

indifference into concern – that is at the heart of the Torah and Talmud, the Christian gospel, the Qur'an and the teachings of the other great world religions. What will energize our enhanced technological capacity in directions that lead to social harmony rather than oblivion? Religion, I remain convinced, is very central to the answer to that question. It has the potential to penetrate hardened hearts in ways that secular ideology and mere technical competence cannot. It can combine commitment and knowledge in ways that will overpower the forces of exploitation and destruction. We have seen outstanding examples of that power in the lives of Dr. Martin Luther King, Pope John XXIII, Nelson Mandela and Elie Wiesel.

But religion will not contribute in its fullness to global society unless it draws from the depths of its spiritual tradition, a tradition that is continually re-energized and refined in light of developing human understanding. Engagement with the world about us cannot become a substitute for a spirituality rooted in tradition. Rather, such engagement must always be the fruit of our spiritual tradition and, above all, it must be concretely embodied in the people of that tradition. Tradition does not reside first and foremost in texts and sacred books, as important as these remain. Rather we are the carriers of our respective traditions. We learn it in the classroom and in the library. It becomes the very fibre of our being in prayer and worship. We express it in our active concern and commitment to human dignity. None of these three elements of authentic religion can ever be separated from the rest without religion suffering a loss of its very soul. Become convinced that until the tradition is embodied in you it remains text rather than a force for human transformation.

Let me close with a question. It is a question raised by a powerful film, partially based on the Holocaust, that I viewed at the Slovak Pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hanover, Germany. The film's title asked a question that remains our question in this challenging time of globalization: *QUO VADIS HUMANITY?*

NOTES

- 1 Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents* (New York/London: W.W. Norton, 2002).
- 2 Ira Rifkin, *Spiritual Perspectives on Globalization: Making Sense of Economic and Cultural Upheaval* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub, 2003).
- 3 Nora Levin, *The Holocaust* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973).
- 4 Cf., Oliver McTernan, *Violence in God's Name* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2003).
- 5 Henry Friedlander, "The Manipulation of Language," in Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton (eds.), *The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy, and Genocide* (Millwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1980), 103-113.
- 6 Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-07.
- 7 Victor Ferkiss, *The Future of Technological Civilization* (New York: George Braziller, 1974), 88.
- 8 Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
- 9 Pope John Paul II, "Effective Mechanisms for Giving Globalization Proper Direction," *Origins*, 33:2 (May 22, 2003), 29.
- 10 "The Provision of Services for Poor People: A Contribution to WDR 2004," *World Faiths Development Dialogue* (Birmingham, UK, 2003).
- 11 "Working for Reconciliation: A Caritas Handbook" (Vatican City: Caritas International, 1999)^

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solutions to poverty, but structures of belief, practice and institutional organization that exist in the name of religion are perhaps some of the least appreciated variables in the development process.

The report then adds:

As well as giving advice based on their nearness to the lives of the poor, faith-based organizations can positively influence the substance of development. For instance, a faithbased approach towards the provision of social services can emphasize a view of human dignity which points in the direction of policies and practices that involve compassion, solidarity, participation and self-confidence. For faith communities development must essentially include the spiritual and social dimensions of life as well as the material and the economic.¹⁰

The point being made is that faith communities often have inroads at the grassroots level and have acquired a measure of thrust among the people that international agencies can never duplicate. Hence a partnership between faith communities and international agencies represents the only effective road to humanized economic development. A panel of representatives from various aid agencies connected with the United Nations made this point quite strongly to us during a session at the 2000 Millennium Peace Conference held at the United Nations.

PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

The final issue I would like to bring before you this evening is the role of religions in international peacemaking and reconciliation. This area is rapidly becoming a central activity of religious communities in our day. To repeat a previous point, religious communities cannot enter the effort at peacemaking and reconciliation successfully and with integrity unless they first confront the violence they have often promoted in language and action. But having done this, I believe religious communities can have a significant impact on peacemaking and reconciliation. For one, they have the grassroots connections already mentioned. Secondly, many present conflicts involve conflicting religious beliefs, at least in part. We have seen religiously-based communities operate with considerable success through such organizations as the World Conference of Religions for Peace and the San Egidio community. A number of organizations tied to Asian religions have also made important contributions in this regard. Caritas International, a Catholic based organization with ties to the Vatican, has worked extensively on reconciliation. Caritas recently produced a comprehensive handbook on reconciliation by my colleague at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Professor Robert Schreier.¹¹

