

**Business Ethics,
Corporate Social Responsibility
and Globalisation
for the Common Good**



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Pause for Thought and Reflection

I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country ... corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money of the country will endeavour to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

This is a role our nation has taken. The role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I'm convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin to shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, militarism, and economic exploitation are incapable of being conquered. A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our present policies ... True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily upon the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth with righteous indignation. It will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West invest huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say 'this is not just'. It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of Latin America and say 'this is not just'. Western arrogance of feeling, that it has everything to teach others, and nothing to learn from them, is not just. A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: 'This way of settling differences is not just.' This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into veins of people normally humane, of sending men home from

dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defence than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

MARTIN LUTHER KING

There is at the core of the celebration of markets relentless tautology. If we begin by assuming that nearly everything can be understood as a market and that markets optimize outcomes, then everything leads back to the same marketize! If, in the event, a particular market doesn't optimize, there is only one possible conclusion: it must be insufficiently market-like. This is a no-fail system for guaranteeing that theory trumps evidence. Should some human activity not, in fact, behave like an efficient market, it must logically be the result of some interference that should be removed. It does not occur that the theory mis-specifies human behavior.

ROBERT KUTTNER

In a world ever more interdependent, peace, justice and the safe-keeping of creation cannot but be the fruit of a joint commitment of all in pursuing the common good.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

This focus on money and power may do wonders in the marketplace, but it creates a tremendous crisis in our society. People who have spent all day learning how to sell themselves and to manipulate others are in no position to form lasting friendships or intimate relationships... Many Americans hunger for a different kind of society – one based on principles of caring, ethical and spiritual sensitivity, and communal solidarity. Their need for meaning is just as intense as their need for economic security.

RABBI MICHAEL LERNER

The only possible alternative to being the oppressed or the oppressor is voluntary co-operation for the greatest good of all.

ERRICO MALETESA

All public resources go to the rich. The poor, if they can survive in the labour market, fine. Otherwise, they die. That's economics in a nutshell.

NOAM CHOMSKY

In all recorded history there has not been one economist who has had to worry about where the next meal would come from.

PETER DRUCKER

The purpose of economic theory is to make those who are comfortable *feel* comfortable.

LORD BALOGH

From the point of view of the economy, the sale of weapons is indistinguishable from the sale of food. When a building collapses or a plane crashes, it's rather inconvenient from the point of view of those inside, but it's altogether convenient for the growth of the gross national product, which sometimes ought to be call the 'gross criminal product'.

EDUARDO GALEANO

It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.

UPTON SINCLAIR

This association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social, and political difficulties that perplex the world, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy and education grapple in vain. From it come the clouds that overhang the future of the most progressive and self-reliant nations. It is the riddle that the Sphinx of Fate puts to our civilization, which not to answer is to be destroyed. So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent.

HENRY GEORGE

American consumerism is about buying things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress friends we don't have time for.

LEO HARRIGAN

A reasonable estimate of economic organisation must allow for the fact that, unless industry is to be paralysed by recurrent revolts on the part of outraged human nature, it must satisfy criteria that are not purely economic.

R.H. TAWNEY

I confess that I am not charmed with the ideal of life held out by those who think that the normal state of human beings is that of struggling to get on; that the trampling, crushing, elbowing, and treading on each other's heels, which form the existing type of social life, are the most desirable lot of human beings.

JOHN STUART MILL

Equality, because without it there can be no liberty.

J.J. ROUSSEAU

Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Courage, like compassion, is one of the great ingredients of the success instinct in man. Courage that demands that you stand up for your rights and the rights of others, the kind of glorious courage that built our nation, courage to live with compassion not aggression, courage to live in hope not despair, courage to surmount crises instead of being overwhelmed by them, courage to build self-reliance, courage to accept a mistake instead of rebuking yourself for not being perfect – these are the true aspects of courage!

MAXWELL MALTZ

The anti-globalists are right to remark that the 'feeling' in our economy is not very good. This is because our economy lacks any sort of spiritual inspiration ... People need to look for meaning in life, as well as just doing business.

DR H.J. WITTEVEEN, EX-PRESIDENT OF IMF

I would define globalization as the freedom for my group of companies to invest where it wants when it wants, to produce what it wants, to buy and sell where it wants, and support the fewest restrictions possible coming from labour laws and social conventions.

PERCY BARNEVIK,
PRESIDENT OF THE ABB INDUSTRIAL GROUP

Ethics is the indispensable interface between my desire to be happy and yours.

THE DALAI LAMA

Today perhaps more than in the past, we realise that human beings are linked by a common destiny which we have to construct together if catastrophe for all is to be avoided. From anguish, fear and escapist phenomena like drugs, the idea emerges that the good to which we are all called and the happiness to which we aspire cannot be obtained without effort and commitment, renouncing personal selfishness.

SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS (1987)

For each community, we have granted a law and a Code of Conduct. If God wished, he could have made you One Community, but He wishes rather to test you through that which has been given to you. So vie with each other to excel in goodness and moral virtue.

QUR'AN 5: 48

Every economic decision and institution must be judged in the light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR ALL

To suggest that war can prevent war is a base play on words and a despicable form of warmongering. The objective of any who sincerely believe in peace clearly must be to exhaust every honorable recourse in the effort to save the peace. The world has had ample evidence that war begets only conditions that beget further war.

RALPH BUNCHE

Beware the leader who bangs the drum of war in order to whip the citizenry into a patriotic fervor. For patriotism is indeed a double-edged sword. It both emboldens the blood, just as it narrows the mind. And when the drums of war have reached a fever pitch and the blood boils with hate and the mind has closed, the leader will have no need in seizing the rights of the citizenry. Rather, the citizenry, infused with fear and patriotism, will offer up all of their rights to the leader and gladly so. How do I know? For this is what I have done. And I am Julius Caesar.

JULIUS CAESAR

War is God's way of teaching Americans geography.

AMBROSE BIERCE

The world cannot get out of its current state of crisis with the same thinking that got it there in the first place.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

In this study Kamran Mofid asks in what direction the economy and globalisation ought to move if human needs are to be satisfied and we are all to live together in harmony and happiness. It discusses briefly and simply some of the principal topics dealt with in his book *Globalisation for the Common Good*.*

The booklet is structured to move from thought to action. The early part analyses the spiritually and ethically impoverished world of globalised business which is spinning out of control. The middle part sheds light on the main reasons for such disintegration, and the consequences for mankind and the environment. The final part provides a step-by-step guide to the attainment of business ethics, corporate social responsibility and globalisation for the common good, arguing that the marketplace is not just an economic sphere, 'it is a region of the human spirit'. Although self-interest is an important source of human motivation, driving the decisions we make in the marketplace every day, those decisions nevertheless have a moral, ethical and spiritual content because each decision we make affects not only ourselves but others too.

This study views business ethics, the question of corporate social responsibility, and the problem and challenge of globalisation partly from economic but primarily from ethical, spiritual and theological points of view. How can we order the modern world so that we may all live well and live in peace?

*Shepherd-Walwyn, London, 2002. This book has been translated into Japanese for publication in March 2003 by Don Bosco-sha, Tokyo.

Business Ethics,
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THIS STUDY views business ethics, the question of corporate social responsibility, and the problem and challenge of globalisation partly from economic but primarily from ethical, spiritual and theological points of view. How can we order the modern world so that we may all live well and live in peace? Its main topics are taken from my book *Globalisation for the Common Good*.

