying both the benefits and the requirements of religion in functional or 'pure' form. This indeterminacy has led them to a reliance on performance relations to reestablish the importance of religion. . . ." Beyer suggests such issues as political oppression or gay liberation are stressed, which are not really religious problems at all. The best example of this option, he contends, is Latin American liberation theology, which he explores in some depth.[55] "They are concerned with justice and peace . . . those marginalized from the benefits of modern institutions," and do not present one particular group culture and its religion as being closer to the divine will than others.[56] Thus the liberation theologians emphasize religious performance where religious belief and practice contribute to the alleviation of social ills. He concludes: "Essentially, liberation theologians respond to the privatization of religion by seeking a revitalization of the religious function in religious performances, particularly in the political realm."[57]

Beyer sees the "conservative option (the reassertion of the tradition in spite of modernity) . . . is making religion most visible in today's world. It is a vital aspect of globalization and not a negation of it."[58] Religion reasserts the traditional view of transcendence but "finds itself in conflict with the dominant trends in global social structure." These trends are part of the problem to which religion has the answer. It emphasizes individual, personal holism in the face of differentiated social structures. "It concentrates on religious function and tends toward privatization." Performance, in the conservative option, frequently takes the form of political mobilization, as in the New Christian Right in the U.S. or the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Beyer offers these, along with religious Zionism in Israel, as case studies.

This mobilization is possible because the "conservative option, grounded as it is in traditional communally oriented societies, offers distinct advan-

[53] Ibid. 80.
[54] Ibid. 86–90.
[55] Ibid. chap. 6.
[56] Ibid. 88.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid. 90.

tages. Its solution to the problem of transcendence allows an approximate dichotomization of the world into the religiously pure and impure, into us and them. Such a clear religious message can . . . lead to successful mobilization of entire populations."[59] Hence, in contrast to the liberal option, the conservative one thinks that religious norms should be enshrined in legislation (e.g. the official adoption of *Sharia* or a constitutional amendment) or tries "to gain control over a limited territory dominated by the particular culture and then control pluralism within it," as with Sikh extremists in Punjab or the neo-orthodox camp in Israel. Such conservative religious movements "want to solve overall societal problems by giving the religious system and its values first place among the various functional spheres."[60] Beyer believes that this might stem the tide of the consequences of globalization for some time but that "it does not negate the fundamental structure of global society."

In Beyer's analysis, the "modern and global context carries negative implications for religion as a mode of communication, but also new potential," for the dominant subsystems leave vast areas of social life undetermined and create problems they do not solve, everything from personal or group identity or ecological threats to increasing disparities in wealth and power.[61] These "residual matters" are being addressed today by religiously based social movements ("performance-oriented religio-social movements"), examples of which were mentioned above and are dealt with at length in the second part of Beyer's book. Beyer sees these as constituting "distinct possibilities for bridging the gap between privatized religious function and publicly influential religious performance."[62] A similar view was put forth a few years ago by Robert Wuthnow, referring to the growth of paradenominational or "special purpose groups" on the North American religious scene. There are now about 800 such groups nationally incorporated in the U.S., such as the Religious Roundtable, the National Federation for Decency, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Christian Business Mens' Committee, and the Christian Legal Society. Wuthnow concludes that "these organizations may be the ones that increasingly define the public role of American religion. Rather than religion's weight being felt through the pressure of denominations, it may be exercised through the more focused efforts of the hundreds of special purpose groups now in operation."[63]

[59] Ibid. 92.
[60] Ibid. 93.
[61] Ibid. 105.
[62] Ibid. 107.
[63] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1988) chap. 6, esp. 121 for summary statement.

THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL MISSION IN ITS GLOBAL CONTEXT

My question here is not whether or how religion in general can exercise any form of public influence in the abstract.[64] My question more concretely is: How is the social mission of the Christian community (even more specifically, its Roman Catholic form) affected by the phenomenon of globalization? As theologians trying to read the signs of the times, we must agree, I think, that globalization is an accurate description of our situation, with both positive and negative ethical or moral implications. In his recent postsynodal apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America,* John Paul II, summarizing the views of the members of the Synod of America, wrote:

> The ethical implications [of globalization] can be positive or negative. There is an economic globalization which brings some positive consequences such as efficiency and increased production and which, with the development of economic links between the different countries, can help to bring greater unity among peoples and make possible a better service to the human family. However, if globalization is ruled merely by the laws of the market applied to suit the powerful, the consequences cannot but be negative. These are, for example, the absolutizing of the economy, unemployment, the reduction and deterioration of public services, the destruction of the environment and natural resources, the growing distance between rich and poor, unfair competition which puts the poor nations in a situation of ever increasing inferiority.[65]

The pope describes a much more complex context than the one that the Church was facing when Leo XIII wrote *Rerum novarum.* That does not excuse Christians from their responsibility for the "neighbor," now globally understood, or from the pursuit of the kingdom of God in today's world, however compressed the space-time context. We have not experienced the process of globalization long enough to foresee all of its ramifications for the exercise of the Church's social mission, but I want to suggest some possibilities.

In order to provide a framework for thinking about what issues the social mission of the Church should address in this context and how this can be done, I will conflate some of the dimensions of Giddens's analysis (nation-state system, world capitalist economy, world military order, and international division of labor) and those of Robertson (nationally constituted societies, international system of societies, individuals, and humankind) and then add some headings of my own.

[64] A recent social science study has made the case persuasively that we are witnessing the "deprivatization" of religion in the modern world; see José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994).

[65] John Paul II, Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in America, Origins* 28 (February 4, 1999) 565–92, no. 33.

Nation-States

If there is one thing that the process of globalization has made dramatically clear it is how the role and functions of nation-states have changed in this new context. Although I think Giddens is correct is arguing that nation-states still generally control territory and the means of violence, they have lost most of their regulatory control over key sectors of the economic subsystem, such as transnational corporations, prices of raw materials, the flow of capital, the flow of economic information, or even the value of their own currencies. The declining significance of territorial borders has led some to suggest that the nation-state would wither away or diminish in importance. But such astute analysts of globalization as Saskia Sassen and Thomas L. Friedman both argue that a global economy is still based in strategic geographic sites and that the quality of the legal system, financial system, and economic management matters more, not less, in the new global system; "the state remains as the ultimate guarantor of the 'rights' of global capital, that is, the protection of contracts and property rights."[66] Sassen has suggested that national sovereignty is not being eroded but transformed. She has also pointed out that there are "global cities" such as London, New York, and Tokyo, in which exist concentrations of resources necessary for the global economy to operate.[67] She argues that "this is also a space economy which reveals the need for strategic sites with vast concentrations of resources and infrastructure, sites that are situated in national territories and are far less mobile than much of the general commentary on the global economy suggests. This signals possibilities for governance and a role for nation-states not typically foreseen in propositions about the declining significance of the state in the global economy."[68] Having noted these qualifications, however, I think it is still true that globalization has dramatically increased the "transnational flow of commodities, people, images and information which are bypassing the boundaries of nation-states."[69] The nation-state has a different and more limited role in the new global economy than it had in the 19th and early-20th centuries.

Hence the nation-state may not be the primary addressee of the

[66] Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* 197; see also her *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University, 1996) esp. chap. 1, 25–30; Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1999) 134 and passim.

[67] Sassen, *The Global City.*

[68] Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* 196.

[69] Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1995) chap. 8, "Travel, Migration and Images of Social Life," esp. 154.

Church's social mission as it was at that time. Nation-states, for example, may not be able to do much to alleviate the exploitation of workers within their borders when transnational corporations will merely move the factory across the border. The North American Free Trade Agreement with its attendant protocols has not been able to alleviate the exploitation of workers in the maquiladoras of American companies on the Mexican side of the border, and the Mexican government is unwilling to risk losing the jobs which the factories provide. The Church may have to foster new transnational organizations and structures to deal with the forms of injustice promoted by a globalized economy.