As with ecology, there may be significant differences within religious communities on the interpretations of peacemaking and reconciliation. Some religious communities see absolutely no role for the military in this process. Others believe force, whether by an official army or a revolutionary military, can still constitute a legitimate response to gross injustice. Nelson Mandela, often honored today as a champion of peace in post-Apartheid South Africa, endorsed the violent activities of the African National Congress, which found religious support in the Kairos Declaration endorsed by many prominent Christian leaders in the country. And some would argue, from the perspective of the International Criminal Court, that any authentic reconciliation must include the trial and punishment of those responsible for gross violations of human rights. In the Christian-Jewish dialogue I notice a growing disparity of viewpoints on peacemaking and reconciliation, especially with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Iraq. Nonetheless, despite the obstacles, I remain convinced religious communities can make a major contribution on a global level to peacemaking and reconciliation.

ENGAGING THE WORLD

In conclusion, I strongly believe that religion today stands at a decisive turning point in this age of ever increasing globalization. Religious communities can withdraw into an isolated spirituality which cares little about what goes on beyond their selfdefined borders. They can continue to be, as they have so often been in the past, sources of social tension rather than forces for social healing. But if religion follows such a path, it will squander its most precious gift – the power to transform hatred into love, the power to turn

Ferkiss' 1974 volume, *The Future of Technological Civilization*, put the contemporary challenge to humankind in these words: "Man has ... achieved virtually godlike powers over himself, his society, and his physical environment. As a result of his scientific and technological achievements, he has the power to alter or to destroy both the human race and its physical habit."⁷

Hans Jonas, in a groundbreaking speech in Los Angeles in 1972 and subsequently in published writings,⁸ conveyed essentially the same message as Ferkiss. Ours is the very first generation, Jonas insists, to have to face the question of basic creational survival. In the past, there was no human destructive behavior from which nature could not recover through its in-built recuperative powers. But today we have reached the point through technological development where this principle no longer holds. Humankind now seems increasingly capable of actions that inflict terminal damage on the whole of creation and raise serious questions about the future of humanity itself.

Religions must respond to this ecological challenge by generating a spirituality of ecological responsibility. They may not fully agree as to directions such spirituality should take. The co-creational responsibility now incumbent upon humanity as laid out in various Catholic documents, including Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, is one possible way to go in my judgment, even though some ethicists such as Stanley Hauerwas are quite critical of it. Whatever the route taken by the various religions they must make ecological responsibility an integral part of their religious vision. This would certainly constitute one of the major contributions they can make to a globalized world.

ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITY

Another area of concern for religions in our increasingly globalized society is the realm of economics.

Religion cannot provide a blueprint for a just and humanizing economic system. But it can contribute greatly to the overall framework of global economics through dialogue with economists and business people. Some of this is beginning to happen at the annual World Economic Forum, where religious leaders such as the former Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, and Rabbi David Rosen are working to establish an in-depth dialogue between religious communities and economic leaders. As someone who participated in one of the meetings in New York in 2002, I know how difficult such a goal remains. The final verdict is still out on this process. But I do know that further progress was indeed made at the 2003 World Economic Forum.

Religions can join leading economists and business leaders such as Paul Krugman and George Soros in insisting that the forces of the market cannot by themselves generate a just and humane economic system. In a May 2003 address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Pope John Paul II called for "guidelines that will place globalization firmly at the service of human development". The Pope insisted that globalization itself was not the problem. "Rather," he said, "difficulties arise from the lack of effective mechanisms for giving it proper direction. Globalization needs to be inserted into the larger context of a political and economic program that seeks the authentic progress of all mankind."⁹In my judgment, the religions, most of which have a transnational reach, can fill, at least for the interim, the void that exists because of the lack of truly international structures which parallel state structures. In an age of globalization national structures, while remaining crucial, cannot handle many of the major challenges, especially the economic and ecological challenges, generated by this globalization process.

WORLD DEVELOPMENT

Another area where religious institutions can play a significant role within the global economic order is grass roots development. A document prepared by the World Faiths Development Dialogue, based in Birmingham UK (which works with the World Bank), for the 2004 World Development Report issued annually by the bank, a report to which I contributed, makes this point quite well. Let me quote the relevant section:

The extremely close relationship of faith-based organizations to poor communities suggests that their role in development should not be overlooked. Faith groups do not have the ultimate

schismatics, as unbelievers, as Communists, with an outstretched hand. Even if he continued to have disagreements with them, even profound ones, he never failed to acknowledge their basic humanity. He demonstrated a keen sensitivity towards the impact of negative language by the religious community. His approach to the Jews is a prime example. He changed liturgical language that he regarded as dehumanizing. He initiated a fundamental change of perspective on Jews and Judaism, which his successors have enhanced both in text and gesture. He thus began one of the most profound turnabouts in interreligious understanding, one that I am convinced can serve as support and model for other historically antagonistic interreligious relations.

