

# Discernment

So that you may be able to discern what is best. Phil. 1:10

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## Reconciliation and Globalization

### Radical Love

■ “The Taliban leadership can boast to be the most disabled in the world today and visitors do not know whether to laugh or to cry,” writes Ahmed Rashid in his book *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (Yale University Press, 2000). “Mullah Omar lost his right eye in 1989 when a rocket exploded close by. The Justice Minister Nuruddin Turabi and the former Foreign Minister Mohammed Ghaus are also one-eyed. The Mayor of Kabul, Abdul Majid, has one leg and two fingers missing. Other leaders, even military commanders, have similar disabilities.”

Although the Taliban and Osama bin Laden openly demonstrated their willingness to pay any price to liquidate “infidels” and impose seventh century Islam on others, few in the peaceful West cared. Despite persistent reports of persecution against Christians in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Egypt, Muslim fanaticism seemed distant, even unreal. Religion-based hatred of the West’s economic and cultural power was another abstraction. We were safe in our prosperity.

Until September 11. Now we have tasted firsthand what Samuel Huntington called a “clash of civilizations.” Globalization has come home with a vengeance, and the United States is mobilizing for war.

Will the church also wake up for the spiritual battle facing us? After the Iranian Revolution, there was an upsurge in missionary recruitment for agencies focusing on Islam. Yet only 6 percent of

foreign missionaries today are devoted to reaching the world’s 1.2 billion Muslims. Understandably, after the World Trade Center, many organizations pulled their workers out of harm’s way. Thus, an increasingly radicalized Muslim world has even fewer witnesses to Christ than it did.

While radicals sharpen the differences between us, we, as good globalists, tend to blur them. Jay Smith, a Brethren in Christ missionary who debates vocal Muslim radicals every Sunday at Speaker’s Corner in London, will have none of this. He presents without apology the historical problems with Islam and the truth of Christianity. Smith believes that we must not only love Muslims into the kingdom, but challenge their intellects as well.

“We think we are being Christlike by conceding many salient points when ‘dialoguing’ with them,” he says. “But in reality, the message that they are hearing is that we aren’t sure where we stand.”

The contributors in this issue of *Discernment* rightly call on us to share technology, resources, and expertise with the poor and oppressed in this era of globalization. But we jars of clay also must share our real treasure. We need to match radical hate with radical, transforming love.

“Globalization has come home with a vengeance, and the United States is mobilizing for war.”

Stan Guthrie, editor of *Discernment*

# Is God in Globalization?

By Max Stackhouse

■ In the new book *Global Transformations*, which is called by several of its critics “the definitive work on globalization,” a team of social scientists led by

David Held have identified three major, competing views of globalization. The “hyper-globalists” hold that economics has set a development trajectory toward a global civilization that will encompass the world, creating plenty for all and bringing about the end of all the older hierarchies and nationalisms.

The anti-globalists, by contrast, point out that regionalization, especially among societies that were internally homogenous

in the past, is taking place more dramatically than globalization. National and cultural pride is rising among various peoples, especially among those marginalized parts of the world’s populations—and even among minorities within larger cultural units. These critics say that we are witnessing the widespread growth in many places of a very dangerous “retribalization” against dominant organizations at home and against globalizing political or economic influences from abroad.

The authors of this really masterful volume believe that a third view, a transformationalist view, offers the better interpretation. They argue that in different parts of the world different aspects of societies are undergoing change in distinct areas of life at distinct paces. All this, they say, is due to the changing shape of power. They focus on the “political, economic, and cultural patterns of determinative influence.”

## Limited Perspective

As good as this analysis is, from a theological perspective, we have to say that it is limited. The kinds of scholarship that the authors are working with have dogmatically decided that nothing decisive can come from things like religion, faith, theology, or

ethics. Nor do they do tell us anything about the ultimate significance of what these interactions mean. This traps them into several profound empirical and intellectual problems. One has to do with the nature and character of power itself. They understand globalization to be a process with no apparent causes, as if nothing had power to bring these things about.

This threefold analysis of power—economic, cultural, and political—is widely used in contemporary scholarship and is overcoming the more old-fashioned division between public and private as the spheres of life. But what generated these patterns? Every society has economic, cultural, and political dimensions. So why did not every society generate the things that lead to globalization? And why can’t every society adapt neatly into the globalization patterns as they develop?

Let’s look at just one part of the globalization scene, science and technology. The authors of *Global Transformations* simply presume that the universe is relatively ordered and yet open to manipulation, and that humanity has the right, indeed the duty, to transform nature for the benefit of humanity. Yet evidence suggests that only when certain strands of the Christian tradition were present did science and technology take root in the modern world.

These fine scholars live, one might say, in a flat world. The Bible, Dante, and Milton do not make sense to them except as poetry. They cannot see higher or lower powers at work in the midst of humanity. The more one digs into the social history and the contemporary phenomena of these complex transformative changes, the more one finds societies that have developed churches and religious institutions, independent of reigning political power and traditional patriarchal culture. These are precisely the societies that have generated the energy for these powers of globalization.

In *Global Transformations*, only two pages touch on religion. The authors see religion and ethics as essentially benign expressions of cultural development. The range of their vision is artificially



Photos by Larry J. DeVries

Max Stackhouse argues that contemporary analyses of globalization usually exclude the religious and spiritual foundations upon which peoples order their societies.

narrowed by studied exclusion of things that are most important to those of us who try to be faithful. Isn't it simply intellectually mistaken to hold that we can understand the generation, the spread, the reception, and the resistance to globalization without reference to the fact that most of the religions in Africa, and parts of Asia, and Latin America are tribal? Can you really understand East Asia without understanding something of the history of Confucianism? Can you understand India without understanding Hinduism?

### Moral and Spiritual Architecture

Thus we need to take a wider, a deeper, longer, and a higher view, and that is what theology and some kinds of ethics try to do. The moral and spiritual architecture of every civilization is grounded more than any other factor in religious commitments that point to a source of ultimate meaning beyond the political, economic, and cultural structures themselves. Our job is to use our resources to fill in what is missing in these portraits, so that globalization can be a blessing and not a curse to humanity.

So let us examine a neglected aspect of Christian thought, which goes under the name "public theology." Many of the themes in Scripture not only talk about the reaching of souls and the building of churches, but to the very formation and reformation of the fabric of the common life. Not only did Christ instruct us to go to all the world, but Paul followed the trade routes to plant churches. The New Testament is written in Greek, not Aramaic or Hebrew. A superpower dominated politics and gave a relative peace that the gospel could be spread in a proto-globalizing era. And the culture of that era was a cosmopolitan babble of Egyptian, Hellenistic, and wider European beliefs, practices, and arts.

People of the time developed the idea that the world is populated by *powers* that are spiritual in character. My colleagues who have studied the issue with me refer to certain disembodied potentialities that become resident in social, political, economic, cultural, personal life. They grasp our loyalties and command our hearts and shape a community's iden-

tity. They grab peoples' souls. They shape mass perceptions. They form an *ethos*. They shape the habits and mores of a people and the range of possible institutions. Life plans that people can imagine are bounded by these things.

