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The convinced and personal adoration of Christ is given as the presupposition of witness to the faith. Every argument extraneous to this condition would acquire, on that account, a human value, purely rational and, above all, would not bear witness.

The witness of faith can and must be defended and proclaimed with persuasive and plausible arguments, maintaining high regard for the listener, even if he be a persecutor, because it must exclude every logic of attack, of offence and of violence, even verbally. "Those also have a claim on our respect and charity who think and act differently from us in social, political and religious matters" (GS 28). Even if no compromise of this attitude can be accepted in the defence of the truth and in the pursuit of the good (cf. 2 Cor 2:17).

"The Church, therefore, urges her sons to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage (*agnoscant, servent et promoveant*) the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, and also their social life and culture" (NA 2; cf. GS 92).

Dialogue and Solidarity: *Nostra Aetate* after Forty Years

Rev. James L. FREDERICKS

Some time ago, I welcomed to my university in Los Angeles a group of Pure Land Buddhists from Japan. We were gathering for a week of inter-religious dialogue. In the days we had together before the formal dialogue meetings began, we visited various Buddhist and Catholic communities in the Los Angeles area. The first day of dialogue was given to a discussion of various topics of theological interest. This discussion came to an abrupt end the following morning, Tuesday, September 11th, 2001. The United States government shut down all air traffic over American airspace. My dialogue partners, in effect, were marooned with their Christian hosts in Los Angeles.

On the evening of the terrorist attack, the campus ministry staff at my university organized a mass. A special invitation was extended to our Buddhist guests and a place was reserved for them at the front of the chapel. The Buddhists were quite moved by the psalm we sang that evening: "Shepherd me O Lord, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life". This Old Testament text became a focus for our conversations in the days that followed. My Buddhist friends, of course, responded to the words of the psalmist from their own religious perspective. In his first Noble Truth, the Buddha taught that the arising of suffering is caused by desire. Pure Land Buddhists live by faith (*shinjin*) in the Vow of the Buddha Amida who has created a "pure land" in the West, a place of liberation from suffering. The image of being led to a place beyond wants and fears resonated very deeply with my Buddhist guests.

An act of terror gathered us around this psalm. In sharing our "wants" and "fears," to say nothing of our very different understandings of what it means to be "shepherded" beyond those wants and fears, Buddhists and Christians learned much from one another. Without exaggeration, I can say that we discovered a new sense of solidarity with each other in those days after the terrorist attacks. In this solidarity, the Christians continued to follow the path of Christ and Buddhists continued to follow the Buddha's *dharmā*. In fact, I think all of us would say that our religious commitments have been strengthened by our conversations and friendship in those days. Yet all of us recognized that the terrorist attacks had drawn us together into a new kind of community – self-consciously religious in character – in which Buddhist and Christian faith is of vital importance.

This essay is a reflection on this sense of solidarity that we discovered in the days after the terrorist attack. I will argue in the pages that follow that the fulfillment of the Church's ministry of dialogue with other religious communities lies

in this solidarity. First, I plan to discuss some issues prominent in the literature having to do with religiously motivated violence, especially as this relates to theories of globalization. The complex phenomenon of globalization has to do with the rise of new forms of interdependence among diverse peoples and societies. In fact, this new interdependence was a major theme in the teachings of Pope John Paul II and directly related to his notion of "the virtue of solidarity". The late Pope's theology of solidarity constitutes the second section of my essay. In the last section, I will argue that globalization and solidarity provide the concrete context of the Church's ministry of dialogue with other religious communities. More precisely, I will argue that the reality of our interdependence and the virtue of solidarity allow us to see inter-religious dialogue as a vital ministry in the Church today.

Globalization and Religion

Increasingly, religiously motivated violence is being related to an historical process commonly called "globalization". The literature on globalization is immense. The literature on globalization and religion is also formidable. I want to summarize several important themes from prominent commentators on globalization and its impact on religion. I acknowledge at the outset that every point I will make is controversial to one degree or another. Many of my ideas come from the works of Benjamin Barber, Jose Casanova, Robert McChesney and Mark Juergensmeyer.