Following the example of John XXIII an essential challenge for religions in the face of globalization is to continue to bring to the global community an example of the centrality of affirmation of the religious and secular “other” at a time when the media, and even an increasing number within the religious communities, are adopting an attack mentality, an “in your face” approach to national and religious identity. This affirmation of the “other” must be done through text, language and gesture.

CHALLENGES OF ECOLOGY

Let me now turn to what I regard as one of the central challenges to all religious traditions today. It is ecology. In many ways ecology is the most global issue of all. No one will survive if we do not attend to it. It knows not nor respects national borders. The destruction of the rainforests, the depletion of the protective ozone layer, the rise in ocean levels as a result of global warming which threatens the very existence of more than forty island countries, the destructive effect of acid rain are not problems of a single nation. They engulf all of us in their web. There simply is no way to address the growing reality of ecological destruction except on a global basis. Religious traditions must respond to this challenge by developing a spirituality in which ecological preservation is central. In the Christian community Protestants have tended to be ahead of Catholics in confronting this issue, though there is growing awareness of ecology within Catholicism of late. But there is also evidence of growing opposition, even ultraconservative criticism of Pope John Paul II for his relatively modest statements on ecological responsibility, rooted in a claim that an emphasis on ecology will transform Christianity into a “naturalist” religion.

There is also the challenge posed for Christians in terms of their biblical tradition. The historian, Lynn White, often regarded as one of the founders of the ecological movement, attacked Genesis as a source of religiously motivated ecological destruction over the centuries. So Jews are also brought into the picture as well. And for Christians there is need to deal with the Apocalyptic tradition of the New Testament which some Christians use to view ecological destruction as central to the coming of the final kingdom. We once had a Secretary of the Interior in my country who testified in Congress, arguing from his Christian faith, that there was no real urgency about protecting forests because their destruction as part of the endtime was not all that distant. While we may legitimately argue that eco-proponents such as Lynn White have misread the Genesis text as many Christians have also misinterpreted the book of Revelation, there is no question that both have been employed by religious believers in an ecologically irresponsible way. So one of the first tasks of the religions will be to ensure that their sacred texts support rather than undercut ecological responsibility.

Back in the early 1970s two futurists introduced us to a fundamentally new reality with which religious ethics has yet adequately to grapple. Victor Ferkiss, a political scientist out of the Catholic tradition, and Hans Jonas, a social philosopher of Jewish background, both served warning that humankind had reached a new era in its evolutionary journey. Humanity was now standing on a threshold between utopia and oblivion, as Buckminster Fuller has put it. The human community now faces a situation whose potential for destruction equals its capacity for reaching new levels of creativity and human dignity. What path humanity will follow is a decision that rests with the next several generations. Neither direct divine intervention nor the arbitrary forces of nature will determine the ultimate outcome. Given the growing reality of ecological destruction human choice is now more critical than ever for creational survival. We must stop the spread of acid rain; we must prevent further deterioration of the protective ozone layers; we must stop global warming and its influence on the rise of ocean levels. And the decisions made in the next several decades will have lasting impact, well beyond the lifespan of those who are destined to make them. These decisions will in fact determine what forms of life, if any, will experience continued viability.

been viewed as “unfortunate expendables” during the Nazi period – and there is no place for any similar classification today. Speaking as a Christian, I would assert that there is no way for the Church, or for any other religious tradition, to survive meaningfully if it allows the death or suffering of other people to become a byproduct of its efforts at self preservation. So the desire to preserve our own distinctive religious heritages against the ravages of globalization cannot be pursued within an insular religious framework.

One vital part of this process is the recognition of how religious communities in the past have often been involved in “dehumanizing” others, including people in other religious traditions, and even participating in their actual destruction.⁴ The era of missionary expansion by Christianity certainly involved violence against indigenous people even if we view evangelization as an integral component of Christian self-understanding. Certainly Pope John Paul II has recognized this dark reality and expressed contrition during the moving liturgy of reconciliation he celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent 2000 as part of Catholicism’s millennium observance. And the same holds true for the long history of Christian antisemitism for which John Paul II also apologized in that same ceremony and subsequently during his historic visit to Jerusalem. And we are quite aware of how religion in many cases sustained the vicious Apartheid system in South Africa and how the churches’ missionary effort, intentionally or not, was instrumental in establishing a social order in Rwanda, the most Catholic country in Africa, in which the seeds of eventual genocide were planted. If religious communities fail to cleanse their language and practice of religious violence toward the other they will eliminate themselves as effective agents of humanization and solidarity in the global era. Hans Kung’s often quoted dictum that there cannot be peace in the world without peace among religions remains as true as ever.

