

## Globalization and Catholicity: Ecumenical Conversations on God's abundance and people's need, Beiheft zu IKZ 200 (2020)

### Observing the Context: See-judge-act: The Reality of Globalization as a Sign of the Times. The Effects, Logic, and Practice of Globalization

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In the 1950s and 1960s it was commonly assumed that the First World revealed the future of the Third World, but in the current era of globalization, this expectation has been reversed. Today, indeed, the Third World (the global South) is showing the First World (the global North) its own future. One must now look to the South to discern the future of the North. Meanwhile the so-called structural adjustment programs that the West forced on the South during the 1960s and 1970s by means of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – programs to reduce social welfare, to deregulate the markets and make them more flexible, and to open the economies of the Southern nations to the world – have turned out to be the future of the West. From the beginning of this process, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has clearly distinguished between globalization as a multi-faceted historic process and globalization in its present form as a pernicious economic and political project of global capitalism, called since 1938 neo-liberalism or new liberalism by its protagonists (Friedrich August von Hayek and others of the network called Mont Pèlerin society).<sup>1</sup>

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the basic principles of an "Agenda for the economic and social renewal of Europe" (Lisbon European Council from 23 and 24 March 2000, Presidency Conclusion of the European Commission) have been established at numerous EU summits. Even taking national differences into consideration, Europe has **defined** a common agenda: the step-by-step dismantling of the welfare state. The resulting social disintegration will see an overall drop in income levels, a disruption of the social rights of those dependent upon wages, a subversion of democratic and social rights, and the destruction of trade unions.

### Globalization and Social Welfare

In 2000 the European governmental leaders decided that Europe should be "the most competitive and dynamic region in the whole world."<sup>2</sup> **The**

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Walpen, Bernhard*, 2004, *Die offenen Feinde und ihre Gesellschaft. Eine hegemonietheoretische Studie zur Mont Pèlerin Society, VSA, Hamburg*; *Ptak, Ralf*, 2004, *Vom Ordoliberalismus zur Sozialen Marktwirtschaft. Stationen des Neoliberalismus in Deutschland*, Opladen; *Segbers, Franz*, 1997, *Das Evangelium des Neoliberalismus. „... eine gewissermaßen adjektivlose Marktwirtschaft ist ein Irrglaube.“* in: M. Huhn, F. Segbers, W. Sohn (Hg.), *Gerechtigkeit ist unteilbar. Beiträge zum Wirtschafts- und Sozialwort der Kirchen*, Bochum 21-31.

<sup>2</sup> Strategy of Lisbon: [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/de/ec/00100-r1.d0.htm](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/de/ec/00100-r1.d0.htm).

**implication of this goal was that** social welfare, social security, and beneficial working conditions would all be reduced **in response to multinational** interests. During the past decade, therefore, the European governments have reduced salaries, increased working hours, and expanded the low-wage sectors of the economy. At the same time, they have lessened the burdens on movable capital. The welfare state has been demolished as an offering to the global economy.

In every European country, resistance against such social destruction has grown in recent years. When resistance in Germany first began to increase, Horst Köhler, who has been the president of the International Monetary Fund and is currently President of Germany, affirmed the government's policy in a letter to the German government: "these reforms are exactly what we have so often demanded." The so-called reforms are part of a greater project, part of a worldwide neoliberal offensive and a program of adjusting the European concepts of justice, social security, and social welfare to the demands of globalization. By adopting these practices, the European governments have contributed to the ~~inevitable~~ destruction of the welfare state.

The welfare state is being transformed according to the logic and desire of the global market. More and more people are being laid off, no longer needed for production of goods and profit. In some European countries the newly unemployed have begun to revolt, as is exemplified by the November 2005 burning of the suburbs of several French cities by their inhabitants. The global economy has created **lower-paying** and less **reliable** ~~tricky~~ **work around the world in so-called supply**. Globalization is driving more and more people in the North to despair as victims of economic fatalism, a belief that, **in the words of Margaret Thatcher**, no alternative exists. Violence lies hidden within the realities of globalization.

The 2005 violence in the French suburbs was a reaction to the economic power under whose pressure more and more in the North are suffering. Unemployment, increased working hours, lowered wages, and worsening working conditions are responses to the global market. Someone is always earning a lower wage or working under worse conditions. There is always a country where factories can get away with paying lower taxes. Competition puts additional pressure on the countries with more welfare and social security.

