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Globalization, Justice and Theological Education

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Globalization as a term and concept became popular by the end of the last century and the beginning of the new millennium. Some words and concepts such as 'nation', 'patriotism', '*swadeshi*'² and 'rural development' which gained more emphasis during the struggle for freedom of India are now sidelined by the popularity of globalization. Print media, television and other visual communications promote the idea of globalization with such captions as, 'Think globally and act locally', 'global village', 'global market', 'global banking', 'global society' and 'global communication'. However, there is a lot of confusion in using terms such as 'internationalization', 'westernization', 'modernization', 'christianization' and 'crossing the boundaries' that come with globalization. Each of these terms has its own specific characteristics from economic, technological, cultural or religious point of view. Such characteristics of each term should not be diluted because each word carries a concept. We must be careful in using them synonymously or interchangeably.

There are many voices of support for and critique of globalization. In India alone, many seminars and debates, both at national and regional levels, have been conducted on this topic between 1998 and 2001. Articles and books with data and analysis have been published on the merits and demerits of globalization. I am glad to write this paper on 'Justice and Liberation' in connection with globalization. Not an expert in analyzing the concept or technicalities of globalization, I am using statistics from secondary sources rather than directly from reports and records of governments, World Trade Organization, World Bank or International Monetary Fund.

I. Definitions and Experiences of Globalization

There is a wide range of definitions of globalization suggested by scholars. One definition is that "globalization is a process by which the economies of the world become increasingly integrated, leading to a global economy and, increasingly, global economic policymaking, e.g., through international agencies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Globalization also refers to an emerging 'global culture' in which people more often consume similar goods and services across countries and use a common language of

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² *Swadeshi* means self-reliance, a political position that local industry should be promoted while reliance on foreign industry should be minimized and steadily eliminated.

business, e.g. English. These changes facilitate economic integration and in turn are further promoted by it. But in its core economic meaning *globalization* refers to the increased openness of economies to international trade, financial flows, and direct foreign investment.”³ Prof. M.A. Oommen says, “Broadly speaking, globalization may be considered a process of transnationalisation of capital, production and even consumer tastes and preferences on the logic of global exchange. There is, therefore, nothing amiss in characterising it as global capitalism.”⁴ According to Ruigrah Van Tulder, globalization refers to “the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between the state and societies which make up the present world system. It describes the process by which events, decisions and activities in one part of the world came to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe.”⁵

Various theoretical approaches to globalization are proposed by academics. Felix Wilfred lists various theories of globalization in his book and points out that “the options and interests of the theorists colour the way globalization is explained”⁶. Some have gone to the extent of believing that there is no salvation without globalization. Only economists, sociologists and scientists can understand the intricacies of the process of globalization. They have the skill and techniques to analyze its merits and demerits. One of the merits is that globalization presents new possibilities for eliminating global poverty and “can potentially benefit poor countries directly and indirectly through cultural, social, scientific and technological exchanges as well as through conventional trade and finance.”⁷ Moreover, developing the nations is possible since finance will be available. Goods will be freely available in good quality and people need not wait for long time or depend on the state to produce and distribute. Liberalization and privatization will bring healthy competition and improvement in quality and marketing. Such competition can bring down the prices. Another merit of globalization is that it can challenge some of the oppressive elements in our religions and cultures and lead to reform our society for better. On the other hand, poor countries could be locked into a pattern of dependency and may experience threats to their cultural identities.⁸ Felix Wilfred is highly critical of globalization that he discusses the deceptions of globalization in his book.⁹ Ordinary people on the road may not have the expertise to analyze the phenomena of globalization but they could feel and experience that something is happening in the world and their society is changing rapidly. Their life is so closely linked to these changes whether they like it or not. Villagers who know the water of the wells or rivers see suddenly bottles filled with purified

³ Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith, *Economic Development* (Singapore: Pearson Education, 2004, 8th edn.), 510.

⁴ M.A. Oommen, ‘Globalisation, Global Media and the Struggle for a Just World Order’, in *Globalisation, Mass Media and Indian Cultural Values*, ed. Michael Traber (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003), 59.

⁵ Refer to John Mohan Razu, ‘Globalisation as victimisation: A critique in the light of the Jubilee Motif – The Case of India’ in *Bible Speaks Today*, ed. D. J. Muthunayagam (Bangalore: UTC, 2000), 100, for quoting the definition of R.V. Tulder.

⁶ Felix Wilfred, *Asian Dreams and Christian Hope: AT the Dawn of the Millennium* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003, 2nd edn.), 4.

⁷ Todaro and Smith, 511.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 511.

⁹ Felix Wilfred, 6-13.

water and coloured water wrapped in attractive labels such as Coca-Cola, 7 Up, Pepsi, Aquafina Bisleri selling in the small shops in their villages. Ready-made garments of export brands such as Peter England, Louis Philippe, Van Hausen, Wrangler, Lee, Levi, Camel are sold in the shops in cities and towns. They see more global brands of drinks and clothes used by their favourite cinema stars and sports personalities on television and glittering billboards. We notice that electronic goods sold abroad such as television, refrigerator, VCR, DVD, mobile phones, computers of many international companies like Sony, Panasonic, Samsung, Sharp, IBM, Hitachi, Thompson, BPL-Sanyo, Nokia and Siemens, Toshiba are now available in Indian market connecting the people of India with the global society. Even the cars of international brands like Ford, Suzuki, Mitsubishi, BMW, Benz, Hyundai, Daewoo and Chevrolet are sold in India. Millions of Indians understand that India has opened its door for multi-national corporations (MNCs) to import or produce for the huge market although they may not know the essential characteristics of 'globalization'. They realize that the Indian government has liberalized the rules and opened the country for marketing the goods of international companies. Rich and middle class people who are attracted to modern technology and goods of international brands welcome globalization and enjoy the benefits of free market rather than getting the goods they wanted through smugglers. The lower middle class and poor are also getting influenced by the mass media to accept the process of globalization. Unfortunately, they are unable to own such goods due to debts and poverty perpetuated by globalization, the very system influencing them. The poor people may not be aware of the characteristics of 'free market' and 'finance capitalism' of globalization but they experience the consequences of the free market due to loss of employment, degradation of environment, high cost of living, the marginalization of traditional skills, etc.

Many Indians have developed a fear of uncertainty about the future trend of their society. They have raised doubts about the ways and means to control the ongoing process of globalization. However, globalization has attracted many people whether they are educated or uneducated, rich or poor, white or black, upper caste or lower caste. Wesley Ariarajah points out four ways in which globalization is experienced, namely: a *new consciousness* of globalization, a *new awareness* of the gravity of the impact of globalization, a *new realization* of globalization as social and cultural and economic consequences, and a *new level of comprehension* that it can be directed to enrich human life.¹⁰ It is difficult to measure fully the positive and negative consequences of globalization. However, evidences of the effect of globalization are seen in many parts of the world in terms of loss of jobs, bursting of financial institutions, increasing debt of several nations, promoting western culture and habits, gradual disappearance of local skills and customs, and reaction towards western countries. Often, by mistake, Christianity is regarded as the promoter of globalization. The fundamentalists in the Islamic and Hindu religions show their violence against Christian communities and work to develop tough resistance against Christianity rather than on the process of globalization itself. They may not be aware of the critical response raised by Christians on globalization. With the sense of inadequacy and incompetence on my side, I try to present this paper focusing my attention on surveying and listing the economic,

¹⁰ S. Wesley Ariarajah, 'Religious Diversity and Inter-Faith Relations in a Global Age', in *Quest* (Nov. 2003), 2f.

social, political, religious and cultural issues and challenges of globalization, highlighting a theological response and suggesting changes in contemporary theological training in India.

