

Two, or Perhaps Two and a Half Cheers for Globalization

BRENT WATERS*

Globalization can mean many things, such as instantaneous communication, easy access to news and information around the world, quick and extensive travel, encountering a wide variety of cultures and the like. This article, however, focuses on economic globalization, particularly in respect to the fluid, and at times unstable, flow of capital, production, and labor that characterizes the contemporary global economy, and what this might mean for ethical and ecclesial leadership.

Since I am an academic I begin with two qualifications: first, economic globalization is *not* a new phenomenon. As long as people living at some distance from each other have engaged in trade, a kind of global exchange has existed, for no human association can be completely self-sufficient in satisfying its material wants and needs. Archeologists, for instance, have discovered Roman trade stations in India, throughout the medieval period Europe and Asia engaged in extensive trading often through Muslim intermediaries, and in the early nineteenth century New England clipper ships were delivering ice to Asian customers.¹ Contrary to Thomas Freidman,² the world was already flat when many people believed it really was flat. The extent of global trade and economic exchange has historically ebbed and flowed, and we are now living in a time of extensive and highly integrated global markets that not only include the production and consumption of goods and services, but also capital and labor.

* Brent Waters is the Jerre and Mary Joy Stead Professor of Christian Social Ethics and Director of the Stead Center for Ethics and Values at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois. This paper was presented at the conference "Ethical Leadership, the Church and the Global Economy," held at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in February, 2010.

¹ See William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008).

² See Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

Second, globalization is *not* synonymous with internationalization. The principal forces shaping contemporary life are commercial and market-driven rather than nationalistic. Formal political borders and jurisdictions do not, in most cases, routinely confine and dictate available goods and services. One can purchase a Hyundai in Chicago as easily as in Seoul. Although governments admittedly negotiate trade treaties, a nation-state subsequently surrenders some sovereignty and regulatory power in order to provide its citizens with cheaper goods and services. Markets are thereby fluid and global rather than stable and national. In this respect, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is a more formative organization than the United Nations (UN), and such terms as *global* economies and corporations are more accurate designations than international economics and multinational corporations.

As might be expected, economic exchange, particularly on a global scale, is always accompanied by benefits and challenges, and our contemporary circumstances are no exception. Two principal benefits may be briefly noted: first, economic globalization is the only realistic strategy for ameliorating poverty. Starting with the formation of the WTO in 1995, for instance, and in conjunction with liberalized and integrative economic policies, it is estimated that nearly a billion people have escaped abject poverty, and income has risen steadily even with the recent financial crisis and subsequent economic downturn. The percentage of people living under a dollar a day in Brazil, for example, has been cut in half from 2.6 percent to 1.3 percent of the population, while per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has more than doubled from \$3,431 to \$7,896. Even more impressively, China's poverty line has fallen from 10.7 percent to 4 percent, and per capita GDP increased from \$466 to \$3,528. Even a desperately poor country such as Ethiopia has cut the poverty rate from 21.2 percent to 9.6 percent while increasing per capita GDP from \$94 to \$226.³ These benefits are partly the result of greater trade, which has created new employment opportunities as well as increasing purchasing power by providing cheaper goods and services. Perhaps more importantly, a more integrated global economy stimulates the creation of capital. This is a crucial factor in alleviating poverty, for it is the source of investments which in turn create employment. In this respect, it should be emphasized that capital is not self-sustaining but must be

³ Statistics provided by IHS Global Insight.

constantly generated. Policies discouraging the creation of capital, therefore, are ultimately recipes for promoting greater poverty. Consequently, as Martin Wolf has observed, the “failure of our world is not that there is too much globalization, but that there is too little.”⁴