The first point to be made has to do with an important consequence of globalization as an integrated system of markets and communication technologies. Globalization leads to an increased awareness of our interdependence. Political developments in the West of China, the weather in Amazon basin, or an industrial accident in North America can now have a direct and measurable impact on the lives of Europeans. The future course of the AIDS epidemic in Africa will have practical, world-wide consequences. The same can be said for the health of poultry in Vietnam. Religious preaching in the Hindu Kush has repercussions for subway-riders in London. Global interdependence is a contemporary fact that cannot be denied. The moral implications of this fact, however, are denied easily and often.¹

The second point to be made has to do with globalization as a cultural and social phenomenon. Globalization is often thought of as an economic process hav-

¹ For a helpful introduction to globalization as an intensification of our awareness of interdependence, see ROBERT KEOHANE and JOSEPH NYE, *Power and Interdependence*, Addison-Wesley, 1989.

ing to do with the integration of markets and the triumph of neo-Liberal economics.² Without denying the economic aspects of globalization, several important commentators argue that globalization has more to do with social, cultural and even religious phenomena. Many of these commentators underscore the importance of the rise of a trans-national culture in competition with local cultures. Often, this global culture is identified with American pop culture. Benjamin Barber refers to this global culture as "McWorld" and can be seen in the global presence of Hollywood movies and American fast food outlets.³

A third prominent theme regarding globalization has to do with the hegemony of this trans-national culture. The world-wide dominance of American pop culture is made possible by the success of new communication technologies and the consolidation of control over global media by a relatively small number of corporations.⁴ This culture seeks to insinuate itself everywhere and inculcates a consumerist ethos around the world. Some commentators also make note of the residual, post-colonial power of North Atlantic societies exercised through corporate control of trade as another explanation of this hegemony. Moreover, the ethos of consumerism often asserts itself as a secularizing force in society. The hegemony of global consumer culture requires the relocation of a society's religious traditions to the private sphere.

This last point suggests that the hegemony of global culture is not going unchallenged. This constitutes a fourth prominent theme regarding globalization and its impact on religion. The intrusiveness of global culture and its consumer ethos is being met by the resurgence of traditional identities rooted in ethnicity, region and, especially, religion. Benjamin Barber makes this point by contrasting "McWorld" with what he calls "Jihad" – exemplified, most dramatically, in organizations which reject McWorld's imposition of secularism like the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and more broadly in the Basque and Catalan separatist movements, the Russian nationalisms of Zherenovsky and Solzhenitsyn and political movements like India's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its call for *Hindutva*. Several commentators note that the resurgence of traditional ethnic, regional and

² See for example the essay by MARTIN WOLF, "Why this Hatred of the Market?" in *Financial Times*, May 1997. This essay is reprinted in *The Globalization Reader*, FRANK LECHNER and JOHN BOLI eds. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 9-11.

³ BENJAMIN BARBER, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Shaping the World* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1996).

⁴ The most prominent critic of the consolidation of global media into the control of a relatively small number of communication companies is Robert McChesney. *Inter alia*, see *The Problem of the Media: US Communications Politics in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004) and *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communications Politics in Dubious Times* (New York: New Press, 2000).

religious identities should not be confused with older notions of nationalism. "McWorld" is trans-national. "Jihad" (as Barber understands this word) is often sub-national. In this regard, these new groups challenge not only the hegemony of global consumerist culture, but also reject the multi-ethnic, pluralistic traditions of the nation-state: a rejection of citizenship and a return to ethnic identity.

A fifth theme has to do with the repositioning of the social location of religion in many societies. The secularizing power of global consumerist culture has already been noted. The resistance to the privatization of religion often takes the form of a resurgent, militant assertion of religious value and identity. Mark Juergensmeyer, for example, has documented the rise of "religious nationalism" as an alternative to "secular nationalism" as a competing "ideology of order".⁵ The sociologist Jose Casanova speaks of the "de-territorialization" of religion as both an epiphenomenon and a mechanism of globalization.⁶ Globalization tends to separate religions from their traditional relationship with locale. Because of Muslim immigration, for example, Europe can no longer be thought of unambiguously as "Christian territory". Conversely, media-savvy Christian Evangelical broadcasters have targeted traditionally Muslim and Roman Catholic countries. In the United States, the social repositioning of religion takes two forms. First, the old diversity of religions (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish) has been replaced with a fascination with a new diversity which includes Islam and many South and East Asian religious movements.⁷ In addition, the relocation of religion in the United States takes the form of "culture-wars" over the "family values" championed by newly assertive conservative Christians. In some parts of Europe, the repositioning of religion takes the form of Muslim and Christian challenges to established secularism. Not all religions will adjust easily to the process of de-territorialization. This helps to account for the rise of religious motivated violence.