II. Globalization and its Essential Features

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. Trade between nations and territorial expansion of political power across the oceans began a long time ago as the early history of Greeks and Romans shows. Evidences of global connections for trade are found in the Tamil *Sangam* literature. However, scholars try to trace the phases of the development of globalization from the time of the industrial revolution of the 15th century.

Prof. T. K. Oommen speaks of three giant phases of globalization, with colonialism that began in the 16th century as the first phase.¹¹ He describes the emergence of two types of colonies viz., 'settler-majority countries' and 'ex-colonial countries', and the atrocities of colonialism in these two kinds of colonies. Both of them fought for freedom from their colonial masters and obtained it. But the 'settler-majority countries' such as USA, Canada and Australia joined with their European colonial powers after the freedom and worked together to become developed nations. Their relationship developed that they have become the First World which promote neo-colonialism today. Although the 'ex-colonial countries' of Africa and Asia have gained political freedom, they are left with impoverished economies, made to depend on their colonial masters for their various needs viz., getting technical knowledge and financial support for developing agriculture, industries and education. As such, they had to continue to be politically subordinated to the First World. The process of subordination is shifted from 'colonial mode of production' to 'subordination mode of unequal exchange' resulting in inequality as a major issue rather than differences.¹²

The second phase of globalization was the development of two ideologies viz., 'capitalist democracies' and 'socialist command economies' and promoting these ideologies to various countries. Such an effort on the side of North America and Europe for capitalist democracy and USSR and China for 'socialist one-party system' resulted in creating two blocks of nations following 'free market capitalism' on the one side and 'state controlled socialism' on the other side. Nations belonging to these two blocks involved in trade agreements, military expansion and propaganda war to globalize the world with their ideology and political system. Cold War and polarization continued between these two blocks till the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The third phase of globalization is the neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism with the economic features marked by the 'free market' and 'finance capitalism' and 'development'; political features of 'multi-party democracy' and 'insistence on observing human rights'; and cultural feature of homogenization.¹³ These economic, political and cultural features

¹¹ T. K. Oommen, 'Globalisation and Structural Change: Historicity and Implications', in *Religion and Society* (June 1994), 16-22.

¹² T. K. Oommen, 17 and Frans J. Schuurman, 'Globalization and Development Studies: Introducing the challenges' in *Globalization and Development: Challenges for 21st century*, ed. F.J. Schuurman (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 2003), 9.

¹³ T.K. Oommen, 18.

that characterize the modern process of globalization need a brief explanation before identifying and listing the issues of globalization.

First, the policy of free market or trading enables one country to produce and market its goods in another country without any trade restriction and to transfer the profit back to its own country. At the outset, it may look like an open policy and even poorer countries can take advantage of the policy of free trade. But the poorer countries do not have that much capital to invest in or develop sophisticated technology to produce goods that can withstand the international competition against the rich and well equipped MNCs of the First World. In order to stabilize international trade, exchange rate and the market after the World War II, the developed nations of the First World have created the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1948 to their advantage. GATT was transformed into World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 to create a powerful centre of global economic governance. While GATT deals primarily with trade, WTO's rules deal with agriculture, services, investments and intellectual property rights. The Third world nations need to sign the free-trade agreements if they want loans and technology for their development. WTO requires certain 'structural adjustment' in the economic and political policies of the developing and less developed nations and open their door for the flow of foreign capital to be invested by the MNCs, the construction of their industries for producing and marketing their branded goods. A MNC or Transnational Corporation (TNC) is a corporation or enterprise that conducts and controls productive activities in more than one country. Multinationals bring not only capital but also 'carry with them technologies of production, tastes and styles of living, managerial philosophies, and diverse business practices including co-operative arrangements, marketing restrictions, advertising and the phenomenon of *'transfer pricing'*. They engage in a range of activities, many of which have little to do with the development aspirations of the countries in which they operate'.¹⁴ Their worldwide operations and activities are primarily controlled by parent companies in the First World. The royalty on technology and patent rights is charged on the countries and transferred back to the First World. The sad part of the trend is that the nation-states are not playing the active role which they played in the earlier colonialism but are now controlled by the MNCs because of the power of the finance capitalism. The number of MNCs was 7000 in 1970. This rose to 37,000 in 1991 and to 45,000 parent firms with 280,000 affiliates in 1995. All this shows the characteristics of their large size and worldwide control.¹⁵ Out of this, 350 largest corporations control more than 40 per cent of the production and dominate the global trade.¹⁶ The estimated sales of the MNCs in 1996 were over \$7 trillion. UNO is also helpless except in certain political negotiations or applying the law of economic sanctions against a country.

Second, free market and transfer of profits are possible only if the nation-states practice 'capitalist democracy'. Under the 'socialist one party system', production and distribution are in the hands of the state. It is very difficult for the MNCs to own resources of production, control the market, and transfer the profit in such a state-command political system. Globalization, therefore, promotes the political feature of 'capitalist democracy'

¹⁴ Todaro and Smith, 635f.

¹⁵ M.A. Oommen, 63.

¹⁶ Todaro and Smith, 636.

throughout the world in order to facilitate the free flow of finance from country to country and growth of free market. One of the aims of globalization is to reduce the control of the nation-states on economic and political policies and force states to adapt capitalist democracy, implement SAP (Structural Adjustment Programmes) and promote liberalisation. Felix Wilfred points out the problems of SAP and writes, 'the state itself is dictated by the Structural Adjustment Programmes. It is forced to deregulate or lose its control over market and economy which are to be handed over to private players operating internationally. And what is worse, the states are forced to cut the subsidies for food and other goods from which the poor benefit'.¹⁷

Third, globalization does not care about the originality and uniqueness of local cultures. It promotes homogenization of cultures through mass media making the people to believe that the world is coming closer and various communities and cultures are getting united and differences and clash of cultures in the world can be removed. It promotes some sort of uniformity in production and consumerism for the branded goods of MNCs throughout the world. The culture of jeans, pop music, disco, fast-food like McDonald and KFC, softdrinks like Coca-cola and Pepsi, and mobile phone communication has taken the world. MNCs spend a lot of money on research to know the tastes and styles of different classes of people to suit their production and marketing. The process of globalization with these essential features has affected the lives of people in various countries including the First World. The following list shows the injustice and violation of human rights caused by globalization.

III. Issues of Justice and India Response

As a colony of the first phase of globalization, India has historical experience of injustice done by colonizers and of liberating herself from their political, economic and social oppression. Struggle for justice is always set in a historical context reflecting on the past, evaluating the present situation, and drawing insights and strengths for the present struggle. I cannot, therefore, ignore the past experience of the struggles against colonialism in discussing liberation from the negative consequences of contemporary globalization. Such a comparison could serve as a methodology to understand and work out approaches for liberating ourselves from problems of globalization and to make use of it to enrich human life. Gandhi had raised his voice against the evils of colonialism. His criticism and suggestions of alternative model of development against western capitalism, parliamentary system, cultural imperialism, homogenization and consumerism stand as valid insights to understand modern globalization. His teachings and actions are remembered as Indian heritage. However, Gandhi is not the only Indian response to globalization. A number of Indian economists, sociologists, scientists, religious scholars, Dalit, tribal and women leaders have responded in the past and are still responding to the problems created by globalization.

1. Economic Exploitation

¹⁷ Felix Wilfred, 18.