No society is without them. *Eros*, the power of sexual desire, is a wonderful gift, except when it pretends that it can satisfy the deepest needs of the human heart. *Mars*, the power of violence and potentially lethal force, is given to political authority and can be a terror to evil, except when it pretends that it alone can protect us from the deepest disorders and dangers. *Mammon*, as money, represents the formation of an economic system with a respect for property. Without which, no society can develop a complex economy, and no society can flourish. But when people see economic security as the only thing that can save us, we are diminished. The *Muses*—the capacity to create and enjoy language and artistic creativity—represent one of the greatest gifts to humanity. This gift, however, can lead to self-celebration or idolatrous group

imaging. My colleagues and I call these things *principalities*. In the New Testament they appear to be primary and necessary for every society, and yet, at the same time, a potential threat to every society if they are not rightly ordered.

Now let us examine something we call the *authorities*, another key New Testament term. Authorities are more obviously historically produced and less universal in their origin, although they are becoming more universal in their effects. These authorities appear to be present only in more complex cultures, and they have great importance for globalization. They tend to become the chief objects of trust in society: lawyers, scientists, doctors, technologists, and so on. These are driven by the forces and powers of *nomos*, *gnosis*, *salus*, and *techne*. These powers have declared their independence from their theological roots.

Then there are the *dominions*, those ruling or governing spiritual realities that for ages have given peoples the vision of the right way to order their

"Our job is to use our resources to fill in what is missing . . . so that globalization can be a blessing and not a curse to humanity."



Max Stackhouse is the Stephen Colwell Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary. An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, he is a widely published author and an editor of the multi-volume series, *God and Globalization*. Dr. Stackhouse presented these remarks in longer form at the 2001 CACE Spring Conference, "The Ethical Challenges of Globalization."

“For all of the religions now must encounter each other. Not only does every society find its boundaries permeable, but so does every institution.”

sexuality, their power, their economic life, their artistic cultures, and which have helped develop views of law, health, knowledge, and technology. Under the guidance of the dominions, the lords of the great world religions, the principalities and powers have been brought into some specific kind of civilization-al pattern. This is one of the most important issues in every age. Which lord do you have? Moreover, the leaders of institutions must make their decisions with reference to these lords or lose their legitimacy.

### Reaching Out

Those of us who take Christ as our Dominus, as our Lord, must also recognize that we not only have to face the various spiritual powers, old and new, but their followers. We know what we confess, but have we cultivated the public theological implications in a way that can make sense in a global era to those who do not have our Lord? How do we “give an account for the faith that is within us” in this area, at this time?

Of course, dealing with these deeper forms and kinds of powers is more complicated in an age of globalization than it was when our horizons were more limited. For all of the religions now must encounter each other. Not only does every society find its boundaries permeable, but so does every institution. If you are going to put together a top rate management team in a corporation, you may get a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Christian. How are you going to find commonality in even making those decisions?

Again, the social, cultural forces most often identified with globalization—such things as corporations that generate efficient production, constitutional democracy that protects minorities and balances out power and provides for peaceful succession of power, family patterns that sustain rights for women and children, communication networks that invite cultural exploration and complex professionalism in advanced technology—were formed essentially by and out of traditions that are stamped by Christian theological ethics. How can we shape them, modify them, and guide them if we refuse to acknowledge this? In fact, most of these institutions make it relatively safe for those who are not Christians to exist. In societies formed on other principles, it is a lot less safe for Christians than for

Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus. What kind of world do you want to shape in the future, and on what kind of foundations?

We must also acknowledge that both Christianity and various other globalizing forces have sometimes been allied with colonialism, imperialism, hegemony, forced migrations, slavery, patriarchy, sexual exploitation, conquest, and genocide. If we don't get down on our knees and pray forgiveness for our ancestors' behavior on some of these things, then we don't get our own heritage. In the final analysis, however, we should not shrink from the moral responsibility to see globalization from a Christian theological perspective.

As far as we can see into the future, there will be a resurgence of religious influence in the world. These religions will borrow from and react against each other, sometimes converting and sometimes converging and sometimes diverging, sometimes finding common ground and sometimes drawing lines in the sand. The psychosexual drives of *Eros*, the political-military ambitions of *Mars*, the economic interests of *Mammon*, the cultural pretenses of the *Muses* will again and again seek to make religion a tool of their own self-celebrations.

Moreover, the *nomos* of law, the *gnosis* of academia, the *salus* of medicine, and the *techne* of engineering—to mention a few—will be used to explain and channel religious meanings. So we must look explicitly at what is claimed in the New Testament, that Christ has brought, in principle, the principalities, authorities, and dominions under the laws of God so that they can, in the long run, serve the purposes of God as a part of the mercies of God, and that all believers in Christ are called to be agents of this reconciliation process, especially in a global era for the glory of God.

How? One, we must recover the deep historical memory about how the faiths influence the structure of life and the institutions of life.

Two, we need to develop a fundamental theory of how to order complex systems. This is one of the weakest points of evangelical thought today. Three, we need to form people who possess a deep memory of biblical and theological history and who have profound commitment to being God's agents in the midst of a rebellious world with all its strange principalities, powers, authorities, and dominions.

# Seeking Justice for the Global Poor

By Samuel Dansokho

■ We are gathered to say and to hear a word about “seeking justice for the global poor.” How can Americans do this when they are part and parcel of the problem? In Senegal and in most countries of Africa, life is not easy, but we celebrate it as the gift of God. We firmly believe in a tender, loving, and caring God, a God of justice and mercy; an Almighty God who is able and willing to deliver on the promises He made—life in abundance (John 10) and a future with hope (Jeremiah 29). But we face a cruel irony. The only abundance seems to be of death and scarcity, and the only future predicted by the pundits is one of gloom and misery.

Let me tell you in all truth and love that a lot of your African sisters and brothers, and I am one of them, hold you partially responsible for our predicament. To be fair, we, as Africans, have also our own responsibilities; how could it be otherwise? Some of our political leaders did not borrow for the betterment of their people. They did not feed and care for the flock but exploited the sheep and killed and fed on them. Having said that, did not the lenders know what and to whom they were lending? Why should the people against whom the debt was used yesterday as an instrument of oppression be forced to pay today? Does it seem right to require that the very victims of apartheid in South Africa reimburse the cost of the bullets and the bulldogs that robbed them of their dignity and land?

## Who Will Pay?

Let us look closely at the accounts. Who will compensate for the hundreds of millions of African children taken into slavery by those who talked of “civilizing mission” but specified in writing that their main purpose was “to charge the decks of the royal company’s vessels with as many slaves and livestock

as possible”? What monies will pay for the raw material and the diamonds and the gold and the artifacts? What amount of money will pay for the depiction of Africans as subhumans, stupid, ignorant, pitiful creatures in need of assistance?

Why are we made so poor that we have to borrow and to beg? Why is the West so rich today that it imposes its rule all over the world? Why do some always seem to be donors and the others receivers?

The sad reality is that whenever we, as Africans, came in contact with the West, we lost!

To make it worse, our meager resources are devoted to servicing an unjust debt, at the expense of education, health, and social programs, according to measures imposed by international financial institutions.

Worse, the debt that we are obviously not able to pay is refinanced into larger loans that will create larger deprivations. This is a deadly circle. We are drowning and they keep on pouring water on our heads! Help! We are still alive but they are burying us. Who will roll the stone away for us? In the spirit of the Jubilee, “the next to the kin” should. Are we your sisters and brothers in Christ?

This is the message of Jubilee: Reverse this deadly culture of profit and exploitation by a culture of solidarity and mutual care (Leviticus 25). In that spirit, not only the debts should regularly be canceled unconditionally, but the property—the means for making a decent and honest living—should be returned. The Bible knows how to prevent the nesting of systemic injustice in society. This is not optional. It is the word of God.



