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GLOBALIZING SOLIDARITY: CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CHALLENGE OF HUMAN LIBERATION

DANIEL G. GROODY, C.S.C.

The article examines the role of theology in the context of globalization and its challenges to the human community. It explores the issue of human solidarity in the context of increasing economic polarities, cultural upheavals, and social disintegration. It offers an “over-view” of globalization by looking at the current demographics of the global village, an “under-view” by examining the problem of poverty, and an “inner-view” by investigating the role the human heart plays in our current world (dis)order. In sum, the article describes contours of a liberating theological anthropology for a globalized modern world.

IN HIS 1967 CHRISTMAS SERMON ON PEACE, Martin Luther King Jr. summed up his vision of the world:

It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality. Did you ever stop to think that you can't leave for your job in the morning without being dependent on most of the world? You get up in the morning and go to the bathroom and reach over for the sponge, and that's handed to you by a Pacific Islander. You reach for a bar of soap, and that's given to you at the hands of a Frenchman. And then you go into the kitchen to drink your coffee for the morning, and that's poured into your cup by a South American. And maybe you want tea: that's poured into your cup by a Chinese. Or maybe you're desirous of having cocoa for breakfast, and that's poured into your cup by a West African. And then you reach over for your toast, and that's given to you at the

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hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world. This is the way our universe is structured; this is its interrelated quality. We aren't going to have peace on Earth until we recognize this basic fact of the inter-related structure of all reality.¹

Although King does not explicitly refer to it, his words are closely related to what is commonly known today as the phenomenon of globalization, a process that has made us increasingly aware of our interdependence. While merchants, colonialists, and explorers began mapping out the network of integrated society thousands of years ago, the current density of interactions between people and the rapid interchange of ideas, money, and commerce make our generation unlike any other.² Transforming almost every aspect of human life, globalization has brought new opportunities as well as new challenges, gains as well as losses, and progress as well as regress.³

While much has been written about globalization from a social, economic, political, and cultural perspective, surprisingly little has come from the field of Christian theology.⁴ Most of the available literature has come from ethical circles. Given globalization's pervasive influence and the extent of its impact on society, however, and its potential to provide a humanizing voice in a world increasingly threatened by dehumanizing undercurrents, it seems fitting to examine in more depth what it means to be human before God in our global context. Recent issues of *Theological Studies* have examined globalization in light of a universal ethic, the common good, intercultural dialogue, and the social mission of the church.⁵ My aim, however, is to investigate theology's contribution to the issues

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (New York: Harper-Collins, 1986) 254.

² For more on the development of globalization, see Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)," *Foreign Policy* 118 (2000) 104–19.

³ For a fuller treatment of the relationship of theology to globalization, see Daniel G. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice: Navigating the Path to Peace*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis) 2007.

⁴ See, among others, John Coleman, *Globalization and the Common Good: Present Crisis, Future Hope* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2005) and David Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (Washington: Georgetown University, 2003); Orlando O. Espín, "Immigration, Territory, and Globalization: Theological Reflections," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 7.3 (February 2000) 46–59.

⁵ Respectively, Jean Porter, "The Search for a Global Ethic," *Theological Studies* 62 (2001) 105–21; Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Toward Global Ethics," 63 (2002) 322–44; William R. O'Neill, "African Moral Theology," 62 (2002) 675–700; and T. Howland Sanks, "Globalization and the Church's Social Mission," 60 (1999) 625–51.

raised by globalization and its challenge to theology, including its implications for personal and social development.

After some initial reflections on the relationship between theology and globalization, I structure my analysis around three central points. I explore: (1) an “over-view” of globalization by examining the current socio-economic demographics of the global village or the context in which our human identity takes shape; (2) an “under-view” of globalization by looking at the world of the poor or those who have the least opportunities to develop as human beings in the current system; and (3) an “inner-view” of globalization by looking at the world of the human heart or the inner challenges that impede authentic human development. From these three dimensions I describe the contours of Christian anthropology and human liberation, arguing that theological anthropology helps us construct an alternative vision of human life that differs significantly from a market system that gives primacy to the economic and consumer agendas of globalization often at the expense of human values. Amidst widespread cultural, economic, and social upheaval, theological anthropology also offers us an invaluable hermeneutical perspective that helps us understand the relational foundation of our existence, particularly as it unfolds through our relationships with God, ourselves, others, and the environment. Because these relationships are central to human life, I draw out in the conclusion how the primary challenge is not to stop the process of globalization (as if that were even possible) but to foster what John Paul II has referred to as a “globalization without marginalization” or “a globalization of solidarity.”

A THEOLOGICAL READING OF GLOBALIZATION AND A GLOBAL READING OF THEOLOGY

Due to historical reasons and the philosophical premises that underlie the current neoliberal economy, the relationship between theology and globalization is complex. On the one hand, the global market system—in partnership with enlightenment rationalism and postmodernity—appears to contribute to the systematic dismantling of many religious traditions, replacing them with the doctrines of consumerism and the canons of technological positivism. On the other hand, this same system has created linkages and relationships between people, communities, and nations in previously unimagined ways, making the world more and more an interconnected village.

