

Redemptive Business Education in the Age of Globalization

By

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Abstract

In the age of globalization, it is no doubt that many poor nations can be better off if they can access opportunities in the global system and earn fair return when there are adequate institutional reforms at the local and global levels. The key issue of globalization is that the more integrated global economy is regarded as a kind of progress and the right, good, and fit order in our humanity today. It is a deep religious problem when globalization is accepted as an unavoidable trend and morally neutral phenomenon. In this paper, I address some issues related to globalization and Christian faith and share some teaching practices that may inspire dialogue among business educators in our journey of seeking better economic development, social justice, and environmental protectionism in the age of globalization. I encourage business educators and Christian colleges to use faith resources to respond to many dynamics in the era of globalization and to invite our students to be redeemed as agents of the Kingdom of God. Some faith resources such as the kingdom of God, Trinity concept, resurrection of Christ, and communion of saints are used to seek for God's created order, esteemed personal identity, and enspirited community in the global market economy.

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Introduction

In the age of globalization, local events can cause tremendous economic and social problems to people around the world. Problems such as Hurricane Katriana in the United States require global actions and reflections (The Wall Street Journal, 2005). Globalization makes local knowledge no longer purely local (Giddens, 1994:88). It is no doubt that many poor nations can be better off if they can be integrated with the global system and earn fair return when there are adequate institutional reforms at the local levels and the global level. The key issue of globalization is that more integrated global economy is regarded as a kind of progress and the right, good, fit order for humanity today. Does this social-constructed order really correspond to the laws written on all people's hearts? Is the order really the right, good, fit one that can sustain human beings in the future and fulfill the promise of the God of the past?

The ideology of globalization can perpetuate violence upon human beings and environment for the sake of economic development when many participants do not question what is God's created order, esteemed personal identity, and enspirited community that human beings really need in the global market economy. The rise of mass organized anti-globalization protests in the recent years reveals that many moral, spiritual, and social issues of globalization are unresolved (Stackhouse, 2001). The protestors yearn for a new economic political order that can be more beneficial and more equitable to our human beings and our environment in the long run. Questions of truth,

justice, and holiness have been raised with great intensity concerning recent global trends (Evans and Evans, 1993; Stackhouse, 2001).

In this paper, I would like to address the following questions and share some teaching practices that may inspire dialogue among business educators in our journey of seeking better economic development, social justice, and environmental protectionism in the age of globalization. How does globalization shake our Christian faith? What kinds of order in the global market economy can relate to the God of the past and the future? What kinds of globalization will provide *Shalom* and justice to human beings? What is wrong with our present business education in the age of globalization? How can business educators at Christian colleges to respond to the challenge such that our students can become agents of the Kingdom of God—“*offering to all our neighbors the good news of God’s mercy in Jesus Christ, of God’s forgiveness and healing and direction, of moral truth and living hope (Dawn, 1997:147)*” in the global market economy?

How Does Globalization Shake our Christian Faith?

Any qualitative analysis of globalization will encounter a lot of problem as “globalization” is an ill-defined term (Scholte, 2000). For the purpose of this paper, I am defining economic globalization that is understood as “the process of growing and intensifying interactions of all levels of society in world trade, foreign investments and capital market” (Drimmelen, 1998). It has been in our human history for a period of time and has recently been accelerated by technological development and trade liberation policies. The intense national and international flow of trade and capital leads to one global market (McAuley, 2004).

Although many intellectuals criticize global capitalism as the domination of multinational corporations, Americanization of many developing countries, and marginalization for the peoples and states who are excluded from the benefits (Barent & Cavanagh, 1994; Brubaker, 2001; Goudzwaard, 2001; Gray, 1988; Korten, 1995, 1998; Lam, 2002; Sobrino & Wilfred, 2001), many intellectuals request more global liberal market economy and attribute the problems of inequality and poverty to “political fragmentation” and “unfair rules” rather than economy globalization (Boersema, 1999; Human Development Report, 2005: 113-115; Wolf, 2004). Faced with all controversial arguments about economic globalization, Goudzwaard (2001) seriously reminds people the deep root religious problem of globalization is that many people accept globalization as an unavoidable trend and morally neutral phenomenon. Many people can easily forget they are their brothers’ keepers in the global market economy and have less empathy to the losers in the system when they assume that each one has equal opportunity to participate in a global free market economy when many institutional barriers are removed. There are questions of equality, community, fairness and freedom when human beings are treated more like commodities in the global market economy.