To place You in my heart,
may turn You into thought.
I will not do that!

To hold you with my eyes,
may turn You into thorn.
I will not do that!

I will set you on my breath
so You will become
my life.

RUMI

I have learned to seek my happiness by limiting my desires,
rather than in attempting to satisfy them.

JOHN STUART MILL

From the dawn of our creation, our ultimate desire has been to find happiness. This desire is in the nature of things; it is common to all of us, at all times, and in all places. Nature, the material of the universe, is modified by us to create wealth so that this desire may be satisfied.

Today, at the dawn of the Third Millennium, our civilisation

has scored its greatest successes in the material sciences. Our glory is the willing application of these achievements to daily life: they have brought us enormous benefits. However, in our understanding of the forces governing the relations between people in society we have shown little aptitude.

So tragic is this failure that we have turned the masterpieces of the material sciences into engines of destruction which threaten to annihilate the civilisation which produced them.

This is the challenge of our time: we must either find the way of truth in the government of our relations one with another, or succumb to the results of our ignorance.

Many philosophers and theologians throughout history have reminded us that there are two forces at work in society, the material and the spiritual. If either of these two is neglected or ignored they will appear to be at odds with one another: society will inevitably become fragmented, divisions and rifts will manifest themselves with increasing force and frequency.

It is clear that this is exactly what has happened today. We have a situation of disequilibrium and disharmony. Only the re-awakening of the human spirit, of love and compassion, will save us from our own worst extremes. Physical wealth must go hand in hand with spiritual, moral and ethical wealth.

Today, despite a five-fold increase in economic growth and a twelve-fold increase in global trade since the Second World War, a massive economic inequality exists, an 'economic apartheid', both within and between nations. The globalised world economy faces a catastrophic series of socio-economic, political, cultural, spiritual and environmental crises, as well as a crisis of security, and they are all threatening the fabric of society, and life itself.

What are the main global problems faced by the modern world? Abject poverty, starvation, Aids, inequality, greed, injustice, marginalisation, exclusion, crime, corruption, sleaze, spin, anxiety, fear, depression, loneliness, mistrust, drug and alcohol abuse, intolerance, xenophobia and environmental degradation and destruction. Much is also amiss with Western capitalism. Recent scandals involving multinational corporations such as Enron, WorldCom, Xerox, Tyco, Dynergy, Arthur Andersen, Global Crossing, Adelphia, ImClone and AOL, to name but a few from a long list, have sunk the world of big business to a new level of disgraceful recklessness and irresponsibility.

Of course the fall from grace of top businesses, through fraud

and false accounting, is not only an American disease. It occurs in all parts of the world. According to Detective Superintendent Ken Farrow, head of the City of London Fraud Squad, corporate fraud in the UK is becoming a real concern. He conservatively estimates it at £14 billion a year. However, as many British firms are reluctant to report fraud, especially when perpetrated by insiders, it is difficult to quantify the problem. Recent research by the Risk Advisory Group suggests that the first instinct of British companies is to cover up internal scams to avoid bad publicity. They found that senior executives were involved in nearly three-quarters of frauds worth in excess of £1 million. The secrecy surrounding British corporate irresponsibility makes it difficult to accept the view that what happened in the US could never happen in Britain.

Many books have already been written on why such scandals took place, on what went wrong. They all agree on the role of one vital element: dishonesty fuelled by greed. We forget at our own peril that honesty and greed are essentially spiritual and moral issues. They lie within the province of religious faith, which seeks to apply God's wisdom to the formation of moral and spiritual values. However, no part of human life can operate without these values, not least the sphere of business. Genuine faith, far from being a private affair, relates to the whole of life, from the chief executive to the bottom line. More of this later.

The greed-motivated neo-liberal world is spinning out of control. Perhaps it is time for us to redefine our values. From a religious perspective the two main problems with market capitalism are greed and delusion. In modern economic theory, and the kind of market it promotes, the moral concept of greed has inevitably been lost; 'today it seems left to religion to preserve what is problematic about a human trait that is unsavoury at best and unambiguously evil at its worst'. Religious traditions have tended to accept greed as part of the human condition, but they have seen a great need to control it.

This will come as no surprise to those with a traditional orientation to the world. By far the best critiques of greed are provided by the established religions, by Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as by others such as Sikhism, Sufism, Ismailism, Zoroastrianism and Baha'ism. All offer a wealth of teachings on how we should ethically and

morally lead our lives, on how we can achieve happiness without greed or delusion.

The benefits of neo-liberal globalisation are limited and are based on individualism, greed, self-interest and economism (which regards human societies primarily as economic systems in which financial considerations alone govern choices and decisions). Other fundamental values such as faith, spirituality, justice, love, compassion, sympathy, empathy and co-operation are neglected.

Individualism, valued by neo-liberals as a force for good in global capitalism, in fact has a major destructive impact on well-being. A lack of appropriate sources of social identity and attachment results in a tendency to promote unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of individual freedom and autonomy. Much unhappiness is often associated with people who have suddenly become super-rich, whether by winning the lottery, inheriting a fortune, or by fraud.

Neo-liberal capitalism is also anti-democratic; it is extremely harmful to the noble principles of democracy. Democracy believes in equality: it gives one vote to each person regardless of status, colour or creed. It does not matter what that person is, intelligent and educated or illiterate, well-informed, or not. Neo-liberalism aims to reward only the most talented and successful, thus clashing with the most fundamental principle of democracy.

By promoting individualism and self-centredness, neo-liberalism also runs contrary to the principles of community and society. What matters is individual preference. The suggestion is that those who squander their riches on conspicuous consumerism are just as worthy as those who use their wealth to help the needy.

The following is a revealing expansion of the above:

In 1923, a very important meeting was held at Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending this meeting were nine of the world's most 'successful' financiers and businessmen. Those present were: the President of the largest independent steel company; the President of the largest utility company; the President of the largest gas company; the greatest wheat speculator; the President of the New York Stock Exchange; a member of the President's cabinet; the greatest 'bear' in Wall Street; the head of the world's greatest monopoly; and the President of the Bank of International Settlement. This, we must admit, was a gathering of some of the world's

most successful men – or at least men who had found the secret of making money. Twenty-five years later (1948) let us see what had happened to these men: the President of the largest independent steel company had died, bankrupt, having lived on borrowed money for five years before his death; the President of the largest utility company had died a fugitive from justice, penniless in a foreign land; the President of the largest gas company was insane; the greatest wheat speculator had died abroad – insolvent; the President of the New York Stock Exchange had recently been released from Sing Sing penitentiary; the member of the President’s cabinet had been pardoned from prison so that he could die at home; the greatest ‘bear’ in Wall Street had died – a suicide; the head of the world’s greatest monopoly had died – a suicide; the President of the Bank of International Settlement had died – a suicide.

All these men learned well the art of making money but none of them learned how to live, commented the original compiler of this list. It seems that the business world (who should know better, given what was described above) has changed not one iota. For them economic growth, the corporate bottom line and the pursuit of self-interest are what matters most. More recent observations also show that the self-interested pursuit of wealth brings only misery. Since 1950 there has been much economic growth and wealth creation in the West, but also a tenfold increase in the incidence of depression and a massive rise in the number of people suffering from sub-clinical neuroses, anxiety and profound self-dissatisfaction.

