

CHRISTIAN IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

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Globalization is also God's project. God is about globalization, otherwise there wouldn't be a Church. The issue is whose globalization is it going to be? Is it going to be mammon's globalization or is it going to be God's globalization? And if it's going to be God's, then what are going to be the ground rules?

~ Bishop Peter Selby, October 8, 2009 ~

Preface

In the Old Testament's historical book of *Judges*, we read of the shibboleth, an ancient term used by the Hebrews.

Then the Gileadites took the fords of the Jordan against the Ephraimites. Whenever one of the fugitives of Ephraim said, "Let me go over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" When he said, "No," they said to him, "Then say Shibboleth," and he said, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce it right. Then they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand of the Ephraimites fell at that time. Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in his town in Gilead (The Bible, Judges 12:5-6, New Standard Revised Version, 1989).

In essence, the shibboleth in this passage of Scripture was a kind of linguistic password. That is, if the speaker had used the correct pronunciation, this would have acted as evidence that he indeed was a Gileadite. An inaccurate utterance of the word, in this case, resulted in death because it was deemed to be proof that the speaker was an Ephraimite.

In its broader application within Hebrew culture, the shibboleth provided the delineating lines between who was "in" and who was "out". Its purpose was exclusionary as much as it was inclusionary. The shibboleth might include a word or collection of phrases, a custom or practice, a shared experience, or another form of cultural norm. In all its various forms, its function was as an ontological test to determine the validity (or falsity) of a claim of membership.

Based on Aristotelian logic, modern day social scientists have the tool of the semiotic square of veridiction as developed by Greimas & Courtes (1982); the shibboleth in graphic form. Hebert (2006) describes it as follows.

person wishing to integrate his or her sacred values with effective management and business practices?

At first blush, this might seem to be somewhat Utopian thinking, particularly in our current context of a globalized market economy. In the secular world, the markers for successful management and business practice are typically defined by monetary gain (profit) and power. For example, Donald Trump is frequently touted as being popular culture's emblem for success. Yet, his strategies for achievement (as outlined in such Trump texts as *Think Big and Kick Ass in Business and Life* [2007] and *Think Like a Champion* [2009]) would not appear to "the stuff" that would place him within an ethics-based shibboleth; quite the contrary.

Business is about making money. It's about the bottom line. The sooner you realize that, the sooner you'll get a grasp about what business is. I'm very often surprised by people who think business is something else. They come in with lofty ideas and philanthropic purposes that have absolutely no place in a business meeting. It's a waste of everyone's time (Trump, 2009, p.127).

In the above quote, Trump is inadvertently alluding to is the Biblical concept of *mammon*, or the worship of wealth and material greed. We see this form of unjust worldly gain described in the New Testament. For example, in Luke 16:1-13 we encounter the parable of the *Unjust Steward* with the master and the dishonest and "shrewd" manager. The interplay between the two characters acts to personify mammon and the passage ends with Jesus' "punch line": *No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth* (Luke 16:13, New Standard Revised Version, 1989). Echoes of this same message are similarly found in Matthew 6:19-21, 24.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also... No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth (New Standard Revised Version, 1989).

The Sermon on the Mount also makes reference to mammon in the discourse on ostentation. What is at issue here from the contemporary Christian perspective is the focus on the worldly and the acquisition of profit from a greed mentality. Profit that seeks to perpetuate and deepen

inequality, that is derived from unjust or exploitative means is of central concern. This is the source of what Ariarajah (2004) terms to be *economic violence*, a condition *where economic life is organized in a way that denies even the basic needs of people* (p.102).

Parallel to this pursuit of mammon is the secular attention to *hubris*; an overwhelming pride that, in ancient Greek literature, required an act of retribution towards one's enemy in order to attain "justice". Again, Donald Trump provides illustrative examples in his own words.

The world is a vicious and brutal place. We think we're civilized. In truth, it's a cruel world and people are ruthless. They act nice to your face, but underneath they're out to kill you. You have to know how to defend yourself. People will be mean and nasty and try to hurt you just for sport. Lions in the jungle only kill for food, but humans kill for fun. Even your friends are out to get you: they want your job, they want your house, they want your money, they want your wife, and they even want your dog. Those are your friends; your enemies are even worse! My motto is, "Hire the best people, and don't trust them."...

When someone crosses you, my advice is "Get even!" That is not typical advice, but it is real-life advice. If you do not get even, you are just a schmuck! When people wrong you, go after those people, because it is a good feeling and because other people will see you doing it. I love getting even. I get screwed all the time. I go after people, and you know what? People do not play around with me as much as they do with others. They know that if they do, they are in for a big fight. Always get even. Go after people that go after you. Don't let people push you around. Always fight back and always get even. It's a jungle out there, filled with bullies of all kinds who will try to push you around. If you're afraid to fight back people will think of you as a loser, a "schmuck"! They will know they can get away with insulting you, disrespecting you, and taking advantage of you. Don't let it happen! Always fight back and get even. People will respect you for it (2007, pp.29-30).

I learned early on that business can be completely impersonal even when you're dealing with human beings...I have to be careful not to blow people away, because if you cross me personally and professionally, I'll have a double whammy waiting for you. I don't enjoy being vicious, but sometimes in self-defense it becomes necessary. I don't like the double standard, as in whatever I do is okay and whatever you do isn't okay, or vice versa. If you treat me a certain way, then I can treat you that way, too. Some people call that the old "eye for an eye" approach, but I call it playing fair. Sometimes the only way to deal with a bully is to punch him back. Let them know who they're dealing with. Fair play is fair play – and once again, don't take it personally (2009, pp.127-129).

This vengeance mindset grounded in a disproportionate pride is reminiscent of the scene from Homer's *Iliad* in which Achilles drags the naked corpse of his enemy Hector in front of horrified

onlookers, including Hector's father, King Priam of Troy. Priam physically grovels at Achilles' feet, offering Hector's weight in gold in exchange for his son's body. The reader recognizes that the true price Priam paid was in the groveling, not in the gold.

Certainly Trump's ideas on fairness and justice run counter to many Christian principles, making his misplaced Biblical reference ("eye for an eye") more than ironic. His mindset appears to be dominated by a Darwinianesque mentality of kill or be killed, with an overtly aggressive ambition towards creating profit and cultivating power. Unfortunately, Trump is not alone in this mode of thought and we see reflections and signposts of this almost daily in the worldwide business community.

Marcus Borg identifies the combination of a concentration on mammon and a state of hubris as being characteristic of *empire*; as part of the *pathology of empire*. He traces this concept of empire back to ancient times, including the Roman Empire at the time of Christ and the crucifixion. Borg's thinking about the relationship between empire and Christianity is clear: *To be Christian in a time of empire means standing against imperial authority/practice and standing for an alternative vision grounded in God's dream of how things can be, God's kingdom* (October 31, 2009 lecture notes, Edmonton). He applies this to the current empire of the globalized market economy and the need for Christian people to take a stance in opposing that same empire.

