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Pax Christi USA strives to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by exploring, articulating and witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. This work begins in personal life and extends to communities of reflection and action to transform structures of society. Pax Christi USA rejects war, preparations for war, and every form of violence and domination. It advocates primacy of conscience, economic and social justice, and respect for creation.

Pax Christi USA commits itself to peace education and, with the help of its bishop members, promotes the gospel imperative of peacemaking as a priority in the Catholic Church in the United States. Through the efforts of all its members and in cooperation with other groups, Pax Christi USA works toward a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

I support Pax Christi USA Statement of Purpose and wish to become a member.

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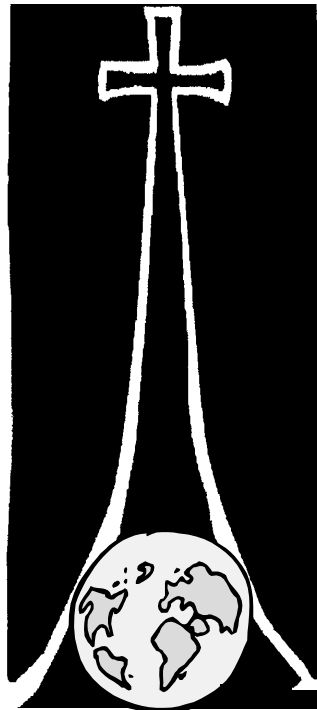
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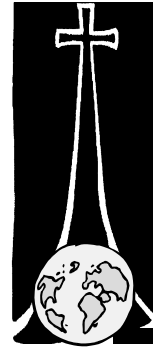
Peaceweavings

Spirituality And Globalization:

In Whose Image?



Pax Christi USA
532 W. 8th Street, Erie, PA 16502
814-453-4955; www.paxchristiusa.org



Spirituality And Globalization:

In Whose Image?

Globalization will affect every aspect of our lives positively or negatively – even the basic shape of our spirituality. This is a moment ripe with possibilities of either embracing a fuller, deeper vision of the God of Life, or succumbing to the idols of Death. Karl Rahner predicted Christians in the coming age will either be mystics, or they will not be Christian at all; that is, believers need to be grounded in a profound, daily sense of the deep unity of all creation with the Creator. Indeed, economics and ecology today are confirming a basic theological insight asserted throughout the ages: we are all one family, for better and worse, sharing in the same joy and hope, suffering and pain. But while we are discerning new ways to understand how we are made in the image and likeness of God, there is a danger of making God in the image and likeness of humanity.

We would do well to remember that the shapes and definitions of spiritual life are transformed with each historical age. For instance, the advent of industrialization accelerated the privatizing of much of that which was held in common into personal property and mineral rights, as seen in the phenomenon of land enclosure and the dispossession of communities. This trend toward privatization foretold a heightened re-definition of the spiritual as individualistic and autonomous (Bellah et al). The kind of economy that ensued, and is still with us, is based on assumptions of scarcity and acquisitive fear, fueling a parallel, distorted version of spirituality -- one that challenges a biblical

faith based on shared abundance, trust, and the personal limiting of wants (Myers).

In the age of Globalization, this next great wave of economic transformation is also accompanied by an intensified struggle between contrasting views of faith. The dominant form of globalization brings a new historical age of privatization and removing whole new areas from the “global commons:” the heavens and seas; cultural and agricultural traditions; even our very genes. A version of faith is emerging congruent with this world-view. It intensifies assumption of fear and scarcity, monocultures and monopolies, appropriation and dispossession, hoarding and individualism.

This contrasts the world-view inherent in biblical faith, which assures abundance and sharing, diversity and decentralization, sustainability when paired with self-restraint equitable community and mutual solidarity, and respect and dignity for all creation.

While some forms of globalization hold opportunities to nurture spiritualities congruent with biblical faith, there is a tension present during this time of inevitable disorientation as new spiritual practices emerge and older ones are re-evaluated.

One marker of this spiritual struggle is the appropriation of faith language by forces of corporate globalization claiming to understand and explain the natural and divine order. Thomas Frank in *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Democracy* analyzes many claims of corporate globalization. For instance, social theorist George Gilder in *The Spirit of Enterprise* (1984): “It is the entrepreneurs who know the rules of the world and the laws of God.” Recent bestsellers include *God Wants You To Be Rich* and *Jesus, CEO*. A 1998 commercial for



IBM's Lotus shows hal-
lowed scenes of entrepre-
neurial achievement –
including a sweatshop —
while asking, “Who is
e v e r y -
where?” (omnipresent),

“Who is aware?” (omniscient), and “Who is
powerful?” (omnipotent) interspersed with a
cardboard sign roughly scrawled with the
name of God as revealed to Moses: “I Am.”
The view of business-as-god has become per-
vasive.