While some theologians continue to challenge the ethical coordinates of the current system and its trends, global awareness and advances in communication have also challenged scholars to widen their framework for theological reflection. Rereading the Gospels through various contextual

approaches—either by regions such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia— or by social groups—such as the poor, Hispanics, Dalits, women, indigenous peoples, and others—has broken open the hegemonic claim of European and North American contextual theologies and offered new perspectives about human life and divine revelation. Broadening our understanding of the world, its cultures, and its people, the diverse loci of contemporary theological reflection have enlarged the way we understand our relationships. Before exploring theology's contribution in helping us understand what it means to be human before God and to live together in community, I will ground these reflections in an overview of the current demographics of the world in which our human identity takes shape and clarify what I mean by globalization.

AN OVER-VIEW: GLOBALIZATION AND THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Globalization has helped make our world into a common village. If the 6.5 billion people who live on our planet were proportioned down to a community of 100 people, 60 would be Asian, 14 African, 11 European, 14 American (North, South, Central, and Caribbean), and 1 would be an Australian or New Zealander.⁶ In this village 14 would speak Mandarin as their first language, 5 English, 5 Spanish, 3 Hindi, 3 Portuguese, 3 Bengali, 2 Russian, 2 Japanese, 1 Arabic, and 1 German. The other 61 would speak Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, French, and many other languages.⁷ From a faith perspective, 33 would be Christian, 20 Muslim, 14 atheist, agnostic, or nonreligious, 13 Hindu, 13 from other religions, 6 Buddhist, and 1 Jewish.⁸

Among the diverse members of this village, and in particular among those in the academy, the word “globalization” is a multivalent term, difficult to define because of its many connotations.⁹ As Robert Schreiter puts it, “There is no one accepted definition of globalization, nor is there consensus on its exact description. Nearly all would agree, however, that it is about the increasingly interconnected character of the political, eco-

⁶ The breakdown of population by continent is calculated from 2005 figures available at <http://worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/contnent.htm> (accessed February 3, 2008).

⁷ For current language statistics, see the *CIA World Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2098.html> (accessed February 9, 2008). I calculated the figures for the village of 100.

⁸ For current statistics on religions, see the *CIA World Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html> (accessed February 13, 2008). I calculated the figures for the village of 100.

⁹ The body of literature on globalization is immense; for an extensive bibliography, see <http://www.indiana.edu/~world/globalbib/index.htm> (accessed February 9, 2008).

challenging global, social, and economic inequities, he cautioned against a theological paternalism that would see the resolution of today's complex issues as residing primarily in the efforts of those living in developed countries. Rather, he proposed that human liberation entails privileging the perspective of the poor and seeing the poor as agents in their own destiny, not simply as passive recipients of help from altruistic benefactors of the first world.

While a greater exploration of Ellacuría's thought lies beyond the scope of this article, what is important here is Ellacuría's characterization of reality as, above all, an inhuman poverty that results in the cruel and unjust death of the poor majority. He believed we find the God of life amidst the marginalized, the "people crucified in history."¹³ Ellacuría's words acquire particular significance when viewed in light of the dire poverty in which much of the world lives, and he raises the question of whether it is possible to articulate a sound Christian theology without contextualizing it within the reality of global misery.

Looking at reality from the perspective of the economically underdeveloped presents a very different picture of what is happening with globalization.¹⁴ In the aforementioned village of 100 people, resources are unevenly distributed,¹⁵ such that the richest person in the village has as much as the poorest 57 taken together.¹⁶ 50 do not have a reliable source of food and are hungry some or all of the time; 30 suffer from malnutrition;¹⁷ 40 do not

¹³ Ignacio Ellacuría, "Función liberadora de la filosofía," *Estudios centro americanos* 435/436 (1985) 50. For more on Ellacuría's thought, see Kevin Burke, *The Ground beneath the Cross: The Theology of Ignacio Ellacuría* (Washington: Georgetown University, 2000).

¹⁴ Jeffery D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (East Rutherford, N.J.: Penguin, 2005) 19.

¹⁵ See United Nations Development Programme (hereafter, UNDP), *Human Development Report 2005: International Cooperation at a Crossroads: Aid, Trade, and Security in an Unequal World* (New York: Oxford University, 2005); United Nations, Department of Economic Affairs, *Inequality Predicament: Report on the World Social Situation 2005* (New York: United Nations, 2005); and the World Bank, *World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development* (New York: Oxford University, 2005). See also Sachs, *End of Poverty*; Branko Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 2005); and Bob Sutcliffe, *100 Ways of Seeing an Unequal World* (London: Zed, 2001).