With respect of global investment, the massive capital flow creates a polity that is beyond the control of an individual nation and is institutionalized and governed by international laws and norms. The norms and values embedded in the global market are affecting the way people invest their money and their future. The information about money and the amount of money are shaping our sense of humanity and the operation of many organizations. Money is not treated as a medium of exchange but a way to create more money. Everything is reduced to its economic value and can be translated into the

form of capital. The right of capital can be easily treated to be more important the right of human beings (Tabb, 2004; Westbrook, 2004).

There is power imbalance in making wealth and distributing wealth in this global market economy. Rugman (2000) argues that over 80% of foreign direct investment and over half of world's trade are controlled by the largest 500 MNEs (Multinational enterprises) and is taken place among the triad (i.e., the economics of the U.S., Europe, and Japan). Most foreign direct investment is intra-regional rather than interregional even though many developing countries are attracting many foreign direct investment in the last two decades. Investors still prefer to invest in countries with well-regulated and well-established legal systems rather than those countries with poor legal system and corrupted government. These poor countries not only fail to attract investors but also suffer any financial crisis happened in the world. They are keeping on being defeated in the global capital market (Isaak, 2005). Khor (2001) argues that world organizations such as International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization only defines the policies that benefit the developed nations. As a consequence, there are increasing concentration of economic resources and power in the MNEs and financial institutions in developed nations even though there are many uprising players from developing countries.

For example, the East Asian market crashes during 1997 and 1998 significantly exposed the invasion of U.S. capital in Asia and the manipulative power of the U.S. government and IMF (International Monetary Fund) in the process of moving East Asian economic practices closer to the U.S. model (Gowan, 1999; Hoogvelt 2001). Thousands of companies were bankrupted and millions of people in the East Asian countries lost

their savings and their jobs in a very short period of time. Mass-capital flow among nations is beyond the control of any regulated and bounded market. It shows that there is tremendous uncertainty and a lack of accountability in the global market economy. However, in the rescue process, East Asian countries including Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, and Malaysia have had to reform their banking sectors and liberalize their capital accounts for the benefit of global capital, and more especially U.S. capital. Hoogvelt (2001: 237) showed that in the first half of 1998, U.S. companies bought up double the number of Asian businesses they had bought in any previous year. The invasion of U.S. capital in Asia really reminds people another type of colonization of Asian countries has been started in the process of globalization. Many Christians' faith is shaken when they have experienced so much economic injustice in Asian countries (Briones, 1998). The issue of economic globalization has to be tackled seriously and sincerely so that the Gospel can adequately respond to the need of people and societies of this time (Huang, 2002).

With respect to global consumption, there are uprising of global consumers who use common assortment of products and services in the world, and their identities are not to particular geographical area but their abilities to consume (Kerin, Hartley, Berkowitz, Rudelius, 2006). Many people are led to think and act beyond their local context of life through international means of communication and the linkage between financial markets in various countries. Many local people in developing countries give up their nutritious local food and consume many global junk foods such as McDonald so that they can catch the global trend and may be seemed to be cosmopolitans (Belk, 1988). When more people are exposed to global brands in global media networks, there is growing envy,

resentment, hatred, and violence between people of have and those of have-nots of the globe (Belk, 2005; Chau, 2003). Ironically, many global brands are manufactured in those countries with cheap labor with poor environmental protection while many workers in these countries cannot afford to buy these products. Some local people in these manufacturing sites buy counterfeit brands to gain some sense of dignity and belonging. Evidence of strong desire for fake luxury goods is shown in the popularity of these products in many street markets in developing countries. It is no doubt these corporations need to protect their brand name and enhance intellectual property rights through keen negotiation with local business partners and government. On the other hand, the international intellectual property laws also increase the cost of local people to access the knowledge base and to pay for these global brands. The worst situation is that some powerful enterprises ask these poor people in developing countries to pay royalty for using the property such as traditional medicine that their ancestors have used for a long period of time.

Harder (2003) criticized the notion of “self-interested choice” in individual economic decision making which can blind us to a realization that there are power imbalances among different groups of people in the world and there is embedded violence in the global market economy. A few powerful consumers dictate what is to be produced and even take away many people’s security, esteem and choices when these producers in poor countries are forced to obey the global market rules. For example, many farmers at Latin Americans produce coffee instead of practicing their traditional farming practices when there is great demand of coffee in developed countries. Later, their well-being depends highly on the international price of coffee. Rampel (2004)

criticized that the conventional name of human beings as consumers in market economy took away the human element in our human relationships. The glorification of individual free choices and consumer sovereignty can expand the ego of an individual at the expense of interdependent relationships among people in the exchange process. The notion of the consumer as a summation of self-interested choices or as a king in the exchange process can dampen the social fabric of humanity.