Basic theological categories are appropriated
and distorted in order to preach *faith* in glob-
alization's trade regimes, despite its failures
in performance. I was first alerted to this phe-
nomenon by Franz Hinkelammert, in *The
Idols of Death and the God of Life: A Theol-
ogy. Freedom* is needed for trade and for
capital, but not for people. Violations of the
neo-liberal model are *sins against the natural
order*, requiring *repentance* and *atonement*.
Repentance is achieved through decades and
generations of *sacrificial suffering* required
for great majorities (but not for elites), per-
haps even costing their lives in applying the
harsh strictures of structural adjustment pro-
grams.

Under globalization, time itself is increas-
ingly treated as a commodity that cannot be
wasted, resulting in a loss of time devoted to
spiritual renewal, re-creation and Sabbath
rest. An overemphasis on activities such as
production and consumption pulls people
away from relaxation or devoting time to
prayer, reflection and contemplation. Simi-
larly, an increasing emphasis on external
stimuli entices individuals to seek solace
from pain and dissatisfaction by turning to-

ward external pleasures rather than turning in-
ward and to each other in community to focus on
the root source of pain and dissatisfaction. Peo-
ple living in western culture can be so caught up
in doing that they can become largely out of
touch with their being.

This colonization of time itself contradicts the
biblical view of Sabbath rhythms as the summit
of creation. These rhythms make room for the
healing pleasures of learning and celebrating
one's place in the Cosmos, of reconnecting with
one's community, of seeking the wisdom that
only comes with some decisions when they have
time to lie fallow. Some forms of globalization
can enhance these rhythms, and they should be
promoted. Yet, these too are being crowded out
in the “race to the bottom” as more hours in each
day are spent in “producing” and “getting.”

“I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out
of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You
shall not have other gods besides me. You shall
not carve idols for yourselves.” (Ex. 20:2-4).
Idolatry is at the heart of the challenge of this age
– and one of the most insidious temptations. De-
spite, or perhaps exactly, because of these chal-
lenges to the Spirit and the human spirit, many
are rising to the challenge of transforming corpo-
rate globalization. Many folks I have met in the
movements transforming corporate globalization
exhibit a life-affirming spirit and the ethics that
flow from it. We would do well to affirm this and
learn from each other.

(Adapted from an article written by Tony Vento,
PCUSA Program Director for the Spring 2002 issue
of the Catholic Peace Voice.)

Prayer Reflections

Monday: Love implies concern for all, especially
those who are poor, and a continued search for
those social and economic structures that permit
everyone to share in a community that is a part of a
redeemed creation. – Romans 8:21-23

Tuesday: “Our economic activity in factory, field,
office, or shop feeds our families – or feeds our
anxieties. It exercises our talents – or wastes them.
It raises our hopes – or crushes them. It brings us
into cooperation with others – or sets us at odds.” -
Economic Justice for All (6)

Wednesday: Speak up for people who cannot
speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who
are helpless. Speak for them and be a righteous
judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.
- Book of Proverbs 31:8-9

Thursday: “The needs of the poor take priority
over the desires of the rich: the rights of workers
over the maximization of profits; the preservation
of the environment over uncontrolled industrial
expansion; production to meet social needs over
production for military purposes. – Pope John Paul
II (1984)

Friday: Creator God, timeless preserver of re-
sources, forgive us for the gifts that we have
wasted. Renew for us what seems beyond redemp-
tion; call order and beauty to emerge again from
chaos. Convert our destructive power into creative
service; help us to heal the woundedness of our
world. - Prayer for a New Society, PCUSA

Saturday: The truth that the globe is inhabited by a
single family, in which all have the same basic
needs, and all have a right to the goods of the earth,
is a fundamental principle of Catholic teaching. -
The Challenge of Peace, Par. 202

Sunday: O God, open my eyes that I may see the
needs of others, open my ears that I may hear their
cries, open my heart so that they need not be with-
out comfort. Let me not be afraid to defend the
weak because of the anger of the rich. Show me

where love and hope and faith are needed. Open
my eyes and ears that I may, this coming day, be
able to do some work of peace for You.

– Alan Paton

Action Suggestions

1. Make the daily prayer reflections in this bro-
chure part of your daily prayer practice. De-
velop an awareness of the “idols” in your life.
2. Form a study group using Pax Christi USA's
packet on globalization to educate yourself
and others about globalization and its effects.
3. Practice sustainable economics: buy organic
food from local farmers; support small, inde-
pendent businesses and workers' co-ops from
developing countries.

Resources

- *Spiritual Questions for the Twenty-First Century: Essays in Honor of Joan D. Chittister.* Ed. Mary Hembrow Snyder. Maryknoll, New York. Essays by Tissa Balasuriya, Elizabeth Johnson, et al.
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- Cox, Harvey. “The Market as God,” in *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1999.
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- Howard-Brook, Wes and Gwyther, Anthony. *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Myers, Ched. *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics.* Washington DC: Servant Leadership Schools, 2001.