Economic exploitation of countries goes on since the time of territorial expansion of political power and colonizing the nations. Raw materials were taken from the colonies to the countries of the colonizers and the finished products were brought back to the colonies. The colonies supplied resources of production and functioned as the market. Producing similar goods by Indians in India itself was opposed by the British with a view to protect industries and the economic growth of Britain. Gandhi opposed this kind of exploitation of India and took bold experiments to produce clothes, salt and medicine in India itself defying the laws and punishments of the British government. Robbing the poor and paying the rich was unacceptable to Gandhi. The resistance to such kind of globalization of exploitation fueled the freedom struggle to become more intensive. Liberation from the British rule was achieved but within 55 years of independence, India is under the control of another phase of globalization. India has come under the power of neo-colonialism agreeing to the GATT agreements and opening the country for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and for free market. The estimated FDI to India is \$3.2 billion in 1997 compared to \$158 million in 1991-92.¹⁸ Many MNCs have come in since they see a vast market for their products as the population of India has crossed one billion. The major attractions for foreign investors in India are cheap labour, huge domestic market, lack of safety regulation and pollution control, and ineffective implementation of laws by the state.¹⁹ Their focus is on the consumerism of the rich and middle class Indians. They started controlling the resources of production and accumulating the profit. If they reinvest the profit to develop other Indian industries and create more jobs, then there is a recycling of the profit. But the major portion of the capital flows out of the country for further research and developing more sophisticated technology to reduce the work force and maximize their profit. It seems that US firms alone received \$27 billion in royalties and fees from all over the world in 1995 accounting for 56 per cent of global receipts. This kind of economic exploitation leads to the dominance of MNCs over Indian society. We are losing our freedom and authority and are reduced as objects of an economic system controlled by the MNCs. We can raise our voice and struggle against a nation dominating us but it is difficult to struggle against the economic system manipulated by giant financial corporations and international companies. The owners of these corporations are not nation-states but individuals and corporate shareholders living in different parts of the world. As Alvin Toffler points out, it is difficult to designate the nationality of these global corporations because 'they fly the flag of their customers, not their country'.²⁰ Investors receive their share in the profit of their investments. We need a new form of strategy to liberate us from the hands of the MNCs. Mere rhetoric against them is not enough. Working out concrete economic and political strategies only can liberate India from the injustices of modern globalization.

2. Labour and Unemployment

Both the earlier colonialism and neo-colonialism have done a lot of injustice to the work force. The British used the Indian work force in their steel and mining industries. They used them to develop roads and railways. They placed them on hills in cold climate to

¹⁸ Kavaljit Singh, 'The Question of Foreign Investments' in *Dimensions of Globalisation*, eds. James David and John Desrochers (Bangalore: CSA, 1998), 68 and Kristoffel Lieton, 'Multinationals and Development: Revisiting the Debate' in *Globalization and Development Studies*, 107.

¹⁹ K. Singh, *op. cit.*, 69.

²⁰ Alvin Toffler, *Powershift* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 454.

produce tea, coffee, pepper, fruits and vegetables. They were employed in plantations of rubber and sugarcane. The colonizers found Indians as hard working and could survive in odd situations and be paid low wages. They transferred Indian labourers to their colonies of Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Fiji, Kenya and South Africa as indentured labourers to develop the plantations of tea, coffee, rubber, sugarcane and work in gold and coal mines. Indian labourers were kept in appalling conditions, paid low and separated from their families. Gandhi took up a long struggle against this injustice while he was in South Africa and worked for the rights of Indian labourers.²¹ The neo-colonialism of recent globalization continues to affect the work force in various ways. Regarding the wages, an Indian or Chinese worker costs \$0.25 compared to \$32 for a German and \$24 for a Japanese worker per hour in 1995. If the Unions demand more wages and benefits, MNCs either closed down their industries or ban the recruitment of unionized workers or give voluntary retirement as it happened in the Bombay-Pune-Thane region of Maharashtra accounting to 43 per cent of the job loss in 1990s.²² As the MNCs introduce hi-tech system of production more and more, thousands of people lose their jobs and have to migrate in search of jobs. They are not absorbed by the MNCs to be re-employed in their industries in another country. The trade restrictions of MNCs prohibit transfer of their labourers to another country or provide them job guarantee. Many were forced to take voluntary retirement in industrial, banking sector, insurance corporations and postal service. Moreover, many small industries, banks and shops in local regions could not compete with MNCs and have closed down their businesses sending away their labourers. The redundant workers have no other option except to accept any job for daily wages, borrow money and live in poverty with the burden of debt.

3. Development and Debt Burden

Development, soon after freedom from colonial rule, focused on improving the industries, agriculture, medical and educational facilities and eradicating poverty, pre-mature deaths, illiteracy and enhancing the standard of living. Rural development was given priority. 'Swadeshi' was one of the ideologies of the freedom struggle. The ways and means by which the ideology of swadeshi is to be continued according to Gandhi would have certainly left India behind in economic progress. But that ideology is a challenge to neo-colonialism too. 'Be Indian and Buy Indian' was the slogan during the period of Mrs. Indra Gandhi's rule. India borrowed loans from WB and grants from developed nations to develop the industries and agriculture. Many Five-Year Plans were initiated with the help of these loans and financial grants.²³ Our agricultural sector and industrial sector developed to make India a self-supporting nation. India achieved a lot in scientific and technological developments compared to other nations in Africa and South Asia. Modern globalization has shifted the focus of our development programmes. It has made us to shelf the ideology of 'swadeshi' to become self-reliant and depend on the MNCs. The MNCs are telling us that they will provide all the goods we need including food, vegetables, fruits and seed for cultivation either by importing or producing in India itself with their patent rights and labour force. Globalization is pushing us to the stage that neither the state nor the local

²¹ See M.K. Gandhi, in *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Ahmedabad: NPH, 1995).

²² K. Singh, op. cit., 70-75.

²³ Bipan Chandra, A. Mukherjee and M. Mukherjee, *India After Independence 1947-2000* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2002), 339-350.

community is responsible anymore for production. The state is leaving the production and distribution in the hands of MNCs. The loans of WB and other financial corporations are not available to develop local industries and agriculture but are diverted for development projects such as expansion of road, airport, nuclear plants to produce power, and construction of dams to channel water for the industries of MNCs. The development of these projects assist the development of production and marketing of MNCs. Developmental projects which could make India a self-reliant nation do not get priority in receiving external loans and subsidies. The trend of lending loans in the period of globalization is oppressive and making the Third world to depend continuously on MNCs as their colonies. These corporations are not willing to share the modern technology with the Third World but keep it within a few developed nations. Countries such as Cuba, China and North Korea which resist this kind of policy of development and granting loan are treated differently.²⁴ The debt crisis of Third World countries reached a breaking point between 1980 and 1990 because the rich countries had reduced the prices of goods exported from developing and less developed nations, forced the developing countries to devalue their currencies and increase trade imbalance. They are unable to settle the balance of payment. Kavaljit Singh says, 'In the wake of the balance of payment crisis in 1990, the Indian government was forced to take loans with harsh conditions from the World Bank and IMF. These loans were not just aimed at rescuing India from the balance of payment crisis. Instead, they served the wider agenda of these institutions to implement SAP and promote private foreign capital.'²⁵ India's foreign debt has risen to \$92.2 billion in 1996.²⁶

