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The Problem and Prospect of a Solution

I consider the reality assessment in the papers dealing with Globalization, Poverty and Cultural Identities reflective of the uneasiness people feel with regard to economic, commercialized globalization largely enhanced by the rapid advance of communication technology. The paper of Dr. Zéphirin Diabré reiterates the vast human and social possibilities of a global community; yet present social facts and figures (with Africa as an extreme case in point) of a trend towards an ever more acute widening of the gap between the rich and the poor in terms of human development indicators among and within countries. Indeed globalization is not trending towards a people-centered development. It is not likely to fulfill the 1995 Copenhagen Summit of Social Development's three-fold concern: poverty-alleviation, employment expansion and social integration. Moreover, a people's indigenous wisdom which satisfies the 'demands of truth goodness and beauty' (Prof. Morandé), a primary factor that could give technology a human face is eroded by the enticements of a monetized, highly commercialized and homogenized culture of economic globalization. The trend will continue unless checked by a socially-effective governance on the national and global levels. However this governance should be made highly conscious of the interconnectedness of the wholeness of life and all life forms. Against this world-view the reality of fragmentation, alienation, divisiveness, discrimination, exclusion and utter insecurity constituting human indignities and destruction of the environment reveals itself in all its death threatening manifestations.

Social contradictions call for governance on national and international levels to face the social issues of 'economic globalization'. The paper of Dr. Diabré suggests a sound macro-economic policy that is to be judged

less by market-based criteria but more and ultimately by criteria related to social justice and social outcomes. I would highlight that one of the social outcomes of an economic policy should be the self-empowerment of monetarily poor people. The ability to draw from the richness of their respective cultural resources (their wisdom) as well as from the knowledge and information available through communication technology for the benefit of themselves and their community is an indication of self-empowerment. From experience, the people's wisdom i.e., their profound life-values derived from one's religious and/or cultural indigenous roots when awakened and harnessed sustains commitment towards a people-centered development and governance. The monetarily poor, when empowered and socially enlightened, can even propel governance on all levels towards a vision of a renewed national economic order and a transformed international economic order. This transformation should be reflected not only in increased incomes but also in a respect for cultural diversity, care of the environment and promotion of solidarity and peace. Hopefully this process combining the quantitative (having) and qualitative (being) dimensions of development will compel globalization's key players to moderate their principles of liberalization, privatization and de-regulation.

The Role of Civil Society

Who will bring about a governance that will lead to a people-centered macro-economic policy? Who will put pressure on the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Transnational Business Corporations to be pro-poor in their programs? How will the creative cultural potentials of monetarily poor people be tapped for a socio-economic system that operates with and for them and for their total well-being?

To advocate for a people-centered governance on national, regional and international levels is the Role of Civil Society. It is composed of all organized groups that mediate between the people and government and/or big business in concerns related to Justice, Peace and Integrity of creation. In a world of globalization, the issues revolving around the poor and their cultural identity are multi-dimensional and highly complex. Since by nature, issues and problems involving people especially the poor are big in number, organized groups responding to these issues multiply. However, if an NGO for instance views a problem in isolation of the many factors that are to be taken account of in resolving it, the said NGO may aggravate the problem

instead of solving it. A big number of NGOs may soon discover that tackling an issue in an isolated way could worsen a social problem. There is a need for Civil Society to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the world of economic globalization as well as to glean profound insights into the concrete realities of the monetarily poor, on their concerns, anxieties, joys and aspirations. Immersion into the lives of the poor is important for effective policy-making on micro and macro levels.

Graduate Education as a Catalyst in Civil Society

Graduate Education should see itself as a vital part of Civil Society. The comprehensive understanding of the complex world of globalization rests on students of society. For it is from universities and colleges where leaders of society have come and will come. They will for the most part provide leaders even for the NGOs. They will be the 'observer of observers' (Prof. Morandé) who will create either a culture of life or a culture of death. To create a culture of life – it is imperative for graduate education to be grounded in the realities of people's lives. Education on the tertiary level has to be formative with a social philosophy as a 'must' for every course of study. I believe that social prescription, research, and sound advice could help in the transformational process towards justice, peace and integrity of creation. But only if the minds and hearts of persons in governance at all levels and in all spheres are attuned primarily to people-centered objectives and secondarily to maximization of profits. There is a lot of wisdom from the experience that UNDP has shared with us through the paper of Dr. Zéphirin Diabré. There is a re-iteration by the Church of the significance of culture in that it is an expression of one's beingness and identity as cited by Prof. Morandé in his paper. And, I wish that these papers could be shared with all universities and colleges as a basis for reflection and for developing a theory of transformational praxis oriented towards justice, peace and integrity of creation. I believe that any leader has to change from within, from the inside out to guarantee sustainability. As mentioned most leaders have come from universities. But we also know that many of our leaders in governance have not made a difference. We all know that many of our political and institutional leaders cannot communicate effectively with the people because they have not learned the people's culture embedded in their languages and art forms. It may be the time to direct our universities to make a difference in that they become first and foremost not only Centers of Science updated in the use of infor-

mation and communication technology but also People-oriented Centers. The challenge is for the universities and colleges to nurture among the students especially the youth a philosophy of commitment to total human development and a heightened consciousness of their interconnectedness with and their responsibility to the whole of dynamic reality. The learning atmosphere, hopefully could build a culture of caring for the wholeness of life and a spirituality of stewardship, compassion and solidarity.