In contrast, in many of the most poverty-stricken parts of the world, the streets, the fields, the mud houses crackle with laughter. Despite the severe poverty, people engage more freely, smile more often and express more affection than we do in our luxurious homes, surrounded by technology and remote controls. They have never heard of Prozac or Seroxat; they do not spend billions on slimming products and cosmetic surgery in an attempt to become someone else.

This is not to suggest that poverty causes happiness, just to say that, in contrast to us in the ‘developed’ world, these people who are poor in things are rich in spirituality and love of their neighbours. Let us pray that neo-liberalism never reaches them. Nevertheless, they should be helped out of the vicious cycle of poverty. They desperately need better healthcare and sanitation, better housing and better education – provided that it respects

their culture, traditions and way of life, and that the development is sustainable, supporting the environment and fragile ecosystem.

By now we should realise that true happiness, whose path is through love, is based on recognising our interconnectedness with others. All beings are like ourselves in wanting and needing happiness, safety and fulfilment, in not wanting suffering and misery. All true happiness and virtue in this world comes from selflessness and generosity, all sorrow from egoism, selfishness and greed.

The neo-liberal ideology has created a globalised world in which we have all been dehumanised, turned into producers and consumers devoid of true spiritual values. We have developed a junk culture based on self-obsession and the cult of celebrity, on shopping 'til you drop, watching 24-hour junk television and eating junk food, all of which promote feelings of hopelessness and helplessness as we see no alternative to this superficial existence. In particular there has been a marked decline in traditional religious values. The rise in materialism has brought a pervasive philosophical incoherence and a scramble to pursue happiness under false assumptions. We have produced a generation of nihilists, forever substituting sensory and emotional pleasure for authentic human purpose. The absence of spirituality and love in our globalised culture is profoundly harmful; it has frozen our imaginations.

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TO REVERSE THE CRISIS we have to awaken the desire to ask deeper questions about life and its purpose. Modern globalised culture desperately needs a conscience; it needs morality, ethics and spirituality. It needs faith. Then we can make economics, politics, business and the trend towards globalisation more relevant and acceptable.

Many social scientists, as Professor Zinbarg for example has noted, have addressed ethics, morality and justice but addressed them philosophically. They have neglected the most important source of human understanding of what is right and wrong: religion. Philosophy can shed the light of reason on ethical dilemmas but it is less convincing about *why we ought to behave well*. It lacks the compelling urgency of religious faith.

Statements like 'I'm spiritual but not religious', 'I'm inter-faith

but not political’, ‘I’m socially engaged but not into consciousness’, or ‘I’m an environmentalist but not into economics’, reveal blinkered points of view. My argument is that it is only by bringing together the common beliefs within our religious traditions and applying them to our economic systems that we can create an all-inclusive world for the good of all. As Hans Kung stresses, ethics should be firmly rooted in religion, otherwise there is no binding force. Only religions can speak with one voice on ethical issues, covering all aspects of respect for life.

Why should we try to combine religion and economics? Because they have a common end: that all may live happily; it is just that they employ different methods in order to achieve this end. One uses the production and exchange of goods and services, the other selfless service, love and compassion. Religions could – if they will speak with their original source of inspiration – greatly contribute towards restoring the balance between the material and the spiritual elements and thus show the way to live fully human lives in a peaceful, just and sustainable society.

The ethical and spiritual teachings of all religions and their striving for the common good can provide us with a clear and focused model of moral behaviour in what we term ‘the marketplace’. An overall ethical orientation to the challenges of daily economic activity can be related to each of our faith traditions. In the Jewish tradition we see the effort to balance pragmatic considerations of economic efficiency with ideals of interpersonal equity and social justice. The key themes of Christian and Islamic thought are respectively a concern for human dignity and a concern for communal solidarity. These three themes are not separate: they overlap and interlock; and they are shared by all three traditions. Together they form an inspiring mosaic of Western religious ethics.

The traditions of the East have somewhat different themes from those of the Abrahamic religions; nonetheless, there is much that is similar. The importance of humility and patience characterises the Hindu view of economic life. In Buddhism, the theme that resonates most strongly is compassion; in Confucian thought it is reciprocity. These, also, are not separate themes, but overlapping and interlocked. The mosaic they form is not sharply distinct from that of the Western traditions. Related to the marketplace, it would inspire businessmen to exhibit mutual compassion, while individual achievement would not be at the

expense of communal solidarity. Steady economic and moral improvement would be pursued with humility and patience. These must become the guiding principles, the vision behind the teachings of a new economics: the marketplace is not just an economic sphere, 'it is a region of the human spirit'.

Self-interest undoubtedly drives most decisions made every day in the marketplace, but those decisions also have a moral content because each decision affects not only us but other human beings as well, and often also the animal and natural world. To the extent that our economic decisions impact on others, we have a moral responsibility to assess our self-interest in the context of a broader sense of right and wrong.

There must be a serious attempt to connect economics and theology. In modern neo-liberal economics no such connection is made. Religion is tolerated only if it narrows its focus to individual salvation; the wider social concerns which preoccupied Moses, Jesus, Mohammed and other prophets are not considered to be within its realm. For neo-liberal economists anything that interferes with their god, the marketplace, is blasphemous. They have forgotten that their mentor Adam Smith, father of modern economics, was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University. Before he wrote *The Wealth of Nations* he was already famous for *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. They also forget his wise words, 'No society can surely be flourishing and happy of which the greater part are poor and miserable.'

They should also remember that when Tocqueville, in the second volume of *Democracy in America*, coined the term 'individualism', he stated that for him individualism includes the love of family and friends. This is in total contrast to the neo-liberal idea of individualism, which has led to the destruction of many family ties and friendships in the interests of self-advancement. This lack of love, empathy and friendship is seen in the growth of a culture of *not* sharing, giving and caring in the last few decades. At the end of the great economic boom of the 1990s, Americans donated far less per head to charities than they had in 1940, for example, at the end of the great depression.

Economic life was formerly regarded as a branch of the moral life of the whole community; today it is a moral-free zone. In shaking ourselves free from many forms of tyranny, we have achieved just one kind of emancipation, and in the process we have delivered ourselves into the hands of a philosophy which

has destroyed the basis for any common social purpose. Economic activity needs moral regulation. The main problems in the world today are not economic or technological; what is really wrong with modern society is that it is morally sick.

R.H. Tawney has described 'acquisitive' societies: the whole preoccupation of our modern way of life is the acquisition of wealth. Rights are divorced from duties; the unrestricted pursuit of self-interest is the ruling ethos. A society of this kind, which has taken off the moral brakes, consists of individuals who see no ends other than their own, no laws other than their own desires and no limits beyond those they set themselves. It sets the individual at the centre of the universe and dissolves moral principles into choices of expediency. We can appreciate the significance of this attitude when we look at the morally impoverished behaviour of many chief executives in big companies around the world.

In our materialistic environment there is much emphasis on wealth creation, but no room for the creator, and no proper relationship between creator and creation. We should not forget that our most important economic resources owe nothing to human labour and ordering, nothing to economic factors in general. The land, the air, the sea, the sun, and vital natural resources such as oil, gas and coal, are all God's gifts: they should be for the benefit of *all* God's creation.