Second, the Church has long maintained the distinction between state and civil society, arguing against totalitarianism, or a state that controls all aspects of human life. In many of the emerging nation-states the Church can and should help build up civil societies—those intermediary organizations and associations among people which are independent of the state. For example, the social mission of the Church might take the form of organizing something like labor schools to train labor leaders in Nigeria or Indonesia as it did in Europe and the U.S. in the early-20th century. In the case of Latin America, both Robert Schreiter and José Comblin have suggested that building up such intermediary organizations may be what is needed now. Schreiter has written that "this is not a time for grand visions. One should concentrate instead upon building up the intermediate structures of society, strengthening neighborhoods, urban zones, trade unions, and political parties. Preoccupation with the political moves to the civil as the means of transformation of society. Comblin stresses especially work with youth."[70] It is also true, however, that in a number of developing countries the national state (frequently still unstable itself) impedes the development of intermediary associations of civil society. The fostering of democratic governments may be a necessary precondition for the growth of civil society. Friedman, stressing that democracy is a process and not an event, argues that "[i]t is important that .. the ever-widening network of nongovernmental organizations [including the churches] that monitor and promote human rights support democratization initiatives in emerging markets. It is important that the globalization of information is constantly informing more and more people about how others live."[71] Thus it would seem that the Church needs to carry out its social mission by fostering both intermediary associations of civil societies and democratic forms of government in those emerging nation-states in Africa and Asia where the

[70] Schreiter, *The New Catholicity* 108; and José Comblin, *Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998) 203–17.
[71] Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* 144.

relationship between civil society and the state differs from that of the West.

International System of Societies

These very limitations on nation-states argue for strengthening international organizations. The Church should support strengthening the United Nations so that it be given some form of police power that is not subject to veto by individual nation-states. The principle of noninterference in sovereign nation-states, already modified in practice, should be modified legally to enable the United Nations to protect minority populations from exploitation and oppression, as the atrocities in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia make clear. The Church should support and collaborate with other international organizations to monitor violations of human rights as well as ecological problems such as global warming and deforestation. The Church can also carry out its social mission on regional levels by fostering cooperation between churches in those areas. The recent synods on Africa, America, and Asia are steps in the right direction, but these synods, in addition to drastically overhauling their procedures, should focus much more on specific problems with the assistance of lay experts rather than produce a laundry list of issues. Thus the social mission of the Church needs to be "glocalized."

World-Capitalist Economy, Global Division of Labor, and World-Military Order

These dimensions in Giddens's analysis have been dealt with by the Church in the years since John XXIII, Paul VI, and Vatican II. However, the situation was dramatically altered with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of communism/socialism in Eastern Europe. Pope John Paul II made it clear in *Centesimus annus* (no. 42) that the neo-liberal capitalism now regnant is not without its own forms of injustice, and he noted the negative consequences of a form of globalization ruled solely by the market. Neo-liberal capitalism, although its implementation varies from region to region, does seem to lead to greater inequality in the distribution of wealth, to a certain amount of permanent unemployment or underemployment, to the "casualization" of labor, that is, an increase of part-time and unprotected jobs. Within the industrialized countries inequalities between the haves and the have-nots have increased in the last two decades because of the process of globalization.[72] Even more serious has been the widening gap between rich and poor nations. A recent report of the United Nations Development Program on the spread of the internet

[72] Ibid. 248–50.

and computer technology as well as the impact of globalization "warns that the glaring, growing inequalities in the distribution of wealth pose a 'dangerous polarization' between rich and poor countries."[73] The Harvard economist Dani Rodrik reports that, despite high growth rates since the mid 1990s, "[t]here are at least 10 countries in the region of Africa where GDP per capita is lower now than in 1960."[74] The U.N. report also notes that the U.S. has more computers than the rest of the world combined and that America and the other rich, industrialized nations hold 97 percent of all worldwide patents.