Second, economic globalization helps resist the encroachment of the universal and homogenous state. This phrase was coined, I believe, by Alexandre Kojève in his extraordinary correspondence with Leo Strauss.⁵ Drawing upon Hegel, Kojève contends that the ordering and very meaning of civil community is dependent upon and derived from the state. Consequently, economic exchange should be regulated to promote political goals as opposed to political policies designed to enable the economic exchanges of private citizens. It is politicians and bureaucrats rather than consumers that should determine what is and what is not available in the marketplace; nationalism is privileged over globalism. Strauss’s retort is that when such power is concentrated in the state, tyranny is the inevitable consequence, as exemplified by the rise of totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century. Some pundits claim that with the collapse of the Soviet Union and China’s embrace of the free market, globalization’s purported benefit of checking the encroachment of the state is now overstated. Such an easy dismissal, however, should be resisted, for even in a world of nearly two hundred nation-states the momentum to concentrate power in these states or in international organizations is nonetheless potentially disquieting. Nationalism, in both its discrete and international forms, tends to exacerbate conflict given contending national interests that are resolved through coercive solutions. In short, it is consumers, not politicians, who have much more at stake in preserving a peaceful world of trade and economic exchange.

This is not a radical libertarian proposal that envisions no constructive role for the state. There are no serious advocates of globalization that simply dismiss the state as an unqualified evil. To the contrary, the ordering of capital creation, investment, production, trade, and economic exchange requires the rule of law. It is not coincidental that failed states are among the most impoverished nations. The debate over globalization is not whether or not the state has any

⁴ Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 4.

⁵ See Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 133–314.

role to play, but the extent of its involvement, and whether that involvement serves to promote or discourage the free flow of capital, labor, and consumption of goods and services.

What makes this debate both interesting and vexing is that the current round of economic globalization may be coinciding with a significant, perhaps epochal, change that is underway in political ordering, namely, the transition from the nation-state to the market-state. According to Philip Bobbitt, the nineteenth century was dominated by the state-nation. Citizens were expected to serve the interests of the state, which were expressed primarily through consolidating national identities and imperial expansion. Such state-nations inevitably came into conflict with each other, and their era comes to an end in the First World War. This in turn leads to the rise of the nation-state, in which the state exists to serve the interests of its individual citizens. The twentieth century entailed a long war, or series of wars, to establish the principle of individual freedom as the dominant political paradigm. The victory, however, was short-lived, for by the end of the previous century the market-state is emerging. What exactly the goals and aims of the market-state might be remains to be seen, for this transition is nascent and ill-defined.⁶ But if the era of the nation-state may be characterized by the centralization of power through large and cumbersome bureaucracies, on both an intranational and international basis, then the market-state may be said to entail the dispersal of power through informal networks in and through which individuals gain access to free-flowing capital, employment, and acquisition of goods and services. Unlike the nation-state, the market-state is, or more accurately will be, populated by consumers rather than citizens.

If Bobbitt is correct, then this ill-defined transition helps to account for the wide range of tensions and acrimonious issues that are associated with globalization, for at the beginning of the twenty-first century people continue to live in nation-states but within a global economy in which market-states are better suited. Moreover, their respective interests cannot be easily reconciled. It is in the interest of the nation-state to protect its capital, manufacturing, and labor behind impenetrable borders, whereas it is in the interest of the market-state to have porous borders that enable free-flowing capital, goods and

⁶ See Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 180–238.

services, and employment opportunities. To invoke a mundane example, it is difficult to have much enthusiasm for the slogan “buy American” for someone residing in Pittsburgh that works for a financial institution owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland, drives a BMW, and has invested much of her retirement portfolio in corporations headquartered around the world. This transition also helps to account for why Christians can only give two (or perhaps two and a half) cheers for globalization, for it cannot be known with any certainty whether exchanging the universal and homogenous state for the universal and homogenous market will ultimately prove to be a good bargain. Some of the more troubling challenges accompanying this transition can again be noted briefly, and serve as indicators why globalization should, at present, be greeted by Christians with a cautious optimism.