### **Wealth and Poverty**

Germany, along with Europe in general, is at its highest level of increasing wealth. Never before have Europeans been so rich. But this wealth is unequally distributed, with a wide gap between the rich and the **truly wealthy**. European society faces two major paradoxes of prosperity. First, most Europeans have become more prosperous in the past twenty years, yet the gap between the rich and the poor has widened, with the result that European social and economic groups are more unequal than ever. While more and more people are unemployed or working for low wages, others are earning more and more.

While economic growth promotes prosperity, new prosperity gives rise to grave inequalities. This reality is linked to the wider issue of global inequalities among nations and among individuals, because increasing global prosperity is creating increasing divisions between the richest and the poorest.

### Plutonomy: Economy and Pluto, the God of Money

Throughout the world more and more of the value added and of welfare is occupied by capital, with devastating consequences:

- The economy is increasingly taking on the characteristics of a "Plutonomy,"<sup>3</sup> with the rich absorbing a disproportionate amount of the economy.
- Rich consumers are few, but their economic role is disproportionately large in terms of their portion of income and consumption. The others, the non-rich, the multitudinous many, account for surprisingly small slices of the national pie.
- The Consumer Finance Survey [**where? When?**] shows that in **year** the top 1% **of the US population** accounted for 20% **of the national** income, 40% of the wealth, and 33% of the net worth.
- The world is becoming divided into two blocs – the plutonomies, where economic growth is powered by and largely consumed by the wealthy few, and all other **nations**.
- Plutonomies are especially found in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Plutonomies represent a break with social market economies. Their economies are oriented not to welfare for all but to welfare for only some.
- In 2006, for the first time, not a single millionaire appeared on the **annual Forbes** list of the richest hundred men **in the world** – only billionaires. This fact illustrates the reality that the rich are becoming richer and richer, with their wealth increasing at the expense of the poor. While reducing taxes for high-income populations, governments have at the same time reduced social security for the unemployed, the sick, and the disabled.
- Between 2003 and 2005, employee income in Germany fell about two percent. During the same period employers' income increased more than 18.4 percent.
- Real wages in the United States and Europe have been decreasing. In the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, wages today are 5% lower than in 1973. In Germany wages have decreased by about two percent in the last ten years.

Germany is one of the world's most powerful economies. More than 10% of all goods traded worldwide are produced by German companies. **From 2002 to 2006**, Germany was the world leader in exports. Indeed, **during that time** German companies acquired so many market shares worldwide that Supachai **Panitchpakdit, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development**, rebuked Germany for expanding at the expense of others. Employees paid the cost of this high level of business competitiveness with reduced salaries and expanded working hours.

There is a wage competition in Europe. The aim is to relieve the **mobile** capital of taxes and to transfer the tax burden to the middle and lower classes.

### The Effects of Inequalities

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.billcara.com/archives/Citi%20Oct%2016,%202005%20Plutonomy.pdf>.

The growing economic gap between the rich and the poor is resulting in numerous destructive consequences, including the following:

- Alarming declines in public health and education: a rich person can be expected to live more than seven years longer than one who is poor.
- Widespread poverty and hunger: in the face of difficult social and economic conditions, **in 2006** soup kitchens served more than ten million people in Germany. Each week more than 100,000 tons of food are distributed and more than 500,000 people receive food in soup kitchens.
- Rapidly increasing growth in household debt among low-income families, who are vulnerable to any kind of crisis or ~~entertained~~ item of expenditure. The rapidly growing indebtedness is particularly damaging for the poor.
- Involuntary exile as many people, especially Africans, enter Europe even at the risk of their own lives. Many, according to statements in the press, are fleeing political conflicts in their own lands, but they are also fleeing the consequences of neoliberal globalization, which has caused poverty and misery in many African countries. Upon arrival in Europe, they often remain illegally. Currently there are from five hundred thousand to a million illegal immigrants in Germany alone, and many millions in Europe as a whole. According to the World Bank, illegal immigrants wire **an average of** US \$200 home to their families [**every year? In a certain year?**]. Together with legal immigrants, they contribute more to the battle against poverty in their countries of origin than does governmental aid. Meanwhile they work for starvation wages. They thus contribute to the pressure on working conditions in Europe.
- Widespread illegal immigration as hundreds of thousands of immigrants, **many/most of them women**, work illegally, with no legal protection, in Europe in domestic or medical positions. Without the labor of ~~these women workers~~ from the Philippines and from Eastern Europe, many people **in Germany** needing care would suffer. The European social system, which has significant gaps, is able to function only through the exploitation of illegal immigrants.

