

The Globalization of Solidarity

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Needless to say, the world that we have described in the previous lectures is very far from being the kind of world that God wills. It is the shape that, to use New Testament terminology, *this world* has taken today under the sway of *spiritual forces of evil*. It is the contemporary version of the system that has emerged as a result of our parents' act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden—a system that since then has affected every dimension of human life. As a consequence of that act, all of history is marked by broken relationships:

- The relationship with God is broken in terms of idolatry.
- Human relationships are broken in many ways, especially in terms of oppression and socioeconomic injustice rooted in greed.
- The relationship with God's creation is also broken in countless ways, including the misuse of natural resources and the consequent destruction of the ecosystem.

These broken relationships provide the background for a proper understanding of the grand story of God's redemptive mission narrated in Scripture. According to this story, God's purpose goes far beyond the salvation of individual souls. It has to do with the restoration of all the relationships that have been broken by sin, the

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transformation of all creation and of human life in all its dimensions. God's purpose provides the basis for us to envision a new future—"a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness [justice] dwells" (2 Pt 3:13).

In anticipation of the fulfillment of that eschatological hope, however, God is working in history to establish his kingdom of justice and peace. The Exodus is a paradigmatic act through which God redeems Israel from the yoke of slavery with all that such slavery involves—political oppression, social discrimination, economic exploitation, and judicial corruption—in order to make of it "a light to the nations" (Is 51:4). Liberated from Egypt, Israel was called to exemplify God's purpose for all the nations: *shalom*, well-being in

The least one would expect of people who claim to believe in a God of love, justice, and peace is an effort to articulate, in light of Scripture, a vision of a better world, more coherent with what God intends for humankind.

all dimensions of existence, including a covenant relationship with God, harmonious social relationships, and a wholesome relationship with God's creation.

With the coming of Jesus Christ, Israel's vocation is broadened to include Christ's church as the agent of God's mission in the world. The church of Jesus Christ, constituted by Jews and Gentiles, is "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession" (1 Pt 2:9), in order that it may proclaim the gospel and "make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19) who will be willing to work with God in the fulfillment of his purpose for human life. Now, participation in the mission of God requires, in the first place, awareness of the ways in which *this world* as a system of opposition to the will of God conspires against the fulfillment of his purpose for human life and, in the second place, discernment of the ways in which the cause of love, justice, and peace can be served.

Such awareness and discernment take us into the field of social ethics. Evangelical Christians have neglected the negative ecological, social, and human effects of the globalization