Aggression, selfishness and greed, disrespect for the common good, have made a mockery of that. Modern economic theory, which lacks any true religious foundation, has created its own god, the god of Mammon. It has degraded God's creation in the name of economic progress. What a bitter harvest this has become!

If we could align the most powerful force in capitalism, namely wealth-creation, with ethical objectives by bringing economics and theology together, then the world would be a better, safer place, and globalisation could become a force for good. If only we could link theology and economics we could make the study of these subjects far more effective than if they continue to be analysed in isolation. We should not reject the imperatives of economics, politics and trade *per se* but should apply them to the common good: everybody must become a stakeholder; everybody must benefit.

As a lecturer in economics and business studies with a wide

range of teaching experience in different parts of the world, I am very familiar with the spiritually impoverished curriculums of business schools, and economics departments in universities. If our students are taught only the neo-liberal ideology, divorced from spirituality, from respect for a power greater than themselves, then we cannot blame them if they go on to mismanage the Enrons of this world. If we want a more ethical world the education of our future leaders must include the bigger picture.

Although I defend certain positive benefits of a well-regulated market economy, I maintain that there can be no civilised marketplace without morality and spirituality. The solution to our socio-economic global crises is not technical. It needs to be looked at again in a fresh way. True human values such as justice, love, sympathy and co-operation must be taken into account. We must get beyond greed and selfish individualism.

This is not a new way of thinking. Well before the rise of prestigious business schools with their ‘must have’ MBAs, the tradition was for successful business people to play a vital role in the life of their communities. Has the post-war rise of secularism outlawed philanthropy?

In the past the charitable works of successful businesses like Sainsbury, Cadbury, Marks and Spencer and John Lewis (to name a few British examples), showed how conducting business in a religious context could power lasting social change. Businessmen who had lived in the shadow of the previous century’s upheavals realised that only peace and social cohesion within a shared culture could provide the harmonious stability in which both the businesses and the workers and their families could flourish. They understood that they were part of the community and environment in which they lived and worked, benefiting from both and responsible to both. Without the benefit of MBAs, they understood about the common good.

They all shared an impulse to give back to society part of their wealth. Some sought to improve their employees’ working lives; some, like the Sainsburys, were patrons of the arts and sciences. Philanthropy among self-made billionaires has been common enough, from Andrew Carnegie to Bill Gates, but curiously it rarely takes the form of benefiting the company’s own workers. There aren’t many Bournevilles in industrial history, even fewer John Lewis partnerships. Since 1824, when John Cadbury first opened his tea and coffee house in Birmingham’s Bull Street, four

generations have poured a consistent stream of talent and commitment into the business and into the community and the lives of the workers. It was the second generation John Lewis who gave his entire inheritance to his employees, to ensure the continuity of the vision of fair shares and happiness at work for all. What a contrast to our neo-liberal progeny, the Enrons and the WorldComs.

The application of religious values to social development, to produce a just economic system, characterised the achievements of John Wesley in 18th-Century England and Johann Heinrich Wichern in Germany in the 19th Century. English social conditions in those days were much like those in developing countries today. There was slavery; there was widespread abject poverty among the working classes, who suffered from exploitation, political exclusion, lack of health care or education, and the indifference of the upper classes to social inequality. In the terms of Marxist philosophy it was a pre-revolutionary situation. However, the revolution that came was primarily a spiritual one, a fact which is hard to recognise today. Wesley and his community, deeply affected by the Christian message, initiated a spiritual movement which from the beginning had social implications. Small cells were formed whose main purpose was education. Gradually these became self-help organisations; the British Labour Movement in part had its origins in these groups. Workers became self-conscious and the promotion of primary schools and people's libraries helped to raise community awareness. On a political level the Methodist movement encouraged the enactment of new factory legislation limiting working hours and protecting children from abuse as cheap labour. The most spectacular political outcome was the abolition of slavery. Wesley, in his anti-slave trade pamphlet, denounced the 'meanest of all villainies' and strongly influenced Wilberforce, who did most to push through the bill declaring the slave trade illegal.

Adam Smith also condemned slavery for ethical as well as economic reasons but it took more than reason to reform economic institutions with short-sighted views of how profits were generated. The driving force behind reform was religion – that overcame the cynicism and short-sightedness of the upper classes as well as the inertia of the lower.

In Germany the Protestant theologian Johann Heinrich Wichern was deeply committed to ecclesiastical as well as social

reform. He was convinced that a deepening Christian faith was the precondition for social improvement. He engaged himself in both evangelising and in founding institutions to protect young people from social exclusion. He set up the Inner Mission, which became one of the largest non-governmental welfare institutions in Germany and encouraged the enactment of social security legislation. These laws, commonly known as Bismarck's Social Insurance Legislation, can only be understood if we bear in mind the commitment of politicians and civil servants whose social conscience was inspired by their Christian faith. A social development which was one of the most progressive of its day had its roots in the work of Christian activists.

It must be heartbreaking for old-school academics with a vision of how to create a better world through ethical and spiritually based education to witness the triumph of neo-liberal ideologies in their academic institutions. This will harm every aspect of our lives because it undermines the education of our future leaders.

Nowhere can this be better seen than in that mother of prestigious universities, Harvard, where many of the now disgraced chief executives of American companies received their MBAs. Harvard University has been accused of honouring Enron executives and benefiting from their association. It is suggested that the university, through the assistance of an Enron employee, netted \$50 million. More serious from the point of view of students and their families, who pay huge sums in fees, is the allegation that Enron shaped Harvard's research and teaching agenda, contributing millions of dollars to university centres advocating the deregulation of the energy industry and thus endorsing Enron's own case.

According to Ralph Nader, champion of the rights of the consumer,

companies like Enron have learned that small investments in endowing chairs, sponsoring research programmes or hiring moonlighting professors can return big payoffs in generating books, reports, articles, testimony and other materials to push for and rationalise public policy positions that damage the public interest but benefit corporate bottom lines ... it is time to establish boundaries that establish precise limits on the university's corporate entanglements. There is need for a clear and comprehensive policy on the limits of commercialism on Harvard University and for pro-active efforts at the university to spur research – guided by public-spirited rather than mercantile values.

Harvard is not the only university taken over by a corporate agenda; there are '*unethical*' chairs in every country of the world. Cambridge University in England received \$4 million from the disgraced Tyco Chief Executive Dennis Kozlowski to fund its Chair of Boardroom Ethics! We need an international effort to rid our places of education of such questionable sponsorship.

This is not to say that universities should seek no support from business, but such support should not come from businesses which seek only their own promotion. There should be no more Enron or WorldCom Chairs of Business Ethics, no more Arthur Andersen Professors of Accounting. Support should be given with no strings attached, and for the purpose of promoting ethical objectives in harmony with the common good.

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IT IS MY BELIEF that the only way to reverse our crises of inhumanity, injustice and environmental degradation is to acknowledge God, the Ultimate Reality, and to love Him.

Why should we love God? Many different religious traditions teach that one's knowledge of God as the most beautiful and perfect being and source of all good things, and one's love for God, who is love and mercy, become so strong and so encompassing that they will occupy all one's heart. At the same time, the knowledge of one's own weakness and deficiencies grows so intense that finally one feels emptiness and nothingness, losing one's egocentricity and becoming selfless, identifiable only with every type of goodness. From nothing, one becomes 'everything'.