#### Summary

**In Europe today** taxes are **being** lowered for the well-to-do but raised for those least able to pay. The governments of Europe and of the United States have embarked upon a neoliberal course that is equally deadly whether with or without war. In this economic situation, the pursuit of capital ~~and wealth~~ holds center stage.

- Wages, social benefits, taxes, rights of employees, **and governmental appropriations / support** for protecting the environment have been reduced in order to provide interesting locations for capital.
- Markets for capital, goods, and services have been opened up and public services and companies privatized in order to provide capital to new areas for profitable investment.
- Poverty, indebtedness, the destruction of the environment, war, the **sealing of from** and disfranchisement of refugees and attacks on fundamental social and democratic rights – all result from the deeds of the world's most powerful.

Margaret Thatcher has declared that today's globalized world offers no opportunity for new political directions: "There is no alternative." The core of the argument is what Adam Smith referred to as "the invisible hand" **that leads the market, which by itself produces welfare and justice as long as all strive for their own economic advantage and gain.**<sup>4</sup> According to this theory, if politics stays away from the economy, the economy will operate effectively to create public welfare. Democratically elected governments succumb to the pressure, while politics adapts more and more to the overwhelming power of the market. Because governments are no longer sufficiently powerful or willing to resist international forces, they choose instead to adapt.

### **Globalization as Ideology**

*Globalization* is a word that means unemployment, pressure on working conditions, and the exploitation of creation. People often explain what is happening in the world by referring to globalization rather than naming specific interests and purposes. Europe and the United States are globalization's winners, though even their populations include more and more losers. Globalization is an ideology that defends, protects, and advances the interests of the powerful.

The so-called social reforms of globalization are accompanied by a debate over a new definition of justice. Friedrich August von Hayek formulated the theory: "Inequality is not regrettable, but most welcome." He went on to explain: "Those who attack the rich forget that most of them created jobs in the process of becoming rich; in this way they helped more people than they would have done by giving their money to the poor."<sup>5</sup> An updated concept of justice should acknowledge the inherent differences among humans, allowing all to seize the opportunity before them. Precisely at a time when Europe is richer than ever before, distributive justice is being considered old-fashioned, requiring replacement by a view of justice oriented to a capability approach.

**Conclusion 1:** Globalization is not simply a process with chances and risks but a project aiming at a worldwide expansion of the market, along with its logic and spirit. The logic is that of competition and its tools: deregulation, privatization, and a reduction in the role of the state. Its spirit consists of producing more and more money. It is also necessary to distinguish between two opposed kinds of globalization. The globalization of the market opposes the other kind, which seeks to turn the planet that God has entrusted to us into a habitable earth where justice and peace may embrace each other. The one project compels humans to adopt the praxis, logic, and spirit of economic competition; the other seeks to create the just structures of a global village.

The world has never before been so rich. During the last decades incredible riches have come into existence on the earth. Global trade has more than tripled in the last twelve years, and the global gross national product has nearly doubled. For the first time in the history of humankind, objective scarcity has been overcome. Materially speaking, the utopia of a common happiness for

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<sup>4</sup> Cite Adam Smith.

<sup>5</sup> *Wirtschaftswoche*, 6 March 1981.

all is possible. No one need go hungry. The agricultural sector could without difficulty feed twelve billion people. There is plenty for all.

What globalization has treated as dross – social security, increased social benefits, ancillary wage costs, and protection against job loss – must be seen in the light of human life and well-being as important social and civil achievements. Those structural adaptations in the South and the North that are currently being referred to as reforms are poised to bid a definitive farewell to the social and economic achievements that have been developed over the course of many centuries.

### A Biblical Perspective

That the economy should serve life is the fundamental starting point of the ethics of economy, echoing Jesus' dictum that the Sabbath exists for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath (Matt 2:27). This understanding leads to the necessity of an alternative to globalization, which changes the world into a marketplace. The axiom that the economy should serve life raises two questions: for whom does the economy further life, and from whom does it demand sacrifice, even to death?

In its concern for justice, the Judeo-Christian tradition orients itself according to a "preferential option for the poor." The poor are the measuring rod. God the creator has created humankind in his image. The understanding that humankind is created in God's image constitutes the foundation of the brotherhood of all people – a relationship that expresses the hope for a form of human life together, with all people respected without precondition as individuals, irrespective of personal achievement, without distinction of class, race, or origin. All people – rich or poor, enslaved or free – are brothers and sisters.