¹⁶ Less than 50 million of the world's richest people have more income than 2.7 billion of the world's poorest people. See Branko Milanovic, "True World Income Distribution, 1988 to 1993: First Calculation Based on Household Surveys Alone," *Economic Journal* 112.476 (January 2002) 51–92, esp. 88–89.

¹⁷ Dan Smith, ed., *The Penguin State of the World Atlas*, 7th ed. (New York: Penguin, 2003) 110. See also Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Economic and Social Department, *The State of Food Insecurity in the*

have access to adequate sanitation;¹⁸ 26 live in substandard housing or are homeless;¹⁹ 33 have no electricity, and another 33 have only limited access to it;²⁰ 18 cannot read;²¹ and 15 do not have access to safe drinking water.²² Only 16 have access to the Internet;²³ 12 own an automobile;²⁴ 3 are migrating;²⁵ and only 2 have a college education.²⁶ Overall, 19 struggle to survive on \$1 per day or less,²⁷ and 48 struggle to live on \$2 per day or less.²⁸ In brief, two-thirds of the planet's population lives in poverty.²⁹

World, 2005: Eradicating World Hunger—Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2005) and <http://www.fao.org>.

¹⁸ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2005* 24. See also Secretariat of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, *Aid for Water Supply and Sanitation* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004), available at http://www.oecd.org/LongAbstract/0,3425,en_2649_34469_36188364_119656_1_1_1,00.html (accessed February 6, 2008); and DAC of the OECD, *Measuring Aid for Water: Has the Downward Trend in Aid for Water Reversed?* at http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,3343,en_2649_34469_23180544_1_1_1,00.html (accessed February 6, 2008).

¹⁹ Miloon Kothari, "Press Briefing by Special Rapporteur on Right to Adequate Housing," November 5, 2005, available at <http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2005/kotharibrf050511.doc.htm> (accessed February 6, 2008). I calculated the statistics for the village of 100.

²⁰ World Nuclear Association, "A Tide of Humanity" (2007), <http://www.world-nuclear.org/why/tide.html> (accessed February 8, 2008).

²¹ For current statistics, see the *CIA World Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/rankorderguide.html> (accessed February 13, 2008).

²² *Human Development Report 2005* 24.

²³ For current statistics, see the *CIA World Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/rankorderguide.html> (accessed February 13, 2008). This address is an index page that lists topics from which I calculated the statistics for a village of 100 people.

²⁴ International Road Federation, *World Road Statistics 2005* (Washington: IRF, 2005) 197–200. This figure represents the aggregate total number of automobiles in use in 100 countries; it comes from the most comprehensive data available. Annual data from 1999–2003.

²⁵ Richard B. Freeman, *People Flows in Globalization*, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 12315 (Cambridge, Mass.: NBER, 2006) 2; at <http://0-www.nber.org.libus.csd.mu.edu:80/papers/W12315.pdf> (accessed February 6, 2008).

²⁶ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Education Digest 2006: Comparing Education Statistics across the World* (Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006). See regional and world statistics for 2004 at http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF_Language=eng. (accessed February 6, 2008).

²⁷ *Human Development Report 2005* 3. ²⁸ *Ibid.* 4.

²⁹ For definitions of extreme and moderate poverty, where poverty is most rampant in the world, and the numbers of those living in poverty, see Sachs, *End of Poverty* 20–24.