Violent religious language can greatly contribute to softening a society for genocide. Religion remains a powerful force in most present-day societies. If religious language in a given society continues to demean people who do not share the dominant faith system and even denies them full rights of citizenship it certainly opens the door for physical assaults on such groups in times of social tension. On the contrary, positive religious language about the “religious other” can serve as a barrier against such assaults. It is especially needed in the complex national societies that globalization has produced.

Religion also has a role to play in insuring that groups in a society are not “neutralized” in terms of their fundamental humanity. The Holocaust scholar, Henry Friedlander, showed some years ago how the neutral language in reporting daily death counts in the Nazi extermination camps paralleled the language used by the United States military in reporting Vietnamese casualties during the Vietnam War.⁵ Religion must always fight against such neutralization, even of an enemy. For if neutralization of particular groups in society is allowed a foothold, it exposes these groups to the possibility of more violent attacks which again, in times of social crisis, can turn into genocidal or near-genocidal actions against them.

For Catholics, the *Document on Religious Liberty* from Vatican II, inspired by Pope John XXIII, can serve as a foundational resource. That document argued for the basic divinity of every human person expressed in the freedom of conscience, even to the point of protecting the right not to believe in human dignity. Human dignity, not right belief, became the fundamental cornerstone of any just society. All other identities, though important, became secondary. They may be used as the basis for a massive assault on human life.

On the Catholic side, but with global impact, Pope John XXIII certainly began the process of removing violence from the Church’s expression. He did this both by text and gesture. In face of a century of attack against the notion of human rights and religious freedom within the European Catholic community in particular John XXIII asserted human rights and religious freedom as integral to the Catholic faith perspective in the Charter of Human Rights in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. In so doing he settled the dispute taking place at the second Vatican Council regarding the proposed document on religious liberty. Unfortunately, the current Catholic Catechism failed to include this powerful Charter in its text and there are those within the Catholic leadership today who would love to relegate Vatican II’s *Document on Religious Liberty* to obscurity, something that must be strongly resisted by the global Catholic community. A religious institution that does not model the concern for human rights both within its internal operations and as a fundamental global concern cannot be a legitimate actor in the current struggle to humanize globalization.

Pope John XXIII also contributed significantly to the eradication of violence in Christian expression through gesture and language. He greeted those who a few years before had been labeled as heretics and

prosperity and create peaceful international cooperation within the family of nations. “Make money, not war” became their basic mantra, something we have continued to hear from the political leaders of the West, as well as in many parts of Asia, for the past several decades.

In most cases, globalization also has resulted in the penetration and expansion of Western food, films, clothing, music, sports, media and many other forms of popular culture into all parts of the world. Personal benefits promised by globalization include a significant rise in the standard of living on a mass scale and the accumulation of goods, combined with rapid transportation and communication. But clearly something went terribly wrong with such optimistic assurances. Even people directly connected with the globalization process on the economic level have not spoken to its failures. The 2001 Nobel Prize winner in economics, Joseph Stiglitz, in his much discussed volume, *Globalization and Discontents*,¹ is one who has severely critiqued the Bretton Woods system from within. The utopian promises proclaimed at the creation of the present global economic system have not on the whole come to realization. Hence for many throughout the world, including many deeply involved with the religious community, “globalization” has become a four-letter word. These critics view globalization as a monster that devours traditional cultures and religious beliefs, condemning millions of people on the globe to a permanent prison of economic depression and political anger. That anger, it is charged with considerable justification, fuels anti-Western terrorist groups and destabilizes fragile regimes.

SPIRITUAL VALUES AND GLOBALIZATION

Today millions of people in the West are bewildered and even stunned by the strident rejection of globalization and its rich promises of a new world order. Facing this reality, I would like to reflect on ways in which religious communities can enter the increasingly strident debate about globalization in a constructive way.