As a sixth theme, I wish to note the view that the revival of religion, even in its violent form, can be understood as a nostalgia for a lost sense of community. Barber, for example, argues that McWorld's consumerism is too thin an ethos to provide an adequate basis for social order and meaningful human interaction.⁸ The hegemony of McWorld undermines the *Gemeinschaft* of traditional social

⁵ MARK JUERGENSMEYER, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

⁶ JOSE CASANOVA, "Religion, the New Millennium, and Globalization," in *Sociology of Religion* 2001, 62:4, 415-441. See especially, p. 428.

⁷ DIANA ECK, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Become the Most Religiously Diverse Nation on Earth*, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2001). ROBERT WUTHNOW, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁸ BARBER, *Jihad Vs. McWorld*, p. 137ff.

bonds and seeks to replace it with the *Gesellschaft* of global consumerism. Globalization, despite the impression given by commercials aired during broadcasts of the Olympic games, is disruptive of traditional society. Not surprisingly, the return to traditional religious practice (or, more commonly, the *ad hoc* construction of "tradition" over against the "West," or "McWorld," or "American pop culture" etc.) presents itself as a strategy for restoring a lost sense of social cohesion and coherence. In Iran, we witness the attempt to renew society by means of a return to *sharia* as an antidote to "West-toxification" (*gharbzadegi*). This longing for lost *Gemeinschaft*, especially when it takes the form of a revival of traditional religious identity, can promote intolerance of religious diversity. The "Christian Nationalist Movement" in the United States offers an example. In Christian Nationalism, the longing for a lost identity, community and national sense of moral purpose takes a religious form that is stridently anti-secular, anti-pluralist and xenophobic. According to Christian Nationalists, such as Randall Terry, America is "a Christian nation," and the presence of other religious communities – i.e. the Church's dialogue partners – is intolerable.

I want you to just let a wave of intolerance wash over you. I want you to let a wave of hatred wash over you. Yes, hate is good. Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a biblical duty, we are called on by God to conquer this country. We don't want equal time. We don't want pluralism.⁹

By no means do I wish to imply that the repositioning of religion and the nostalgia for lost *Gemeinschaft* always takes intolerant, let alone violent, forms. The fact remains, however, that in many parts of the world religious communities are in the process of asserting themselves against the imposition of secularism by global consumerism in a way that leads to conflict between religious communities.

I take these six themes, especially the revival of religion as a longing for lost *Gemeinschaft*, as central to the context within which Roman Catholics should be thinking about inter-religious dialogue. All six issues in the current discussion of globalization should be appreciated as "signs of the times". The Church needs to recognize these signs, interpret them and respond to them in pastorally prudent ways. In fact, I want to argue that in the teachings of Pope John Paul II regarding the virtue of solidarity, the Church has already begun to respond to these signs of the times. The Pope developed his theology of solidarity in the context of his teachings on economic and social justice. I wish to recognize the import of the Pope's teaching for our reflections on inter-religious dialogue.

⁹ RANDALL TERRY, *The News Sentinel*, (Ft. Wayne, Indiana), 8/16/93.

Interdependence in the Thought of John Paul II

In calling for an ecumenical council in 1959, John XXIII spoke in hopeful terms of the increasing interdependence of the human race and the need for *aggiornamento*. Today, almost half a century later, we call the interdependence about which the Pope spoke “globalization”. The interdependence of human beings was never far from the minds of the bishops at the Council.¹⁰ Interdependence figures prominently in the thought of John Paul II as well. I want to reflect on John Paul’s understanding of interdependence in light of the salient themes regarding globalization listed above. I wish to make four brief observations about the Pope’s use of this term.