Although globalization has generated, and will continue to generate new employment opportunities, thereby ameliorating poverty and increasing prosperity on a global scale, one consequence is short-term displacement and unemployment. When manufacturing and service jobs, for example, are shifted from developed to developing nations (or to use that inelegant term “offshored”), two things inevitably occur: on the one hand, new jobs are created, in turn generating increased commerce and tax revenue in one part of the world, while on the other hand, a corresponding loss of jobs and reduced commerce and tax revenue occurs in another. Such shifts are not unprecedented. In 1910, for instance, 33 percent of Americans were either farmers or farm laborers, while the amount declines to slightly over 1 percent in 2000.⁷ Concurrently, roughly 54 percent of Americans lived in rural areas in 1910,⁸ while the amount declines to slightly under 21 percent by 2000.⁹ What is important to note in this shift is that at the end of this ninety-year period there is not a 32 percent unemployment rate comprised of individuals languishing in rural communities. Rather, many people moved to cities and suburbs to find work in the industrial and service sectors. The principal difference today is the global scale, and rapid rate of these shifts. Consequently, perpetual anxiety over potential unemployment may be an ongoing concern for the foreseeable future. The challenge is to determine what responsibilities the public and private sectors should have in assisting affected people to overcome these

⁷ See <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2006/apr/wk1/art04.htm>.

⁸ See <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/CT1970p1-11.pdf>.

⁹ See <http://www.flwva.dot.gov/planning/census/cps2k.htm>.

displacements, particularly in respect to learning new and marketable job skills in which they are competing not only with neighbors down the road or citizens in the next town or state, but with individuals throughout the world.

Another challenge is that the benefits of globalization have not been evenly distributed. Although an unprecedented amount of wealth has been created over the last few decades, the gap between rich and poor has grown and is continuing to grow. This is not to suggest that such wealth has been gained at the expense of the poor, for the top and bottom lines on the graph have both been rising rather steeply, but the gap separating them is expanding. It cannot be known in advance what the social and political ramifications of this gap, for good or ill, might mean over an extended period of time. Whether or not it is morally significant how high the ceiling climbs so long as the floor is also rising is an open question. Or to use a more familiar analogy, a rising tide does indeed lift all boats, but the current harbor is crowded by a growing number of modest dinghies and sloops, as well as some lifeboats and swimmers in lifejackets, alongside a few larger and larger yachts, and no one is certain how such a fleet collectively may fair in rough seas, much less a perfect storm.

Globalization necessarily entails complex financial integration which is simultaneously efficient and vulnerable. Frequent booms and busts are therefore endemic. Highly mobile and available capital has enabled investments which over the past two decades created unprecedented wealth, as well as unprecedented levels of debt. The effects in each instance are systemic. Investments in China and the tiger economies of Asia returned handsome profits to investors and pension funds, while toxic mortgages in the United States poisoned banks and investors in Europe and Japan. As witnessed by recent events, easy credit fueled a rapid rise in housing prices throughout the world which in turn was highly leveraged, and when the so-called "housing bubble" burst the debt incurred could no longer be carried. Hence, the recent global financial crisis and recession with its defaulted loans, underwater mortgages, tight credit, bankruptcies, and soaring unemployment.

Consequently, there is a need for greater investment transparency and financial regulation. Yet again the transition to a market-state makes this a daunting task, one that nation-states may be ill-equipped to address. Establishing workable and sustained agreements among nation-states given their often conflicting interests is no easy chore, as

the recently failed meeting on climate change in Copenhagen and the continual failures of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to adequately address the financial needs of developing nations attest. How do nation-states come to terms with highly mobile capital, labor, production, and consumers whose interests are not national or even transnational, but global? The tag line of HSBC sums up the dilemma rather nicely when it proclaims itself to be “the world’s local bank.” Moreover, even if such a regulatory scheme could be cobbled together, it could not provide perpetual stability for all sectors given the nature of global markets. The success of globalization is predicated upon the ability rapidly to shift capital, labor, and the production of goods and services, which in turn results in frequent dislocations at various locales around the world. When even the globalized economy is efficiently generating capital, creating jobs, and producing goods and services at affordable prices, the resulting systemic stability is dependent upon an underlying and chaotic process of rapid and frequent change and disruption,¹⁰ a process described by some economists as “creative destruction.” Perpetual employment worries, income inequality, fluctuating housing prices, failed business ventures, and community dislocations are now among the daily facts of life—the price that must be paid to participate in the global economy.¹¹