4. Political Freedom Under Threat

Trade leads the Flag' is the truth with the arrival of East India Company and colonizing of India by the British and ruling for about two hundred years. Any upsurge to question the authority of the colonizers or work for freedom was suppressed. The massacre of hundreds of innocent civilians assembled at the meeting in Jalian Wala Bagh stands still as an evidence for suppression of the British. The political freedom gained after a long struggle and suffering is under the threat of globalization. Gandhi was in favour of freedom, democracy and united India but he was critical of the idea of governance following the British political party system and parliamentary structure. He accepted the idea of nation-state but promoted the ideology of 'trusteeship' through *panchayat* system of sharing of power, making decision, counting corporate accountability and governing the nation of India.²⁷ He wanted the people at the grass root to have more power than the elected few at the top making decision for the entire nation. Any policy which threatens the political freedom and self-governance should be opposed by the people together and not left in the hands of the elected representatives in parliament. Gandhi might have suspected that the elected representatives could be influenced by the external forces or become corrupt for their own selfish gain and turn as oppressors of people. The ruling minority could join hands with external forces in the name of developing India at the expense of freedom and self-reliance. This is what is happening today with our political leaders. They have signed

²⁴ Fidel Castro, *On Imperialist Globalization: Two Speeches* (New Delhi: LeftWord Book, 2000), 34-36.

²⁵ K. Singh, 67.

²⁶ B.N. Banerjee, *Globalisation: Rough and Risky Road* (New Delhi: New Age International P. Ltd., 1998), 86. James David, 'The Backlash against Globalisation', in *Dimensions of Globalization*, 35-38.

²⁷ See M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Ahmedabad: NPH, 1995).

agreements and surrendered the political sovereignty of India to a certain extent to the MNCs who dictate terms and conditions and demand structural adjustments in our political system. To whom should we direct our struggle for justice – against our political leaders or MNCs? Will the political leaders support the struggles of the affected communities or oppress them showing their solidarity with MNCs?

James David narrates several oppositions of people of different countries against globalization including the nation-wide industrial strike by 15 million workers in 1992 protesting the New Economic Policy of Indian government. Political situation was changed in Venezuela due to anti-globalization movement but the change did not last long due to the interference of western countries in support of MNCs.²⁸ The MNCs have destabilized political governments if they oppose their policies and progress. This has happened to many countries which are politically and economically weak as Varghese George quotes the case of Chile, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru.²⁹ Alvin Toffler also points out that if the nation-state cannot bring law and order to protect the MNCs or control violence and terrorism against these corporations and their interests, then these corporations will 'put their own brigades into the field' and he quotes the example of the billionaire Ross Perot hiring ex-Green Berets to penetrate Iran and rescue his employees.³⁰

5. Cultural Imperialism

Territorial expansion of political power, commerce, or religions can easily promote cultural imperialism. The colonialism of the past brought the culture of the West to India. We still experience the hegemony of cultural imperialism of the West. Our habits, architecture, customs and education reveal the impact of western culture. Lord Macaulay said, 'to bring about a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'³¹ is an evidence of looking down upon the culture of India and of domination by the West. There arose a sharp reaction to the spread of western culture from different quarters of Indian society including Gandhi, Tagore and religious leaders. The reaction fueled the growth of religious nationalism and fundamentalism.³² RSS, VHP and Islamic institutions regard western culture and Christianity as one and the same and so oppose Christianity. Using the free market finance capitalism and mass media, the new globalization promotes western culture particularly of American entertainment programmes as well as electronic entertainment goods. Western sports, cartoons, TV serial are telecast throughout the world that youth and children have accepted the values promoted through these programmes and entertainments. In order to reach the mass who cannot understand English, translations of the programmes in various Indian languages are made available. Indian folk stories of monkeys, fox and crow have been sidelined or even forgotten and replaced by Tom and Jerry, Flintstone, Bunny Rabbit, Popeye, etc. A number of Indian games played in villages do not require sophisticated gadgets. They are not

²⁸ James David, 'The Backlash against Globalisation', in *Dimensions of Globalization*, 35-38.

²⁹ Varghese George, 'The Politics of Globalisation' in *Dimensions of Globalisation*, 47-49.

³⁰ Alvin Toffler, *Powershift*, 1991, 455f.

³¹ J.C. Aggarwal, *Modern Indian Education: History, Development and Problems* (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2003), 2.

³² J.C. Ingleby, *Missions, Education and India: Issues in Protestant Missionary Education in the long Nineteenth century* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 18.

commercialized but played as a sport and good exercise. But the global media have promoted the commercialisation of sports, selling costly goods to be used for games. Old colonial games such as football, cricket, tennis and hockey have become the national sport of India. What makes us sad is that we are led to believe that our own culture is inferior to the culture promoted by the MNCs and mass media.

Furthermore, the spread of western culture breeds culture of individualism. Individuals who adapt the culture of globalization promoted by consumerism are alienated gradually from the rest of the members of family and communities. Cultural imperialism leads the people to cultural alienation as it happened to Christians in India with the spread of Christianity and Muslims with the spread of Islam. Cultural imperialism divided the families and communities rather than unites people. It is important to point out here that the spread of the culture of globalization is opposed by the Hindus and Muslims on the one hand since it affects the values and practices of these religions. It also creates identity crisis and thus leads them to be more communal conscious.³³ On the other hand, the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and Hindutva of RSS is another sign of cultural imperialism over the rest of Indians. The resistance and domination of these religious groups should take seriously the context of pluralism and value the way modernization and the influence of western culture and Christianity have contributed in reforming India. Envisaging the confrontations of different religions in India, Gandhi promoted the idea of 'Truth is God', a common ideology of 'satya' for all religions. He took effort to teach and educate people to be aware of the domination of one culture over another culture in India and hold on to good values useful to humanity. Liberating India from cultural imperialism promoted by the powerful communication media and MNCs is not easy but it is possible through teaching values and practicing them.

6. Privatization – Industries, Education and Health Care

During colonialism, industries were owned by the British in their brand names like Lipton, Binny, Fenner, Harvey, Leyland, etc. As the freedom struggle gained momentum, the British were willing to include Indian businesspeople as partners and sold the industries to them after the freedom. British company names were changed to Indian names since indigenization was promoted. Many large scale industries such as railways and locomotives, iron and steel, telephone and mines were made public sector and controlled by the central government. Some industries were made a joint sector with the government holding more than 50 per cent of the share and management and leaving the rest of the shares for the public to own. Many banks and insurance companies were nationalized and managed by the government. It is true that some of the industries and corporations in the PSE made losses due to outdated technology, lack of funds, interference of unions, inefficient management and rampant corruption. These problems should have been addressed and rectified rather than privatizing PSE. On the other hand, some of these industries are doing well even today. For example, the LIC which was nationalised with the initial investment of Rs. 5 crore is doing well. It has returned more than Rs. 1100 crore as tax

³³ K.N. Panikkar, 'The Mechanisms of Cultural Hegemony' in *Dimensions of Globalization*, 111-113. Yogendra Singh, *Culture Change in India: Identity and Globalization* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2002), 69-105.