Social relationships in a global context become complex and move away from traditions such as Christian faith. People are increasingly attracted by all possibilities in the global system and to take many “*forward-oriented decision*” by “*living after the retreat of tradition and nature*” when the “*world increasingly constituted by information rather than pre-given modes of conduct.*” (Giddens and Peirson, 1998:115). What is most treasured is not the tradition or natural order but the new order that can control over social conditions and physical environment even though there are new uncertainties and risks involved in this highly interconnect and information explosive world! Who is most awarded is those who set the new rules that benefit them and further alienate those who cannot access the opportunities (Isaak, 2005). Furthermore, the symbolic world of globalization challenges the Christian value of humanity and community. For example, people’s temples are shopping malls, the clergy are 24 hours bankers and financial agents, and the sacraments are McDonald, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Coke in many parts of the world (Moughal, 2000). The inherent wholeness of human beings are destroyed in the fragmented or masked identities (Palmer, 2004).

From my previous discussions with many students at a Christian college, the problems of many developing countries in economic globalization are attributed to their

government. Students forget that they perpetuate the global economy injustice when they treat human beings as commodities in the international exchange process and make market competition as a universal law of all of society. Many graduate students working in American corporations suffer from global outsourcing and tend to be more apathetic to the suffering of people in other parts of the world. Even though these students are Christians, they are found to have the ideology of American nationalism cannot go beyond the parochial self-interest and face the reality of economic aggression in other developing countries. The effect of globalization upon people's lives is replete with ambiguity, inevitability, and urgency. It can easily hypnotize many people, including Christians who can access capital market for better return of investment, into thinking globalization will be beneficial to all human kind.

What is Wrong with Business Education in the Age of Globalization?

Globalization is generally regarded as a kind of human progress or evolution in many business textbooks. Many business students are trained to exercise more control upon the global environment through many managerial theories and tools that assume people are opportunistic. Ghoshal (2005) has criticized that the present research and theories concerning business and management have had negative influences on the practice of management when they neglect the moral autonomy and the good sides of human beings and institutions. Indeed, Vaill (1998) has testified that some business professionals seek spiritual growth in their work and seek alternatives to deal with the negative effects of unprecedented extreme turbulence and uncertainty. In the field of marketing education, educators (Catterall, Maclaran, Stevens, 2002; Lam, 2005; Smith

and Robins, 1991) have criticized conventional marketing education as technological, instrumental, and managerial oriented without developing students to be critical thinkers concerning the issues of ethics, morality, and politics in their training. When students at Christian colleges are not facilitated to think how the ideology of economic globalization shakes their Christian faith and to seek for a new order that can facilitate economic development, social justice, and environmental protectionism, they are trained as capitalism's foot soldiers as Ehernsal (2001) describes. Thus, Caterall, Maclaran, Stevens (1999: 348) comment that most business educators are "*suffering from false consciousness: an inability to recognize that they are promoting the instrumental and technicist values of a dehumanizing capitalist system.*" They criticize business educators as being apologetic of global capitalism.

What Kinds of Order in Global Market Economy Can Provide *Shalom* and Justice to Human Beings?

Christians are called to take up our moral responsibility to view globalization from a Christian perspective and use Christian resources to resist the ideology of globalization (Brubaker, 2001; Dawn, 2003; Drimmelen, 1998; Goudzwaard, 2001; Schweiker 2000; Stackhouse 2000; Sorbrino and Wilfred, 2001). Christian business educators must use faith resources to respond to many dynamics in the era of globalization and to invite our students to be redeemed as agents of the Kingdom of God. Some faith resources such as Christ's Kingdom, Trinity concept, resurrection of Christ, and communion of saints can help us to think of the possibility of bringing Christ's Kingdom to the earth through God's grace. Stackhouse (1972:106) describes the Christ's Kingdom as follows:

“the kingdom of God is the normative political structure of the communion of the saints means that any project that hopes to establish love and spontaneity and immediacy between persons must at the same time give the participants in the community direct access to the structures and skills of power and to its legitimate value systems. Otherwise the community is not authentic. It will not bear the marks of the ultimate future and it will not endure.”

With a gift of God, it is possible to develop an order that corresponds to the laws written on people’s heart, give people esteemed identity in a community with the presence of holy spirit. People are expected to grow and flourish in a sustained environment. Because of the faith in the resurrection of Christ and the communion of saints, business educators at Christian colleges can believe that the resurrected order will be entirely different from the present and we are glad to join with the saints who were in the past and will be in the future in the movement that seek *Shalom* and justice for humanity.