Given these pervasive anxieties, it is not surprising that nation-states attempt to protect their citizens. This attempt is exemplified by restricting trade, propping up failing industries, constraining or forbidding immigration, and the like. Ultimately, however, such protectionism harms the citizens it is intended to protect, and is potentially dangerous. Restricting trade results in consumers paying higher prices for inferior goods and services; propping up failing industries more often than not merely delays their collapse, resulting in even greater unemployment and the unproductive deployment of capital; and constraining immigration cuts off a vital source of entrepreneurs and their subsequent creation of new jobs. Imagine what the price and quality of televisions would be like if Chinese, Korean, and Japanese corporations were restricted from the U.S. market or where we

¹⁰ See Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers: A Natural History of Economic Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹¹ See Gregg Easterbrook, *Sonic Boom: Globalization at Mach Speed* (New York: Random House, 2009).

would be if the federal government had subsidized the typewriter industry when the personal computer was introduced. And would the United States really be better off without Intel, Yahoo, and Google, all of which were founded by immigrants?¹² As tempting as protectionism might be, it is tantamount to holding a gun to one's head and shouting, "Stop, or I'll shoot."

It is also a dangerous strategy in respect to international relations. Protectionism promotes international tension, and at times hostility, because no nation can produce all the goods and services it might need or want. Saudi Arabia, for example, can be energy independent but cannot meet its needs for agricultural and manufactured products. Moreover, as Adam Smith and David Ricardo recognized, trade always benefits both parties because of their respective comparative advantages. There are good reasons why the English trade their wool to obtain Portuguese wine, because England does not have a suitable climate for vineyards and Portugal is not a good place to raise sheep. In this scheme it does not make much sense to wage war against a trading partner, whereas when trade becomes greatly restricted, conquest may appear to be a rational strategy. Cordell Hull, Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of state, for instance, argued that high tariffs and restrictive trade policies were among the chief causes of both the world wars.¹³ This is not to suggest that unfettered trade would result inevitably in world peace, but extensive trade does help to alleviate both the underlying causes and scope of international conflicts.

The challenges noted above are merely a few among the many accompanying the transition from nation-state to market-state. What might theology have to offer for informing ethical and ecclesial leadership in this transitional period? Any answer to this question must be prefaced by acknowledging that the role of the theologian is neither to commend nor condemn globalization in any wholesale manner. To offer a blanket endorsement or denunciation is tantamount to being for or against icebergs. Rather, they must deal with the world as it is and not as they might prefer it to be. The task is to learn how to navigate perilous economic waters and deal with wreckage as it occurs. For the remainder of this article I briefly sketch out four theological

¹² It is estimated 25 percent of all technology firms are founded or co-founded by immigrants. See Farhad Manjoo, "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Startup Founders," *Slate*, posted September 14, 2009; <http://www.slate.com/id/2228258/> (accessed January 20, 2010).

¹³ See Easterbrook, *Sonic Boom*, 7–8.

themes that might inform further reflection and discussion for undertaking this navigational task.

First: *loving global neighbors*. Christ commands his disciples to love their neighbors (see Matthew 22:34–40). Following Karl Barth, there are neighbors near and far; neighbors who are friends and those who are enemies; neighbors who are known and those who are unknown.¹⁴ Most neighbors are strangers who are encountered in daily economic exchanges and financial transactions, and in a global economy these encounters are increasingly anonymous and distant. Imagine, for example, that I need a new computer so I can continue to write books and articles that are read by very few people. I order the computer online. In the few minutes that it takes to complete this task, I initiate a series of global transactions. Although the lead office of the company from which I purchased the computer is located in Dallas, the server hosting the website is in Vancouver. An office worker in Dublin reviews and processes my order. The hardware and software are manufactured in such places as Bucharest, Seoul, and Taipei. My customized computer is assembled in Shanghai, and air-freighted and delivered to my door by a corporation headquartered in Memphis. Unfortunately, I can't get the bloody thing to work, so I ring the customer service hotline and speak to a representative in Bangalore who helps me correct the problem. With the exception of the delivery person, I have no face-to-face encounters with any of the dozens or perhaps hundreds of neighbors who participated in this process.