and share profit to the government. The General Insurance Company nationalized in 1992 paid back Rs. 275.94 crore as taxes and Rs. 26.87 crore as profit to the government. Some of the returns were used for the developmental projects by the government.³⁴ But modern globalization promotes privatization of industries, banking and insurance corporations. Agriculture, Education and Health Care are also included in the list of WTO for privatization in free market countries. If all the sectors of production and services are privatized, then, the country itself can become a private property of the rich business class. Through FDI scheme, the Indian government has allowed foreign financial corporations to invest in industries and banking and take over the industries. More than 59 foreign banks have entered the country. Due to their role, the public sector banks have lost Rs. 5400 crore.³⁵ MNCs are given license to produce telephones (Siemens, Sony, Sanyo), automobiles (Ford, GM, Hyundai, Honda, Toyota) and two wheelers (Suzuki, Yamaha, Honda) and to operate courier mailing services by DHL, Fed-Exp, TNT, UPS and domestic airlines. The present NDA government at the Centre is cutting down its investment in the public sector such as LIC, UTI, Postal Service, Iron and Steel and Coal Mine and planning to sell some of the profitable industries like SAIL, Telecom and mobile phone service to MNCs. The share of the India's best Public Sector Enterprise (PSE), SAIL was sold for a low price and traded at high as Rs. 212 per share after disinvestment. Other PSE such as ONGC, BHEL, Hindustan Latex are already on the list of sale. The disinvestment and privatization policy has already made many employees of the public sector to go on voluntary retirement. The job vacancies are not going to be filled by the government due to lack of funds for public sector. This is obvious again in the field of education and health care services. Some of the state governments are giving license to families to establish schools, colleges, medical and engineering colleges and even Deemed Universities and poly-clinics, cancer and cardiac hospitals. The state is neglecting its responsibility to provide jobs, education and health care services to people in spite of the hike in taxes collected from the public and thus leaving the masses to the mercy of the MNCs. Privatization means paying a high cost for each service needed by the people. Many will go without medical care and higher education in the future. Job losses will lead to debt and poverty. Liberation struggle should be directed against privatization of essential services and demand to protect our industries and banking from being taken over by MNCs.

7. Environmental Degradation

Gandhi opposed large scale industries and mass production mainly because they use a lot of natural resources, dehumanize people as labourers and pollute water and atmosphere. Work becomes a burden and people become slaves to machines and masters. He was in favour of cottage industries and developing agriculture and traditional skills of production. He promoted the economy of 'need-based' rather than 'want-based' production. His concern is to have sustainable development after seeing the effects of colonialism. But the present globalization makes room for MNCs to own land and other resources such as water, forests and power for their production. Furthermore, water, wood and marble stones are the commodities processed and marketed by MNCs. Depletion of natural resources of the Third

³⁴ Varchese George, 51f.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

World and the environmental problems caused by the process of globalization are not the concerns of these giant corporations. Union Carbide incident in Bhopal stands as an example even today. Overseas project of Narmada Valley is another example for displacing thousands of tribals from their habitat. More than 15 MNCs including Uprohn, Monsanto, DuPont and Pioneer have monopoly over 122 genetically engineered products. Basmati rice and Neem products of India are coming under the patent rights of the MNCs. Moreover, MNCs are encouraging the commercial products like shrimp cultivation in Andhra Pradesh in the place of cultivating good quality rice. This has resulted in salinity of the soil, an ecological disaster of the land. Environmental decline has affected the agricultural production and in turn resulted in the migration of villagers to cities and towns in search of jobs. Land alienated from these villagers is marketed by the real-estate business people. NGOs and Environmental Organizations are fighting against the MNCs' power and authority to own and transfer natural resources, develop Genetically Modified Food and patent rights on seeds. That the state is silenced and estranging itself from such struggles for justice and welfare is a sign of being controlled by MNCs through their trade and loan agreements.

8. Discrimination against the Marginalized

Colonialism has left India in poverty. The colonial rule did not try to solve the problem of caste and class in Indian society. Its main focus was in earning revenues and not the peace and harmony of different communities. Gandhi's thirteen point community development programme (CDP) addressed some of these social and economic problems of Indians. CDP helped to a certain extent to liberate the people from illiteracy, the practice of untouchability, oppression of women, and abuse of alcohol and drugs. Some of the good developmental projects helped India to achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture and industrial production to a certain extent. Significant progress in science and technology was also achieved. However, the progress in industrial and technological section widened the gap between the rich and poor and increased the discrimination against the marginalized groups such as dalits, tribals, women and children. The globalization which claims to bring people closer and create unity among races and castes is causing more division and alienation. The upper and middle class support and enjoy the benefits of globalization because they are employed as executives, managers and sales personnel of MNCs. The upper caste people who oppose the hegemony of western culture, supports the MNCs because of the opportunity of well paid jobs in these corporations. Their sons and daughters are qualified in information technology, mass communication and business management and work for MNCs and become promoters of globalization. Dalits and Tribals who depend on agriculture and use traditional skills are unable to compete with upper caste and class. Furthermore, the religions and social culture of Dalits and Tribals are under the threat of homogenization or saffronization effort of Hindutva forces.³⁶ The worst hit group is women and children. The loss of jobs and unemployment of their husbands force the women folk to search for low paid jobs or to suffer in poverty. The SAP of privatization of industries and granting sub-contract of production has made women force cheap and casual labour in unorganized or semi-organized sector. Rural women have to collect water and firewood

³⁶ Gopal Guru, 'Interrogating the Discourse on Globalisation and Culture: A Dalit Perspective,' in *Globalisation, Mass Media and Indian Cultural Values* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003), 154f.

after walking a long distance because some of their habitats and natural resources come under the control of the MNCs or due to ecological disaster caused by MNCs. Debts of the family could force women and girl children to be given as domestic servants or for flesh trade or to work as smugglers of drugs for rich businesspeople. Some feminists have noticed the power of cosmetic products produced marketed by MNCs with effective advertisements and their various attempts to commodify women's bodies through sponsoring beauty contests and competitions. Such attempts lead to homogenization of the culture of women which is pluralistic in India.³⁷ When the cultural domination affect women, men folk react to the influence of western culture changing the lifestyle of their women. Some Muslim families insist that their women wear 'purdah'. The practices of sati, superstitions, giving lower status to women are promoted by some Hindu conservatives as reaction to the effect of globalization. Privatization of education and medical care affect the women more since parents are not willing to send their girls for higher education or to have proper health care due to high cost of these services.

9. Human Rights

All the above listed issues are directly related to the question of human rights. The paradox is that institutions such as WB, IMF and MNCs which promote globalization also speak of the rights of human beings. Their voice is more for the rights of the rich who invest large sums of money in production and are eligible to have a huge profit and to protect their MNCs. They insist on their right to take away the capital to another country or close down or sell their industries if they are not profitable anymore. They enjoy the right to negotiate with other MNCs for merger in production or marketing and become a giant corporation in a nation. Since globalization breeds individualism and alienates individuals influenced by the culture of MNCs and mass media, many speak of the rights of individuals than communities. Felix Wilfred warns against this trend of focusing on the rights of individuals which is relative and can vary from individual to individual. He emphasizes the 'relational' character – i.e., that individuals are related to the community and so the shift should be from the concept of individual to the concept of subject. He writes, 'to base the human rights on such a conception of individual as an autonomous entity would mean insensitivity to history to the social reality to culture and solidarity. On the other hand, the category of subject is a concept that is *relational* in character, and is historically situated.'³⁸ To me, we have to go one step further and emphasize the rights and sovereignty of nation-states in this age of globalization that nations have the right to develop their agriculture and industry and protect their trade against neo-colonialism. While the nation-states are silenced by the MNCs, other institutions such as NGOs and social action groups, PUCL and other voluntary organizations raise their voices for the rights of communities and nation-states and protection of environment. Their effort for human rights should not merely focus on an abstract individualism but should focus more on community solidarity and togetherness to counter the pervasive spirit of individualism promoted by globalization and control of the nation-states by MNCs.

³⁷ Gopal Guru, 153.