GLOBAL INCOME AND WEALTH

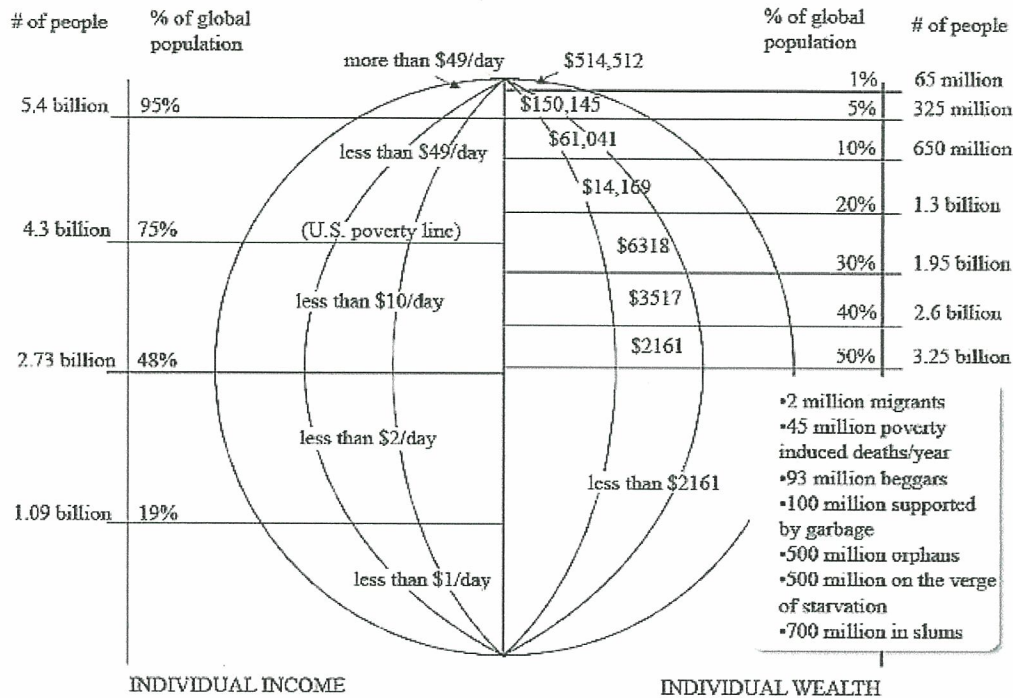


Figure 1.1: An Economic Snapshot of the World³⁰

Although it is true that globalization has increased the standard of living for more than half the world, the gaps between the rich and the poor are growing, not shrinking (see Figure 1.1). The difference in income between the richest and poorest countries was 3 to 1 in 1820, 11 to 1 in 1913, 35 to 1 in 1950, 44 to 1 in 1973, and 72 to 1 in 1992.³¹ Current research indicates

³⁰ Two ways of assessing an individual’s economic status are by income and wealth. Annual income is the amount of money earned or received by the individual over the course of a year. Wealth is the amount of assets accumulated at any point over the lifetime of the individual less his or her total debt. Wealth includes anything that has material value such as real property, livestock, and retirement savings. I am grateful to economists Branko Milanovic and Rich Brown as well as to Mary J. Miller and Jesse Carrillo for their help in constructing this chart. The income calculations are done in so-called international dollars or PPP (purchasing power parity) dollars. The individual wealth calculations are drawn from the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) in Helsinki, as published in “Winner Takes (Almost) All,” *Economist*, December 9, 2006, 81.

³¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* (New York: Oxford University, 1999) 38. For more comprehensive information, see Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy: 1820–1992* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1995); and Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001).

that the economic trends continue to diverge.³² It is staggering to consider that, of the world's 6.5 billion inhabitants, the three richest *individuals* have more assets than the combined GNP of the poorest 48 *nations*, a quarter of the world's countries.³³ In 2008 more than 1000 people were billionaires and a billion people survived on less than one dollar per day.³⁴ When looked at from "below," it becomes all the more evident that economic development in the global village has not always led to greater human development. Most of the world lacks the basic necessities for a dignified human life. As Gustavo Gutiérrez comments, to be poor means to be insignificant.³⁵

While poverty is widespread in continents like Africa, Asia, and South America, even in the United States, one of the world's wealthiest nations, many go to bed hungry and go without proper medical care, education, and clothing;³⁶ 840,000 people in the United States are homeless at any given time; over the course of a year 2.5 to 3.5 million are homeless, of which 1.35 million are children.³⁷ One out of eight citizens lives in poverty, and one out of three lives in poverty at least two months out of the year.³⁸ More than 37 million people in the United States live in poverty, a number exceeding the entire population of Canada.

Looking at the world from "below" becomes even more perplexing as we survey our collective spending patterns as a human family in relationship to basic human needs. Annual expenditures between 2003 and 2005 indicate that the world spent as much money on fragrances as all of Africa and the Middle East spent on education.³⁹ The world annually spends as much for

³² See World Bank, *World Development Report 2006*; Milanovic, *Worlds Apart*; and Glen Firebaugh, *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2006).

³³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* (New York: Oxford University, 1999) 37.

³⁴ See Forbes Magazine, "The World's Billionaires," at http://www.forbes.com/lists/2008/10/billionaires08_The-Worlds-Billionaires_Rank.html (accessed March 18, 2008).

³⁵ Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Memory and Prophecy," in *The Option for the Poor in Christian Theology*, ed. Daniel G. Groody (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 2007) 17–38.

³⁶ See U.S. Census Bureau data at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty.html> (accessed February 13, 2008), and the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin at <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/> (accessed February 13, 2008).

³⁷ Kothari, *Press Briefing by Special Rapporteur on Right to Adequate Housing 1*.

³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States: 2002* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003) 1, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p60-222.pdf> (accessed February 7, 2008).

³⁹ In 2005 the global village spent \$27.58 billion on an aggregate of men's, women's, and unisex mass and premium fragrances. Africa and the Middle East spent

toys and games as the poorest one-fifth of the world population earns per year.⁴⁰ In the areas of greatest economic prosperity, the world squanders almost 100 times more for luxury items than the money required to provide safe drinking water and basic sanitation for all those in need.⁴¹

The most disordered area of global expenditures involves military spending. Even the smallest reductions in military expenses could dramatically affect human development.⁴² For one day's worth of military spending, malaria in Africa could be virtually eliminated.⁴³ For two days worth of

\$27.96 billion on education, comprising preprimary, primary, secondary, postsecondary, nontertiary, and tertiary education, as well as education by radio and television broadcasting. Data from: <http://www.gimd.euromonitor.com/StatsPage.aspx> (accessed May 1, 2006), a subscriber data base. For only about one-third of what was spent on fragrances in 2005, the worldwide community could provide the \$9 billion needed for one year of adequate primary school education for all the world's children. See UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children: Girls, Education and Development* (New York: United Nations, 2003) 71.