Business professionals can act as moral agents of three kinds of justice, including distributive justice, commutative justice, and productive justice in the global market and thus promote a virtuous market economy that exhibits economic justice and pro-Christ ideology as Blank (2004: 95) described. Schweiker (2000: 137) states, “*productive justice articulates in economic life the meaning of creation as good; commutative justice enables the world of actual social and cultural exchange; distributive justice reflects in economic life convictions about sin and redemption.*” The regulative guide of productive justice is to have equal opportunity and access function. The regulative ideal of commutative justice is to hold fairness and freedom. The regulative principle of distributive justice is equality and community. We are called to initiate and practice a community-oriented market economy as Blank (2004: 95) suggested. We need a curriculum that supports the

principle of Christian solidarity with people and respects the biblical vision of life. We must bring Christian humanistic values and ethical principals to challenge the ideology of globalization. We must guide students to expose institutional greed and self-interest seeking value, and atheistic dogma of evolution concept in our business textbooks. We must increase our students' consciousness that their local life is related to many realities and relationships that go beyond given time and space through case studies of corporation practices in different parts of the world, open dialogue with people of other cultures, discussion of other business models, and imagination of network of relationships of human life. We must incorporate the moral critique of consumption (Borgmann, 2000), the critique of illusion of the victory of "free market capitalism" (Kortan, 1995, 1998), the arguments for the turn toward local economy power (Mander & Goldsmith, 1996), and the essence of spiritual leading and learning (Vaill, 1998) in our teaching. We encourage students to think global and act local with a sense of justice in their decision making process. Students are encouraged to use their consumption power to boycott unfair or unjust corporate practices.

In the process of seeking Christ's kingdom in the global market economy, Skillen (2001:103) encourages Christian Colleges to "*discern and propose normative reforms for academic work and the practice of government, business, law, and medicine in which Christians and non-Christians are bound together in God's one creation order.*" It is essential for Christian Colleges to model Christ's healing of present global economy reality and their leaders associate Christian moral values with a new social and political order. These leaders cultivate internal culture that affirm Christian professionals' vocation calling and students as agents of the Kingdom of God. They are expected to be

critical to norms and values embedded in the global market economy, investigate the meaning of money, and are serious about the spiritual power of money upon faculty and students' lives and our public goods (Guinness, 2003). They are called to be sensitive to their accountancy perspective and are encouraged to be accountable to the Lord.

For external relationships, Christian colleges must reflect their relationships with mammon and initiate to work with other non-government organizations in local, national, or international communities in increasing public concerns about the problem of global economy and providing better welfare of the local community. Through collaborative work with many non-academic institutions, Christian colleges can develop a consistent set of ideas and practices that helps Christians and non-Christians to operate with spiritual values in our global market economy. The future suffering of our global community has to be based on our sharing of suffering rather than on abstract class-based distinction, First World-Third World distinction, Christian or non-Christian distinction. Christian colleges should address the voices of many people outside the United States and be sensitive to their perceived problems of globalization. Hopefully, anxiety over globalization among people in different parts of the world can be shared and transformed as a driving force against polarization of the global economy and political system. Christian colleges can be a community of faith that provides vital resource for people who are seeking security and identities in the global market economy. They become thriving communities between the global economic governance structure and the local economy.

Redemptive Actions in Business Education

Based on personal mediations and teaching experience, I would like to share some of my teaching principles and examples with you in the journey of seeking God's created order, esteemed personality, and enspirited community in the age of globalization as follows:

In the process of providing instruction, I need to establish a vision of globalization as justice at the individual, institution and cultural levels. For individuals, I need to recognize the worth of persons. I need to use Christian resources to transform the patterns of valuation and the means of self understanding set by commodification of the world. I learn to assist my students in recognizing their responsibility for issues of justice and to raise awareness some people benefit from the economic, political, and cultural systems that are primarily shaped by few rich countries in the North while many poor and marginalized persons frequently experience the same system as oppressive. I must address justice as a right relation between God and all of creation.

I guide my students to view the global market economy through the lens of Christian faith and to consider values in addition to efficiency, productivity and growth in business decision-making process. I have investigated and implemented various pedagogical strategies to help undergraduate and graduate students to live in the world, but not be of the world, and thus give witness to the kingdom of God (Lam, 2004, 2005). I continue to challenge my students to think about the meaning of money, work, poverty and consumption in their daily lives. I hope each of my students will recognize and accept a role as part of a missionary generation with the opportunity to practice Christian faith in transnational corporations. Some examples of teaching practices are as follows:

Examples of Teaching Practices:

Teaching business from a perspective of listening to the voices of local community would help us to increase our consciousness of the value of life of human beings and our wrong assumptions of better economic development. We can help students to explore the capitalistic assumptions about human beings through understanding the conditions of being human today in other developing countries. We can help students to transform themselves through encountering these strangers' perspectives.