In many religions love plays an essential role. To draw a religious picture of the world which includes the story of creation and God's treatment of humanity, one needs to invoke the notion of love. God is love and has created the world out of love; He treats human beings with love. Faith also starts with love, with an overwhelming love for certain truths, and it flourishes by being nourished by God's love until one's own love for God fills all one's heart and directs all aspects of one's life. Love of God can increase only when selfishness is reduced; if one could ultimately get rid of selfishness one would be a perfect person whose will and pleasure is the will and pleasure of God.

The similar way in which the different religions have addressed love and the oneness of creation can be seen in the following six quotations:

1. *Close to God*: ‘One may never have heard the sacred word ‘Christ,’ but be closer to God than a priest or nun.
2. *The Christ’s Breath*: ‘I am a hole in a flute that the Christ’s breath moves through; listen to this music.’
3. *In My Soul*: ‘In my soul there is a temple, a shrine, a mosque, a church where I kneel. In my soul there is a temple, a shrine, a mosque, a church that dissolve, that dissolve in God.’
4. *He Asked for Charity*: ‘God came to my house and asked for charity. And I fell on my knees and cried, “Beloved, what may I give?” “Just love,” He said, “Just love.”’
5. *And Help Him Comfort*: ‘God has a special interest in women for they can lift this world to their breast and help Him comfort.’
6. *With Passion*: ‘With passion pray. With passion make love. With passion eat and drink and dance and play. Why look like a dead fish in this ocean of God?’

The first quotation is from Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), widely regarded as the greatest Catholic theologian. His experience led him to believe that revelations of God’s infinite, eternal, expanding being were seen in the whole of creation.

One would assume the second quotation to be Christian as it is suffused with the love of Christ, but a Muslim, Shams-ud-din Muhammad Hafiz (c.1320-1389), wrote it. Hafiz is the most beloved poet of Persia, considered one of history’s greatest lyrical geniuses. Goethe wrote that ‘Hafiz has no peer’.

The third piece is by Rabia of Basra (c.717-801), the most popular and influential female Muslim saint in the Sufi tradition. Born nearly 500 years before Maulana Jalaludin Rumi, she more than any other poet is said to have influenced his writing.

Saint Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), perhaps the most beloved saint of the Western world, wrote the fourth piece. The son of a wealthy merchant, he gave up his comfortable life to pursue his spiritual quest after a vision in an old country chapel when the painted figure of Jesus on the cross said to him, ‘Francis, go and repair my house, which, as you see, is falling completely to ruin.’ There are accounts that St Francis while in the Middle East was in contact with Rumi’s master, Shams. Rumi and St Francis, the

two great names in Abrahamic mysticism, are thus given a point of contact which reflects their spiritual unity.

The fifth quotation is from Mirabai (c.1498-1550), the most renowned poet-saint of India. Although Mirabai was born a Hindu princess in Rajasthan, her songs are also popular with Muslims and Sikhs.

The final quotation is from Rumi (1207-1273), one of the greatest poets in history. Born in Balkh, in modern Afghanistan, at the time part of the Persian Empire, Rumi transcends time and space to touch our hearts in the 21st century.

These pieces powerfully remind us of what is common in the great faiths. The different voices all reflect a universal compassion and eternal wisdom. The glowing beauty of their message is universal and eternal and it is more relevant than ever in our age of rampant materialism, seductive consumerism and widespread violence.

Love of God and freedom from selfishness must at first be secured by sacrifice, by relinquishing one's desires for the sake of God and His people. One will then have no desire other than what He desires, and no will other than His will. Once this has been achieved there will be no sacrifice and no pain. Ethical rules are guidelines to this path of love, enlightened and oriented by the teachings of sages and prophets.

It is only by seeing other people and things as God's creation, created in His own image, that we will stop abusing and exploiting them for our own ends. 'Surely, when the Great Creator looks down on the Earth, He sees all of His children playing together from the Red, White, Black and Yellow races. He does not see the superficial differences. He sees the beauty of each one of His children.' This is the 'right road' in life, interpreted as the Spiritual Path, where all the gifts of the Great Creator, all connected and all sacred, must be nurtured, restored and held in trust for generations to come.

Our secular society has alienated itself from its spiritual roots. For many 'transcendence' has no meaning, the autonomy of man is considered the ultimate standard in life. This unbalanced exultation of the sense of self – this 'only I' mentality – undermines the development of a truly human existence. As human beings we are inextricably linked to the Ultimate Reality. The great philosopher Hans Jonas considered the denial of transcendence the greatest error in human history. Vaclav Havel came to the

same conclusion during his years in prison before becoming President of Czechoslovakia.

I am persuaded that [the present global crisis] ... is directly related to the spiritual condition of modern civilisation. This condition is characterised by loss: the loss of metaphysical certainties, of an experience of the transcendental, of any super-personal moral authority, and of any kind of higher horizon. It is strange but ultimately quite logical: as soon as man began considering himself the source of the highest meaning in the world and the measure of everything, the world began to lose its human dimension and man began to lose control of it.

When respect for the sublime evaporates, and quantifying and measuring become the benchmarks, we are left with a flattened world in which banality thrives. Romano Guardini, a well-known thinker and theologian, warns of the grave consequences of an indifference to transcendence. If we ignore Ultimate Reality we will lose our centre and sense of orientation. With the loss of the name of the living God, man loses his own name and consequently his purpose in life. If we accept that our identity is rooted in God we do not need to prove ourselves by amassing wealth or seeking power. This truth will set us free from the craving for more and more, so typical of the secular Western world.

All religions believe that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, that without the knowledge of God there can be no true education. Our modern secular civilisation has decided otherwise. It is impossible to exaggerate the dangers that must inevitably arise when social life is separated from the spiritual impulse. We have only to look at the history of the ancient world to see how destructive the consequences are. The Roman Empire, and the Hellenistic civilisation of which it was the vehicle, became separated from religion, which all the efforts of Augustus and his followers were powerless to restore. In spite of its material success and culture, this civilisation became hateful in the eyes of its people; all that was most vital in the moral life of the time became separated from the spiritual life of society.

This spiritual alienation of its own greatest minds, as Peter Milward SJ has so eloquently observed, is the price every civilisation has to pay for losing its religious foundations and settling for material success. We are only just beginning to understand how intimately and profoundly the vitality of a society is bound up with its religion. The religious impulse unifies a society and

culture. The great civilisations of the world do not produce the great religions as a kind of cultural by-product; in a very real sense, the great religions are the foundations on which the great civilisations rest. A society which has lost its religion and its spirituality becomes a society which has lost its culture, and sooner or later it will fail to exist, as did many civilisations before it.

If we look at so much human misery, physical, emotional and spiritual, and at the destruction of God's gifts, surely we must admit that we are guilty of being very wasteful custodians of what we have been given? Maybe we will yet have the wisdom to see our wrongs, and choose the route away from destruction so that we can create a world with a nobler future. However, no amount of neo-liberal economics can correct the injustice which is at the heart of the problem.

This is the challenge we face in the new millennium. Successful and ethical businesses should be congratulated for their good work, and encouraged to play a fuller role in ensuring the good of the community, of the people who have helped to create their wealth, and to show a total respect for the environment, for God's gifts. This mirrors God's vision of his kingdom, which offers not wealth for the fittest but a level playing field for all.