³⁸ Felix Wilfred, 82.

IV. Theological Response to Globalization

Before relating the challenges of globalization to theological education, it is necessary to raise our theological response to globalization. The theological response lays down some indications for developing theological training. The theological response should focus on three important aspects of globalization, namely, the essential features, the consequences and institutions promoting globalization. I am highlighting below some of the theological areas to be explored for detailed response. I have already pointed out the free-market finance capitalism and homogenization as the essential characteristics of globalization. The promoters are giant institutions such as MNCs, IMF, WB and WTO. The consequences are the issues of justice as listed above. Globalization is primarily based on money, that is, investment – production – trade- profit – wealth. The entire process of globalization is circled around the cult of mammon. During the process of globalization, some developments take place in countries and people may enjoy the benefits of achievements of science, technology and communication. But the power of money and accumulation of wealth in the hands of the investors widens the gap between the rich and poor. The burden of debt on the nations as well as their citizens is so heavy that people live in a vicious cycle of poverty.

First, the theological response demands us to have proper biblical understanding of poverty, wealth and debt. The Bible speaks of the barter system of early civilization, exchange of goods for silver, and the use of minted coins for commercial purpose, paying taxes to Romans and giving alms to the poor. As civilization developed, trading and transaction systems also changed. Stories of ancestors tell us of owning animals and servants as their wealth and blessing from God. The Bible does not criticize the biological multiplication of sheep, oxen and donkeys or growth of trees and multiplication of fruits as natural phenomenon. However, multiplication of food and animals as surplus commodities for commercial market to gain profit and accumulate landed properties was not the economy of the settlement period narrated in the Old Testament. Commercialization and growth of large estates oppressing the poor resulting in increasing poverty developed during the monarchical period. Prophets criticized such an economic system of production, marketing, taxation and accumulation of wealth in the hands of the rich and demanded justice. The concept of sharing to help the needy people was emphasized by laws in Israel. Jesus made it clear that it is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God and criticized the commercialization of worship by the Jewish religious authorities and the economic and political oppression of the Jews by the Romans. His teachings are critical of money and wealth that he declared that people cannot serve mammon and God as well. He earned the enmity of the rich people, religious and political authorities of his time. The apostles spoke of the evils of money and encouraged the people to share their resources with the needy as a process of recycling their wealth and economy for egalitarianism.³⁹

³⁹ J.B. Jeyaraj, 'Charity and Stewardship: Biblical Foundations,' in *Evangelical Review of Theology* (UK, April 2004), 166-173.

Second, a lot of theological response is already raised to address the problem of debt and its burden.⁴⁰ Borrowing loans and grants from WB, IMF and MNCs either for development of essential services or production and marketing to earn more foreign exchange is a burden on a nation. Usually the developing and less developed countries are unable to match their income to clear the debt. The result is that the balance of payment is not settled properly and the burden of debt continues. The debt of a nation affects the economy and politics and ultimately the people at the grassroots. The Bible speaks of debts and its burden on people although it does not explain the technicalities of the economies of debt. The Mosaic Law warns the Israelites against charging interest for their lending or keeping the pledge and allowing the poor to suffer (Ex. 22:22-27). It encourages sharing of financial resource with the needy without charging interest. The kith and kin were required to redeem the land of their relative and return it to that family which mortgaged the land for money and lost it due to debt burden (Lev. 25:20-28). The principle of Jubilee system to return the land, labour and forgive the debt promoted in the ancient Israelite society stands as a challenge even today. Jesus used a parable to forgive the debt of poor people. He condemned the money lender who received pardon for his default in clearing his huge debt but was unwilling to forgive a poor man who borrowed a small amount from him (Matt. 18:21-35). Jesus appreciated Zacchaeus for his willingness to return the wealth he earned through illegal ways to the poor and called his repentance as his salvation (Lk. 19:9). The teaching of the apostles also insists on forgiving debts. A number of NGOs and action groups are raising their voice against the debt burden created by globalization and pressurizing the well developed nations and financial corporations to write off debts and change their policy of lending on the basis of moral and humanitarian ground.

Third, a thorough study of God's attitude towards other nations in the Bible is necessary if we want to address the problem of globalization either through colonialism or hegemony of ideology or neo-colonialism. The Israelites are elected as a special people of God for a purpose. This does not mean that others are not the people of God. The Israelites who cherished and boasted on their election as the people of God and a holy nation (Ex. 19:5) had to change their views and accept the declaration of God through his prophets that the people of other nations such as Egypt, Assyria, Cushite, Philistine and Aram (Isa. 19:25; Amos 9:7) are also his people on par with the Israelites. They are God's creation just as the Israelites are. All nations are under the sovereignty of God of the Bible. God is concerned about them and stands in solidarity with them in liberating them from oppression and injustices. Territorial expansion of military or political power was criticized by the prophets. To keep a nation under its authority as a colony for strategic reason or political and economic gain was an unacceptable principle in the sight of God. That the powerful nations cannot treat the powerless nations as they like is clear from the message of Amos (1:2-11). That Jeremiah asked the Israelites to seek the welfare of Babylon during their exilic life is another example of having positive attitude towards other nations. The service of Nehemiah and the effort of Mordecai and Esther to save the life of the Persian king and avert the genocide shows how much the Jewish community in Diaspora understood and worked with another nation. Jesus' attitude towards the gentiles when they came to him for

⁴⁰ Refer to the essays in Part II of *Bible Speaks Today*, ed. D.J. Muthunayagom (Bangalore: UTC, 2000), 97-142; J.B. Jeyaraj, 'Jubilee and Society' in *NCCI Review* (December 1999) and ERT, UK, April 2000.

healing was not negative. He appreciated them for having faith in him. The vision of Peter at Joppa (Acts 10) changed his attitude towards gentiles. The inclusion of the gentiles in receiving the Holy Spirit and in the Church along with Jews shows an attitude of acceptance and co-existence in the church (Gal. 3:28). However, the Bible speaks of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome as nations of power and wealth and condemns the exploitative system and oppressive policies of these nations over their colonies.

Fourth, the response should address the problem of homogenization of cultures promoted by globalization. The God of the Bible is the global God. As Creator of the universe, God is the God of the world as well as God of the local people. God is universal as well as particular. The Bible tells us clearly that God is interested in the unity of humanity and not uniformity. God did not create all the human beings alike in colour, thinking or in appearance. But God created all human beings in God's own image. God wanted multi-lingual humanity that God dispersed the people building the Babel tower to consolidate one culture on earth (Gen.11:1-9). God did not drive out the different ethnic communities from the land of Canaan completely but allowed them to continue in the same land that the land of Canaan did not lose its pluralistic context. God allowed the mixing up of people from the Hittites, Moabites, Babylonians and Persians into the community of Israel in marriage. The genealogical list points out that the Israelites were not one pure race but a composition of different tribes and ethnic people. However, God of the Bible opposed the worship of creation and wealth practiced by these ethnic communities and not the people themselves. God loved the diversity of humanity but not the injustices and violation of human rights. Israelites were constantly warned by the prophets against making their culture dominant over others within the land of Israel or outside. I have discussed elsewhere the tension between 'theological nationalism' and 'cultural nationalism' in ancient Israel and the way the danger of cultural imperialism was controlled.⁴¹ They were scattered to live in another culture to understand the love and sovereignty of God over others. Their experience of living in Egypt, under the rule of surrounding nations and exile in Babylon was a turning point in their understanding of other culture and pluralism of the nations. Jesus never asked his disciples to propagate the culture of Jews except the gospel of the kingdom which is not exclusively for Jews. The message of the kingdom of God and the nature of the church, according to Jesus, should be inclusive to accommodate people from all races, languages, economic and social status and different age groups. The hegemony of one culture over other nations was challenged in the Bible.