*Samuel Dansokho says Christians in America must take steps to break the crushing and unjust circle of debt suffered by their brethren in other countries.*

Rev. Samuel Dansokho, a citizen of Senegal, is coordinator of the Africa Committee of Jubilee Chicago. The worldwide Jubilee 2000 campaign was an attempt to get rich nations to cancel the debts of poor nations. Dansokho gave his remarks during a forum on “Jubilee 2000: Seeking Justice for the Global Poor,” held at Wheaton College and co-sponsored by CACE and Urban Studies.

# The Digital World and the Myth of the Global Village

By Robert Fortner

■ What is our responsibility to the rest of the world—as Christians and as Americans—in the so-called Information Age? And do we Americans have an extra measure of responsibility for what goes on in the digital world?

The idea of a global village emerged from the writings of Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s. In one of his books, he said that “as electrically constructed, the globe is no more than a village.” He also wrote that “‘time’ has ceased, ‘space’ has vanished, we now live in a global village.”

In the capital cities or airports of almost every country in the world, you can watch CNN to see what is happening in other places. We see things on our televisions virtually at the time that they occur, and we seem to be in two places at once. And we experience it, for the most part, as though we are actually in that physical space. But, there is another dimension of McLuhan’s argument. In 1964, he wrote, “Electric speed at bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion has heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree.”

What McLuhan was really saying is that once this connectivity was established, once this global village actually exists and we all recognize that we inhabit it as function of this extension of our central nervous systems through the media and now through the Internet, we will feel the pain, the suffering, and the joys as though we lived in those villages. And we will feel responsibility for what goes on there. In other words, our ethical awareness will somehow be heightened as a result of these developments. This is an aspect that you very seldom, if ever, see referenced when the popular media talks about the so-called global village.

## Our Ethical Responsibilities

What does the Bible have to say about our ethical responsibilities? Passages such as Leviticus 19:9-10; Leviticus 25:8-55; Deuteronomy 26:12-13; Hebrews

13:2; Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 11; Deuteronomy 24:17, 19-22 describe a variety of requirements. When people harvested their fields, they were not to go into the corners or along the edges so that the poor could glean enough to feed themselves. Also, slaves could be redeemed and debts forgiven. There were also the expectations that God’s people would care for strangers and sojourners. Anyone who knocked on the door was to be given a place to sleep and bread to eat. The poor, widows, and orphans were to be cared for so that they did not somehow fall through the cracks.

We see that God would have us acknowledge the ontological status of humankind, the *imago dei*. Every human being is made in the image of God and has equal status before God. Second, He would have us—as people who have chosen to believe in the salvation offered to us through Christ—extend His *shalom*, His community gathering, His peace, His justice to the least among us on His behalf, just as the Jews were expected to do in the Old Testament. This is a kind of restatement of what we call the Great Commandment, that we should love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and that we should love our neighbors as ourselves.

This ethic, of course, was originally given in an agricultural society, but it did not die when the Industrial Revolution came along. As a higher and higher percentage of people left the farms, went to the manufacturing cities, began to live and work in cities, the ethic did not change. It didn’t stop there. The expectations that God had made in this agricultural society were extended into the Industrial Age. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, wrote a book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. In it, he says, “What is the use of preaching the Gospel to men whose whole attention is concentrated upon a mad, desperate struggle to keep themselves alive? You might as well give a tract to a shipwrecked sailor who is battling with the surf which has drowned his comrades and threatens to drown him. He will not listen to you. Nay, he cannot hear you



Robert Fortner argues that God’s requirements for social justice, originally given in an agricultural age, can and must be applied in our Internet age.

any more than a man whose head is under water can listen to a sermon.” This kind of thinking led Booth to expand the work of the Salvation Army beyond dealing with drunkenness into establishing soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other charitable activities in the urban slums of England. Booth and others began to apply the ethic of social justice, which had been developed within an agricultural framework, within industrial societies.

They redefined gleaning, for instance. Now it was not just a matter of not picking up every piece of grain that might have been yours, but providing housing, sanitation, and food for the industrial poor. One of the things that happens when people move to the cities, of course, is that they cannot grow their own food anymore. And most of them had come from agricultural sectors of their society. So how did one provide food for them? The alien or the stranger began to define larger and larger percentages of the population who came to these industrial areas to work. The cities themselves became places that were populated by strangers.

And the density of space, the squashing together of people, the incredible huddles that were created, the tenements, and the slums of the cities, those were not excuses to walk away from the plight of people who were stuck there. The ethic of the agricultural society still had to be applied within this industrial society. The devaluation of humanity through child labor, unnatural rhythms of shift work, places of work—deep underground in the mines and so forth—none of these were excuses, or acceptable excuses, to Christians to abandon God’s requirements. It simply meant that those requirements had to be brought into the modern age, had to be applied within a new context.

### Shalom in the Information Age

Now, we are moving out of a so-called industrial society into an information society. How do we apply these same principles of gleaning, of jubilee, of care for strangers, aliens, and sojourners in the age of

the Internet?

In recent decades, some secular statements and resolutions have had something to say about the nature of humankind and the role of information and communication in society. One statement, passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946, declares that “freedom of information is a fundamental human right and is the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated.” The second, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.” Both of these resolutions were adopted at the vigorous urging of the United States. We, being a society with a Bill of Rights, were eager to extend those rights to the rest of the world. And yet the reality falls far short of these noble declarations.

In Canada and the United States, about 55 percent of all households are using the Internet. In Europe it is about 16 percent. In the world as a whole, it is about 7.5 percent. So talk about a “global village” seems a bit of a joke. Only a very small percentage of the world’s population is part of that “village.” Worldwide there are about 440 people using the Internet of every 10,000. In the United States, it is almost 4,000. In Canada, it is 3,600 per 10,000; in Sweden, 4,100. But in Africa, it is about 35 per 10,000; India, 20; China, 70. In the former Soviet bloc, meanwhile, Lithuania stands at 278, Russia, 183, and Albania, 6.5.

So then, in an information society, what is community? In one respect, it has come to embrace the entire planet. Even though people aren’t connected to the Internet and part of the “global village,” we are responsible for them. Space or distance is no more an excuse for us than it was in the Industrial Society.

Over 80 percent of Web sites, globally, are in English. So what do you do if your first language is Hindi, Japanese, or Russian—or one of the tribal

“How do we apply these same principles of gleaning, of jubilee, of care for strangers, aliens, and sojourners in the age of the Internet?”



Robert Fortner is professor of communication, art, and sciences at Calvin College. He has developed several distance education courses dealing with communication in the digital world, including Media and Information, Literacy and Information, Literacy and Communicating the Gospel. Fortner presented these remarks, in longer form, at the CACE Spring Conference, “The Ethical Challenges of Globalization.”

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# The Global Digital Divide: The Morality of Information Distribution

By Albert van den Heuvel

■ Never in history have people had so much power over nature, over life and death, over genetic structures. Our powers to heal, to research, and to destroy are on a scale no generation before us has ever known. We have never known as much, and soon we will know more.

## Power Only for a Few

This tremendous power rests only with a tiny fraction of the populace of the earth. The great majority of our contemporaries have no access to vital information. Fifteen percent of the world's population lives in absolute poverty, earns a dollar a day or less and desperately searches to eat, to find shelter, to feed its children. Between 40 and 60 million of them have fled their native regions for fear of war, persecution, hunger, and natural disaster. Yet in spite of their misery, their numbers increase faster than any plan to help them. The financial resources to help them are available, but the will is lacking.