This growing gap between the rich nations of the North and the poorer ones, especially in Africa and Asia, raises the question of how the Church's preferential option for the poor can be implemented in a globalized economy. Clearly this commitment must be carried out with regard not only to individuals but to whole countries and regions of the world. It must address both the global structures that promote poverty and the rules of globalization that make it work for all people rather than for corporate profit.[75] The Church cannot provide specific solutions to these problems, but it can pressure the rich countries, as represented, e.g., by the G-Seven, to listen not only to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank but to the poorer countries themselves in creating new structures.

The Roman Catholic Church and leaders of other churches have been calling for a Jubilee Year in 2000 and the abrogation, in all or in part, of the external debt for the poorer countries of the Southern hemisphere.[76] The G-Seven nations, after intensive lobbying by humanitarian and religious groups including Roman Catholic bishops, did commit themselves to some degree of third-world debt remission at their spring 1999 meeting in Cologne. I have already mentioned the inability of nation-states to deal with many of these issues by themselves and the need for new international structures. How to do this requires us to turn to the two components which Robertson includes and Giddens omits, namely humankind and individuals.

Humankind

Robertson's inclusion of the subjective aspect of globalization, the consciousness of globality, is very pertinent to the Church's social mission. The

[73] As reported in the *New York Times* 13 July 1999, A 8.

[74] Dani Rodrik, *The New Global Economy and Developing Countries: Making Openness Work* (Washington: Overseas Development Council, 1999) 105, citing World Bank data. Rodrik presents a balanced view of the benefits and perils of economic globalization and suggests that developing countries must themselves adopt policies that will enable them to benefit from a more open world economy. Globalization by itself will not guarantee economic growth.

[75] Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America* nos. 55–56.

[76] Ibid. nos. 22, 55.

Church has been espousing the principle of solidarity at least since the time of John XXIII, but an increasing awareness of the unity and dignity of all humankind will be necessary if some of the suggestions for international responsibility and cooperation already mentioned are to be carried out. With the technological developments in communications, globalization makes the awareness of human solidarity more possible than ever before. The media are definitely, although not deliberately, contributing to such increasing consciousness. People in very different parts of the globe cannot help but identify and sympathize with victims of famine, flood, earthquake, or forced migration shown nightly on television. Historically the Church has raised the consciousness of human solidarity through its teaching and witnessing, but it needs to get beyond consciousness-raising to responsible action and devising structures to accomplish that. The Roman Catholic Church, with its international structures is in a better position to do this than many other denominations. National and regional episcopal conferences and synods could be one effective means in this endeavor. International religious orders are another.

Individuals

Again, I think Robertson is correct to include individuals as one of his four reference points or components in the process of globalization. As individuals we are all affected by the conscious awareness of globality, even if we resist it. The consciousness of human solidarity has to occur in individuals, not in some abstract "humanity as such." Conversion toward responsibility for the neighbor takes place in individuals, as does the sin of irresponsibility.[77] Thus, in order to be effective, the Church's social mission must be directed to individuals. This has historically been done by teaching and preaching. Unfortunately, this seems not to have been very effective. The authors of encyclicals, pastoral letters, and even conciliar and synodal statements write in a style seemingly calculated not to communicate. If the Church wants its social mission to be taken seriously and to be efficacious, the manner of communication has to change dramatically.

Another contribution of both Giddens and Roberston is to call attention to the place of agency (human individuals as conscious actors) in social change. Social structures are the products of human activity and are maintained or not by the ongoing outpouring of the values and commitments of individuals. Globalization can make social transformation seem like an impossible task and breed a sense of hopelessness and helplessness, but even in the terribly complex global context individuals can and do make a difference. One of the main functions of the Church's social mission is to keep reminding us of that utopian vision we call the kingdom of God and the hope it engenders. We are a community of hope and resistance.

[77] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Bloomington, Ind.: Liguori, 1994) no. 1888.