⁴⁰ The aggregate of traditional toys and games and video games was \$86 billion. Data from: <http://www.gimd.euromonitor.com/StatsPage.aspx> (accessed May 1, 2006), a subscriber data base. Personal interviews of and correspondence with Branko Milanovic at the World Bank indicate that the poorest one-fifth of the world's population, 1.09 billion people, earns a combined yearly income of \$100 billion in actual (rather than PPP) dollars, or about \$100 per person.

⁴¹ The cost to provide drinking water and sanitation by 2015 to those who lack them is estimated at an additional \$9 billion per year beyond what is currently being spent. UNICEF, *Finance Development: Invest in Children* (New York: UNICEF, 2002) 19. The United States and Europe alone spend approximately \$800 billion annually for luxury items, that is, premium goods and services such as air travel, restaurants, clothing, cars, and beverages. According to the Boston Consulting Group, "We estimate the size of the European New Luxury market . . . to be about \$400 billion, the same size it is in the United States" (Michael J. Silverstein and Neil Fiske, *Trading Up: Trends, Brands, and Practices: 2004 Research Update* (Boston: Boston Consulting Group, 2004) 6; available at http://www.bcg.com/impact_expertise/publications/publication_list.jsp?pubID=1120 (accessed February 7, 2008).

⁴² There is some variance in the total military spending reported by individual countries. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) is a reputable source for statistics on military spending. For recent trends see "Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2004* (New York: Oxford University, 2004). See SIPRI website at: http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html (accessed February 13, 2008). The United States spends almost as much on its military as the rest of the world combined.

⁴³ For the \$1.5 billion the United States spends daily on the military, insecticide-treated, long-lasting mosquito nets could be provided for every sleeping site in Africa. Jeffrey Sachs, keynote address at Notre Dame Forum on Global Health Care (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame) September 14, 2006, unpublished. See Sachs, *End of Poverty* 196–200 for a discussion of the virtually ignored issue of malaria in Africa.

military spending, health care services could be provided that would prevent the deaths of 3 million infants a year.⁴⁴ For less than a week's worth of military spending, 140 million children in developing countries who have never attended school could receive an education.⁴⁵

The current socioeconomic reality also raises serious issues related to the structural dimensions of sin, which become instituted in the fabric of society. Nowhere do the levels of disorder and human greed appear more evident than in the world of sports, entertainment, and business. The excessive disparity between compensation of chief executive officers (CEOs) of major corporations, for example, and that of their workers gives expression to how far off course the current system has gone. In the early years of the third millennium, some CEO salaries are as much as 411 times higher than that of the average worker, nearly ten times the 42-to-1 CEO-to-worker salary ratio in 1982.⁴⁶ By 2006, the CEOs of major corporations made annually, on average, \$11.3 million. Compounding the disparity, in the face of competition and financial pressures in the global economy, some CEOs and their corporate boards have given themselves inordinate salaries and bonuses even after poor performance, employee lay-offs, and eliminating pension plans for many workers.⁴⁷ Whatever arguments can be made about the market value of corporate leaders and their relative worth in contributing to the solvency and profitability of a company, a virtually unquestioned system of disordered compensations has now become a normal and accepted part of corporate culture. Without a critical evaluation of the root causes of such a system, these disorders and injustices have not only become normalized and institutionalized but even legalized.⁴⁸ The UN's 2005 Human Development Report summarizes this situation: "In our interconnected world, a future built on the foundation of mass poverty in

⁴⁴ *Human Development Report 2005* 94 puts worldwide military aid expenditures at \$642 billion in 2003. It estimates that \$4 billion would be needed for basic health interventions that could save the lives of 3 million infants a year, 0.06% of the military budget.

⁴⁵ UNICEF places the cost at \$7 to 17 billion to educate every child in a high quality primary school. See *Toward Universal Primary Education: Investments, Incentives, and Institutions*, UN Millennium Project, Task Force on Education and Gender Equality (London: Earthscan, 2005) 9. See also UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 2005: Childhood under Threat* (New York: UNICEF, 2004) 22.

⁴⁶ See Scott Klinger et al., *Executive Excess 2002: CEOs Cook the Books, Skewer the Rest of Us* (Boston: Institute for Policy Studies, 2002) 1.

⁴⁷ See Jill Rauh, "CEOs Awarded Millions as Companies Downsize," June 10, 2006, <http://www.coc.org/bin/view.fpl/1404/article/4995.html> (accessed February 3, 2008). See also Sarah Anderson et al., *Executive Excess 2003: CEOs Win, Workers and Taxpayers Lose* (Boston: Institute for Policy Studies, 2003) 1.