In the midst of a major global recession, certain factions of the secular world are also beginning to question the sustainability of the unbridled pursuit of wealth and power as we also face issues of global warming, diminishing nonrenewable natural resources, environmental devastation, and the legalized abuse and exploitation of human resources in some countries. Additionally, the last decade has seen significant publicity surrounding the high profile criminal prosecutions of several business icons including Conrad Black, Martha Stewart, and the Enron executives. In each of these instances, the public has seen the personification of mammon and demonstrations of hubris in action. In each of these instances, the public has seen the erosion of a small scale empire, and there is a recognizably growing desire for ethical change.

Evidence of a new openness to the need for more overt demonstrations of business ethics came from the United Nations in 1999 when it released its *Global Compact Principles* (Figure 2). Recognizing the growing impact and pace of globalization through the 1980s and 1990s, the United Nations compiled this series of principles to encourage responsible business practices

around the world. While these standards cannot be legislated by the UN, the hope was that they would provide some structure and incentive for ethical management and business practices.

Figure 2: United Nations' *Global Compact Principles*, 1999

United Nations Global Compact Principles

Human Rights

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect global human rights.

Principle 2: Businesses should make sure they are not associated with any human rights abuses.

Labour Standards

Principle 3: Businesses should allow the freedom of association and recognize collective bargaining of their employees.

Principle 4: Businesses should eliminate all forms of forced and/or compulsory labour.

Principle 5: Businesses should abolish child labour.

Principle 6: Businesses should eliminate all forms of discrimination in the workplace.

Environment

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to global environmental challenges.

Principle 8: Businesses should undertake all initiatives that promote a higher level of environmental responsibility.

Principle 9: Businesses should encourage the development and dissemination of environmentally-friendly technologies.

Anticorruption

Principle 10: Businesses should stop all forms of corruption including extortion and bribery.

(Source: Stanwick, P., Stanwick, S. [2009]. *Understanding business ethics* .p.195. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.)

The release of the principles was also a recognition that globalization had created opportunities for businesses from developed nations to move their production to third world and lesser developed countries. Because labour standards and wages are often lower in lesser developed countries, this had great potential to translate into a higher profit margin for business. As well, regulations and restrictions regarding the use of natural resources were frequently less stringent in third world countries, allowing businesses to increase production at lower costs. Thus, the intent of these ten principles was to draw attention to the need to safeguard human rights, human workers, and the environment and to fight against corruption in a globalized market economy.

Further evidence of heightened awareness of the need for ethical standards for managers and business persons came in 2007 when the United Nations published its *Principles for*

Responsible Management Education (PRME), calling for post secondary institutions offering management and business programs to shift their curricula to encompass six key standards (Figure 3). This was intended as a kind of next generation evolution from the 1999 *Global Compact*.

Figure 3: United Nations’ *Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)*

The mission of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative is to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought leadership globally.

The PRME are inspired by internationally accepted values such as the principles of the United Nations Global Compact. They seek to establish a process of continuous improvement among institutions of management education in order to develop a new generation of business leaders capable of managing the complex challenges faced by business and society in the 21st century.

In the current academic environment, corporate responsibility and sustainability have entered but not yet become embedded in the mainstream of business-related education. The PRME are therefore a timely global call for business schools and universities worldwide to gradually adapt their curricula, research, teaching methodologies and institutional strategies to the new business challenges and opportunities.

Taking the [Six Principles](#) as a guiding framework, any institution which is willing to integrate corporate responsibility and sustainability in a gradual but systemic manner is welcome to join the initiative.

As institutions of higher learning involved in the education of current and future managers we are voluntarily committed to engaging in a continuous process of improvement of the following Principles, reporting on progress to all our stakeholders and exchanging effective practices with other academic institutions:

Principle 1

Purpose: *We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.*

Principle 2

Values: *We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.*

Principle 3

Method: *We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.*

Principle 4

Research: *We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.*

Principle 5

Partnership: *We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.*

Principle 6

Dialogue: *We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.*

We understand that our own organizational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.

(Source: <http://www.unprme.org/the-6-principles/index.php>. Retrieved September 3, 2009.)

By September 1, 2009, 249 post secondary institutions, professional bodies, and accreditation bodies from around the world had joined the consortium of PRME participants. The Association of MBAs (AMBA) – a worldwide accreditation agency for MBAs in 158 programs across 72 countries – is just one of the partners in this initiative.

Yet another positive signpost of public expectations for higher ethical standards for the fields of management and business is found in *A Hippocratic Oath for Managers* (Figure 4). Patterned after the medical profession's *Hippocratic Oath*, this pledge was first crafted by two professors from the Harvard Business School, Dr. Rakesh Khurana and Dr. Nitin Nohria, and initially published in *Harvard Business Review* in October of 2008 (pp.72-73). The idea for *A Hippocratic Oath for Managers* was anchored in a concern that “the MBA does not become three scarlet letters” (Rakesh Khurana as quoted in *Business Week*, May 26, 2009, Francesca Di Meglio article author).

Figure 4: A Hippocratic Oath for Managers

AS A MANAGER I serve as society's fiduciary for one of its most important institutions: enterprises that bring people and resources together to create valued products and services that no single individual could produce alone. My purpose is to serve the public's interest by enhancing the value my enterprise creates for society. Sustainable value is created when the enterprise produces an economic, social, and environmental output that is measurably greater than the opportunity cost of all the inputs it consumes. In fulfilling my role:

I RECOGNIZE that any enterprise is at the nexus of many different constituencies, whose interests can sometimes diverge. While balancing and reconciling these interests, I will seek a course that enhances the value my enterprise can create for society over the long term. This may not always mean growing or preserving the enterprise and may include such painful actions as its restructuring, discontinuation, or sale, if these actions preserve or increase value.

I PLEDGE that considerations of personal benefit will never supersede the interests of the enterprise I am entrusted to manage. The pursuit of self-interest is the vital engine of a capitalist economy, but unbridled greed can be just as harmful. Therefore, I will guard against decisions and behavior that advance my own narrow ambitions but harm the enterprise I manage and the societies it serves.

I PROMISE to understand and uphold, both in letter and in spirit, the laws and contracts governing my own conduct, that of my enterprise, and that of the societies in which it operates. My personal behavior will be an example of integrity, consistent with the values I publicly espouse. I will be equally vigilant in ensuring the integrity of others around me and bring to attention the actions of others that represent violations of this shared professional code.