As parts of God's creation we are all equal; nobody has a monopoly of wisdom and civilisation, no matter how powerful. The greatest threat to humanity is annihilation. Today we spend more than ever before on weapons, on creating tools for our own destruction. We have the power to eradicate all life many times over. This doomsday potential now combines with strategies which increase the likelihood of actually using the tools of destruction. The doctrine of the pre-emptive strike (mainly for self-interested motives), an over-emphasis on military power for solving conflicts, and simplistic notions about good and evil nations, are bound to lead to collective disaster and destruction. Might is never right. Only when we realise this can we achieve a fully inclusive globalisation for the common good, embracing all of us, creating a harmonious world.

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IT IS MY INTENTION to conclude this paper on a positive note, with the hope that, if we want to, we can collectively change the world for the better. In what follows I will discuss the necessary steps towards this goal.

1 CHANGING OURSELVES FOR THE BETTER

If we truly want to change the world for the better, all of us, the business community, politicians, workers, men and women, young and old, must truly become better ourselves. We must share a common understanding of the potential for each one of us to become self-directed, empowered and active in defining this time in the world as an opportunity for positive change and healing. We can achieve a culture of peace by giving thanks, spreading joy, sharing love and understanding, seeing miracles, discovering goodness, embracing kindness and forgiveness, practicing patience, teaching tolerance, encouraging laughter, celebrating and respecting the diversity of cultures and religions and peacefully resolving conflicts. We must each of us become an instrument of peace.

This is the first and most important step. Unless we are able to change ourselves for the better in order to serve peace, nothing else is possible. Once this has been achieved, other important steps should be taken.

2 PROMOTING ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The key that will unlock the door to world peace is economic justice, therefore my second step is a plea for ethical economics. Recent international events have highlighted the desperate need for this, but justice is needed at all levels, regional and national as well as international.

Justice, as Leon Maclaren has observed, is deemed a hallmark of modern civilised societies, yet at the present time injustice and its effects can be seen the world over. In a lecture he drew attention to the fact that justice presents itself in more than one form. Political or civil justice is of great importance, but it is not complete in itself. Economic justice is also necessary in a truly civilised society. It is the failure to observe justice in economic affairs that accounts for much of the poverty and many of the problems of modern economic life. Many governments the world over continue to preside over injustice, for example allocating resources to unjust economic activities such as importing arms, while economic theories conceal the real causes of economic injustice. There is an ethical price to pay for freedom in the marketplace. The economy is most efficient when competition is open and unrestricted. But economic *efficiency* is often out of sync with economic *justice*. In my view, the challenge of the 21st

century is to find ways for the whole world to reap the benefits of global economic efficiency while enduring fewer of the ethical costs.

It saddens me as an economist to see that most members of my profession have failed to connect economic efficiency and economic justice. This failure was highlighted when the 1998 Nobel Prize for Economics was awarded to Professor Amartya Sen and the prize committee cited his efforts to ‘restore an ethical dimension to the discussion of economic problems’. Clearly they believed that at some point ethics had been excluded from economists’ discussions. This regrettable separation was most clearly alluded to by Professor Sen himself: he told a reporter that when he was a young student of Professor Joan Robinson, one of the giants of modern economic theory, she advised him to ‘forget all that ethics rubbish’. Unfortunately many earlier winners of the Nobel Prize for Economics had made their mark in rather strict adherence to Professor Robinson’s dictum. They have made our universities’ economics departments and business schools a barren wasteland, spiritually arid places. I know this well; I have taught in such places for the last twenty years and have been a lone voice. They indoctrinate their students with the common view of modern economists that moral discourse is not relevant to their profession. What a bitter harvest this has brought us all! It is high time economists once again engaged themselves with ethics and with justice, not purely with economic efficiency.

3 SHARING THE WORLD

All god’s gifts – human beings, the land, air and sea, natural resources and the environment – should be used for the good of all and not abused, as now, for the short-sighted profit of the few. This will mean the adoption and implementation of internationally binding regulations. Free-riders and other abusers should be penalised and shamed as rogue nations.

4 ALLOWING EVERYONE A STAKE IN SOCIETY

In this study I have attempted to demonstrate the destructive impact of neo-liberal economics on our well-being, and the negative consequence for our world. In many religions well-being is described as *wholeness*, achieved through a healing of mind, body and spirit. Such wholeness involves being in harmony with

ourselves, with those around us, our neighbours, and with God. It also means inner peace, a sense of contentment and co-operation.

Now let us once more see what neo-liberalism encourages us to do. It prescribes individualism, selfishness, consumerism, profit maximisation, and greed. It tells us that the world is fiercely competitive, that the market makes the final decision. By now we should know how false this philosophy is. The commercial objective of profit maximisation for shareholders' benefit, for example, is not compatible with seeking the well-being of everyone, yet when all are not catered for, no-one ultimately can enjoy well-being. Witness, for example, the rise in crime in countries such as the US and UK, and the associated rise in 'gated' accommodation where the rich live in isolation behind bars, fearing for their property and even for their lives. A recent study of gated communities noted that 'those behind the gates become detached not only physically but politically'. Their desire to find a small area in which they feel secure only expands the vast areas in which they feel insecure. 'People feel safer behind gates although at the same time the fear of the outside world increases. This voluntary exclusion is mirrored by the involuntary isolation from society of those trapped in the ghettos of the socially excluded.'

From gated communities we move inexorably to gated countries. Our prisons are full, our borders fortified, our embassies armed; global summits take place behind cordons of riot police – the private affluence and public squalor of the Reagan and Thatcher years on a global scale. Many people are being drowned by the tide of globalisation and, as the tide rises, they will grab on to anything available to keep afloat.

It is important to understand that security can be achieved only if the causes of insecurity – namely poverty and exclusion – are addressed. To overcome our collective insecurity we need not gates but bridges. Neo-liberals do not define – because they cannot – what maximisation is, and when it is achieved; the constant drive for more growth and profit becomes a destructive mentality of greed. As for the market, yes, the market creates wealth and jobs, but not for all. It is programmed to create money, and plenty of it, but not well-being, not happiness and contentment. It is based on competition. This creates insecurity; it tells us that we are not in control. Not being in control,

psychologically speaking, is the fundamental reason for an absence of well-being. Market forces are indiscriminate. Jobs may be created in one region or country, but at the expense of another, and production will move to places where the workforce can be most exploited. Downsizing and restructuring, takeovers, deregulation and privatisation can nurture the greediest business practices. Such economic strategies have been described as ‘the gales of creative destruction’. From a human point of view, all this is daunting and unsettling. If the market determines everything, it becomes our ultimate value. Deregulated markets make money, but there is nothing in the programme to generate social justice and create inclusive communities.

An example of this is the disastrous recent sinking of the *Prestige* oil tanker off the coast of Spain, one of the world’s worst environmental disasters. This exposed the convoluted international framework of maritime regulation and the cavalier attitudes of many shipping companies to safety. The vessel was chartered by the Swiss-based subsidiary of a Russian conglomerate, registered in the Bahamas, owned by a Greek via Liberia and given a certificate of seaworthiness by America. When refuelling, it stood off the port of Gibraltar to avoid inspection. Every aspect of its operation was calculated to avoid tax and maximise profitability. God Mammon ruled supreme.