From 1979 to 1998, 4,000 farmers in one state in India committed suicide because of their inability to provide a living for their families. Between 1991 and 2000, the Gross National Product of 59 countries, largely outside of North America and Europe, declined steeply. Death rates in these areas increased by more than 15 percent. Infant mortality in some poor countries is on the rise. In 1980, the income gap between the top 20 percent of the world's population and the bottom 20 percent was 30-1. In 1997, it was 74-1. Africa in that period lost a fifth of its income, and the average African household consumed 25 percent less than it did.

UNESCO estimates that providing a basic education for all children would cost \$6 billion a year. That is \$2 billion less than the U.S.A. spends on cosmetics every year and \$11 billion less than this country spends annually on pet food.

Two hundred and twenty-five individuals have assets of \$311 billion. That is equal to the annual

income of 47 of the poorest countries. The top 20 percent of our generation consumes 86 percent of all goods and services—the bottom 20 percent, 1.3 percent. The top 20 percent consumes 58 percent of all the energy, 84 percent of all the paper, and 74 percent of all the telephone lines. Half of the world's population has never made a telephone call. Five percent of the world's population owns 85 percent of all modern means of communication.

We live on a tiny island of wealth in an ocean of poverty. Communication technology, which is the very symbol of our strength and wealth, does not benefit most of the world's people. On the contrary, it has become the newest weapon to keep people in their places. Bold promises that were made publicly to the developing countries to include them in the new benefits of integrated computer technology were broken. The global digital divide is not a tragedy or an accident, but the result of a policy on the part of richer nations to break their promises and to keep the have-nots in their place.

## Six Consequences

The first consequence of these facts is that we live in a deeply divided world. The second is the emergence of an ever-growing mass of human beings who are written off as valuable and dignified partners in the race for growing welfare, better health, and more education. The third is an ever growing mass of people who move from disadvantaged and neglected areas of the world to the pockets of wealth and power. They are demanding proper pay for the natural resources they have given us for low prices to accumulate our wealth. They are giving us a bill for goods delivered.

Fourth is the increase in the acts of despair on both sides of the divide. If you deny large groups of people a share in the wealth of the world, especially if you use their labor to increase your own wealth, then they will come and get it for themselves. History is full of stories about people who organize in order to overcome unjust structures. They



*Albert van den Heuvel says that communication technology, "the very symbol of our strength and our wealth," has become "the newest weapon to keep people in their place."*



sometimes fail. They often succeed. The consequence of intended inequality is enforced change.

Fifth is that the divide will increase. That has more consequences than we may yet realize. In terms of philosophy and theology, the agenda of the left-out countries will address different problems than the philosophers and the theologians in the rich countries. The agenda of the poor is not the agenda of the rich. The theological and philosophical work of the people in the Third World threatens the continuance of our being. In South Africa, for example, the white agenda differed totally from the black agenda. White theology and spirituality were not only irrelevant but also offensive to the black brethren and sisters—and vice versa.

Sixth is the backlash of the digital have-nots on the haves. When the rich begin to understand that they are responsible for what happens in the larger part of the world, it saps their spirituality and mental health. The artists, the scientists, the philosophers, the theologians will begin to raise their heads and begin to resist their own societies, leading to social implosion.

### Three Choices

We have three choices. The first is the stupid one: We can ignore the facts and forget to look at our feet, which are of clay. That is the choice we have usually made. I call this the Nebuchadnezzar syndrome.

The second is to defend our lifestyle and explain it as a gift of God. We say we didn't get rich through theft but because we worked hard for it, and the Lord blessed our efforts. We say that wealth is given to us to educate the poor and to maintain creation.

The third choice, of course, is to proclaim, as the prophet Jonah did to Ninevah, "We are on the brink of disaster." We are living on this small island of wealth with an ocean of poverty around us, and if those characters around us start to move, we will hardly have time to put a farewell note on the Internet to our friends. We need to take on the challenges and do what we can.

### Two Challenges

What are the challenges? The first is that most of our countries do not know about the digital divide

and its consequences. We need to tell them. Second, we need to challenge our governments, not to do something new, but to keep the promises they have made to the rest of the world. The money is there. We are not talking about luxury but the way in which our society is organized.

Bill Gates said recently that there is no market for digital investors in developing countries. That is correct. But we are not talking about investors breaking a promise. We are talking about elected governments making a promise and breaking it. We need vision, courage, and respect for human dignity not to acquiesce in a situation that is socially so explosive. Educational institutions have specific tasks. I happily call on you to use your influence with staff, colleagues, and fellow students to analyze the world as it is. The lovely atmosphere on this campus has very little to do with the wide world in which we live. Therefore, you have a double task, for yourself, for your children (because they will live with the consequences of our failure to close the digital gap).

That means that we have to do a little publishing. You are in one of the best schools in America. Your voice is heard wherever you lift it up. It would be very interesting in the United States if there were one college somewhere that painted the picture of the world as it is for fellow schools. It is not an impossible task. Two little books a year will do a lot.

I see that you have the great privilege of having in your midst a number of students who come from developing countries. That is exceedingly important. You have too few of them, I think, but it is a good beginning. Those people are the representatives of the other world. They are also your ambassadors when they go back home. So here is another little task: Make sure that none of the people who are here from countries where the digital divide is so stark goes home without access to Internet and to the new digital possibilities. These people should be able to stay in touch with you and to strengthen the infrastructures in their own countries.

Why don't you go to your administration and say, "Let us set a goal for the number of schools we can wire in the next five to six years"? Why not adopt 12 schools around the world to make sure that a network of digital reconciliation is begun? Then ask your administration to get on your teaching staff



Albert van den Heuvel is chairman of the board of the Dutch Media Academy, the training facility for public, private, and commercial broadcasting. In 1996, he was elected president of the World Association of Christian Communication. He is an ordained minister in the Netherlands Reformed Church. He gave these remarks in longer form at a forum—"The Global Digital Divide: The Morality of Information Distribution"—sponsored by CACE and the Wheaton College Department of Communications.

a few members from these other parts of the world. You will be able to create a free university on the air and begin closing the digital gap.

### **Avoiding Catastrophe**

Do not ever think that this digital divide will be closed by a political decision alone. Because we are in a digital age, the power of governments is much less than politicians would like it to be. The forces of the international economy govern us all. Political action needs lively support from non-governmental agencies. You are one of the non-governmental institutions. So it depends on the people underneath the political structure whether in 10 or 15 years we will be able to say that we just sailed away from the

catastrophe.

I spend a lot of my time in Eastern Europe. You see people who once were established in the middle class sitting in the streets and selling their two or three cigarettes and a pair of old shoes. Those societies have been annihilated in the last 10 to 15 years. Do you know how many of the students, how many members of the leadership, and how many citizens in those countries expected this could happen? None. The disappearance of your own society, which you think is so stable, is very hard to imagine. Yet, since the time I was born—about 70 years ago—512 cities have disappeared from the earth. So, if I were you, I would organize a little group among yourselves to steer clear of the catastrophe.

*continued from page 7*

## **The Digital World and the Myth of the Global Village**

languages of Indonesia? What if you have no infrastructure—no electricity to turn the computers on, no phone lines to connect the modems to—or education? These dispossessed are out there, cut off, through no fault of their own. The community became responsible for Ruth and Naomi. Today, in the Information Age, we, likewise, have a responsibility for them.

### **Destroying the Myth**

One of our tasks is to deny the mythology of the global village. Don't buy into the idea that everybody is living nice, happy, well-tuned lives, because it destroys the dignity of people who have been cut off. It screens the ugly reality of inequality. We must recognize that communications is a basic human right.