Fifth, the creation accounts (Gen. 1-2; Ps. 8, 19, 104) address the problem of ruthless use of natural resources and destroying the environment causing ecological disaster. Creation theology emphasizes responsible stewardship of natural resource.⁴² Theological response that emphasizes the theology of creation and protects the environment challenges the injustice done to creation in the name of free market, mass production, profit or development of a nation.

⁴¹ J.B. Jeyaraj, 'Religion and Politics in Ancient Israel: Interactions and Issues' in *TBT Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2003), 35-38.

⁴² J.B. Jeyaraj, 'Church and Environment' in *TBT Journal*, vol. 1 (1999), 77-90.

Sixth, our response should include the problem of the victims and the marginalized. The bondage in Egypt and liberation from the hands of Pharaoh shows how God took the side of the oppressed and the victims of violence. The constant reminder of the Mosaic law to take care of the orphans, widows and poor and do justice to them indicates the preferential option of God for the poor (Ex. 22:22; 23:6-9). The laments in various psalms express the pain and misery of *anawim* (poor and marginalized people). Their prayer asking for justice reveals their faith and trust in God. Prophets have raised their voice for justice of the oppressed. The incarnation of Jesus to be with humanity and working for the suffering people challenge us to take the side of the suffering people. He represents the victims of injustice on the cross and offers forgiveness to the oppressed on behalf of the victims. Jesus demanded proper understanding of the poor and adjustment in the structure of his religion and society to promote the welfare of the marginalized. He wanted the sabbath to help human beings and asked the Pharisees and Sadducees to bring changes in their interpretation and implementation of the law. He wanted the sinners, disabled people, women and children to regain their status. He proved himself as their friend and accepted them.

Seventh, what sort of institutions we need to counter the giant corporations promoting globalization is important. The WTO, IMF, WB and MNCs are so powerful and even control the nation-states that it is difficult to find alternative institutions to counter them. Our response should focus on recovering the nation-state from the clutches of these giant corporations and promote some biblical models to challenge them. The theological response comes from the prophets of ancient Israel. Some of the prophets worked closely with rulers namely, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Josiah and guided them not to succumb to the powers of the rich or domination of external force. They were able to bring some reform in their society.⁴³ The vision of Isaiah is of the powerful, who are like lions and wolves, to voluntarily relinquish their power and wealth and become powerless so that the powerless, like the sheep, need not feel threatened and can co-exist with the powerful (Isa.11: 1-9). If this vision can be developed further and implemented then we realize the prospects of new heaven and new earth. Mobilizing the church to raise such a prophetic voice could awaken the state to be careful about the power of the MNCs. As the prophets emphasized the importance of institutions like Sabbath and Jubilee, we need to emphasize the importance of writing off the debt and of the critical cooperation of churches with social action movements and NGOs working for liberation from the power of these giant corporations. Above all, the powerful MNCs, WTO, WB and IMF should have concern for human beings and relinquish their power voluntarily and drive for profit and wealth to be on the side of the poor and marginalized nations. Can they ignore the ethics of justice and welfare?

One important question connected with cultural imperialism is the spread of Christianity. Is the gospel of Christ imperialistic? The gospel of Christ is not a political system to dominate a nation-state. It is full of kingdom values of love, peace, justice, sharing, welfare and harmony. These values are to be practiced in any given political and economic system.⁴⁴ The

⁴³ J.B. Jeyaraj, *Christian Ministry: Models of Ministry and Training* (Bangalore: TBT, 2002), chapter 6, pp. 239-248.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 149-150, 159-161, 166f, 217-226.

kingdom values may cut across some of the aspects of political and economic system practiced in a nation-state or promoted by globalization. The spreading of the gospel is not to oppress people but to enrich the life of humanity. As such it is not imperialistic. The gospel of Christ is not a commodity to be produced by human beings and marketed for a profit. It was established by his incarnation, life, death and resurrection. It demands suffering on the side of those who accept it. It is expressed in the symbol of the cross. However, when the gospel is associated with the spread of colonialism, it is unavoidable to regard it as cultural imperialism over other nations. In this respect, the gospel itself has become a victim of earlier globalization. It needs to be separated from colonialism and neo-colonialism and liberated from being globalized for cultural imperialism but to be promoted and established as a liberative instrument. God of the Bible is a global God who is interested in diversity. The entire creation and all the resources including human beings belong to God. The global God promotes justice globally for all people through the spreading of the gospel. This leads us to ask: How far can the mission of God be associated with globalization? How far can theological colleges associate themselves with globalization or accept the funds donated by churches, agencies and finance corporations who have invested in the shares and profits of MNCs for evangelism, training and construction of buildings coming through different channels?.

V. Challenges for Theological Education

The institutions involved in theological education should take seriously the consequences of globalization in the North and South and bring changes in the content, form and infrastructure of their training. As Yang-Guen Seok points out, we should not ignore 'the historical context of decolonization struggles as the theological context and resource' when we want to relate our theological education to globalization.⁴⁵ Let me list the following challenges for theological education.

1. Information Technology and Infra-structure Development

The process of globalization is accelerated by the growth of information technology and in turn globalization makes it impossible to live without information technology. Both enrich each other. Education is becoming global with the growth of information technology and mass media. Theological education in the West is highly influenced by globalization. Seminaries and Bible colleges in India are also happy about the outcome of globalization because they can use high-tech equipment and information technology particularly email and web-sites to get a lot of information. Most of the seminaries in India have a small computer centre to help students and staff to download information on theological subjects as well as on other subjects. Seminaries that could afford to buy journals and books coming in the form of CDs have started building up their libraries with these electronic communications. Globalization helps theological education from the point of building up information resources and sending letters and memorandums or declaration on critical issues to various activists through e-mail facilities. Raising solidarity for justice with this

⁴⁵ Yang-Guen Seok, 'Globalization and the implication for Decolonization Theology', in *Journal of Theologies and Cultures in Asia*, Vol. 2 (2003), 212.

kind of facilities is made possible by globalization. But the main disadvantage is that the students have begun to depend on the web-site for ready-made answers rather than reading books and articles and writing their assignments. They use the information without critical analysis. There is not much inter-action with the material downloaded. Theological education could become impersonal if it depends heavily on information technology. Developing the infra-structure of theological education in the period of globalization is needed but should be done carefully and by giving proper training to students and staff.