⁴⁸ For more on this subject, see Harold V. Bennett, *Injustice Made Legal* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002).

the midst of plenty is economically inefficient, politically unsustainable and morally indefensible.”⁴⁹

In our own day and age, to argue in favor of the strengths of the free market and material prosperity without reference to the weaknesses of human nature is to court moral and social disaster because it unravels the bonds that unite us as a human family. Without an adequate vision of human life, it is easy to lose sight of our interconnection with each other and become vulnerable to an inner slavery that not only ignores human need but even rewards human greed. Structural reform is certainly needed, but politics and economics alone are insufficient to bring about the renewal and reordering of society. Nor can they map out the contours of a liberating human anthropology. Fundamental structural reform must be accompanied by a more fundamental inner change that originates in the human heart.

AN INNER-VIEW: GLOBALIZATION AND THE WORLD OF THE HUMAN HEART

Many of the problems and disorders of the modern world, as has long been noted by liberation theologians, have their roots in structural and systemic issues that create and perpetuate global injustices. What many liberation theologians have not explored in sufficient depth, or have ignored altogether, is that these disorders on a more fundamental level are related to what happens within people. Vatican II's *Gaudium et spes* notes that the problems of the modern world are also integrally related to the disorders of the human heart:

The truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labors are linked with that more basic imbalance which is rooted in the heart of human beings . . . [where] many elements wrestle with one another. Thus, on the one hand, as created beings they experience their limitations in a multitude of ways; on the other they feel themselves to be boundless in their desires and summoned to a higher life. Pulled by manifold attractions they are constantly forced to choose among them and renounce some. Indeed, as weak and sinful beings, they often do what they would not, and fail to do what they would. Hence they suffer from internal divisions, and from these flow so many and such great discords in society.⁵⁰

Our inability to deliver ourselves from inner discord not only contributes to global disorder but also distorts our understanding of how we come to realize our identity as human beings. This problem, at root, is not simply a political, economic, or social one but a spiritual one.

Although technological progress, economic developments, and material

⁴⁹ *Human Development Report 2005* 17.

⁵⁰ *Gaudium et spes* no. 10, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (Piscataway, N.Y.: New Century, 1966) (translation modified).

prosperity have given us more and more control over the external world, they have given us little grasp of the inner world of the human person and little insight into the ultimate questions of human existence. In much the same way that globalization has left behind such a high percentage of the world's population economically and developmentally, it has also left behind the deeper questions of human life that pertain to loneliness and belonging, good and evil, order and disorder, peace and division, meaning and meaninglessness, hope and despair, love and apathy, justice and injustice, freedom and slavery, and ultimately life and death. My argument here is that, beneath the veneer of global disorders, are fundamental spiritual issues that can be grasped only by a more thorough theological interpretation of reality and a deeper examination of the terrain of the human heart.

The heart is a biblical concept with rich ramifications for Christian anthropology and spirituality.⁵¹ It is also the context in which the deepest form of human liberation unfolds. To its own diminishment, much of Western culture and its proclivities toward rationalism have reduced the notion of the heart to feeling and emotion; more than simply the place of sentiment, the biblical notion of the heart deals with inner wealth: the quality of people's characters, the endowment of their souls, and the treasure within them. The heart symbolizes the whole process of human understanding that can only be grasped from the depths of one's being, the place where the human and the divine intersect. It is the place from which flows one's values, one's relationships, and it is intimately connected with how one responds to the most vulnerable members of the human family. Therefore the work of global transformation has its origin in a more rudimentary inner transformation.

In his book *The Gracing of Human Experience*, Donald Gelpi brings out how political and social injustices in the world are connected to fundamental psychological, intellectual, personal, moral, and religious distortions within people. He names the major fallacies of our human condition as essentialism, dualism, extreme optimism, extreme pessimism, nominalism, and rationalism.⁵² In their place he offers a metaphysical conception of the human person—drawing on the work of Charles S. Pierce—that replaces essentialist substance philosophies with a relational, functional, developmental, social, and environmental understanding of reality. Avoiding the

⁵¹ Jean de Fraine and Albert Vanhoye, "Heart," in *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Xavier Léon-Dufour (Paris: Desclée, 1967) 200–202. See also Thomas F. Martin, *Our Restless Heart: The Augustinian Tradition* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2003).

⁵² Donald L. Gelpi, *The Gracing of Human Experience: Rethinking the Relationship between Nature and Grace* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2001) 263–359.

aforementioned fallacies, Gelpi offers instead a framework of Christian anthropology that grounds philosophically the thoroughly relational character of the human condition and that therefore holds more potential for human liberation.