I VOW to represent my enterprise's performance accurately and transparently to all relevant parties, ensuring that investors, consumers, and the public at large can make well-informed decisions. I will aim to help people understand how decisions that affect them are made, so that choices do not appear arbitrary or biased.

I WILL NOT PERMIT considerations of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, party politics, or social status to influence my choices. I will endeavor to protect the interests of those who may not have power, but whose well-being is contingent on my decisions.

I WILL MANAGE my enterprise by diligently, mindfully, and conscientiously applying judgment based on the best knowledge available. I will consult colleagues and others who can help inform my judgment and will continually invest in staying abreast of the evolving knowledge in the field, always remaining open to innovation. I will do my utmost to develop myself and the next generation of managers so that the profession continues to grow and contribute to the well-being of society.

I RECOGNIZE that my stature and privileges as a professional stem from the honor and trust that the profession as a whole enjoys, and I accept my responsibility for embodying, protecting,

and developing the standards of the management profession, so as to enhance that respect and honor.

(Source: Khurana, R., & Nohria, N. (2008). It's time to make management a true profession. *Harvard business review*, Oct2008, 86 (10), pp.72-73.)

More than half of the 2009 graduating class of the Harvard Business School's MBA program voluntarily signed a paraphrased version of this oath. Graduates from other MBA programs from Stanford, Wharton, and Oxford's Said Business School also signed.

For the worldwide Christian Church, the *Global Compact*, *PRME*, and *A Hippocratic Oath for Managers* are all positive signs of an awareness of the need for significant ethical standards in management and in business that are also translated into ethical practice. Concern over issues related to human rights, justice, and the protection of the environment are expressed by the Anglican Church of Canada through its *Ecojustice* initiatives. Likewise, the World Council of Churches has a similar organizational framework in its *Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation* projects. Embedded in both organizations' efforts is a directive for action on the part of its membership. But is it enough? Are there additional possibilities yet untapped for the Christian Church to take a more direct role in shaping the future of business and management practices?

From the broader Scriptural landscape, there is a general, ongoing call for Christians to ensure that there is integrity between belief and action on their part. This is expressed in the New Testament.

...be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act – they will be blessed in their doing (The Bible, James 1:22-25, New Standard Revised Version, 1989).

All Christian people, therefore, are entrusted with the charge that they act upon the Word in all aspects of their lives. This holds true for Christian business persons and managers.

The current structure of management and business programs in the post secondary sector is not necessarily conducive to achieving the Church's vision for sustainable, just, and peaceful business practices that are grounded in high ethical standards. As Harvard Business School's Dr. Rakesh Khurana (2009) notes,

Business education is part of the business system. Consequently, as part of the business system, it plays a role in producing both ideas and individuals inculcated with those ideas for business. It is also influenced by business practice and influences business practices. Consequently, I think it is an important portal from which to examine what happened in recent years with respect to the economy...

The goal of a university is to produce value for society. Professional schools, in particular, have a role for producing individuals who will act as guardians of society's interests. If that is not a role that business schools are will to take then I think we have more important existential and structural issues...business schools need to inculcate students with a sense that there is a commitment to use the knowledge they acquire for advancing the interests of the institutions they are charged with leading, rather than self-interest alone...

I think where business schools went wrong was starting to see themselves as business and not enough of education. Too much of contemporary business education offers a narrow concept of the role of business in society. It is not holistic, nor does it take into account the competing claims that a variety of constituents have on the firm...It does not produce a broad, integrative understanding of business.

In recent years, business educators have adopted the language, techniques, and structures more often found in the subject they are supposed to be studying. For example, the idea that we are in an industry has led to a competitive mentality among business schools. One consequence of this is a race to the bottom with respect to requirements and a weakening of educational standards (pp.1-2).

This critical analysis of current structure of business schools highlights the point that even those working within leading post secondary business and management programs (such as the Harvard's Business School) believe that there is a need for change.

In our current contemporary context, Christian values and management and business practices are often viewed as necessarily existing in a dichotomous relationship. Is that reality or myth? I believe that to be a myth.

Clearly, there is evidence on a number of levels that cracks are appearing in the façade of the empire of the globalized market economy. Thus, it would seem an opportune time for the Church to use those cracks to advantage in order to deepen them, to create profound fissures that can begin to bring about change. In essence, the time is ripe for the Church to take a leadership role in the arenas of business and management and in the post secondary educational experiences of future Christian managers and business leaders.

Introduction

Globalization is a reality of our contemporary world wide economy and of our global culture. The research literature is informative in illustrating both the negative and positive outcomes of the processes of globalization. On one hand, it has created many opportunities for entrepreneurs in local, national, and international markets, effectively allowing businesses to operate in countries where laws and cultural norms may be less stringent and wages lower than in Western nations. In some instances, this has meant the realization of significant monetary profits for these companies. However, globalization also poses challenges to the entrepreneur in relation to the ethical and nonexploitive uses of the natural environment, the Earth's resources, working conditions, and the distribution of wealth. Unfortunately, these challenges have not always been met and the results for the environment and for human beings have at times been very negative, even disastrous. Thus, from a Christian standpoint, we are left to question the legitimacy of some of the monetary profits that have been realized through the processes of globalization.

As this chapter unfolds, we will see that globalization itself is neither “good” nor “bad”. Rather, it is our use of the processes of globalization that determines the direction of its utility as a tool of virtue or of vice.

Understanding the Concept of Globalization

In his work *A Brief History of Globalization: The Untold Story of Our Incredible Shrinking Planet* (2006), Alex MacGillivray traces the first use of the adjective *global* in contemporary print to an article in an 1892 publication of *Harper's Magazine*. The article featured a Frenchman named Monsieur de Vogue who was described as one who,

*...loves to travel; he goes to the East and to the West for colors and ideas; his interests are as wide as the universe; his ambition, to use a world of his own, is to be **global** (Harper's Magazine, September, 1892, 492/2).*

MacGillivray goes on to note,

1892 was an eventful year around the world, with British and French invasions in Nigeria and Dahomey bring the European 'Scramble for Africa' to a new pitch of imperialism. But there is something different about Vogue's ambitions. They are not quite imperial, not quite modernist, broader than colonial.

Vogue's quest for inspiration and novelty is startlingly voracious. It is globe-consuming. 1892 was also the year Ellis Island opened to immigrants; the year when Edison patented the two-way telegraph and General Electric was founded. It saw the birth of two very different politicians – Wendell Wilkie and Haile Selassie – both with global vision. Globalization was alive and well in the late nineteenth century (pp10-11).

Thus, the word *global* appears to originally have been used in popular print to depict the ambitions of a European fashion designer.

The term **globalization** initially debuted in the English language in 1959 and was first included in the 1961 Webster's dictionary. However, the origin of its root word **globe** can be traced back to the Latin term **globus** which was then adopted by the British in the 15th century. The word **global** emerged in late 17th century English and about two centuries later came to take on the meaning of being 'on a planetary scale'. Since the 1980s, *globalization* has become part of our everyday vocabulary.