2. Contextualization and Curriculum

Contextualizing theological education has been discussed for the past three decades. Some achievements are made on this line in Indian theological education by emphasizing indigenization of worship, text book, medium of instruction and leadership. Introducing subjects such as Indian Christian Theologies, Re-reading the Bible from the perspective of subalterns, study of local historical and religious traditions has brought in the dimensions of contextualization into education. However, with the growth and influence of globalization, our theological education should take seriously to introduce a few more subjects such as Economics, History and Basic Biology and Social Analysis into our curriculum. Usually students of all disciplines and degrees are given admission to do B.Th. or B.D. or M.Div. They could come from the discipline of humanities or literature or science or commerce. They may not have enough knowledge in other subjects such as Economics, Biology or History or Commerce except in their own field of study. Studying these subjects from critical perspective in seminaries can enlighten our students to understand some economic theories of production, demand, supply, marketing, financial corporations and taxation. Since globalization is based on finance capitalism, free market and financial investment, students should know economics. Globalization affects political and economic history. It is important, therefore, to know the history of globalization for evaluating and directing our future. Since issues of using the natural resources, environment, applying genetic technology and other biological research are connected with globalization, students should know basic biological science. Contextualization is not only in terms of subjects or programmes, but also in terms of their practical work and exposure. Usually practical work for theological students is organized within the churches or para-church organizations to train them in evangelism, preaching and teaching children in Sunday School. How far the churches are influenced by globalization needs a special study. But the people on the street, villages and forests are affected by globalization. NGOs and Social Action groups know better the villages, towns and regions or a tribe or a community affected by globalization. In order to contextualize the practical work in theological training, a closer co-operation is needed between seminaries and NGOs and Social Action Groups. This dimension is discussed in another essay on Social Action.⁴⁶

3. Global Distance Education

Globalization with its information technology and mass media facilitates distance education in different fields of study. Whether distance education mode can replace the traditional

⁴⁶ J.B. Jeyaraj, 'Social Action: A Mission Challenge' in *Mission in Context*, ed. C.V. Mathew (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), 147-163.

residential education or not is debatable. However, we notice the trend is to go more and more for distance education. Some of the universities and colleges started losing their admission for their residential programmes. Many more are opting for distance education since they need not leave their jobs or location. It can be cheaper than residential programme. Study materials are supplied in the form of books and CDs. The trend is affecting some seminaries in the West that they are losing students and income. Some of them have already started Distance Education Programme and others are contemplating to start their own Distance Education Programme and making it available across the borders. Globalization with its facilities of free flow of capital and free market accepts education also as a commodity for sale that it has enabled seminaries to open up their branches in other countries. It is something like MNCs having their branches in different countries, with these seminaries and universities having their centres in countries in North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and South East. Students of these regions are influenced by mass media that they can earn their theological degrees of seminaries in the West through Distance Education by registering and buying their package. The fees are fixed high and the students of the developing and less developed nations are asked to pay the same amount with meager concession or scholarship. While theological education can be had through Distance Education, we need to raise a number of questions here. Is the content of the course written by faculty members in the West or East suitable for the context of nations in Africa, South Asia or Middle East? What sort of thrust is emphasized in the subjects? How do the institutions know the life of the students in another continent? What is the relationship between the institution and student in Distance Education crossing the borders of the continents? What is the accountability between them? How much of the Distance Education offered through email, CDs and satellite is making the learning impersonal? What is the motive of offering theological education globally? Is it to help others to get qualified or improve their own financial support and survive? Can't the Extension Education established by the national churches be encouraged? It seems that global theological education of distance mode is like a commodity and the seminaries and universities of the North are becoming like MNCs in this age of globalization. This can hinder the development of local theological education and the extension education of national churches in different countries. While possibility for partnership and networking with their partners in other parts of the world could be encouraged, it should be worked out carefully taking into consideration the dimension of indigenization and contextualization of theological education.

4. Internationalizing Theological Concerns

I am bringing another dimension of theological education in the age of globalization without ignoring the contextualization of curriculum and the problems of global distance education. So far theological education is like a one-way traffic. Missionaries from the west came to India and founded seminaries patterned after the education in the west. Contextualization effort over the years had brought some changes. However, we need to explore the possibility of internationalizing theological education in terms of offering subjects on the socio-economic and culture of the Third World to the students in the First World. Why can't they learn Indian Christian Theologies and Asian theologies as we learn the theologies of the west? Internationalizing the faculty position in the seminaries in the North with the faculties from different continents and the South with the faculties from the

West and Middle East can make education global and enriched with perspectives from different cultures. We need to create global knowledge for understanding others as well as global conscience for justice and solidarity to counter the problems of globalization affecting the nations in the North and South. In addition to the concern of justice, protecting the environment and the rights of people particularly the marginalized should become foremost concern of global theological community.

5. Ministerial Formation for Global and Local Challenges

One of the important global challenges today is terrorism and violence by a group of people against economic exploitation, cultural imperialism, political oppression, racial or caste discrimination or military attack. Globalization has contributed to a certain extent to global terrorism. Due to mass media, we are able to see the consequences of terrorism carried out either by hijacking and blowing up airplanes killing all the passengers, taking hostage of innocent people including women and children, random killing of civilians, ethnic cleansing, etc. in different parts of the world. It affects our psychological feelings but it can also have a direct or indirect effect on the economy and political aspects of another nation. Millions of people are uprooted from their land and have become refugees due to war, terrorism and communal conflicts.⁴⁷ They are losing their identity and dignity. Another challenge is the control of knowledge and freedom of expression by religions. Alvin Toffler regards religion as power and one of the global gladiators like MNCs. The power of religions knows no boundary limit today. An Islamic leader like Ayotolla Khomeini can issue a fatwa against Salman Rushdie living in another nation-state. What Khomeini wants to control is the knowledge and freedom of expression as the MNCs want to control the flow of capital, knowledge of technology and production and marketing. Tomorrow, another political or religious leader or thinker of a nation-state can be brought under the judgment of another religious leader ignoring the sovereignty and responsibility of the nation-state in which that individual lives and the importance of international judicial bodies.⁴⁸ Such a fatwa can be carried out by the agents of the leader who proclaimed the fatwa. Another global problem is environmental degradation and depletion of the renewable and non-renewable sources for the sake of consumerism. One of the most crucial issues is the growing inequality among the nations and burden of debt. How can the church deal with this kind of challenge? What sort of theological education is needed to address these problems?

A number of local challenges rise out of globalization. Some of the already existing problems of poverty and inequality caused by colonialism are aggravated by the free market capitalism. Furthermore, loss of jobs, debt burden and alienation of family members, ethnic conflicts, need for counselling and guidance and witness for Christ in the midst of these problems are waiting at our doorsteps. One of the important challenges of globalization is to address the problem of maintaining diversity, identity, traditional skills and unity and peace. Colonialism failed to address the problem of the caste system. How

⁴⁷ J.B. Jeyaraj, 'Uprooted People and Human Rights: Biblical Perspectives' in *Struggle for Human Rights: Towards a New Humanity*, ed. J.M. Razu and A.P. Gray (Nagpur: NCCI, 2000), vol. 1, 208-221.

⁴⁸ Alvin Toffler, *Powershift*, 451.

can we use neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism to address caste system and bring transformation in our society? The power of money and media in this period of globalization is threatening the diversity and identity of the people on the one side and creating division of inequality within a community and between communities in a nation on the other side. Is it possible to channel the benefits of globalization to bring structural changes not only in our economic and political system but also in the social structure?

Concluding Remarks

The above presentation of the definition and essential characteristics of globalization, issues of justice due to the consequences of globalization, responses from various Indians, listing of the areas of theological response and implications to theological education gives a comprehensive idea about globalization. The power of globalization is great. The process of globalization is penetrating every area of life. The promoters of globalization are rich with capital, human power and technology. Critics of globalization speak in favour of or against globalization. But it seems difficult to stop the process of globalization. It will go on in one form or another in human history. Its impact, both positive and negative on environment and in the lives of human beings, will shape the political, economic and social system of the world. So we must ask what type of globalization we need. It is necessary to be aware of the pros and cons of globalization and take effort to control the process and channel it to enrich human life. This is possible only by educating, mobilizing and strengthening the solidarity of communities all over the world to raise criticism against the injustices and demand MNCs, WTO, WB, IMF and nation-states to make proper policies on ethical basis and uphold divine values for promoting life on this earth.