The reader very well be thinking, to invoke Tina Turner, what's love got to do with it? Can we not say that these anonymous and distant interactions are nonetheless concrete expressions of love because they enable us to help each other acquire needed goods and services? The reader may of course reply that these exchanges are motivated by self-interest. Yet the love of the other can never be separated from the interests of the self. This is precisely the insight of Adam Smith's much maligned observation that it "is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest."¹⁵ This precept must be understood in light of his previous book on *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in

¹⁴ See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961), III.4, §54.3, 285–323.

¹⁵ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund, 1981), 26–27.

which he argues that there are universal needs shared by all people.¹⁶ The baker, for instance, knows that all people must eat, and she satisfies her own need for money by selling bread to those who are hungry. Self-interest, therefore, is inescapably grounded in the necessity of cooperation. There can be no bakers without hungry customers, and there can be no customers in the absence of bread. Consequently, when Christian theology speaks of love, it does not have sentimentality in mind. Indeed neighbor love often requires making difficult decisions entailing social and political consequences. It is in the interest of poor farmers in developing countries, for instance, as well as consumers worldwide, to compete freely and fairly in global markets. Would not a corresponding and concrete act of love, then, require locales such as the United States, the European Union, and Japan to discontinue subsidizing and protecting their own farmers in order to enable this competition?

The second theme is *stewardship*. Stewardship is often associated with voluntary transfers of money, such as tithing and charitable contributions. This limited connotation is unfortunate, for in Christian theology it embraces a much larger range of concerns involving the allocation, use, and purposes of one's time, work, and financial resources. Consequently, investing within a global economy is an issue of stewardship. As the parable of the talents illustrates, it is the servants who double the value of the property entrusted to their care who are deemed to be good and faithful stewards (Matthew 25:14–30). There is, of course, a need to govern investing in line with the principles of justice and other moral considerations, particularly in respect to churches and their related institutions and organizations. The issue at stake, however, is not confined to ethical principles governing denominational pension funds and institutional endowments, but also how individual Christians invest their money, and how they might influence the investment strategies and objectives of corporations, venture capitalists, and hedge funds. If, as Martin Wolf insists, more rather than less globalization is needed to alleviate dire poverty, then investing in the most impoverished regions is a crucial moral issue. This does not denigrate the work of relief agencies and charitable and non-governmental organizations. When people are hungry, sick, or homeless they should be fed, cared for, and provided shelter.

¹⁶ See Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund, 1982).

Yet these are emergency responses and not long-term solutions. Capital is needed to develop infrastructures enabling the production of goods and services that can be purchased in global markets, in turn creating greater employment opportunities. A simple example may serve to illustrate this need for capital investment. Malaria is a disease found throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa. One simple, albeit partial, remedy is to provide nets under which people sleep. A charitable organization distributes thousands of free nets. Unfortunately this admittedly humane act drives several small, local companies that were struggling to produce affordable nets out of business, thereby increasing both unemployment and greater dependency upon aid. Investing in these struggling firms might arguably have been a more productive and effective response to preventing malaria. Good stewardship of investments within a global economy ranges from simple micro-lending to more ambitious ventures, accompanied by political reforms ensuring that both capital and aid serve the people they are intended to benefit in the most direct and efficient manner possible. This is why a growing number of neighbors in the most impoverished regions of the world are saying something to the effect of “send us less aid and more investments so we may join you in the global marketplace.”¹⁷ If Christians in developed nations are to be good stewards, perhaps they should listen to these neighbors a bit more attentively.

To speak of stewardship leads to the third theme: *vocation*. It is unfortunate that many churches are coming to regard themselves to be, in effect, voluntary organizations. This implies that, at least for the vast majority of believers, Christianity is something pursued in one’s spare time. The work of the church, then, is the domain of a small core of ordained and lay professionals who coordinate and enable small cadres of part-time volunteers. This represents a highly diminished and impoverished understanding of the church, however, for it reduces ministry to little more than ineffectual priestcraft. Rather, in virtue of their baptism all Christians are ministers of Jesus Christ, and since there is no such thing as a part-time Christian there is also no such thing as a part-time minister. What Christians do in the workplace and marketplace, on Wall Street and Main Street, expresses and bears witness to their faith, and the ramifications of that witness are not confined locally or nationally, but are global.