Today’s received economic wisdom is that there is no alternative to the onward march of global capitalism. ‘Our commonly received political thinking remains firmly restricted within the limits of the free market.’ My fourth recommendation is to drop this destructive philosophy of self-interest. We need to promote policies that respect human dignity, that are in tune with the true human values of love, co-operation and the common good. We need a philosophy that recognises a higher purpose, that is loyal not merely to chief executives and shareholders but to workers and their families, the community at large, and to ecosystems and the planet. We have to transcend the madness of free-market fundamentalism. The market is not a religion; Mammon is not God and the chief executives of self-interested corporations are not prophets; dubious accounting books are not sacred texts. We need a socially cohesive philosophy to replace the present divisive one, a philosophy which gives a rightful place to God, ethics and justice.

Here, I should like to recommend Henry George, R.H. Tawney and John Rawls. These egalitarian thinkers show us that fairness and justice are not nice-to-have adjuncts to social relationships but fundamental requisites of well-being and happiness, integral to a sustainable, durable social order. They insist that society should be built on principles that ensure access for everyone to key primary goods, to a reasonable income and material well-being, to opportunity and basic rights and liberties, which allow all citizens to feel they have been given a proper chance to be full members of society. Their call is not for utopian collectivism. We do not all have to earn the same wage, live in the same sort of house, eat the same food, wear the same clothes, drive the same kind of car. The call is just for less inequality, for more fairness. This view of society is so convincing that it is hard to think of a reason – other than selfish greed – for anyone to argue with them.

5 PROMOTING FAIR TRADE

We should say a loud and clear no to free trade and yes to fair trade. Free trade in the hands of neo-liberals has become a new form of slavery. ‘Economists have provided capitalists with a comforting concept called the “free market”. It does not describe any part of reality, at any place or time. It’s a mantra conveniently invoked when it is proposed that government do something the faithful don’t like, and just as conveniently ignored whenever they want government to do something for them.’ To create a better environment for all we have to discard this false philosophy, this preposterous free-market fundamentalism. What has been described as ‘global democratic capitalism’ will ultimately fail to deliver its promises, just as Marx’s unrealistic concept of ‘the end of history’ (in which Communism would triumph and conflict vanish) so spectacularly failed. Both forms of fundamentalism result in tyranny. The countries that most fervently lecture others on free trade are the ones with the highest tariffs and barriers to trade, which at the same time provide the biggest subsidies for their own industries. If such double standards are not a witness to the impossibility of free trade, what else could be? An example of fair trade, which should be emulated by others, is that introduced by the British Co-op supermarket chain. The Co-op is to make *all* its own-brand chocolate bars from Fairtrade cocoa in an effort to give West African producers

a stable income and promote the idea of fair trade. They have signed a deal with a co-operative of small farmers in Ghana to supply cocoa in return for a guaranteed price that will cover the cost of production and provide a basic living wage. The free-market price of cocoa beans is currently about \$1,000, but the Co-op will pay a guaranteed minimum of \$1,600 per ton, which it calculates is the price the producers need to get. It will pay a further \$150 per ton into a co-operative for community projects which will help villagers to dig wells and build schools and health centres. The Co-op has shown that businesses can trade fairly and still be viable – imagine what benefits would be felt worldwide if others were to follow this example.

6 HAVING A ‘BUY NOTHING DAY’

In the last couple of years, leaders like Tony Blair and George Bush have encouraged their good and noble citizens to go out and shop till they drop! It will help our ailing economy; what’s more, it will help the ‘War on Terrorism’. Shopping is very ‘patriotic’! People of goodwill should know from personal experience that this is nonsense. Our encouragement of runaway capitalism through conspicuous consumption has never solved any of our economic problems; it has never made us any more noble or patriotic; it has never provided us with any real security. If these leaders really want to tackle the economic crisis, they would do better to approach the chief executives of all the Enrons and WorldComs and ask them to become more patriotic and noble citizens.

In my sixth recommendation for all caring citizens I follow the example set by the Vancouver-based Media Foundation, which tried to persuade people to have a twenty-four hour ‘consumer fast’ in order to focus attention on excessive consumption and on inequalities between the haves and have nots, whether individuals or nations. I suggest a once-a-month ‘Buy Nothing Day’ to encourage the principles of saving and thrift. Everybody will be encouraged to put 50% of what they would have spent on those days into personal savings accounts and to donate the other 50% to a fund which encourages fair trade and helps impoverished producers worldwide. This would challenge the ‘your greed can save us’ ethics of ‘patriotic shopping’ and point to a different kind of global patriotism, based on the notion that what is good for others is ultimately good for us as well. The fast will

be a helpful reminder of those ancient, prophetic words from the world's greatest critic of consumerism: 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.' Together we must fight the concept that 'the strongest bulwark of the capitalist system is the ignorance of its victims'.

7 CANCELLING THIRD WORLD DEBT

The globalised economic apartheid of the last half century has enslaved billions of people to indebtedness, especially in the third world. Servicing the debt (the main preoccupation of the World Bank and IMF) has in many countries of the world left too little to provide for basic human needs. My seventh step is demanding monetary justice and debt cancellation for the third world. Nearly all the loans were for the benefit of the creditor nations; most were to corrupt, unaccountable, undemocratic regimes, for questionable purposes. This recommendation has an important historical parallel which it is useful to remember.

When in the 1920s the United States had problems with unpaid bonds on the London Market and were unwilling to reach an agreement, the United Kingdom appealed to an international board of arbitration at the League of Nations. However, to the dismay of the British government, this initiative was vetoed by the US Congress to which it was referred for ratification. They argued that there had been a referendum in Mississippi in 1852 in which the population had voted against repaying the debt because they did not know how it had been raised or how the money had been used. Given this historical precedent, it could surely be argued that the third world debtor nations should be entitled to hold referendums in which their people could legitimately express the opinion that their debts should be cancelled because they did not know how they were raised or how the money had been used!

8 REFORMING THE IMF AND WORLD BANK

I strongly believe that globalisation, provided it is not Americanisation, could be a positive force for good, but it needs to be based on policies that are in harmony with the principles of common good. This can only be achieved if institutions such as the IMF and World Bank dramatically alter the way they operate. Instead of promoting the neo-liberal ideology of austerity

programmes that bleed already impoverished nations to death, they should promote policies that empower poor countries so that they can participate fully in the world economy, thus ensuring global justice. My eighth step is the drastic reform of these two institutions.

The first act of reform should be their 'de-Americanisation': the umbilical cord that connects them to the US Treasury should be cut. Their headquarters should be moved from Washington to Latin America, Africa or Asia so that their neo-liberal advocates can witness at first hand the results of their recommendations. These institutions must demonstrate greater transparency and a willingness to examine their own actions away from dogma and fundamentalism. People like Joseph Stiglitz should be invited to direct these reformed bodies. An accomplished economist and academic, he served for four years on President Clinton's council of economic advisors, then for three years he was chief economist and senior Vice President of the World Bank. He was dismissed and ostracised simply for expressing reservations about the consequences of World Bank policies on those damaged by them. He is a man with inside knowledge, and a man of integrity concerned for all nations. Under the leadership of people such as Joseph Stiglitz, the IMF and World Bank could be forces for good which could achieve globalisation for the common good.

