

## Social Studies

### *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice: Navigating the Path to Peace*

By Daniel Groody, Orbis Books, 2007, 286 pp., ISBN 978-1-57075-696-2, \$24.00.

This book appears in the "Theology in Global Perspective Series" whose goal is to respond to the challenges the new global reality poses to many foundational Christian doctrines. In this book the author's intention is to develop both a theology of globalization and a globalization of theology. The author's approach is both empirical and personal. Globalization is more than an economic issue; it is a deeply human reality that challenges not only the mind but also the heart. The book is an ongoing theological and spiritual reflection on the reality of poverty from a Christian perspective but also in dialogue with other religious traditions in order to understand better and respond to the challenge of justice in a global world.

The Christian faith has a long tradition of dealing with issues of justice. The author attempts to follow the issue of justice to its foundational sources such as Scripture, Liturgy and Church doctrines. These various sources are presented in eight different chapters. Each chapter is introduced with a story which

In the first section, "A Gift of God, a Human Responsibility," the author, following his fundamental approach, affirms that the great injustices of our global world are connected to the disorders of the human heart, greed and self-interest. What is needed is a conversion. Conversion is the choosing to live out of a different set of values than that of a consumer society. Conversion is to move from one set of roots to another, from a destructive narrative to a liberating one. Conversion is to live out of the scriptural narratives. The Scriptures offer five interrelated metanarratives: the narrative of the empire of the poor, of Yahweh, of idolatry and of the Gospel. Each narrative yields a specific view of justice and a call to discipleship.

While discipleship demands unity, diversity is also promoted. Globalization should not involve homogenization but diversity. Such a diversity in unity is celebrated in the Christian liturgy, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. In a culture that emphasizes individualism, the Eucharist celebrates diversity, universality, community and hospitality. The liturgy of the Eucharist breaks down the walls of personal isolation and reminds the faithful of their call to relationality and interconnectedness. The Eucharist is also connected to the mystery of Creation, to the sacredness of nature.

Section four, "A God of Life, a Civilization of Love," is about Catholic social teaching. This teaching is

Social injustice is contrary to God's will for life. Everything is "Gift" from God. From that perspective Catholic social teaching neither naively condemns the process of globalization nor uncritically embraces it. It is to be judged according to its capacity to generate love and according to its concern for the poor. The option for the poor is central to all contemporary Catholic social teaching.

While the author offers valuable insights on the economic and social nature of globalization his emphasis is on the personal implications of globalization, on the issues of the heart. Now the heart is the domain of spirituality. Spirituality is dealt with in section nine, "A Loving Heart, a Just Faith. Spirituality and Transformation." Spirituality's task is to awaken within us an authentic hunger for justice. Spirituality calls us to a new mind, to a new heart, to authentic following of Christ. There is no facile fix to the problems of globalization.

This is a successful integration of hard thinking about globalization and personal appropriation. This is a book on which a course on social justice could be organized. Each section is followed by a series of questions and a bibliography.

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