¹⁷ See, for example, Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

Again, this is not to denigrate the time that laypersons volunteer to usher, serve on boards and committees, and the like. Rather, it is to acknowledge that the ministry of the church in the world is most immediately and extensively present through its people who are already there. It is in and through the mundane activities of work and economic exchange that people are enabled to put roofs over their heads and food on their tables, and in extending these opportunities to those excluded that the church's ministry in and to the world is best performed. Consequently, the church should not be embarrassed by, much less hostile to, the requisite means of achieving these ends, namely, the creation and investment of capital and the profits derived from it, which enable economic exchange through the work of producing and consuming goods and services. If the church is to renew its *global* mission and ministry in the contemporary world, then it is incumbent on the church to recover a vital sense of secular callings and vocation—to recover the ministry of the baptized.

This recovery leads to the fourth and final theme: the *renewal* of the church's mission and ministry. Jesus Christ commands his disciples to go into the world and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16–20). In every generation Christians have fulfilled this commission in a world undergoing frequent social, political, and economic change. It is no different today. Given highly mobile capital, labor, and production on a global scale, rapid technological innovation, frequent dislocation, job and housing anxieties, and financial boom-and-bust cycles occur with an alarming regularity. Change is the dependably ubiquitous feature of the late modern world, and arguably the dominant character of its inhabitants is increasingly more nomadic than settled. Yet many, if not most, of the churches are stuck in a bygone era, fixated on institutional maintenance and survival. Entirely too much time, attention, and money is being spent on trying to keep the doors of local churches open and propping up large and cumbersome denominational and ecumenical bureaucracies. The church continues to think in local, national, and international terms in a world that has become global, and its ministry, particularly in terms of evangelizing the world, is suffering as a result. In fixating on institutional survival, churches forsake any possibility of thriving.

Perhaps the time is ripe for some creative destruction. This is not a radical suggestion, for is this not how the Holy Spirit has always done her work? Renewal can only come about by allowing the old to pass away so the new can come into being. This means, in part, that Christians should stop thinking about the church primarily in institutional

terms at local, national, and international levels, and more in terms of ministry within highly mobile and unstable global networks. Such ministry entails a variety of forms and approaches that are able to adapt to changing circumstances, requiring in turn that they be agile, lean, experimental, impermanent, and focused on enabling the ministry of the baptized. Within such a scheme centralized institutions, structures, and bureaucracies are more often than not a liability instead of a benefit. Practically, what might this shift from institutional maintenance to enabling ministry entail? One example: one of the most crucial issues pressing upon the churches of Europe and North America is to prepare their cultures to be reevangelized—to prepare hearts to be receptive to the proclamation of the gospel by missionaries already being sent from the new centers of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and South America. Ironically, the institutional legacy of Christianity's past cultural dominance has become an impediment in these new mission fields. To use an admittedly crude analogy, the church is trying to preserve failing farms and factories when it should be paying attention to imports. Consequently, perhaps the time has come for the church to divest itself of much of its unproductive property and institutions in order to facilitate and financially support its central task of evangelizing the world, particularly in and through the secular vocations of its people in exercising the stewardship of God's creation. This is admittedly a radical and risky proposal, yet is it not potentially a more faithful response than the current gimmicks, marketing strategies, and advertising campaigns being undertaken that are designed to secure a meager increase of attendance and tithing within the religious and spiritual marketplace? Perhaps it is time that the churches stop begging people to attend their programs, and empower their people to be the church wherever they might happen to be.