Example 1: I invited an American leader to describe how the lives of many Latin Americans are affected by the price of coffee in the international market and the coffee consumption behavior of Americans. Students can understand the rationality behind the fair trade practices and how business professionals can help many rural poor to access the global market economy through a better system. A group of students who are working for a project that markets a well-known coffee can incorporate the perspective of respecting suppliers in their strategic plan and will like to boycott those companies that exploit suppliers of coffee beans.

Example 2: Our undergraduate consumer behavior class discusses the child labor issues with students coming from different disciplines including political science, social work, and psychology. They have to examine the deep root causes of child labor issues, the deceptive practices of companies that use child labor in the global supply chain, and the possibilities of a consumer boycott. Before their discussion, they are exposed to different studies of child labor issue. After discussion, they have to submit their individual learning papers. Many students admit that the awareness of child labor issue increases in their purchase behavior. They tend to read the purchasing tags on clothes

more and make sure that they will not support child labor. Some students would request companies to provide good working conditions for those children who must work to support their families. They have more consciousness of the harmful effect to their beings when there are great discrepancies between their purchase behavior and their attitude toward child labor. Thus, the collaborative learning, critical research and individual reflection assignments can cultivate some students' empathy towards children's development, discover the universal rights of children, and exercise a more inclusive sense of stewardship in a global economy.

Example 3: All students are encouraged to consider and suggest solutions to a variety of business problems in many small group activities. They articulate their own moral reasoning, share their life stories, and participate in various role plays and peer group review. They learn how to submit their assumptions, their observations, and their theories to a community of learners when students are involved in different groups. They also learn how to support each other to grow and to develop better ability to create a community of learners, a sense of solidarity, and a more meaningful existence for everybody in the classroom. Thus, they can discover they learn more through collaboration rather than through competitive environment. Hopefully, each person's identity, conscience, creativity, autonomy, and responsibility is affirmed in a cooperative setting with an inclusive sense of stewardship.

A trusting and supportive learning community is extremely important for part-time graduate students who have more diversified experience and insights about life than a novice. The collaborative learning experience leads them to appreciate different perspectives, and know how to establish harmonious relationships among people in a

learning community. They learn how to confront people with respect in the process of solving conflicts and to include people of different abilities. Hopefully, they experience the ideal of “Christ’s Kingdom First” in the classroom.

Example 4: Graduate students and undergraduate students in marketing management and sales management are asked to serve the community through the development of a marketing plan and selling program for non-profit organizations respectively. For example, students in the sales management course sell tickets and collect auction items from more than hundred firms in the local community for the annual Red Cross fund raising event at Stark County. They share their learning experience through four presentations and experience of doing good cause marketing in their local community. When they reflect their sense of feeling good in serving the community, they can discover their being as a part of community even though many do not grow up in the Stark county. They learn the joy of seeking something bigger than themselves and learn to be grateful to the community when they are marketers. Through these service learning projects, they can develop a pro-active attitude towards the solidarity of a community and are inspired to seek the common good of a community with a sense of personal and communal growth. Furthermore, they also practice the concept of servant leadership and stewardship of resources in a community.

Conclusion

As far as I can use the faith resources to think about the ultimate objectives of global market economy and my role as a business educator in a Christian college, I can have better respect for my business profession as an agent of bringing Christ’s Kingdom

to the earth. In process of establishing God's created order, esteemed identity, and enspirited community, I do hope Christian colleges can work with non-academic institutions to develop a set of ideas and practices that help business educators to operate with spiritual values. Business educators can provide an education in justice, not only expect to have fair social cultural exchange among people in the world, but also to convey the meaning of creation as good, and the idea of the sin and redemption of economic life convictions. As there are many new dynamics in the global market economy, there are many new moral arguments and new rationalities among intellectuals. Business educators at Christian colleges are expected to incorporate more imagination, affection and symbolic actions in our thinking and our dialogue among colleagues about new moral arguments and rationalities in the global market economy. We must develop a theological critique of globalization through the help of theologians who have more direct encounters with people who are struggling with the conditions of modern world. We must address the issue of economic injustice and facilitate students to be more responsible for questions of wider public economy.

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