Globalization was 'discovered' in the 1980s. It took a while for the news to get out. For most of the 1980s, references to globalization were infrequent, but during the 1990s they became a stream and then a flood. Journalists, businesspeople, politicians and scholars seized upon the term and made it part of their core vocabulary. Discourse about 'globalization' rapidly increased... We see a steeply rising curve, like a massive ocean wave. That picture mirrors the way globalization was experienced, especially by Westerners (Smith, 2006, p.3).

Literature devoted to the topic of globalization is voluminous. A search on www.amazon.com yielded 73, 372 books available on the subject (search date June 29, 2009). But what exactly do we mean by the term? From the research literature, we can find many definitions for the word *globalization*.

Globalization, at its simplest, refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's regions (Held, 2004, p.1).

Like power, globalization has different meanings. There are three possibilities for conceptualizing it. Simply put, globalization is often understood as an increase in interconnections or growing interdependence on a world scale. Probing further, scholars have defined globalization as a compression of time and space. Speeded by new technologies, events in one part of the world instantly affect what takes place in distant locales. These definitions are helpful as far as they go; however, they are silent about social hierarchies and power relations. Arguably, a more useful avenue of inquiry is to

approach globalization as a historical transformation. It is a transformation in the economy that livelihoods and modes of existence change; in politics, since the locus of power gradually shifts above and below territorial states, forming a multilevel system; and in culture, insofar as there is an erosion of certain life-ways and the emergence of new hybrid forms (Mittelman, 2004, p.4).

In a single word, this term summarizes a wide spectrum of experiences shared by many people. For one, the people of the world's wealthy nations find (nearly) the entire world at their doorstep every day thanks to modern forms of consumption and communication. For another, the breakup of the isolated world of the Soviet bloc appears to have left the planet as a whole permeated by uniform principles of Western lifestyles. Seen from an economic perspective, the liberation of market forces from governmental regulation and the technological innovation in the areas of data processing and communication seem to have helped create markets in which supply and demand can become effective worldwide...At the heart of this term is a dichotomy that proves time and again to be as trivial as it is true: the world is becoming noticeably "smaller" as distant lands are being linked ever more closely together. At the same time, the world is becoming "larger" because our horizons have never been so broad (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, pp 2-3).

While we have perhaps most often considered globalization from economic and political perspectives, sociologists have a somewhat different point of view on the issue. In their text, *Globalization – The Transformation of Social Worlds*, authors Eitzen and Baca Zinn (2009) describe the phenomenon of globalization from a sociological standpoint.

Globalization refers to the greater interconnectedness among the world's people...Globalization is a process whereby goods, information, people, money, communication, fashion (and other forms of culture) move across national boundaries. There are several implications of this view of globalization. First, globalization is not a thing or a product but rather a process. It involves such activities as immigration, transnational travel, e-mails and the Internet, marketing products in one nation that are made elsewhere, the movement of jobs to low-wage economies, transnational investments, satellite broadcasts, the price of oil, coffee, wheat, and other commodities, and finding a McDonalds and drinking a Coke or Pepsi in virtually every major city in the world. Second, it follows that globalization is not simply a matter of economics, but it also has far-reaching political, social, and cultural implications as well. Third, globalization refers to worldwide changes that are increasingly remolding the lives of people worldwide. Globalization is not just "something out there" but it has outcomes for institutions, families, and individuals within societies...And, fourth, not everyone experiences globalization the same way. For some it expands opportunities and enhances prosperity while others experience poverty and hopelessness (p.1).

Globalization as characterized from the sociological perspective includes a broader range of impacts beyond the economic and political. However, there is commonality between the sociological, economic, and political vantage points, and it is in this commonality that we can expose a more comprehensive understanding of globalization; much like a wide angle kaleidoscope. Effectively, globalization represents the compression/manipulation of time and space in that money, goods, ideas, communication, people, and culture itself travel quickly across comparatively smaller spaces. Furthermore, this flow of money, goods, ideas, communication, people, and culture is multidirectional, and there are structures such as political borders and economic pacts (such as the North American Free Trade Act) that expedite and block this flow.

Globalization is not a new concept. Trade, travel, migration, and the exchange of goods and information have been taking place for thousands of years. We can easily trace such examples to the times of the ancient Greeks. There have also been periods in history when the processes of globalization gained speed. Renaissance Europe provides us with a case in point. Art in all its forms flourished in pockets of Italy (for example, Florence) during the Renaissance, and these artifacts soon traveled across Europe to be placed in public buildings and in private collections. The Industrial Revolution gives us yet another historical example. However, there exists a series of important factors that separate the processes of 21st century globalization from previous iterations of this phenomenon.

One such distinguishing feature is the speed at which globalization has been expanding from the period of the 1980s to the present. Clearly, it has accelerated in pace and scope in the past two decades, and the arrival of the Internet and the electronic age have certainly expedited its spread. There are new patterns of trade as 21st century globalization appears to have shifted from a North-South orientation towards a focus on East-South relations in terms of trade and finance. This has been a result of a weakening of the United States' domination over trade and finance and the gathering strength of East Asia, China, and India as newly industrialized economies. Western overconsumption and debt alongside Asian surpluses is creating an unsustainable imbalance in trade and finance. As the economies of Brazil and Russia have also been altered, the axis of globalization has also been realigned accordingly. The influence and stability of the institutions that provided the financial structure to the globalization of the 1990s (The International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization) have been

eroded. Conversely, the weight of the emerging economies is growing. Global inequality in relation to poverty and social struggle is on the rise in 21st century globalization. This has been accompanied by a stronger presence of progressive social movements such as the World Social Forum, demanding a more humane form of globalization that includes economic and social parity. Working conditions and the distribution of the world's wealth are also feature demands of these social movements. Cultural homogenization and the intermingling of cultural patterns continue to create cultural hybridization. And, finally, ecological concerns such as global warming, climate change, and natural resource depletion are taking on a new urgency as we move further into 21st century globalization.

There is little disagreement that the above mentioned shifts in the processes of globalization have occurred. However, these changes have also sparked considerable debate over the net impacts of globalization and its potential to be more detrimental than beneficial. As Kalantzis and Cope (2008) note, *The New Globalization is a state of human affairs in which, for the first time in human history, the globe is the potential domain for any action or representation* (p.xv). Understanding both the positive and negative realities and possibilities of 21st century globalization is the first phase in ensuring that its processes are used for more than monetary profit, that its processes are used for constructive and affirmative action in relation to issues of power, wealth, and the natural environment.