This biblically based model of brotherhood contains three elements:

- Recognition of the value of each person, irrespective of achievements. everyone has the right to participate fully in society simply because he or she lives.
- Justice as the creation of fair and equal conditions for all, through which all may use their freedom.
- Solidarity as support for the possibilities of the lives of all people and a commitment to their well-being.

Justice is the recognition of what human beings owe each other. The preferential option for the poor means that the poor cannot be required to pay the price for the ever-increasing well-being of the rich but must rather draw the attention of the rich to their responsibility for the lives of others.

When **Jesus** speaks of a preferential option for the poor, he does not call poverty blessed, but the poor (Lk 6:20). Of course the Bible does not condemn material blessings. The biblical evaluation of wealth rests upon the fundamental view that wealth is the product of God's gifts and of human work. The participation of all in this wealth, if it is shared, leads to the blessings of wealth. Shared wealth is blessed, but when it is not shared, it is a disaster. Justice is therefore part of the cycle of blessing (see Deut 24:14).

Of the world's largest economic units today, already more than half – fifty-one – are companies. Only forty-nine are nations. The overwhelming majority of these globally operating companies have their seats and registered offices in the United States or in Europe. They are neither legitimated nor controlled democratically. The former president of the National Bank of Germany, Hans Tietmeyer, has therefore declared that "Most politicians have still not realized to what extent they are controlled by the financial markets and are even ruled by them."<sup>6</sup> This concentration of power and influence is the world's new empire. The rulers of this empire secure their interests and aims militarily and politically, thereby manifesting a kind of structural violence against the poor.

### Trusting the Invisible Hand

The globalization of the market is rationalized by **Smith's idea of the invisible hand**. According to this view, the state and the labor unions **should not intervene to correct the economy**. Smith, the originator of the concept of the market economy, referred to this trust in the invisible hand as a "generous faith in the will of the ruler of the universe." Avarice, the accumulation of capital, and the satisfaction of self-serving interests, he explained, produce the common welfare. The unswerving certainty with which many live according to this economic policy and proclaim it to allow no alternative derives from trust in the invisible hand of the market, but the ruler of the universe to whom Smith refers is not the Christian God. Faith in the market is a religion; it is idolatry.

The metaphor of the invisible hand is an ideology of an organized absence of alternative. It demands that intrinsic necessities be accepted as unavoidable. Such an acceptance renders the visible hands of acting subjects invisible. The expression *invisible hand* depoliticizes and reconceptualizes dominant capital-oriented interests as neutral, unavoidable necessities, before which all rational beings must bow as though they had no alternative.

Time and again the Bible speaks of creation as a house, which humankind inhabits with other creatures. The housemates must toil the soil, care for livestock and farming, and provide for all who live in the house. According to this image, humankind has a fiduciary task: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it" (Ps 24:1). Since God, like a good economist, has provided the earth with an abundance of resources and goods, economic action takes not scarcity of goods as its starting point but rather the abundance already present in creation. If all people respond economically to the creation entrusted to them, there will be plenty for all. Biblical social laws are a kind of house rule for the protection of life in the household of God. The Bible contains concrete instructions for the protection of life as necessary in its day.

Of course our contemporary world is more complex than the world of the Bible. Nevertheless, the fundamental question remains: do we take the right of life for all as a point of orientation, accepting solidarity and justice as measuring rods for our living together, or do we accept the market as a competition that serves the accumulation of profit and allows money to rule? In the end, according to the latter model, everything should be changed into money.

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<sup>6</sup> FAZ 3.2.1996.

**Conclusion 2:** In the context of globalization, the perspective of justice makes us ask what human beings owe each other and especially what they owe the poor. Globalization changes the earth into a marketplace, changing all goods into commodities and buying and selling them. Globalization has been effective in its production of wealth. Never before has the world been so rich. During the last decades incredible wealth has come into existence. However, this wealth has come into being at the cost of the poor, of the weak, and of creation. They are the victims. Their possibilities for life have been sacrificed to the increase of profit.

