

Globalization as Process and Project

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Dale Bishop, of Hartford Seminary, defines the problem and challenge of globalization in a helpful way. He says we need to make an important distinction between “globalization the process and globalization the project.. Globalization as process,” he says, is the way “of facility of communication, not the least via the internet, as well as relative ease of travel, have brought the peoples of our world together in ways scarcely imaginable even 50 years ago...globalization as project has to do with the economic and political arrangements in the world made possible by globalization as process.

Unfortunately, globalization as process, which has brought the peoples of the world together, has resulted in a “world radically divided in terms of access to the good things of life. United Nations statistics describe a world of haves and have-nots, with the gap between them wider than ever...a world of exploiters and the exploited. This is a world of the unspeakably rich and the unspeakably poor.” He says that globalization as process is here to stay; we can’t change that. But opposing globalization as project is not only possible; it may be the church’s most urgent mandate. Globalization as project has to do with shaping the economic and political forces in the world so as to direct them toward chosen ends. These forces today, shaped and controlled by giant corporations, are directed toward profits, not people.

Bishop’s challenge is that the church and the peoples of the world’s great religions must join hands in cooperative efforts to transform globalization as project into something more humane, just, and compassionate. In this huge task we will be empowered by the God of unconditional, all-embracing love.

Fifty years ago, referring to the impact of radio and the wireless, an editorial challenged, “Distances have vanished. Oceans and deserts no longer divide. Science has made of the world a neighborhood. It is the business of religion to make of the world a brotherhood.” How much more true as we face this 21st century!

John Lackey