Universalism and Particularism

Perhaps one of Robertson's most stimulating insights is that concerning the universalizing of the particular, the particularizing of the universal, and their mutual interpenetration. In the case of the Church (and of theology) the attention to the diversity and plurality of cultures spurred by Vatican II has helped us focus on the particular and thus on the need for inculturation. But we have realized how porous particular cultures are, no matter how seemingly isolated geographically, e.g. the islands in Micronesia or Oceania. The forces of globalization inevitably impact on each of these cultures. From its inception the Christian community has lived with tension between the particular and the universal. For the Church to carry out its social mission, then, it must simultaneously affirm the universal principles of human solidarity and subsidiarity while adapting them to particular cultural contexts.

At the same time, we can take a principle or insight originating in a particular situation, such as the preferential option for the poor, and universalize it, modifying it in the process. Schreiter speaks of such movements as "global theological flows."[78] These are "[t]heological discourses that, while not uniform or systemic, represent a series of linked, mutually intelligible discourses that address the contradictions or failures of global systems."[79] They arise out of and are committed to specific cultural and social settings, yet they are intelligible and evoke responses in other cultural and social settings. Schreiter suggests four such global theological flows: liberation, feminism, ecology, and human rights. Thus, the liberation theology that originated in Latin America has found resonances in Africa, the Philippines, and Korea, though modified somewhat in each case. The Church's social mission need not and cannot be so specific as to be limited to one particular social or cultural context, nor so universal as to remain an abstraction. It needs to be carried out, as Schreiter says, "between the global and the local."

Culture

We have seen that the globalization process is not just a matter of the dynamics of the world-capitalist economy or of political interdependence and interaction but involves issues which are basically cultural in nature. Again, Robertson says that no matter how much "national self-interest may enter into interactions of nations, there are still crucial issues of a basically cultural nature which structure and shape most relations, from the

[78] Schreiter, *The New Catholicity* 15–20. He cites Peter Beyer's concept of "antisystemic global movements," in *Religion and Globalization* 96–110.
[79] Ibid. 16.

hostile to the friendly, between nationally organized societies.... [P]oly-ethnicity and multiculturality have become increasingly significant internal and external constraints on foreign policy formation."[80] Most of the local and regional conflicts, for example, in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, India, and Pakistan, are not just about territory or natural resources but about culture. We are experiencing globewide cultural politics. The Church's social mission must address cultures both to support the best contributions of diverse cultures and to critique them in the light of the gospel. Given its history of using Western European culture as the bearer of Christianity in its missionary activity, the Church must learn to listen to non-European cultures and learn from them before engaging in any critique. The Asian, African, and Latin American churches will have to take the lead in this.

We are accustomed to think of particular cultures as tied to particular national or subnational societies. But globalization analysis suggests the formation of something like a global culture. Robertson argues that there is something akin to a global culture, not merely the Westernization of cultures. He suggests that the very "discourse of globality" or "globe talk" is a vital component in the building of such a culture. He notes that "[c]ommitment to the idea of the culturally cohesive national society has blinded us to the various ways in which the world as a whole has been increasingly 'organized' around sets of shifting definitions of the global circumstance. It would not be too much to say that the idea of global culture is just as meaningful as the idea of national-societal, or local, culture."[81]

It is important to remember that globalization is not a one-way street; it is not just Americanization or Westernization. The global cultural flows do not always begin in the Western industrialized countries. Friedman, quoting Chandra Muzaffar, president of a Malaysian human rights organization called International Movement for a Just World, has observed that: "As a result of globalization, there are elements of culture from the dominated peoples that are now penetrating the north. The favorite food of Brits eating out is not fish and chips today, but curry. It is no longer even exotic for them. But I am not just talking about curry. Even at the level of ideas there is a certain degree of interest in different religions now. So while you have this dominant force [Americanization], you also have a subordinate flow the other way."[82] Thus, if a global culture does emerge, it will be the result of an interpenetration of the local and the universal.