The Bible is realistic when it says, "The lover of money will not be satisfied with money, nor the lover of wealth with gain" (Eccle 5:10). The ~~apostle Paul~~ apostolic writer of the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians even refers to this attitude of always wanting more as idolatry (Eph 5:5, Col 3:5). Whenever money becomes the all-determining reality to which humankind bows the knee, the Bible speaks of Mammon (Matt 6:24). The critique of Mammon is a theological critique of the accumulation of money. If the continuous accumulation of money is regarded as the first principle and the world acts accordingly, the monetary system rules at the expense of humankind. This theological phrasing identifies a fundamental mechanism still at work today, changing everything into money by reducing pensions, retrenching social services, weakening laws protecting jobs, and lowering taxes. The consequences are disastrous: the measuring rod is no longer that which serves the life of humankind and of all the creatures inhabiting the earth, but only what serves the most profit.

The choice between God and Mammon poses a fundamental opposition: God is worshiped where life and justice grow, while Mammon is worshiped where everything is subordinated to the accumulation of money. Theologically, the critique of Mammon says that we cannot abandon everything that is good for humankind and for humans living together to those who would change everything into commodities and money, ~~however successful they are~~. The dance around the golden calf has gone wrong before.

**Conclusion 3:** We need a politics derived from the critique of Mammon, demonizing not the economy but rather the fundamental mechanism of the multiplication of money. *Plutonomics* means orienting economic behavior to profit alone, and its advocates proclaim "welfare for the happy few." But we need an economy that serves the life of all.

### **Globalization Destroys the Unity of Humankind**

At the center of the logic of economic globalization stands trust in competition as the motor of social and societal development. Competition is a process that necessarily eliminates those who cannot keep up. Competition is all about a battle for advantage over others. In this confrontation, the weak lose. Competition is anything but neutral; it follows a logic that serves the strong and harms the weak. Of necessity, a logic of victory and defeat, of winners and losers, results in the elimination of the weak. This logic of power, with the strong ruling over the weak, leads structurally to violence. Defeating this kind of economic globalization and its inherent violence constitutes the true challenge.

God has created this earth and equipped it with abundance. Nobody is excluded from this abundance. The earth and all the goods of the creation are

there for all. Therefore economic globalization is not only an economic challenge but also a spiritual challenge to our understanding of catholicity.

### Catholicity

To be church means living a new kind and quality of relationships; it signifies a new community in Christ that embodies the alternative to the forms of power and violence defined by globalization. As the *nota ecclesiae* indicate, ~~the vision of~~ the unity of the church is not a project of imperial rule aiming at the establishment of a uniform system of doctrine and faith. Rather, it is a **vision of** unity in multiplicity and of multiplicity in unity. The Creed's confession of "one holy catholic and apostolic church" preserves the memory of that earlier form of globalization in the Roman Empire. Roman globalization was founded upon the principle of unity: one God, one Emperor, one Empire, and also one language and one currency. Over against this kind of imperial unity, the early church presented an alternative vision of the *Oikoumene* as a conciliary and synodical community of local churches that retain their autonomy and their diversity. This vision was expressed in the church's praxis of solidarity with the poor and the victims of imperial globalization.

Against the *Imperium Romanum*, the early church claimed the *nota ecclesiae*. The model of the church's unity is not the empire headed by an emperor and having dependent provinces, but a synodical federation of local churches with equal rights. Catholicity is thus the counterpart to the *Imperium Romanum*. Catholicity / *kathólos* is an alternative ecumenical vision, understood as a conciliar community of local churches. The ancient church represented this type of community over against the principle of unity established by the Roman Empire. This catholic synodical community was the early church's answer to the globalization of the *Imperium Romanum*.

The church is integrated into God's action for the salvation of humankind. Catholicity is the characteristic of the church as she engages in this mission. It is the recovery from the destitution of humankind, seeking the salvation and the well-being of all through justice, peace, and the conservation of creation: the Shalom of God. Solidarity with the poor is therefore an expression of catholicity.

God's plan is that people of all ages, races, and places may come to unity in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The church catholic is a sign of the unity of humankind beyond all boundaries. Therefore the church has the task of working for the unity of humankind through ecumenical engagement and commitment. Catholicity is the vision of an alternative human unity. It is an eschatological sign that shows and announces itself in a corresponding praxis. The church that wishes to be true to its characteristics – its *nota* – is part of God's movement in history towards the kingdom. Church is therefore church for others, including the poor. As W. A. Visser't hooft, the first General Secretary of the WCC, said, those members of the church who in their **praxis behavior / acts/ deeds** deny their responsibility for those in need elsewhere on the globe are as guilty of heresy as those who deny any other doctrinal truth.