One starting point might be the recent volume by the award-winning journalist, Ira Rifkin. In his *Spiritual Perspectives on Globalization: Making Sense of Economic and Cultural Upheaval*,² Rifkin provides a concise analysis of how eight major world religions relate to globalization. He does so not merely on the basis of religious texts but by probing as well the hearts of representatives of these religious traditions. He vividly tells their gripping stories as they struggle to remain faithful to their classical spiritualities in the face of the relentless and powerful forces of contemporary globalization. While some evangelical Christians regard globalization, according to Rifkin, as nothing less than a sign of the imminent arrival of the Antichrist, most of the people interviewed by Rifkin come across as seeking to balance globalization’s claims and real achievements with a sense of justice and respect for cultural traditions and time-tested religious values.

Rifkin addresses a provocative question to religious communities in the era of intensifying globalization. Is it possible, he asks, “to blend local values with globalization?” What particularly unnerves many people when confronted with globalization is the threat it seems to pose to those values that have grounded fundamental human meaning in various cultures. I would add here, in response to Rifkin’s question, that in fact religious communities have a new challenge before them in this regard, for they are almost the only global organizations that function both at an international and a local level. In my view, religious communities have the potential to become critical bridgebuilders in this period of globalization.

VIOLENCE AND THE OTHER

I would lay a second major responsibility on religious communities. Globalization forces us to expand our universe of moral obligation. One of the most insightful comments made about the Christian churches’ attitude towards Jews during the Holocaust is that they became “unfortunate expendables”, to use the term coined by Nora Levin,³ in the churches’ struggle for self preservation against the demonic forces of Nazism. If religious communities are to face up to the challenge of globalization they need to expand their “universe of moral obligation” to include all peoples of the globe. Not to undertake such an expansion will in fact endanger every religious community. Religions must now recognize that the survival of all persons is integral to their own authentic survival. Jews, Poles, the Roma, gays, and the disabled should not have

Ethics & Globalization

the interreligious challenge

John T. Pawlikowski, OSM

*G*lobalization is certainly a term that generates great passion today, nearly everywhere. Whether people are supportive or in strong opposition to the reality of globalization they very often express their viewpoint with great gusto. I personally tend to believe the process has a considerable number of positive features, but I also recognize the profound dislocation and misery it has brought to many. My perspective in part is based on the recognition that globalization in one form or another has in fact been taking place for most of human history, as people have continued to move out of very confined geographic and cultural settings into ones of increasing diversity. The worlds of Rome and Greece represented such an early form of globalization in my view. The missionary activity of Christianity in fact represented another period of intense globalization, with all the ambiguities that are evident in the present forms of globalization. And I could cite many later examples. To the extent that the globalization process enables us to break down cultural, ethnic and religious barriers and brings us into increased human understanding and solidarity it is a good thing. Insofar as it becomes a generator of cultural and economic hegemony by rich and powerful nations over other peoples it deserves strong condemnation. As I look at the process of globalization today I think it is in fact doing both. The challenge before us is how to erase its shadow side

It is not possible in this presentation to provide a detailed analysis of the current reality of globalization. So I would like to limit my focus to a consideration of the potential contribution of religion to the humanizing of the globalizing process that engulfs us at the present moment. Let me begin with a few words about the origins of our current form of globalization.

GLOBALIZATION AND BRETTON WOODS

*A*t the 1944 World War II economic conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, representatives from forty-five nations established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, both based in Washington, DC, which have served as primary engines of globalization. These new agreements were meant to encourage extensive free trade when the war had ended, in the belief that by breaking down economic barriers that had in the past alienated peoples and separated nations from one another future wars could be prevented. Contemporary globalization is deeply rooted in the structures put into place by the Bretton Woods Conference.

The Bretton Woods form of globalization has generated the largely unfettered flow of capital across continents and it has often entailed often the dominance of giant transnational corporations. The late prophetic Archbishop of Recife in Brazil, Dom Helder Camara, once addressed this reality in a major speech in Geneva, Switzerland. Asked to describe the economic and social problems facing his native country, the Archbishop responded, to the shock of his audience, that the biggest problem facing Brazil was in fact the Swiss banking system which allows for the outflow of vital capital resources from his country. A number of Swiss governmental officials suggested the next day that Dom Helder should be jailed for violating the Swiss law against criticism of the country by a foreigner! This issue of capital outflow was also directly addressed by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, clearly the most radical statement on social responsibility issued by any pope. For years Catholic neoconservatives have attempted to persuade Pope John II and the Vatican to distance themselves from Paul VI's views on this question.

For many years globalization's champions, especially in North America and in Western Europe, were vocal cheerleaders for this cause. It has constantly been claimed that globalization would achieve worldwide