There is a sense in which our concern as theologians with globalization is a continuation of our concern with culture and inculturation. Cultures now imply not only particularisms and local differences but also how each

[80] Robertson, *Globalization* 4. [81] Ibid. 114.
[82] Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* 291.

group participates in the global singularity, as Robertson's example of Japan indicates. This usually entails cultural change and challenges cultural identity. Americans, for example, understand themselves to participate in the world as "making the world safe for democracy" and as defenders of a free market economy and of individual human rights. In any conflict we like to think of ourselves as the "good guys." That is part of our cultural consciousness. But in the case of Vietnam, that cultural identity was challenged by the haunting possibility that we were not such "good guys" after all. Whether and how the U.S. participates in other conflicts around the globe has been very much affected by that challenge to our cultural consciousness.

Underlying Ecclesiology

In reflecting on the Church's social mission in the context of globalization, we are assuming a communion ecclesiology, i.e., that the universal Church is a communion of particular churches. Much has been written about how to understand this, whether in a more "centralist" or a more "federalist" sense, and I do not wish to rehash that discussion here.[83] I think that *communio communiorum* is the historical language for understanding the Church as both local and global; it is how we describe a "glocalized" Church. I also agree with Schreiter that the concept of catholicity "may be the theological concept most suited to developing a theological view of theology between the global and the local in a world Church."[84] Vatican II, while reaffirming the importance and significance of diverse particular churches, did not abandon the notion of the catholicity of the Church. "In and from such individual churches there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church.... This variety of local churches with one common aspiration is particularly splendid evidence of the catholicity of the undivided Church" (*Lumen gentium* no. 23). The Council could not have foreseen the rapid process of globalization that has taken place since then, but it did affirm, in its own language, the interpenetration of the universal and the particular that Robertson and others have described from a sociological perspective. Their analyses may help us avoid useless dichotomizing of the particular and the universal dimensions of the Church.

CONCLUSION

Globalization therefore is not just a fad or a media buzzword but an accurate description of a relatively recent change in the way nation-states, the international system of states, individuals, and humankind as a whole

[83] See, e.g., Walter Kasper, "The Church as Communio," *New Blackfriars* 74 (1993) 239–41; Joseph Komonchak, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic: The Contemporary Theological Problematic," *The Jurist* 52 (1992) 416–47.

[84] Schreiter, *The New Catholicity* 119.

interact with one another and how they consciously understand themselves to be in this "one place." It describes both an objective set of relationships and a subjective awareness of them. The rapidity and massiveness of these new dynamics threaten the identity of humans both as groups and as individuals. At the same time, they make possible the participation of ever greater numbers of people in their own development, not only economically and politically but also culturally. Globalization promotes freedom and democracy with the aid of new information technology unavailable only a few decades ago. While there is a developing global culture, globalization is not necessarily homogenizing; it also promotes and appreciates diversity.

For Christians, committed as they have always been to the promotion of the common good and of justice and peace for all, this new context poses challenges and opportunities. It challenges us to rethink the place and function of nation-states in the pursuit of justice. It challenges us to promote and preserve cultural particularity while enabling diverse cultures to participate in the global marketplace. It challenges us to promote individual freedom without that becoming an isolating individualism. It challenges us to foster new international structures to deal with issues and problems that exceed the capabilities of sovereign nation-states. It challenges us to communicate Christian principles of social justice in a form that is persuasive and that leads to the conversion of human hearts. It challenges us to exemplify in the life of the institutional Church the justice we preach.

At the same time, globalization offers new opportunities for the Church's social mission. The dramatic new communication technologies offer the greatest possibility of all time for a heightened sense of human solidarity. People from around the globe can communicate and thus come to know one another as fellow human beings in a way unimaginable when Leo XIII wrote of "new things." Western colonialism and Soviet imperialism have given way to a polycentric world no longer dominated by two superpowers. Long-suppressed cultures have become revitalized by their interaction with other cultures. A new international system is aborning. The Church has a new opportunity to foster subsidiarity as well as solidarity. Its long-standing teaching on the use of material goods for the common good can now be applied globally; the common good is now a universal common good. At the same time, this common good has to be concretized in local communities and intermediary organizations—glocalization of the social mission. Finally, I would reemphasize that the social mission of the Church is a constitutive dimension of its fundamental mission "to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served," to be the bearer of hope and "light for all nations" (*Gaudium et spes* no. 3).