The Debate Regarding Globalization

For all the attention globalization has received in recent years, little consensus has emerged concerning how best to understand it. For some, it is the happy product of free and rational choices; for others, it is the unfortunate outcome of imperial forces beyond our control. It is in turn celebrated for the opportunities that it affords and criticized for the inequalities in wealth and power it generates.

(David Singh Grewal, 2008, front cover page)

As noted previously in this chapter, globalization is a process that has gained much attention in the past two decades as its impact on many aspects of human endeavour and human life has continued to increase; economically, socially, politically, environmentally, and culturally. Lane (2006) cites four major challenges posed by globalization.

- *Energy: How to meet the future energy needs, replacing fossil fuels?*
- *Environment: How to safeguard the sustainability of the earth's ecosystem?*
- *Global Market Economy: How to enforce the rules of the global economy and promote social justice?*
- *Peace and Human Rights: How to avoid confrontation between states as well as civil wars, anarchy and genocide through collaboration between governments (p.3)?*

The degree to which businesses have successfully addressed these four areas of concern has varied considerably. Some entrepreneurial activity has completely ignored these questions and can be described as nothing less than exploitive, causing considerable damage to the environment and creating significant hardships in human lives. In extreme cases such as the “blood diamond” trade in Africa, diamonds are mined in war zones and then sold to help finance that war. Such sales generate an estimated \$7.5 billion annually, but come at the cost of human life and other very significant atrocities. Other entrepreneurs have been much more attentive to these issues and have, in fact, made positive impacts.

Economists, entrepreneurs, philosophers, environmentalists, and political activists are examples of groups that are represented in the many publications that have been devoted to examining both the pros and cons related to the effects of globalization. Clearly, the debate is far from settled and we can be certain that much more research on globalization will take place in the coming decade.

Jagdish Bhagwati, a professor at Columbia University and Senior Fellow in International Economics at the Council on Foreign Relations, notes that globalization itself as a concept is neither positive nor negative. Rather, he cites **our use** of globalization as being the determining factor that will create either positive or negative outcomes. In his work, *In Defense of Globalization* (2007), Bhagwati provides many examples of positive impacts of globalization: decreased levels of poverty in India and China, reduced rates of child labour in Vietnam, and exposure to the feminist movement (e.g., for Japanese women) with an accompanying shrinkage of the wage gap between genders being among them. Additionally, globalization has opened employment doors for persons with disabilities. For example, India has the world's largest population of people with hearing impairments. Ten years ago, these people would have been deemed to be “unhirable” in India due to lack of opportunity and social stigma attached to disabilities. However, many Western corporations have hiring policies that include persons with

disabilities, and developing nations have had to adhere to those policies when dealing with these companies.

However, there are many examples of authors who cite globalization as being detrimental, particularly to the environment and to the world's poor. Below is a sampling of titles that address globalization from this stance.

- *Acts of Resistance – Against the Tyranny of the Market* by Pierre Bourdieu.
- *Wealth, Poverty, and Human Destiny* by Doug Bandow and David Schindler (editors).
- *Poor Story – An Insider Discovers How Globalization and Good Intentions Have Failed the World's Poor* by Giles Bolton.
- *Flat World, Big Gaps – Economic Liberalization, Globalization, Poverty, and Inequality* by K.S. Jomo and Jacqueline Baudot (editors).
- *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality* by Glenn Firebaugh.
- *A Commonsense Case for Income Equality – Challenging the Defences of the Unfettered Free Market* by Maurice Allen.

In attempting to examine both sides of the debate, authors David Held and Anthony McGrew offer us the text, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization – Beyond the Great Divide* (2007).

Being knowledgeable about both sides of this issue is important for entrepreneurs because they have the ability to promote positive outcomes or to create harm; economically, socially, politically, environmentally, and culturally. Responsible business practices need to be grounded in real information and ignorance is no excuse for entrepreneurial activity that is simply exploitive. While there is yet no definitive answer to the question in debate regarding the net impact of globalization, one of the positive outgrowths of this phenomenon has been the rise of *corporate social responsibility*.

Corporate Social Responsibility

*Some men see things as they are and say, "Why?"
I dream of things that never were and say, "Why not?"*

~ George Bernard Shaw ~

Globalization has opened the doors for businesses from developed nations to move their production to third world and lesser developed countries, creating unprecedented opportunities for increased profit and production. In part, this has been an attractive corporate option because various nations from around the world represent a diversity of laws and cultural norms regarding

the use of the natural environment and the Earth's resources, and regarding working conditions, wages, and labour standards. This means that business practices that may be illegal or deemed to be unfair or even unethical in the West may be legal and acceptable commercial procedures in other parts of the world; particularly in developing or third world countries. It also means that what may not be culturally acceptable in North America and continental Europe may be quite culturally tolerable in other nations (e.g., wage discrimination based on gender). This opens the door for potential exploitation of the environment and of human beings. The critical question for the business person then becomes, *Even if this practice is legal and/or tolerated in this country, is it ethical?*

As noted in the preface of this monograph, the United Nations' *Global Compact Principles* were drafted in 1999 and released for action in the year 2000.

The United Nations Global Compact is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption...

The UN Global Compact is not a regulatory instrument, but rather a voluntary initiative that relies on public accountability, transparency, and disclosure to complement regulation and to provide a space for innovation (www.unglobalcompact.org accessed November 16, 2009).

The ten principles of the *Global Compact* are organized around the four key themes of human rights, labour standards, environment, and anticorruption. They are significant because they bring key questions to the forefront; questions about the legitimacy of monetary profit, fair distribution of power and wealth, and sustainability. These principles are also important because they lay the foundations for *corporate social responsibility*; a phenomenon that has gained momentum in the 21st century globalized market economy.

Dr. Alan Murray, one of the authors of the *Principles for Responsible Management Education* and a lecturer at Sheffield University's Management School, notes that there are scores of definitions for corporate social responsibility, but that the concept of corporations having a responsibility for civic good is the common denominator. He and coauthor Michael Blowfield identify a range of areas of corporate responsibility activity identifiable in our current context: *business ethics, legal compliance, philanthropy and community investment,*

environmental management, sustainability, animal rights, human rights, worker rights and welfare, market relations, corruption, and corporate governance (2008, p.24).

Building on the above perspective, Daniel Diermeier (2007) notes that:

Corporate social responsibility has been broadly defined as the ways in which a company's activities affect its stakeholders and fulfill its perceived obligations to society, including the environment. Some businesses are on the cutting edge of the movement to make corporations more socially responsible. Others are driven to join it by unfortunate disclosures or the consequences of missteps in regard to social responsibility. Nevertheless, most large companies grapple with a broad range of corporate social responsibility issues ranging from global poverty to renewable energy ...

