

development will take place next. A Christian can only exult at the possibilities of what the Holy Father has spoken about in his 2001 apostolic letter — *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium) — when he speaks of the "New Evangelization" and the need for all Christians to "go out into the deep" (*Duc in Altum*) to catch men.

I think that we should look at this reality from a supernatural viewpoint.

Our Lord taught the apostles and us at the end of his earthly life to go out into the whole world and preach the Gospel. Some sort of a healthy globalization helps the spreading of the Good News while protecting the things the Pope insists on: solidarity, the common good, the dignity of the human person. At least it affords the opportunity for all men and women and their families to hear and respond to the Gospel preached to them. A greater interdependence should promote the Christian solidarity of which the Holy Father speaks.

Some years back, I had a conversation with a British Nobel Laureate economist, Robert Mundel, who certainly does not consider himself a Christian. He told me that Catholicism indeed would be the global religion of Christianity on account of its history, with its core dogmatic and moral teachings serving as a sort of Gold Standard for the religious world.

So though the world has shrunk to a global village, the Church's mission and growth will continue to rely on the supernatural means of sacramental grace and prayer which will overflow into a greater service to all, especially those most in need. Indeed, due to globalization and productivity and to the implementation of the teachings of the last great ecumenical Council as seen through the historic pontificate of John Paul II, it may lead the Church to the greatest period of growth, both in numbers and in sanctity, in its history.

Many years ago, as a student, I read a book entitled *Understanding Media* by Catholic convert Marshall McLuhan.

He had converted to the Church as a result of reading G.K. Chesterton's book, "What's Wrong with the World." McLuhan was perhaps the first person to see how quickly the world was coming together principally through the new means of communication. He coined the terms "The Medium is the Message" and "The Global Village."

I believe the Church alone knows what's wrong with the world, and its message will be the best medium or remedy to solve the many problems of the global village in our new century.

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Pamphlet 354

## **Universal Church, Global Village**

Father C. John McCloskey

Recently I was honored to be asked to give a talk to members of the Houses of Parliament in London, along with Catholic writers and journalists, on the intriguing topic of "The Catholic Church and the Global Village."

It was easy to gain inspiration as I passed through St. Stephen's Gate and past the Great Hall, where the martyrs St. Thomas More and St. Edmund Campion were condemned to death for their faith. I am happy to report I emerged alive at the end of the talk, even though some of the questions were somewhat challenging.

Naturally, the Church, being the universal institution par excellence, has made understanding globalization a high priority. The Holy Father has made several comments about it in recent years. Judging from the Holy Father's statements, it is clear that the Church recognizes globalization is not going away, short of cataclysmic climate change (The day after tomorrow?) or nuclear world war. Or, I might add, the Second Coming.

The Church's response to the reality of globalization is that "the human person must be the centre of every civil and social order, of every system of technological and economic development." The Holy Father says: "I am motivated by no other concern than to defend human dignity, and by no other authority than the Divine Word." While the institutional Church works through diplomacy, as it has for thousands of years, it is clear that the Church's principal influence on the phenomenon of globalization will come through the free action

and influence of its more than a billion Catholics.

Without the influence of Catholicism, the net result of globalization could well be either a quasi-totalitarian world government, inevitably exalting the rich and exploiting the poor, or a chaotic, free-market free-for-all with multinationals competing for market share. Either outcome would most likely strive to impose a sort of secular fundamentalism that would leave no room for religion in its public square.

This could well produce what John Paul II referred to in his encyclical on *The Gospel of Life* as a "new totalitarianism." Of course, there is another possibility, rather far-fetched, I think, which is a world under the control of a resurgent Islam in its most extreme form.

At this point in history, there are only two global institutions, and one nation-state, that have a realistic claim for hegemony, of different sorts, over the world. One is the United Nations; the other, the Roman Catholic Church. The United States may be a third, but empires come and go, and it is not at all clear the United States will remain the sole world superpower; China and India with their enormous populations are making rapid economic progress.

Let's talk about the United Nations first. The United Nations' claim is based on the vision of its founders after the Second World War and its continuing participation in the proceedings of hundreds of member nation-states. It has proven to be ineffective, at least in part, in settling inter-country disputes, most of which have finished in violent conflicts. At the same time, it has proved fairly effective in what may be its best argument for continuance, which is its work of providing relief for disaster- or war-stricken nations.

However, there have been proposals made, at least in the United States, to form another world body, which would be made up of

democracies that have seceded from the United Nations. The United Nations' membership is made up largely of de facto or de jure dictatorships, oftentimes making true discussion and viable agreements virtually impossible.

The Belgian Catholic theologian Michel Schooyans is concerned about the U.N. becoming a vehicle for a vision of the world that is atheistic with new-age accents. His fears are justified in the creation of an Earth Charter (to take the place of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights) under study by the U.N. that would promote "the creation of one unique new world religion that would entail right away the prohibition of proselytism on the part of all other religions."

It is clear that there are many people of power interested in greatly increasing the global powers of the United Nations to the detriment of religious freedom, the principle of subsidiarity and the central role of the family. The Catholic Church would stand, perhaps, alone in opposing this concentration of power in a world government that hints at totalitarianism.

Perhaps for that reason, the Church continues its work in the United Nations, above all to give a Catholic voice, as well as to keep an eye on possible attempts at global hegemony via world government, rather than any real hope that, as currently constituted, the United Nations can be effective.

As for the United States, "the real question for the United States is whether they are going to follow the path of Europe into the de-Christianization and continental suicide via contraception, sterilization and abortion, or whether they are going to fight and win current culture wars. Orthodox Christianity is alive and well in the U.S. and growing, yet the country is increasingly polarized. The U.S., like Europe but to a lesser degree, suffers from what noted

American thinker Francis Fukuyama describes as the "great disruption."

He says the West has witnessed a disintegration of traditional family structures because of the birth-control pill, introduced in the early 1960s, and the demographic decline of native-born populations in the developed world because of contraception and the consequent need to increase immigration. "The growing cultural diversity those two trends augur raise questions about how pluralistic Western cultures can become without breaking apart." In the U.S., however, the overwhelming bulk of immigration comes from Catholic Latin American countries and from Catholic Asians: Filipino, Vietnamese and Chinese. Europe's immigrants are largely Muslims, Turks and Hindi whose religion and culture are certainly not of the West.

Affecting these secular institutions is the enormous power of multinationals that are theoretically governed in part by their shareholders or by the consumers who use their products. In reality, their boards of directors, predominant shareholders or executive officers have powers that are increasingly exempt from national governance. I read recently that of the top 200 economic global entities in terms of net worth, 40 were multinationals, while the rest were nation-states. Many of the 40 multinationals were very high up in the rankings. How they fall under any governance except in a fragmentary way is a serious subject that must be examined.

There are certainly many factors that account for globalization but most notable has to be the ever-increasing communication among people. Communication over distance started with chariots, horses and roads, moved on to the printing press, telegraph, telephone, radio and television, and now has arrived to the internet and worldwide web and who knows what