We can also help in the development and extension of the infrastructure, electricity, and telephone lines needed to be a part of this Information Society. This also includes the equipment, software, and service to keep things running. Additionally, we need to provide training and education to people and to use media as a means of healing and community development. This has been done in many urban areas in the United States by ministries. The

Internet doesn't have to be all about e-commerce.

We Americans have a special obligation, a role that we inherit, because we are in the forefront of those movements. We generally take an amoral posture concerning technology and equality of access to resources. But by refusing to get involved in the development of information infrastructure in places that can't afford it, we are essentially cutting them off from the rest of the world.

In 1995, David Nicholson, a *Washington Post* staff writer, wrote, "It's too late, of course, to turn back and retreat to pre-digital times. But it isn't too late to think about what kind of future we want to live in and how we might affect things from here on out. The more technology invades our lives, the more it obscures the real issues—the fact that our lives are really about love and work and death, about creating and maintaining relationships that sustain us, about finding meaningful vocations, and about living with the knowledge that, alone among all creatures, we know one day we're going to die. Technology may affect the material conditions of our lives, but it hasn't yet done much for our souls."

As American Christians, we have to turn that around. If we put our minds to it, we can.

# Partnership and the Global Digital Divide

By Michael O'Rear

■ Here are some of my core beliefs about information technology from a Christian ethical perspective:

1. *God intends for information and technology to be used to help fulfill His purposes on the earth.* The digital age did not take God by surprise. He is as much in control in this area as He is in any other area. I believe that information technology is part of what we are called to handle as stewards for God and for His purposes.

2. *The worldwide body of Christ is one.* We have an obligation globally to act as family, because we are one in Christ. Paul tells us that in Christ we who are many form one body, and that each member belongs to all the others. In Philippians, he says, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

3. *The church's center of gravity has shifted to the non-rich world, which others and I call the two-thirds world.* There has been a radical change in the past 40 years in the global geography of the evangelical church, missionary force, and leadership. In 1960, two-thirds of the world's evangelicals lived in the West. Now there are four evangelicals in the non-West for every one in the West. Patrick Johnstone says in his book *The Church is Bigger Than You Think* that within 10 years evangelicals in the non-Western world will outnumber those in the West by seven to one. It's not just about quantity, either. Many of the best—most effective, most appropriate, most God-ordained—teaching and ministry ideas in leadership are coming from the two-thirds world.

4. *Information (and the technology that delivers it) is power.* There is a lot talk of today about partnership. But if one party in any partnership has vastly more power than the other, then at best it is not much of a partnership. At worst, it begins to corrupt the relationship and dishonor the people involved and doesn't advance God's kingdom in His way.

5. *The global digital divide is real, and it is getting bigger, faster than ever.* While in the last 10 years or so, the two-thirds world has grown considerably in its access to information and technology, today the gap is far wider than it was 10 years ago, because we in the West have so much more. This trend will continue, unless there is some intentional change brought in from the outside.

6. *Everyone wins when two-thirds world Christian leaders get better access to information and technology.* They win, we win, God wins, and the people of God's earth win. "Access" means people's access to the content that already exists as well as the realistic ability to use the technology in their own voice, to publish what God has laid on their hearts.

7. *Bridging the global divide demands real partnership.* Few lone rangers are needed. This kind of empowerment we are talking about is usually best accomplished through real, practical partnerships leveraging the strengths of each player toward the common vision. It is critical to involve end users in any kind of a technology solution that is being designed. It is critical to involve the end users as genuine partners from the very beginning and not to pompously assume that we can design and deliver a solution that they will love.

The global digital divide is real and it is serious. Yet we can make a genuine difference if we so choose.

*For a partial listing of evangelical organizations responding to the global digital divide, see a chart prepared by Michael O'Rear on the "Ethics Links" page at the CACE website, [www.christianethics.org](http://www.christianethics.org)*



*Michael O'Rear says that sharing information technology with brothers and sisters from around the world is not a job for "lone rangers" but for people who are willing to work at building genuine partnerships.*

Michael O'Rear is president and CEO of Global Mapping International, an interdenominational evangelical mission support agency serving Christian ministries around the world. O'Rear is the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization's senior associate for information technology. He presented these remarks at the forum on "The Global Digital Divide" at Wheaton College, sponsored by CACE and the Department of Communications.

# Practical Responses to the Global Digital Divide

By Sharon Maeda



*Sharon Maeda says that technologically appropriate ways exist to bring members of the non-Western world into the digital age.*

■ On the theme of the digital divide, one word comes to mind—empowerment. We cannot empower people to bridge that divide without their having access to both technology and information. A second aspect of empowerment is authenticity. People need to speak in their own voice. To provide access to technologically poor areas of the world, we must be creative. At Global Ministries, where I work, we distribute wind-up, solar-powered radios that do not need batteries or electricity. Why? Batteries are hard to come by in many places, particularly in Africa and some places in Latin America, and electricity doesn't exist in many villages.

We are cautiously developing global mission learning centers. These computer centers are situated in the centers of communities. Sometimes they must be run with generators. Sometimes they have to be connected to the World Wide Web by satellite cell phones, because there are no land lines.

## Radio Station in a Suitcase

A bishop in the Democratic Republic of Congo asked us for a \$125,000 to build a local public radio station. In the Congo, of course, a war is going on. If we built the station the bishop wanted, the lives of everyone who worked there would have been in danger, and the rebels probably would have taken over the station very quickly. So instead we have formed a partnership with a Canadian who devised

a “suitcase radio station.” The suitcase houses a full-blown radio station with a transmitter. The station transmits at only about 10 watts, but a whole village can hear that. The “station” can be moved as necessary for safety reasons. Thus, the church has the resource without the danger that building a regular radio station would bring.

Recently we launched a short-wave radio program produced in New York and distributed in Germany to all of Sub-Saharan Africa. The program, on AIDS prevention and awareness, runs for two hours a day in English, two in French, and, soon, two hours a day in Portuguese—Africa's three major official languages. We produce the program in New York because we cannot find a place in Africa to safely produce and then distribute the program. But to be authentic, we work with Africans living or working in the New York area to produce the program. They have access to colleagues on the continent who call us and give us stories, sometimes using pseudonyms. This is an African program produced in the United States.

But, unlike the Voice of America and some of the other entities, our program is attractive to young people. It provides a bit of popular African music, some jazz, even some hip hop. There are interviews with Africans talking about what they are doing about AIDS, plus spiritual messages that uplift and give people hope. In Africa, people can find CNN, but they don't know what is going on in the town next door, let alone the country next door. So we take news from those countries and send it to them. Our religious messages are messages of hope from Africans to Africans.

Sharon Maeda is associate general secretary for mission communications for the General Board of Global Ministries for the United Methodist Church in New York. She coordinates communications projects involving telecommunications advocacy and global radio and computer learning centers. Formerly deputy assistant secretary for public affairs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Maeda presented these remarks during the forum on “The Global Digital Divide: The Morality of Information Distribution,” sponsored by CACE and the Wheaton College Department of Communications.

# Global Perspectives on Economic Development and Growth

By Jim Goering

■ Here are some of the major global challenges, particularly for the international development community, over the next couple of decades:

1. *Sub-Saharan Africa*: The challenge of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) must rank near the top of any list of international development issues. SSA's population of about 600 million is growing 2.4 percent annually, the fastest growth rate of any major region and equal to about 14 million additional people each year to feed, clothe, educate, and keep healthy. Half of this population lives on less than \$1 per day. Life expectancy is only about 50 years and infant mortality is 92 per 1,000 births. HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic proportions and is impacting negatively on life expectancy, educational achievement, and economic growth. Malaria is emerging as a major killer of children in the region.