What is new is an emerging consensus that corporate social responsibility is no longer a luxury for a few prosperous companies but a necessary component of sound business practice. Companies are increasingly held accountable by standards other than maximizing shareholder value, and they need to develop strategies and policies to address these challenges (pp.xii-2).

Diermer highlights the fact that not all corporate social responsibility is initially done with altruistic intent, but rather has been at times a reactive measure for the sake of public relations. Media revelations regarding sweatshop working conditions associated with high profile name brand merchandise have been the primary catalysts in some companies (e.g., GAP and Nike) creating corporate social responsibility agendas.

However, other authors have focused on developing frameworks for companies that wish to be proactive in formulating corporate social responsibility plans. In her work, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Globalization – An Action Plan for Business*, Jacqueline Cramer describes corporate social responsibility as being comprised of three key elements or *pillars*: people, planet, and profit. Figure 10 explains this concept in greater detail.

Figure 5: The Three Pillars of Corporate Social Responsibility – People, Planet, and Profit

People relates to a range of subjects, including both internal and external social policies. This concerns not only the company's own part in the chain, but also the rest of the chain for which the company can take responsibility.

Internal social policy includes the nature of employment, labour/management relationships, health and safety, training and education, as well as diversity and opportunities.

External social policy encompasses three main categories, each with several sub-categories, namely"

1. *Human rights issues, including strategy and management, nondiscrimination, freedom of*

association and collective bargaining, child labour, forced and compulsory labour, disciplinary practices, security practices and indigenous rights.

2. *Society, including community activities, bribery and corruption, financial contributions to political parties, competition and pricing.*
3. *Product responsibility, including consumer health and safety, products and services, advertising and respect for personal privacy.*

Planet *relates to the environmental impact of the company's production activities: the use of scarce goods (such as energy, water and other raw materials) and the environmental impact in the product chain.*

Profit *stands for the company's contribution to economic prosperity in the broadest sense. Here, a distinction is made between direct and indirect economic impact. Direct impact involves the monetary flows between the organization and its key stakeholders and the impact which the organization has on the economic circumstances of those stakeholders.*

The indirect impact is related to the spin-off from company activities in terms of innovation, the contribution of the sector to gross domestic product or national competitiveness and the local community's dependence on the company's activities.

(Source: Cramer, J. [2006]. *Corporate social responsibility and globalization: An action plan for business*. p 15. Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing Ltd.)

Further to these definitions, Bhagwati (2007) examines the issue of how and why corporate social responsibility should be undertaken.

*It would appear, therefore, that the true, indeed only, compelling reason for corporations to assume social responsibility is that it is the right thing to do. For in doing so, they will **enhance** the social good that their economic activities promote when they invest in these developing countries, and for which there is now much evidence...*

*The edifice of corporate social responsibility, however, must rest on two foundations. One has to be altruism, which deals with what corporations **should** do. But the other must deal with regulation that defines what corporations **should not** do (p. 191).*

One would hope that businesses develop corporate social responsibility agendas for the altruistic reasons that Bhagwati has cited. Some companies have intentionally given corporate social responsibility initiatives a prominent place in their organizational cultures, working from a values based perspective. Others have been motivated to adopt such policies because being seen to be environmentally and socially responsible appeals to its customers. That is, some businesses have been sufficiently sensitive to trends in our broader societal culture to know that consumers are interested in patronizing companies that respond to concerns about the environment and

about social justice. Consider the example of the coffee company that advertises the fact that it uses “fair trade coffee beans”. They may be engaging in an act of social justice because it is the right thing to do, or they may be simply engaging in marketing practices that will increase their sales. Ultimately, it is incumbent upon the consumer to utilize a bit of “healthy skepticism” in discerning which end of the spectrum that the motives of the business lie, and to ask questions. The business person also needs to reflect on his or her motives for crafting and implementing a corporate social responsibility agenda. If the intentions are indeed altruistic, then we would expect to see that ethical stance figure prominently in other aspects of the company’s organizational culture.

Alfred Nobel as an Early Example of Corporate Social Responsibility. Alfred Nobel provides us with a case in point. In 1888, Nobel, the Swedish chemist, engineer, and inventor of dynamite, was quite shocked to read the headline, *Le Marchand de la Mort est Mort* in a French newspaper. Translated, the headline stated that “The Merchant of Death is Dead” and the article continued on to say, “Dr. Alfred Nobel, who became rich by finding ways to kill more people faster than ever before, died yesterday”.

The third son of Immanuel and Andriette Nobel, young Alfred had followed in his father’s footsteps and became involved in the family’s torpedo manufacturing business. He eventually made his own fortune in the field of explosives and armaments through his company *Bofors*. He was particularly focused on the safe use of nitroglycerin and had much success in this area. In 1867, he patented dynamite and demonstrated its explosive power at a quarry in Surrey, England later that same year. In 1876 he produced another highly effective explosive named *gelignite*. However, his accomplishments came at a cost. On September 3, 1864, there was an explosion in his Stockholm based factory. Five people, including Alfred’s younger brother, Emil, were killed.

After reading his own premature obituary, Alfred began to rethink his entrepreneurial ambitions. In 1895, he wrote his final will and testament; the terms of which created the funding for the Nobel Prizes. Signed on November 27, 1895 at the Swedish-Norwegian Club in Paris, Nobel’s will stated that the majority of his personal wealth should be devoted to the prizes. Worth 31 million kronor at the time of his death in 1896 (equivalent to several million US dollars in our time), the fund for the Nobel Prizes has been perpetuated for more than a century. The intention was that five prizes were to be awarded annually: one each in the areas of physical

science, chemistry, medical science or physiology, literature, and one to an individual or society that significantly furthers peace or international relations. The first prizes were awarded in 1901 to individuals who had made outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

When Alfred Nobel died in Sanremo, Italy on December 10, 1896 following a stroke, his legacy of the Nobel Prizes was to become his way of giving back to society. In this sense, we find an example of corporate social responsibility that came about as a result of profits gained through Nobel's entrepreneurial activities during his lifetime. To be awarded a Nobel Prize remains one of the highest honours that can be bestowed in the sciences, medicine, literature, and in peace efforts.

The Secular Challenge of Globalization

The secular challenge of globalization is multidimensional.

1. Imbalances in wealth and power go hand in hand, as 20% of the world's population possess and control 86% of gross national product. The association of prosperity with financial wealth and with overconsumption as a visible sign of that wealth have supported the perceived "legitimacy" of those imbalances in first world countries.
2. Technology has provided us with tools that allow money to travel at great speed. Bank machines, credit cards, and debit cards have moved us one step away from the immediacy of cash and the reality of its limits in terms of purchasing power. Coupled with an unprecedented tolerance for personal, corporate, and national debt, the Western practice of living on credit in order to continue consuming has proven to be unsustainable.
3. As new countries take centre stage as emerging industrialized economies, an even greater strain is being placed on the natural environment and on natural resources. From a secular perspective, it would seem only logical that East Asia, China, India, Brazil, and Russia would want to have their collective "turn" to "catch up" with North America and Western Europe as consumer nations. It would seem only "fair" that they be given the same opportunities to enjoy first world "prosperity" for the next few decades without concern for the environment. But can God's Creation and God's people afford to wait that long?