First, in John Paul’s view, our interdependence is a fact of human life. This is true in two senses. In keeping with his philosophical anthropology, John Paul emphasizes the fact that to be inter-connected with others is part of the human condition.¹¹ Every human person is created by God to live in society with other persons. In addition, interdependence is part of human life because of recent economic, technological and social developments.¹² In this respect, the fact of human interdependence is morally ambiguous. Interdependence, in its economic and political forms, can be coercive, oppressive and dehumanizing. Fear of interdependence can motivate morally reprehensible behavior. Conversely, the Pope urges us to look on the fact of interdependence as an opportunity to do what is good. In keeping with his basic philosophical and theological anthropology, John Paul affirms that human personhood and the dignity that characterizes it cannot be realized in isolation from social existence. The dignity of the human person is not realized in isolation from others. Human dignity is realized in community.¹³

Therefore, John Paul teaches that interdependence is not something to be escaped. This is my second observation. Escaping interdependence is the futile hope of individualism in its various forms.¹⁴ Moreover, the attempt to control our interdependence for selfish purposes is a preoccupation that can lead to “savage” forms of capitalism. Instead of escape or control, interdependence is something to be embraced as a means to a moral end: the dignity of each and every human being and the common good of the human community. Therefore, the common

¹⁰ See for example *Gaudium et Spes* 23.

¹¹ For John Paul’s basic philosophical anthropology, see Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person: A Contribution to Phenomenological Anthropology*, (Springer, 1979).

¹² For the *locus classicus*, see *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* chapter 3.

¹³ Address to the Ambassador of Santa Lucia, AAS 84 (1992), pp. 960/1.

¹⁴ In *Centesimus Annus* 49, the Pope holds up solidarity as a moral response to individualism.

good and the dignity of the human person must serve as the guiding moral principles for the character and development of human interdependence.¹⁵

Third, the embrace of our interdependence is what John Paul calls the “virtue” of solidarity. The key text in this respect is found in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* #38.

It is above all a question of interdependence, sensed as a system determining relationships in the contemporary world, in its economic, cultural, political and religious elements, and accepted as a moral category. When interdependence becomes recognized in this way, the correct response as a moral and social attitude, as a virtue, is solidarity.

By linking interdependence with solidarity, the Pope is resisting the modern separation of fact and value. Interdependence is a fact, but a fact that must be “accepted as a moral category” that places moral demands on us all. Economic and social relations, therefore, are never morally neutral. They require of us a moral response. Solidarity is the moral response demanded by the fact of our interdependence. Moreover, in speaking of solidarity as the “virtue” of our interdependence, the Pope is not merely holding solidarity up as an ideal. Solidarity requires a persevering commitment to the common good which functions as a corrective to the vices of selfishness and indifference.

“[Solidarity] then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all [SRS38]”.

Fourth, let me observe that in *Centesimus Annus* 22, John Paul teaches that solidarity is realized by means of “dialogue and opposition”. Once again, let me note that the context of this text is the Pope’s discussion of social and political concerns. Dialogue contributes to solidarity in its ability to create local human community out of difference and indifference. In section 49 of this encyclical, the Pope notes that dialogue promotes solidarity in its ability to create “real communities of persons that strengthen the social fabric, preventing society from becoming an anonymous and impersonal mass”. Moreover, in dialogue, a space is created for difference, opposition, lack of consensus, and a genuine conflict of interpretations. Dialogue creates solidarity, while the virtue of solidarity supports dialogue.

In the thought of John Paul, the fact of our interdependence finds its moral fulfillment in the virtue of human solidarity. Solidarity, in turn, is also related to dialogue in the Pope’s thought. In *Centesimus Annus* 22, “dialogue” seems to imply the give-and-take of political discussion in the broadest sense, not inter-religious dialogue. However, if dialogue is part of the praxis of solidarity, and if solidarity itself

¹⁵ Address to the Ambassador of Argentina 30 Nov. 89 AAS 82 (1990), p. 689.

is the praxis of making a virtue out of the fact of our interdependence, then this entire discussion in the work of teachings of John Paul II has relevance for our contemporary discussion of the Church's ministry of inter-religious dialogue.