Seven or eight of these countries are now dealing with internal civil war, and more than a dozen are involved in a costly war in Congo. Independence came to many of these countries about 35 years ago. Departing colonial powers left physical and social infrastructure of varying qualities. Many of these countries have lost ground economically since then. Internationally, SSA is rapidly falling behind much of the rest of the developing world. In 1964, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person in Zambia was nearly twice that of South Korea. By 1999, the Koreans were more than 25 times richer.

While the burden of Africa's development must remain largely in the hands of Africans, the international community can and should help with technical and financial assistance, responsible debt relief, generous support of efforts to control HIV/AIDS, and, above all, support for improved governance, more democratic institutions, well-defined property rights, and the rule of law.

2. *HIV/AIDS*: This has moved from a health issue to a development crisis. Of the 36 million people worldwide currently infected with

HIV/AIDS, 95 percent live in the developing world and 70 percent live in SSA (more than 25 million). SSA has already lost nearly 14 million people to AIDS, and another 23 million are likely to die there by 2020. In SSA, some 12 million children have been orphaned by this epidemic, and UNAIDS estimates that by 2010, there could be as many as 42 million orphans.

While infection rates in Asia and Latin America are currently much lower, many non-African countries are expected to see rapidly rising infection rates and millions of AIDS deaths over the next two decades. Today the largest absolute number of HIV infected people is in India. Within the past two years there has been growing realization that HIV/AIDS is moving from a major health problem to a development crisis in many countries.

What can be done to begin to address this humanitarian and economic crisis? Prevention is the ultimate solution, but mitigation of effects among those already infected is no less urgent. In terms of prevention, aggressive education is a standard prescription. A growing view is that AIDS prevention strategies must start with efforts to reduce poverty.

3. *Global food security*: The issue is access. Food security is: *A situation where every person has access to sufficient food to sustain a healthy and productive life, where malnutrition is absent, and where food originates from efficient, effective, and low-cost systems that are compatible with sustainable use of natural resources.*

The Malthusian fear of gradual global starvation has not materialized. The world's farmers have done remarkably well in providing adequate food supplies at the global level over the past 25-30 years.



*Jim Goering says that AIDS has moved from a health issue to a development crisis in many of the poorer parts of the world.*



Jim Goering has served as senior agricultural economist for the World Bank and as administrator for the Peace Corp-National Grange Project in Guatemala. He also headed World Vision's relief and development efforts financed by public sector grants. Goering presented these remarks at greater length during the 2001 CACE Spring Conference, "The Ethical Challenges of Globalization."

- ✓ World cereal production doubled between 1960 and 1990;
- ✓ Per-capita food production increased 37 percent;
- ✓ Calories supplied per capita increased 35 percent;
- ✓ Real food prices (adjusted for inflation) fell by almost 50 percent;
- ✓ The proportion of the world's people living in poverty has declined;
- ✓ Average income per person has doubled;
- ✓ Infant mortality has fallen by half;
- ✓ People can expect to live 10 years longer today than in the 1970s.

The cruel paradox is continued food insecurity and malnutrition for many, despite these solid achievements in global production and yields. Today, about 840 million people are food insecure, including at least 200 million malnourished children. As many as 30,000 children die each day from hunger and hunger-related diseases.

Future demand for food will be driven by population growth and increased per-capita incomes. Food supply will be determined largely by changes in the cropped area and changes in yields on cropped land. Yet the outlook for crop yields is cause for concern. In both developed and developing countries, the rate of increase in cereal yields is slowing from the relatively high rates of the 1970s.

While total food supplies are likely to be adequate, with real prices continuing to decline, SSA and South Asia will remain the centers of child malnutrition and food insecurity over the next two decades.

4. *Energy*: There is growing international competition for available supplies. Energy is fundamental to the survival and progress of modern societies. Supplies of fossil fuels—oil, gas, coal—are likely to be sufficient to meet global demand for the foreseeable future. Instead, the challenge will be to provide to all consumers adequate supplies at reasonable prices.

Within the next few years, Asia's oil consumption is expected to exceed that of North America. By 2010, total world energy consumption is projected to be at least a third higher than it is today. With most of the needed incremental supplies

coming from a relatively unstable region of the world, the potential will remain high for oil supply disruptions, terrorism, and severe price gyrations.

5. *Water*: Water is an increasingly strategic commodity. Like global food production, the major issues here are not total global supply, which is adequate. Rather, it is the distribution of available water among and within countries and between rainy and dry seasons. There is also increasing global concern about the deterioration of water quality from industrial and agricultural pollution, soil erosion into surface waters, and salinization of irrigated lands resulting from faulty irrigation practices. Today about 20 percent of the world's irrigated area suffers from salinization of varying degrees.

Today, 28 countries with a combined population of more than 300 million face "water stress" of varying degrees. By 2020, this number could increase to 50, with a population as high as 3 billion.

### Our Responsibility

How should we, as the body of believers, respond to what seem to be daunting challenges to those of us concerned about the well-being of society?

As Christians we have a unique responsibility to do what is possible to improve the lot of humanity, and thereby, honor the One whom we serve. I like the thoughts of Stuart McAllister of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, who urges us to recover from the distractions of this world and fix our focus, cultivate living in the truth, and embrace and cultivate the seeds of hope.

Also, Christian students must prepare well in their professional fields of endeavor. The development challenges of the future will be increasingly complex. There are no easy solutions. Well-intended but poorly prepared people will not be able to make maximum contributions.

Christian students should set clear personal and professional goals, put them writing, and review and update regularly as circumstances change. They should be informed advocates on key issues and autograph their work with excellence. Finally, they must be prepared to share with others, by word and action, the reasons for their behavior (1 Pet. 3:15-16).

# U.S. Policy in the New World Order

By Brian Wesbury

■ What can you buy today from the earnings of a summer job? Michael Cox and Richard Alm looked at this question in the March 2001 issue of the monthly *Ideas on Liberty*. To play it safe, Cox and Alm assumed that workers would earn the minimum wage and came up with a figure of \$1,990. (Many young people make much more than that.) With that money you can buy a personal computer, a DVD player, a Palm 3X, an alarm clock, a 19-inch color television, a VCR with remote, a stereo with remote, a cordless phone, a 1.7-cubic-foot refrigerator for the dorm room, a toaster oven, a compact microwave oven, a fax machine, a Dirt Devil hand vacuum, a coffee/cappuccino maker, a digital camera, a 10-speed blender, a seat massager, an ironing board with iron, and a table lamp.

Cox and Alm then looked at what the earnings from a summer job could buy in 1970. Back then, the amount would have been \$618. That would have bought a black and white TV, a clock radio, a used typewriter, an electronic adding machine, and a stereo with a record player.

Then they went back to 1950, when the amount would have been \$282. You could have bought a black and white TV, a clock radio, a record player, and a Brownie camera.

Clearly, our living standards are a lot higher than they were 50 or even 30 years ago. How did this happen? Simply put, it is the magic of the capitalist system. We have become more productive as a nation. Therefore, our incomes and our wages have grown faster than has inflation.

In addition, because we are entrepreneurial, we've come up with a lot of new things that never existed before, such as digital cameras.

## Where Wealth Comes From

If you grasp where wealth comes from, you understand just about all you need to know about economics. Everyone should know about Adam Smith's 1776 book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*.