These three points encapsulate pressing concerns regarding the realities of globalization. The discipline of Sociology provides us assistance in appreciating the implications of those concerns.

In May of 2009, I was fortunate enough to attend a conference on globalization at the Zayed University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. One of the keynote speakers was Dr. George Ritzer, one of the preeminent sociological scholars in the area of globalization. Ritzer is best known in sociological circles for his books, *The McDonaldization of Society*, *Enchanting a Disenchanted World*, and *The Globalization of Nothing*.

In his address, Ritzer noted the phenomena of *hyperconsumption* (consuming more than one wants, needs, and can afford) and the current focus on the *prosumer* (one who simultaneously consumes what one is producing) as hallmarks of 21st century globalization. He also spoke of *cathedrals of consumption* and the need for *spectacle* as signposts of *hyperconsumption* and *prosumerism*. He drew the connection between the rise in Western wealth with increased consumerism. He cited Baudrillard's work *Consumer Society* (1970) as the first important work to explore American patterns of consumption, including the introduction of the modern day credit card in 1950 in the United States.

Expanding on his propositions regarding *cathedrals of consumption* and *spectacle*, Dr. Ritzer described the evolution of theme and amusement parks (such as Disneyland, established 1955), shopping malls (such as West Edmonton Mall, established 1980), casino-hotels (such as the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, established 1947 by gangster "Bugsy" Siegel), and the *Sunward* as the first modern cruise ship (Florida, 1966). Each of these examples served to illustrate a focus on the creation of simulation or a "fake reality" while simultaneously indulging in consumption on a grand scale. As the Western world moved deeper into the 20th century and into the 21st, the *spectacles* have become more grandiose and expensive, and locales boasting two or more *cathedrals of consumption* have become *landscapes of consumption*.

In his work, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (originally published 1943 in the United Kingdom), Joseph Schumpeter describes *the processes of creative destruction* (pp.81-86) as a facet of capitalism. Ritzer borrows from Schumpeter's phraseology, citing the *not-so-creative destruction of cathedrals of consumption* in the current recession. That is, Ritzer observed that *cathedrals of consumption* are ill suited to survive in recessionary times, and may, in fact, become dinosaurs that are obsolete or extinct before they are even completed. He noted that the website www.deadmalls.com actually documents this observable fact, beginning with the opening tagline, "Welcome to Retail History!" This example serves to illustrate the unsustainability of *hyperconsumption* on credit.

In summation, Dr. Ritzer was most emphatic about this central point: **Globalization is about capitalism and that, in spite of the common misconception that it is about democratization, this is in fact a popular myth.** He was, however, swift to note that **globalization can be about de-democratization**, indicating that one need look only as far as the “war on terror” to see evidence of this.

The Sacred Response: A Theological Reflection on Globalization

Considering the complexity and depth of the secular challenge of globalization, the Church clearly has a significant and immediate role to play in untangling the processes of globalization that do harm from those that have the potential to do good. Returning again to the conversation with Bishop Peter Selby, he spoke about globalization in relation to the worldwide Church and in relation to the conflicts that arise between the secular and sacred worlds when competing interests are at the forefront.

Globalization is also God's project. God is about globalization, otherwise there wouldn't be a Church. The issue is whose globalization is it going to be? Is it going to be mammon's globalization or is it going to be God's globalization? And if it's going to be God's, then what are going to be the ground rules?

The thing that has made it so much mammon's globalization has been the vast expansion in the supply of money, mostly through lending, fractional reserve banking, and all of those things that we take for granted in our world but which, when they get out of control, become a serious problem (October 8, 2009, Isle of Wight).

To date, mammon's globalization has clearly been at the helm for many in the corporate world. This is evidenced in the themes of imbalance, debt, and environmental sustainability.

Imbalance. The Bible makes many references to poverty and to wealth, but always coupled with commentary on imbalance as the source of injustice. That is, the overriding concern in Scripture is that there be equitability based on need, and that we respond accordingly. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, Paul challenges the Christian community to achieve such a balance, using Christ himself as a role model.

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia, for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints – and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the

will of God, to us, so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking.

Now as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you – so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something – now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has – not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written, “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little” (The Bible, New Standard Revised Version, 1996).

Thus, as Christians we are all called to work towards creating this balance. For the Christian business person or manager, there is a clear mandate to work at correcting the current imbalances that exist in the distribution of wealth and power.

Parallel to this issue of imbalance that stems from an attraction to mammon is the theme of focusing on worldly things. Christ provides us with a stern caution about this in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 8: 33-38).

But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things. He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (The Bible, New Standard Revised Version, 1996).

There is an implicit challenge in this passage; a challenge to clarify our priorities. For the Christian business person or manager, this clarification needs to be at the foundation of all action. That is, in order to avoiding having a double standard exist between one’s personal and professional lives, this is a fundamental step. The litmus test is clearly stated, although, admittedly, not easily achieved: **If the foundation of one’s business philosophy or *raison d’etre* is grounded in a focus on the worldly (including the pursuit of mammon), then one’s business and management practices will necessarily follow suit.** The logical result will be a

demarcating divide between how one seeks to live out the Gospel in one's private life while ignoring it during business hours.

Debt. Debt is an economic reality that humans have had to confront since the inception of currency. And, while some might propose the thought that ancient Scripture is irrelevant on that issue, Bishop Selby reminds us that this is not so.

While the world of the first century may appear rather different from ours, there are some themes in the Bible that touch directly on business. It says in the Bible that there are limits first of all to what you may take as a pledge for a debt and, secondly, to what lengths you can go in order to get payment of a debt; about not taking somebody's cloak, not being able to take the tools of somebody's trade. Debt, therefore, does not have the last word.

There are issues which are dealt with in Biblical text which have implications or reverberations in commercial life. In the episode with the tribute money, I would make the point that what Jesus actually says in the punch line is significant in that it changes the verb because they ask him if it is lawful to pay or give to tribute to Caesar. And the verb he uses is "give back". He says, "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar." And the reason he is able to do that is because tribute money had the emperor's face on it and his inscription, and the production of all money was an act of sovereign authority. One of things we have got to look at is what it's like to live in a world where that's no longer the case, where money is produced by bankers for profit. And if you say that in a meeting of bankers, mostly they recognize that you're onto something. Not that it answers all of their questions because it doesn't, and I would never suggest for a moment that it did. But it does make a point.