I cannot here discuss Gelpi's theological anthropology in detail, but particularly germane is the construct of conversion that emerges from this system and is aimed precisely at human liberation. Gelpi defines conversion not simply as a movement from one religious belief system to another but more fundamentally as a movement from irresponsibility to responsibility. He then names five forms of conversion in human life: affective, intellectual, moral, religious, and sociopolitical.⁵³ Each of these areas has much to say to our current disordered reality, but arguably in light of growing global inequities, one of the most important areas for creating a more just and humane society that fosters justice and solidarity is not only sociopolitical conversion but also religious conversion.

The contemporary impediment to justice in an age of globalization, however, does not derive primarily from secularization or atheism. The primary impediment to justice in our current system has, at root, a deeply religious character. The question is not so much whether people believe in God, but in which god they believe. Idolatry, worship of the false gods we create for ourselves to save us from our anxiety and all that threatens to overcome and even destroy us, is arguably the greatest obstacle to a more human globalization.

One of theology's central and critical tasks is to help unmask our world's operative idolatries. In the context of globalization, Christian theology challenges not only religious fundamentalism but also a virtually unquestioned "market fundamentalism" that absolutizes the value of capital above all other values. It dominates much of today's society and creates the idols that enslave us.⁵⁴ Without any discernable accountability structures, market fundamentalism by and large has absolved itself from the demanding, critical examination of the current global system, its consequential impact on the human community, the inescapable issues of the common good, and the welfare of the planet.

In place of understanding human life in light of a monotheistic faith that inverts the current world order through the economy of grace, the consumer culture fosters the notion that the answers lie in a "money-theistic" faith that baptizes the status quo and finds its redemption *only* through the economy of our current global system.⁵⁵ Money-theism, idolization of capi-

⁵³ Donald L. Gelpi, *Committed Worship: A Sacramental Theology for Converting Christians* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1993) xi.

⁵⁴ Richard Falk, "The Monotheistic Religions in the Era of Globalization," *Global Dialogue* 1.1 (Summer 1999) 137–48, at 148.

⁵⁵ On the concept "money-theism," see David R. Loy, "The West against the

tal, expressed as the worship of the gods of the marketplace, is often practiced through the rituals of the stock market and the liturgies of global capitalism. The idolatry of money not only greatly contributes to global injustices, but it is also anchored in a fundamental theological and anthropological error precisely because it measures people in terms of material wealth and financial metrics, often at the expense of people's human dignity and spiritual endowments. It is more concerned with the size of one's bank account than of one's spiritual capital.

Because such idolatry greatly contributes to today's social disorder, the solutions lie not only in social and political reform but also in a more fundamental conversion of heart. As an articulation of a vision of human existence within the context of Christian revelation, theological anthropology offers an important hermeneutical dimension to the process of globalization, in that it sees conversion as integral to understanding what it means to be authentically human.⁵⁶ It helps us name the pathologies of globalization as "sin," not simply because they violate certain norms and laws but because they ultimately dehumanize us. Theological anthropology also facilitates an ability to grasp the deepest aspirations of the human heart. Moreover, it gives us insight into who we are as we seek to understand both ourselves in the light of our deepest hopes for relationships and the recurring, destructive patterns that unravel our bonds with God, one another, and our universe.

Such a vision of human life is difficult to attain in an increasingly consumerist global society that has its own operative anthropologies, its own perceptions of what constitutes the true, the good, and the beautiful in human beings. The operative anthropological undercurrents of this consumer culture, in particular, need further critical reflection because they so frequently distort our understanding of the path to human liberation. By the age of 20, average Americans will have seen some one million television commercials, and before they die they will have spent in sum an entire year of their lives watching commercials.⁵⁷ Often such commercials promise deliverance from meaninglessness and emptiness through a new car, a bigger house, a larger paycheck, a faster computer, or some other new

Rest? A Response to "The Clash of Civilizations,"" <http://www.transnational.org> (accessed February 3, 2008), the website of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research.

⁵⁶ Janet Ruffing, "Theological Anthropology," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1993) 47–50.

⁵⁷ See "Affluenza," <http://www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza/> and the guide to its "Treatment" at <http://www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza/treat/tguide/tguide2.html> (accessed February 3, 2008). For more on the deleterious effects of commercials and consumerism, see John F. Kavanaugh, *Following Christ in a Consumer Society: The Spirituality of Cultural Resistance* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1981; rev. ed. 1991, 2006).

Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin.⁶²

The incarnation does not reject our material nature nor our drive for some measure of material fulfillment. Rather the incarnation embraces our nature and directs our vision to the meaning of human life beyond those forces that would limit our perception, especially the vision that prevents our perceiving the interconnectedness of all reality. Our interconnectedness means that we come to understand what it means to be human only within the context of our relationships, which must be grounded in the dignity given by God to humans and all other creatures, and that the source and grounding of all relationships is God. Christian anthropology goes even further to speak of this interconnectedness in terms of sharing in a common body in Christ. It acknowledges that material and technological progress without a corresponding spiritual advancement cannot bring about genuine human liberation.⁶³

As we look at globalization from within, we can discern three erroneous anthropological premises in our contemporary global context, especially as it is marked by advanced industrial capitalism and the values of Western culture: that human beings are (1) fundamentally consumers, (2) defined primarily by their material and economic endowments, and (3) radically autonomous. Christian theology, following these insights from Gelpi's construct of conversion and *Gaudium et spes*, fundamentally rejects these premises. In contrast, a liberating human anthropology rests on the premise that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and that they therefore (1) find their realization as persons only in relation to God, (2) in the end are measured more by their inner endowments than by their material or financial assets, and (3) are fundamentally relational creatures who need each other in community. In this light conversion is the hermeneutical key that is central to the process of human liberation precisely because it helps name, and even reclaim, the undeconstructable truth of our existence as relational creatures who share an intimate bond with the Creator and all other creatures.

GLOBALIZING SOLIDARITY

Whether one sees it as positive or negative, globalization is an integral part of the world picture and an evolving part of human society. As Gustavo Gutiérrez states:

To be against globalization as such is like being against electricity. However, this cannot lead us to resign ourselves to the present order of things because global-

⁶² *Gaudium et spes* no. 22 (translation modified).

⁶³ *Ibid.* no. 4.

ization as it is now being carried out exacerbates the unjust inequalities among different sectors of humanity and the social, economic, political, and cultural exclusion of a good portion of the world's population.⁶⁴

The central questions about globalization ultimately are not about efficiency or profitability but about human life and human freedom. Christian theology's principal task in the modern world is not to reject globalization but to humanize it, to make it more risk-averse to human costs than to financial costs, and above all to challenge people to become more interested in the human and spiritual assets of the global community than in the financial and material portfolio of its individual members.

In a world where more and more people experience alienation from God and each other, theology invites us to communion. In a consumer market saturated with material goals, theology reminds us of the irrepressible spiritual dimensions of the human heart. In a culture that creates new forms of slavery, theology names the idolatry of our hearts and proclaims the path to freedom. In a society where there is inner and outer fragmentation, theology dares to foster a vision of human life that risks solidarity. Above all, theology points to the fact that the call to be fully human requires a conversion of heart that leads to a spirituality of globalization and solidarity. By necessity, the realization of our interconnectedness as human beings challenges us to work for what John Paul II referred to as a "globalization without marginalization" or "a globalization of solidarity,"⁶⁵ which arguably ought to be the ultimate *telos* of globalization.

To advance a "globalization of solidarity" means building "a civilization of love."⁶⁶ The response of the world community to the tsunami that hit South Asia on December 26, 2004, leaving more than 300,000 dead and millions homeless, is one example of how the collective efforts of individuals, governments, business organizations, and churches from around the world can help alleviate widespread human misery. The globalization of institutions, networks, and systems gives expression to the unprecedented potential for doing good and concrete ways of affirming our interconnectedness.

While such direct assistance to victims of this tsunami is praiseworthy, every *hour* more than 1,200 children die of preventable diseases, a figure equivalent to the number of deaths by three such tsunamis every month.⁶⁷ The lack of responsiveness to this health crisis and other instances of

⁶⁴ Gutiérrez, "Memory and Prophecy" 32.

⁶⁵ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America* no. 55 (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1999).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* no. 10. Paul VI first referred to "a civilization of love"—in his Address for the Closing of the Holy Year, December 25, 1975, *Acta apostolicae sedis* 68 (1976) 145.

⁶⁷ *Human Development Report 2005* 1.

preventable human misery indicate that there is indeed much work that still needs to be done in fostering a globalization of solidarity and in building up a civilization of love. As Christian theology reflects on this practice, it will continue to evaluate the results of globalization in terms of how the current structures of society help create a more just social order, help the poor, contribute to the international common good, and foster genuine development.⁶⁸

As the UN's 1999 Human Development Report put it, "People are the real wealth of nations."⁶⁹ What human society most needs now is not so much an unbridled belief in the invisible hand that guides the world economy as a discovery of the invisible heart that would enable us to foster care in the global village.⁷⁰ The most fundamental task of Christian discipleship is to live out human solidarity to such an extent that one helps make more visible the invisible heart of God.

Nonetheless, even as globalization has led to the lowering of trade barriers, making us more and more into an integrated market, perhaps the more difficult walls to lower are those in the human heart that prevent our seeing our interconnectedness in a common human family. By orienting us toward a "civilization of love," theology can offer a compelling critique of idolatrous structures that enslave and can issue a persuasive call to conversion of heart as central to authentic human freedom.

⁶⁸ John Paul II, Peace on Earth to Those Whom God Loves, message for the 2000 World Day of Peace, *Origins* 29 (1999) 449–55, at 453.

⁶⁹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004* 127

⁷⁰ The notion of the "invisible heart" comes from UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* 77.