However, few people have heard of a speech Abraham Lincoln gave in Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1859. On a cold February night, he talked about how Americans had accumulated higher living standards over time. Interestingly, he started with Adam and Eve, noting that they wore leaves.

Then, Lincoln pointed out that a young American in 1859 could have a watch from Europe, silks from Asia—and a much higher standard of living than Adam and Eve had previously. How did we get so far? Lincoln said human beings had taken six great steps.

1. Lincoln said the first thing we did was to develop a language.

Language enabled us to share ideas, allowing us to work together.

2. The second thing, Lincoln noted, was to develop our powers of observation. We could figure out how things work. Lincoln said that by developing our powers of observation, we began inventing things.

3. Lincoln's third item was the invention of writing. Writing allowed us to share these ideas.

4. Fourth for Lincoln was the invention of the printing press. This achievement allowed us not only to share ideas across huge geographical boundaries but also to send them through time.

5. Fifth, Lincoln said, we discovered America, the first place where ideas were truly emancipated.

"We have become more productive as a nation. Therefore, our incomes and our wages have grown faster than has inflation."



*Brian Wesbury argues that creating a business is one of the most honorable callings in life.*



Brian Wesbury is chief economist at Griffin, Kubik, Stephens, and Thompson, Inc., a Chicago-based investment bank specializing in fixed-income securities. In 1998, the *Chicago Tribune* named him "Chicago's most prominent New Era Economist," while the *Wall Street Journal* ranked him as the third most accurate economic forecaster in the United States. Wesbury presented these remarks in longer form at the 2001 CACE Spring Conference on "The Ethical Challenges of Globalization" at Wheaton College.

6. Sixth, and most important to Lincoln, we wrote the U.S. Constitution. Lincoln focused on patents and copyrights. Never in history had government allowed private ownership of patents and copyrights. Lincoln said that patents and copyrights, because they provided ownership for people's ideas, were "the fuel of interest to the fire of invention." That is where wealth comes from. Without this self-interest, without patents and copyrights, plus the rule of law, there would be no economic growth.

A summer job buys more today because we have learned the entrepreneurial process better than any nation on the face of the earth. The amount of wealth that we have created in the last 20 years exceeds every 20-year period in our history. We have seen our economy grow faster than it did even during the Industrial Revolution.

It is a wonderful time for students to be going to college, graduating, and looking for work. We now live in a world in which we are networked. Because of the computer, the Internet, the fax machine, and the cell phone, we are seeing productivity soar. That is the key: When productivity soars, waste goes down, efficiency goes up, living standards and incomes go higher, and wealth is created.

### Answering Objections

Of course, a lot of people think that economic growth has caused problems. They complain particularly that we now have the greatest disparity of wealth, in the United States and around the world, ever. In other words, "Bill Gates keeps getting richer, and I am not improving my financial situation as quickly, so there must be something wrong." I must say that I don't see any problem with increasing wealth disparity. In fact, wealth disparity is a sign of opportunity in the economy.

Let's think of an economy as an island. On that island are 10 people, and they wake up in the morning, go fishing, catch two fish each, eat them, and go to bed. This is subsistence living. But let's say two people on that island invent a boat and a net.

These two can now go out on the high seas and catch 20 fish in a day. It used to require 10 people to catch 20 fish in a day; now two people can do it. Productivity has improved. Now people on the island have a choice. There are eight people who still catch two fish a day each, and two that now catch 10 each. Those eight could decide, "I am not as efficient at catching fish as these other two are, so I will grow corn, clean fish, make boats and nets, or pick coconuts and trade for the fish." If everybody does that, the wealth of that island goes up. Now they

have 20 fish plus coconuts and corn, and more boats and more nets. Or the eight may decide that the other two have gotten too rich and form a government to tax 80 percent of the other two's catch. If they do that, they can take 16 fish a day and redistribute them. Everybody's back to two, but is anyone better off?

Redistributing wealth does not work. Other nations must learn how to keep a system in place that creates wealth, and the only way is to allow entrepreneurs the freedom to invent and create. There are four simple things that government must do: (1)

Keep tax rates low, (2) allow markets to work freely, without regulation, (3) respect private property rights, and (4) keep the value of the currency stable to facilitate economic planning. These four things lead to rapid economic growth and wealth creation.

The government often tells us that if it weren't for the government, the economy couldn't exist, that government spending creates jobs and economic growth. We hear that defense spending has a "multiplying effect" that creates jobs down the supply chain. Every dollar the government spends, we hear, creates more than a dollar of Gross Domestic Product and wealth in the economy. If that is true, why isn't Iraq, with the fifth largest army, one of the most powerful economies in the world? If government could create wealth, there would be no poverty. Yet there is a lot of poverty around the world. Why? Because many governments actually foul up the wealth creation process. They believe they are the most important organ in the economy; they should realize that their role is simply to ensure that

"The amount of wealth that we have created in the last 20 years exceeds every 20-year period in our history."



the system runs well enough for wealth to be created over time.

In Germany, over 50 percent of the economy is controlled by the government. Economic growth there has been less than half that of the United States over the past 20 years. In Japan, the government has been trying for a decade to get the economy out of recession, and it looks to be heading into depression. The bigger government is and the more it tries to take care of all the things that people want, the more failure you will see in the economic system, the less wealth creation you will have, the lower standards of living you will enjoy, and the more dependence you will create.

### The Role of the United States

In the context of globalization, then, what is the role of the United States? I believe it is simply to push other nations and peoples toward free market democracy. Wherever freedom exists, so do higher living standards, longer life spans, and the other good things we enjoy in this country. And yet, we often find ourselves apologizing to the rest of the world because of how good we have it and how bad they have it. We need to realize that we are not to blame for the lower living standards of other people. The world is not a fixed pie that gets divided between all people. The reason others struggle economically is because their governments and, in many cases, their people have not allowed economic growth to occur.

The best that we can do is to share our ideas about free market capitalism and democracy. Once countries move in that direction, they will see their



economic growth rates and living standards increase. Unfortunately, often we do not share that philosophy. In fact, we run around the world trying to help countries figure out how to manage their economies through their governments. The International Monetary Fund is one of the prime examples of this. When a country gets in trouble, the IMF says, "The most important problem for you to solve is your budget deficit. We think you need to raise taxes." At the same time, it says, "You need to devalue your currency." If you think about it, those two actions devastate consumers and businesses. By devaluing a currency, you wipe out savings. It used to be three Mexican pesos for a dollar. Today it takes seven. Mexicans saw their purchasing power on world markets fall by 50 percent in 1994. At the same time, increased taxes take income from individuals and businesses.

The United States is growing faster than the rest of the world, and there are reasons. The rest of the world could, if it wanted to, follow policies that promote economic growth rates as fast as, or faster than, that of the United

States. Many of these countries choose not to, for a variety of reasons.

Wealth is created not by government actions but by individuals who come up with ideas and bring them to fruition. Creating wealth is one of the most difficult things to do; 90 percent of businesses fail in the first two years. To create a business that can stand on its own and serve others is absolutely terrifying, but it is one of the most honorable and godly callings in the world.

"Wherever freedom exists, so do higher living standards, longer life spans, and the other good things we enjoy in this country."

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# Religious Tensions and Globalization

By Stan Guthrie



Stan Guthrie is the associate news editor for *Christianity Today* and the editor of *Discernment*. Previously, he was managing editor of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* and editor of *World Pulse*, both published by the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College.