I am a proponent of economic globalization based upon free trade stemming from mobile capital, labor, and production. I believe it is the only practical way to alleviate poverty and promote prosperity in the long-term. I am also aware of the many short-term issues that need to be addressed in a humane manner; the endemic problems, dislocations, and anxieties accompanying this transition from nation-state to market-state. I also acknowledge that even if globalization should fulfill its promise and resolve all its issues in a just manner, as a Christian I can only give it two, maybe two and a half, cheers. Why? To answer this question, I turn briefly to F. D. Maurice. Late in his career Maurice delivered a series of lectures at Cambridge University which were later published under the title of *Social Morality* in

1869.¹⁸ He argues that the longing for universal fellowship is a healthy desire. Human beings are by nature social creatures that seek the company of others. This is exemplified on a small scale in such associations as families, and in nations on a larger scale. Together, these private associations and civil communities comprise what Maurice calls a “universal society,” from which emerges the authority of law that in turn establishes, protects, and promotes freedom. What is important to stress in this scheme is that a universal society is constituted by a rich variety of how private associations and civil communities are organized. True universality does not destroy or negate particularity.

Maurice is aware, however, that the longing for universal fellowship can be easily distorted or corrupted, the most obvious example being a quest for universal empire. Empire is based upon the assertion of dominion as embodied in the pretensions of the imperial leader, resulting in tyranny and subsequent loss of freedom. Through its ceaseless conquests, empires destroy the particularity of private associations and civil communities; the many become one by negating their respective identities, customs, and traditions, for empires require autonomous individuals who in their isolation can be easily dominated. In contrast, Maurice lifts up the kingdom of God as the ideal expression of the universal society, for it binds together without negating the particularity of its members; the many comprise the one. The church embodies, albeit imperfectly, this kingdom, for at Pentecost the church becomes a universal society; the many voices bear witness to a common reality.

Although Maurice’s historical analysis is often inaccurate, and his arguments at times eccentric, he nonetheless offers some imagery to help understand our present circumstances. His critique of universal empire is applicable to the more egregious encroachments of the universal and homogenous state which globalization has helped temper. State-controlled economies have neither enabled the livelihood of citizens nor protected their freedom. Maurice, however, would be quick to remind that a universal and homogenous market is no panacea. The voracious consumption of goods and services can also create autonomous and isolated individuals who are every bit as susceptible to domination and manipulation. Consumerism alone cannot provide an adequate moral foundation for private associations and civil communities as bastions of freedom.

¹⁸ F. D. Maurice, *Social Morality* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1869).

Similar to Maurice, Christians need to lift up the universal and pluriform church. Drawing on Saint Paul, the church is comprised of a variety of gifts; a body consisting of parts drawn from every race and nation. The church, at its best, is a universal fellowship that embraces the particularity of its members. Such a model helps resist the homogenizing impulse of the state which is predicated upon coercion, and the homogenizing tendencies of the market based upon consumption. In contrast, the form of church's social life is *koinōnia*, which can be variously translated as "community," "communion," or "communicate." In the words of Oliver O'Donovan: "To 'communicate' is to hold some thing as common, to make it a common possession, to treat it as 'ours,' rather than 'yours' or 'mine.' The partners to a communication form a community, a 'we' in relation to the object in which they participate."¹⁹ Equality, as well as freedom, is thereby established and preserved by communicating the goods of creation with one another. Consequently, communication is not synonymous with either conferral or exchange, but is associated with a pluriform pursuit of a variety of shared goods.

Communication, however, not only enables the church to resist the universality and homogeneity of either the state or the market, but informs how the church, as a universal society in which there is a need for properly organized and limited states and markets, pursues its ministry in and to the world. The church may serve as a reminder that the bonds of fellowship cannot be reduced to those that are solely political or economic; that not all human associations are merely relationships of power or financial transactions; that people do not live entirely in and for the state or the market. In this respect, the church can provide the world a model of ethical leadership if it can learn to stop thinking and organizing itself in terms of local, national, and international institutions, in favor of a global community whose many and unique voices bear witness to, or better communicate, their unity in Christ. To make this shift is to admit that we live in an uncertain and perilous time, but when has it ever been otherwise for Christians?

¹⁹ Oliver O'Donovan, *The Ways of Judgment*, The Bampton Lectures, 2003 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 242.