A second example is the episode about the major debt in Matthew 18 and the minor debt. I think it is really interesting to get people to imagine themselves into such a circumstance and, in particular, to imagine themselves into the circumstance of the person who had the large debt and had it remitted. To us, the question is, "Why was he not generous in response?" And the answer is, of course, that if a person is very near the abyss, and is suddenly relieved of the threat of the abyss, their first thought is, "I'm not going to get into this situation again." Therefore, he didn't actually remit the other person's debt because he wanted to be sure that he didn't get into this mess again that he's just fortunately gotten out of. The interesting thing, of course, is what the other servants who stand in the audience do; they protest. They say, "This is outrageous!" But, what this man has really said is, "I don't mind having my debts forgiven. But if you're telling me that this is going to be the policy, then that's a different matter." And if you want to know why Jesus died, he died because having forgiven people their sins and having healed their sick and all the rest of it, he suddenly announced that this was not a piece of kindness on his part; this was a new policy. "This is called the Kingdom of God, and this is how it's going to be, folks." And that left people thinking, "Well, that's not really so good because I might get my debts forgiven and that might be quite nice. But, actually, I don't want to be in a position where I have no hold over other people." So I think it's a very interesting piece of atonement theology teaching...

It was not surprising, therefore, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer – what we call our finance minister – said to bankers, “We bailed you out, so would you please now lend money to the economy to get it going again?” Not surprisingly, they said, “Well, no, we’re not going to do that because we got into a mess and bailed us out, and that’s really nice of you. But we don’t intend to get ourselves into this mess again. And, in any case, our primary responsibility, Mr. Chancellor, is to our shareholders and that’s a statutory responsibility, so don’t you lecture us about greed and so forth. We will go on the way we’ve always gone on.”

I think that when you start talking like that with business people, they’re very interested. But they have to be weaned off a deeply held belief that only the free market can solve any of these problems.

As I think you would not be surprised to know, I believe it was right to relieve the burden of debt from the most indebted countries; that’s obviously right. But the problem was that the most indebted country in the world was the United States and the reason it didn’t need to be relieved was that, on the whole, people who lend money don’t want it back. What they want is interest and a return on it, in other words. And if you give it them back, they are left with the problem of finding someone else to lend it to. Because if it just sits in their bank again, it doesn’t produce anything (October 8, 2009, Isle of Wight).

The parallels that Bishop Selby is able to draw between these illustrative examples from Scripture and the state of our current global market economy are unmistakable. There is a wisdom embedded in his interpretation of these stories that clearly highlights not only the relevance of the Bible, but the imperative for Christian business persons and managers to engage in exegesis as part of their formation for their professional lives. That is, if the goal is to be able to integrate one’s Christian beliefs and values into one’s business life in a manner that is informed, intelligent, and intentional, the exploration of Scripture needs to occur alongside contemporary issues and challenges of the business world.

Certainly debt is currently a serious issue for the Western world. This begs two essential questions: **How does debt impact our collective abilities to extend generosity to others? As our debt increases, how less likely are we to forgive the financial debts of those countries who are most in need?** In the English language, there are several expressions of the Lord’s Prayer, including the version which exchanges the terms *sin* or *trespass* for the word *debt*.

*...Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,
For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen.*

We can use either the literal and figurative interpretations of the words *debt* and *debtors* in this instance, but the substance of Bishop Selby's point about the human tendency to want to have a "hold" over others – whether it be in a financial or moral sense – resonates. As well, there is the reminder that our focus is to be on building up the Kingdom of God as opposed to the cultivation of mammon. Clearly, the corporate world has potential to make a substantial contribution in extending generosity to those most in need as well as in forgiving financial debt in struggling parts of the world. In doing so, they would, in fact, be furthering the Kingdom of God. The crux would appear to lay in the decision to use money as a symbol of greed or to employ it as a tool of Christian virtue.

I think a Biblical orientation to this subject would say is, "Money behaves like that. Money behaves in a threatening manner. Money behaves mercilessly. Whereas, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob behaves mercifully. Therefore, you can't be a slave to God and to money because they have very different behavioural characteristics." (Bishop Peter Selby, October 8, 2009, Isle of Wight).

Clearly there is a need for the manager or business person to make a conscious choice about which characteristics of money he or she wishes to adopt.

Environmental Sustainability. Having elucidated the principles of *corporate social responsibility* earlier in this chapter, we are left to consider possibilities for ***Christian corporate social responsibility*** and what that might look like in action. Again drawing on the conversation with Bishop Selby, we begin to appreciate that the Church can have an important role in taking a proactive stance in the face of ethically questionable business and political activities.

We, in the Church of England, have an ethical advisory group that advises the bodies that control the funds that are at the Church's disposal. The Chair of that group is in fact a banker who has a theology degree. He is a very interesting person; a very able banker and a very interesting reflector on issues. So, the Church of England uses its position as a shareholder first of all to sometimes disinvest in companies whose practices we don't agree with. It uses its position not to invest in certain things. The Church of England does not invest in alcohol, and it does not invest in military production. But it also uses its position to consider other things about how firms operate. And the purpose of doing that is, first of all, because we think it is important to use our possessions responsibly, and shares are a possession and they should be used responsibly. But we also do it because, by doing that, we send a message to our members and to others that actually there are some ground rules, some ways of behaving that are more Christian than others. I think Churches should have such groups, really, which try to look at theology and business at the same time. Not always easy, not always comfortable.

I give you another example that borders on your country. At the Lambeth Conference of 1998, I got to know three bishops, namely the Bishop of Alaska, the Bishop of the Yukon,

and the Bishop of the Arctic. Some time after the Lambeth Conference, the Bishop of Alaska came over to this country to lobby BP Oil who were planning to do oil exploration in the Arctic wildlife reserve in Alaska. President Bush didn't see a problem about that and we did. And it was interesting because what the Bishop of Alaska was really wanting to say was, "You really have to understand that our First Nations have a rather different attitude towards land and values than we have. And you have to take that somehow into account." You will know the story about the Chief who was offered money for some land and said, "But what will you pay me for the sky?", making the point that is a really a very Biblical point, that you can't sell land. That is your patrimony and you can't sell it. Now, of course, if somebody says to me, "Well, that was then and this is now and we now have a property market," what I want to say in response is, "What you're saying is not that it's irrelevant, but you're saying that you choose to set it out of account." And the result, of course, that we well understand is a property market that got completely out of control and ruined all sorts of people's lives, especially the lives of poor people. That is the result of saying, "This Bible is an irrelevance." And there is certainly a convenience to that perspective if one is trying to excuse ethically questionable practices (October 8, 2009, Isle of Wight).

The above examples illustrate once again that the Church has a definite role to play alongside business in safeguarding both people and the planet.

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