Nostra Aetate after forty years

When *Nostra Aetate* was promulgated by Paul VI and the bishops of the Second Vatican Council on 28 October, 1965, the world was dominated by a conflict between two adversarial economic systems, capitalism and communism. Some neo-Liberals hoped that, with the ending of the Cold War, we had reached "the end of history" in the triumph of market-driven capitalism and democratic political institutions.¹⁶ Human society had reached a kind of perfection in the Western democracies and their victory in the Cold War would make clear to the rest of the world (the "third world") that the way to future economic prosperity and political stability had been revealed. The years since 1989, however, have made clear that history has not come to an end. The hegemony of the global capitalism, with its neo-Liberal consumerist ethos, is being challenged in many parts of the world today, often by religiously motivated human beings. The current discussion of globalization, recounted above, bears testimony to this fact.

We do not read *Nostra Aetate* from the vantage point of the Cold War. Our context – the Church's context – is that of globalization, with all its moral ambiguities and its impact on religious communities. I believe, however, that, far from obscuring the declaration for us, globalization allows us to appreciate *Nostra Aetate* with a renewed sense of appreciation and even urgency. This is because the Church has already begun the process of engaging globalization morally. John Paul II, the pope who was instrumental in the ending of the Cold War, was also witness to the rise of globalization. The Pope's theology of solidarity serves as a heuristic device for reading *Nostra Aetate* today. The declaration's call for inter-religious dialogue should be interpreted today as a summons to the Church to build solidarity among religious communities in the world.

The market-driven reality of our global interdependence; the failures of the consumer-ethos to provide a basis for a genuinely humane solidarity of peoples in the world; the repositioning of the social role of religion in opposition to the hegemonic secularism of global capitalism: none of the bishops at the Second Vatican Council had these issues in mind on 28 October, 1965. Yet *Nostra Aetate's* opening statement seems remarkably prescient today. The declaration begins by noting that the increasing interdependence of peoples serves as an impetus for reflection on the Catholic Church's relationship with other religious communities.

¹⁶ FRANCIS FUKUYAMA, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Penquin, 1992).

"In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions [NA 1]".

The declaration's opening statement anticipates what has become a major theme in the contemporary discussion about globalization: the increasing proximity of religious communities to one another. The tone may seem somewhat optimistic given the tensions that have accompanied the repositioning of religions vis-à-vis secular society today. To be sure, "mankind is being drawn closer together" by communication and transportation technologies. Moreover, "the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger". However, the current discussion of globalization bears witness to the fact that this increased interdependence has not been an unalloyed blessing. The "de-territorialization" of religions is making the promotion of solidarity among religious communities a genuine urgency today. The Catholic Church is called to give leadership in this regard by making a virtue of the brute fact of our interdependence. In effect, I am arguing that *Nostra Aetate*, read in light of John Paul II's theology of solidarity, sets an important agenda for the Church. The declaration's call to dialogue is more urgent today than it was forty years ago.

What will it mean to think of the *Nostra Aetate's* call for inter-religious dialogue in terms of John Paul II's theology of solidarity? I wish to offer two brief reflections. First, we need to recognize that inter-religious dialogue has become more central and pressing to the work of the Church than anyone envisioned in 1965. The Roman Catholic Church needs to become a model of leadership in its efforts to build bridges of understanding and cooperation to other religious communities. Inter-religious dialogue, in other words, goes to the core of the Church's ministry of service to the world. Dialogue is a basic part of the Church's ministry of solidarity in which the fact of the interdependence of religious communities is rendered a virtue that contributes to human flourishing.

From this first observation flows a second. If inter-religious dialogue must be appreciated as a ministry central to the work of the Church today, then we are in a position to see *Nostra Aetate's* call for dialogue as an integral expression of the Council's vision of the Church. In section 1 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Council teaches that the Church is "like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument" of "the unity of the whole human race". By means of its multiple dialogues, the Church becomes what the Spirit is calling it to be: a kind of "sacrament" that is both a "sign and instrument" of solidarity among religious communities which stand together in opposing religiously motivated violence and promoting the common good. In this respect, *Nostra Aetate's* call for dialogue can now be appreciated, more than was the case in 1965, as a call to the Church to be a sign and instrument of solidarity in an age of globalization and religious resurgence.