This article is adapted from a chapter in his book, *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Paternoster, 2000).

■ A few years ago, Britain's Foreign Office cabled some of its embassies to comment on whether Islam or "the Coca-Cola culture is more attractive for the young generation of Arabs and Muslims." One diplomat told the *Washington Post*, "The last thing Syrians want to do is replace one restrictive dogmatic regime with another. They wear grunge. They want to make money."

Another said, "The answer is that Islam is attractive and Coca-Cola is attractive, and there's enormous tension."

Despite occasional hiccups, like the Asian and Russian financial crises, globalization seems here to stay. According to a recent United Nations survey, some 60,000 transnational business firms produce a fourth of the world's economic output. Capital flows by global investors have reached impressive, and sometimes destabilizing, levels. Governments are being forced to revamp their economies not out of altruism toward their down-trodden citizens, but because outsiders demand it.

## In Line for Change

Even members of the ancient religions feel the pressure as the world becomes more interconnected—and many are responding violently. The Muslim religious book, the Qur'an, is quietly being subjected to some of the "critical-historical" analytical methods the Bible underwent in the 19th century. Countries such as Kuwait, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, and even Saudi Arabia are inching toward more democracy.

For their part, Christian missiologists acknowledge that modernity also has affected the Great Commission task—for good and for ill. The "Jesus" film has been seen by billions of people in hundreds of languages. SAT-7, a Christian satellite television service in the Middle East, is daily broadcasting the

gospel to millions.

Yet, these global trends bring ethical problems. Critics such as Samuel Escobar, an evangelical theologian from Peru, faults the U.S. missions movement for succumbing to "managerial missiology," the belief that missions can be approached merely like a business problem.

The tensions between old and new are likely to continue well into the third millennium. Paul McKaughan of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies says that mission organizations have reflected their secular counterparts for the last 40 or 50 years, particularly in the areas of professionalization and institutionalization. "This mirror-like image is far too close for comfort," he said. "We felt that we could organize and manage our way to world evangelization.

The natural laws that seem to control the rest of institutional life seem to shape us as well." Will these tensions affect our more numerous non-Western brothers and sisters? Assuredly.

Yet missions promoter Mike Stachura says that these Christians, unlike their Western counterparts, have seen the modernization wave coming.

Helping keep them afloat, Stachura says, are coping strategies such as emphasizing biblical truth in their proclamation, rejecting materialism, and developing small groups—strategies which focus on the unfulfilled promises of the modern world: "They're not coming and offering that your life is going to get better in terms of stuff."

Despite its proven track record of advancing material well-being, globalization presents both opportunities and dangers to the church. The ethically sensitive evangelical knows that Christianity cannot be contained by any system, even if that system is globalization. Christ's followers must take up their crosses and walk the narrow way, when possible using modern tools to help others but always holding them loosely.

Stan Guthrie says that even the world's ancient faiths are being profoundly affected by globalization.

# Messages of Reconciliation

An Interview with David McFadzean

Artie Terry:

David, how are artists in your field dealing with issues and ideas regarding reconciliation?

David McFadzean:

Bringing Christ into the mix in Hollywood is very difficult—not that it can't be done, but there is certainly very little interest in bringing Him there. We live in a culture that is more interested in shame than glory. Hollywood thinks that basically we Christians are trying to infuse culture with arbitrary guilt and shame so that we can stay in power. Somehow we need to begin showing another side of the Christian in American life. It is not just propaganda. The petty, hypocritical, mean-spirited Christian is who they think we are. So they need to begin to see in our culture something besides that, which is hard, because goodness doesn't make good movies. You really need sin to make good movies. So if we are going to portray our lives, we are going to have to tell two sides of it, and we are not usually very keen on telling the two sides of our lives. We don't want to talk about pre-Friday; we only want to talk about Sunday. It is a huge, huge job.

Terry:

What offerings on television or in films have succeeded on some level, from your perspective?

McFadzean:

The intention of *Touched by an Angel* is to talk about God as Jehovah, and occasionally to bring up Christ. Whatever your feelings about the show, it succeeds at that from time to time. *Seventh Heaven* occasionally does that, too, and keeps the characters fairly real. But remember, these programs, which I hope stay on the air for 20 years, are not serious approaches to

Christianity and reconciliation. That's because television and film primarily do not appeal to your thoughts, but to your emotions.

The best way to deal with reconciliation from a Christian standpoint in film is to talk about the model that Christ set for us, which is basically that He suffered, that He sacrificed, and that there is glory. Those are the films that actually get made, such as *A Man for All Seasons* and *Chariots of Fire*. They are few and far between, however.

Terry:

We hear that there is an anti-Christian bias in Hollywood. Does that really exist? And if so, how do we change the portrayals of Christians?

McFadzean:

Most of Hollywood sees us as the great wet blankets of culture, because we certainly do not share the values of the majority of people that I encounter day to day. So they do not want us to have center stage to put our values out there. The bias, however, usually centers on two key issues—homosexuality and abortion. Yet, if we have a good story about somebody sacrificing in order to reconcile, and it doesn't deal with those two issues, they are not as nearly as scared about it.

Also, we don't present ourselves very well in Hollywood. There are very few of us there. We are not training people to go into that business. We need you if you are a writer who will write not to the church but to the culture. We need more Robert Bolts. Bolt wrote *The Mission* and *A Man for All Seasons*. Your stories will get told.



David McFadzean says that Hollywood perceives Christians as “the great wet blankets of culture.”

David McFadzean is a playwright and a producer with Wind Dancer Production Group, which is known for the sitcoms *Roseanne* and *Home Improvement*. He has also written the plays *Oklahoma Rigs*, which has played at the Kennedy Center, *Deep River*, and *Tennessee Waltz*. He also co-produced the movie *What Women Want*, starring Mel Gibson and Helen Hunt. McFadzean was interviewed by Wheaton College communications Professor Artie Terry during the Forum “Reconciliation and the Arts,” sponsored by The Artist Series at Wheaton College, The Division of Arts, Media, & Communications, and CACE.

## CACE Notes

### Double Issue

■ This Double Issue completes our volume year. Our next volume will explore our 2001-2002 theme: Cultivating Conscience: Exploring Moral Development.

### Interviews Online

■ For further insights on globalization, check our website for interviews with Prof. Stackhouse, Dr. van den Heuvel, Dr. Maeda and Mr. O'Rear.

### Calendar

■ Registration forms for our 2002 Spring Conference "Exploring Moral Formation: The College Experience" are available on our website. We have a superb list of speakers and very low registration rates, so consider attending on March 20-22.

### Grateful

■ We are sad to say goodbye to our editor, Mr. Stan Guthrie. Stan's growing family and his responsibilities at *Christianity Today* require him to step down after this issue. His three-year term has been exceptional. We will miss him!

## Discernment

Summer/Fall 2001 • Vol. 8, No. 2/3

*Discernment* aims to stimulate interest in the moral dimensions of contemporary issues; to provide a forum for Christian reflection; and to foster the teaching of Christian ethics across the curriculum. Published three times a year.

**CACE DIRECTOR:** Kenneth Chase, Ph.D.

**EDITOR:** Stan Guthrie, M.A.

**RESEARCH & PRODUCTION:** Pat Reichhold

**DESIGN:** Beth Wright

Center for Applied Christian Ethics

Wheaton College

Wheaton, IL 60187-5593

Phone: 630.752.5886

E-mail: [CACE@wheaton.edu](mailto:CACE@wheaton.edu)

Web: [www.christianethics.org](http://www.christianethics.org)