The catholic vision of the unity of humankind is supported by the conviction that a world without poverty and exploitation is not only possible but even in accord with the *Missio Dei* for this world. Catholicity has to do with

multiplicity and continuity – the unity that pertains to the whole church and the unity of humanity: “The Church dares to speak of itself as the sign of the future unity of humanity” (Uppsala, WCC).

### Contexts of the Origins of our Churches

- The Old Catholic churches arose as protest movements, protesting against the power of the supremacy of Rome at a time when people were fighting for freedom, including liberalism, freedom of the press, democracy, and the right to vote. The Old Catholic protest had emancipatory dimensions.
- The Iglesia Filipina Independiente arose in the war of liberation from colonialism and for social justice (e.g., the labor union *Union Obrera Democratica*).
- These protests against Rome’s centralism and power were expressions of a search for a local inculturation and autonomy that Rome, distanced by space and history, could not provide.

What does conciliarity mean for the relations between ECUSA, the IFI, and the Union of Utrecht? Globalization brings to life the treasure of conciliar community. The Old Catholic churches, together with the Episcopal Church and the IFI, can combine their individual experiences of a conciliar form of life and translate them into an alternative model for a worldwide framework of relations. Conciliarity is a mode of existence that secures equality and freedom for all. It contains the recognition of the other in his or her otherness. Conciliar community is the Christian churches’ answer to the challenge of globalization. Communion of churches – community of churches – is an *oikoumene* of cooperation and solidarity. The churches’ conciliarity – the mutual accountability of churches and Christians – is still a future concept, required to provide the conditions for both unity and autonomy. Conciliarity is unity in plurality and plurality in unity.

Conciliar communion with the largest Old Catholic church (the IFI) is the price of catholicity that must be paid by the Union of Utrecht and ECUSA. It requires the risk of investing in an experience of a culturally polycentric world church, joining the Union of Utrecht, ECUSA, and the IFI. The Old Catholic churches are willing to invest what the early Christians in the Roman Empire invested. It requires the continuation of the contest between Peter and Paul – Paul, who with his rejection of circumcision for Christians not only began the transition from Jewish-Palestinian Christianity to Roman-Hellenistic Christianity but also simultaneously invested in the historical development of Jewish Christianity through its assimilation into the Roman-Greek culture. The Old Catholic concept of synodality, catholicity, and conciliarity contains the ecclesiological chance that in a pluralistic and global world, cultural autonomy and particular traditions will be valued. Synodality not only has meaning for church structure but also says something about human beings: We can only be the church of Jesus Christ when we live in solidarity with human beings. In order to do justice to a cultural polycentricity without denying the churches’ own cultural-historical inheritance, the churches must bring together an option for the poor (the IFI) and an option for the other in his or her otherness.

The process of a cultural polycentricity also brings new tasks to theology. A new catholicism needs to begin to develop from the Eurocentrist

understanding of the Old Catholic churches and the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. as they begin to relate to the IFI.

### **Eucharistic Ecclesiology and Eucharistic Ethics belong together**

The unity of the churches is fulfilled and made visible in the celebration of the Eucharist. The church points to Christ, shown as the sign of the unity of the faithful, and also to the unity of human beings, who are divided through hunger, poverty, and riches. In the eucharistic celebration the celebrating community answers the challenge of Christians and of the church of the present. In a world of hunger, Christ takes the form of bread.

The celebration of the Eucharist responds to the hunger of human beings for bread and for unity in the face of the divisions between poor and rich. Eucharist – thanksgiving – begins with the fundamental presupposition that people must have something to eat and drink. In the Eucharist the universal, catholic dimension of the church beyond its local manifestation is experienced and celebrated.

### **Resistance of Churches and the Alternative Catholic Globalization**

Catholic ecumenism pushes for establishing an alliance with those who are committed to a globalization of solidarity. We Christians understand ourselves as part of a worldwide Christianity. In our various partnerships we come to know the consequences of globalization through its global victims. Together we listen to what they have to say. We join them in seeing the consequences of globalization, and together we consider what kind of answer our mutual faith in the one God who showed his *φιλανθρωπια* to us in Christ demands from us (Tit 3:4). We know ourselves to be connected with the whole community of worldwide Christianity. In times of globalization, this solidarity places us beside its victims.

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it" (Ps 24:1). We are therefore coworkers for the Shalom of God, and together with others throughout the world, we stand for justice, peace, and the conservation of creation.