9 ENCOURAGING PUBLIC SERVICE

As an educator of young people for more than twenty years, I am extremely concerned about the attitude of many students towards the common good and public service. Most graduates these days see success in monetary terms and want jobs in the City or in privatised industries which pay the highest salaries and bonuses. Tragically they equate happiness with large pay cheques. This deplorable attitude has greatly harmed society. I propose that university graduates should be encouraged to undertake public service. The government should offer to repay the loans of graduates who decide to work in schools or hospitals, for local government or private charities, or as peace workers overseas. In this way graduates would be attracted to sectors currently short of manpower, and they would gain useful experience. This could be a very positive way of introducing the common good to young people, and it would have a positive effect on society as a whole.

10 INTRODUCING 'SOCIAL IMPACT AUDITS'

Undoubtedly the world is facing a colossal challenge because of environmental degradation and the plight of the billions who live in poverty. Although we cannot live in isolation but need to engage in foreign trade and investment, we have to realise that what is happening today, especially in the Third World, is wrong and must rapidly be reformed. My tenth step would be the establishment of an international regulatory body to set and implement universally approved standards of conduct for multinational corporations investing in the Third World. All ventures should be subject to 'Social Impact Audits' (SIA) to ensure that corporate ethics were an essential component of any business deal. There must be full transparency, an openness based on respect, honesty, justice and environmental responsibility. The emphasis should be on universal reporting standards. Multinationals and other Western businesses should be required by law to show corporate social responsibility. They should regularly report on the environmental, social and economic impact of their activities both at home and overseas and should consult major stakeholders when making key decisions. Company directors should be legally responsible for making socially and ethically acceptable decisions as well as for financial probity. If they fail, like any other wrongdoer in society they should be tried; if found guilty they should go to prison. Resigning with a golden handshake, pension and share options should no longer be an escape route from justice.

Nothing short of this will do. As long as big business is accountable only to shareholders, and chief executives are concerned primarily with salaries and bonuses, there will be no reversal of environmental degradation, no relief of abject poverty. We need a new vision of global corporate governance. Imagine what the world could have been like if, instead of the WTO promoting a self-interested neo-liberal ideology, benefiting only the wealthy, we had had an international body promoting the good of all?

One thing is certain, there would have been far less environmental degradation and poverty. At the very least it would not have been necessary for so many people, spending tens of millions of dollars, mostly at taxpayers' expense, to crisscross the world to South Africa to try to solve these problems. This was not even a very useful gathering. Since the first such meeting in

Rio, ten years earlier, there has been a huge rise both in poverty and environmental destruction the world over.

11 BUILDING AN 'ECONOMY OF COMMUNION'

This is my final recommendation. I suggest that a successful business can be developed today, as in the past, within a religious and spiritual context, and that it can power lasting social change. The Economy of Communion, founded in 1991 by Chiara Lubich, is one of the great works of the Focolare Movement. The Economy of Communion, or of sharing, is a product of the 'culture of giving of the Gospel put into practice' in economic activities. Its entrepreneurs are asked to use their skills and creativity to produce useful, quality products, and to run their businesses honestly, without damaging the environment or being drawn into unethical forms of competition. They are asked to divide future profits three ways, one part to be kept to cover current costs and the future development of the business, one part to be given to the poor to lift them out of the vicious cycle of poverty, so that they also are able to contribute to the community, and the final part to finance education in this way of doing things. In other words, this is an economy based on a commitment to grow together, not on a neo-liberal survival of the fittest. It involves risking money, and sharing inventiveness and talents, within a culture of giving. It is a transparent economy. In the current economic climate it offers a real alternative.

In 1991 many observers were extremely negative, believing there could be no viable alternative to motives of self-interest. They thought not only that the Economy of Communion could not succeed but that it would never even take off. However, it has gone from strength to strength. There are now more than 750 such businesses in Brazil, the Philippines, Italy, Germany and elsewhere, and more businesses are being developed each year in different countries. Jorge Braga de Macedo, President of the United Nations Economic Cooperation and Development Organisation, has called the Economy of Communion an 'important proposal for economists working for development in the world's poorest nations'. It has succeeded in encouraging a new human model, one which finds fulfilment in relationships rather than in self-promotion. The Focolare movement, the Economy of Communion and its associated businesses are true examples of socially acceptable commerce conducted according to Catholic

social teaching, where love, justice, solidarity and subsidiarity to the common good are the main driving forces.

This achievement reminds us that our righteousness before God depends largely on how we treat the needy and vulnerable. This is not a message that should be forgotten by those who consider themselves believers. All religions have much to say in this regard. A Christian example is from *Jeremiah*: he speaks strongly against the greed of the people:

Like a cage full of birds
so are their houses full of loot.
They are fat, they are sleek, in wickedness they go to any lengths:
they have no respect for rights,
for orphans' rights, and yet they succeed!
They have not upheld the cause of the needy.
Shall I fail to punish this,
Yahweh demands ... (5:27-29)

There is a crucial implication here: concern for the least fortunate is not just one possible option; it is not something that can be left to mere altruism and personal inclination. It is, as the Christian tradition has always insisted, a matter of justice.

The book of *Deuteronomy* exhorts us to share our goods:

If, when reaping the harvest in the field, you overlook a sheaf in the field, do not go back for it. The foreigner, the orphan and the widow shall have it, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all your undertakings.

When you beat your olive tree, you must not go over the branches twice. The foreigner, the orphan and the widow shall have the rest.

When you harvest your vineyard, you must not pick it over a second time. The foreigner, the orphan and the widow shall have the rest. (24:19-21)

Although we may not shake many olive trees, the principle speaks to us today. People have a right to private property, but it is not absolute. It must yield to the needs of the vulnerable – foreigners, orphans and widows – to be provided for. We must remember that, because of the global economy and the interconnectedness of the whole world through modern transport and communications, we are able to aid people everywhere, not just those in our midst.

The Gospel of *Matthew* contains Jesus' description of the last judgement:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

The life of the early Christians is summarized in the *Acts of the Apostles*:

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favour with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

(2:42-47)

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favour was accorded them all. There was no needy person among them for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

(4:32-35)

The first disciples gave to others what they needed. Their community provides a model for sharing material possessions so that those in need are provided for. We should embrace their spirit of generosity and worship and, in so doing, would surely

attract followers to the Way of the Lord Jesus while serving the needy throughout the world 'according to each one's need'.

There is an idea of common good in all religions; the words in their sacred and holy books are very clear on this subject. We need to bring all examples of an economy of communion from all religions together so that all of us together can work for a global common good.

A further example of business for the common good, inspired by faith, is from the Sikh community in Birmingham in the UK. Marg Sat Santokh (MSS) Ltd, timber merchants and joinery manufacturers, opened their doors for business in 1980. Marg Sat Santokh means Path of Truth and Contentment. This is a private co-operative, not aided by the government or any other organisation. Its principle aim is to provide training and long-term employment in the building industry for local people in the Handsworth area. MSS is a 'meagre profit' organisation that emphasises service rather than maximising returns at any cost; its workforce is committed to earning a livelihood through hard work. MSS has close links with the Sikh Temple and Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ), a non-political charitable organisation dedicated to the selfless service of all humanity. MSS employees play a significant role in the activities of the Temple as members of the larger congregation.

Under the guidance of the Sikh Temple Chairman, Bhai Mohinder Singh Ji, MSS has grown from strength to strength and become a sustainable social enterprise in the city, a beacon of hope to many in the heart of one of the most disadvantaged areas of the country.

As the founding fathers of MSS have wisely observed, the saying 'Work is Worship' was coined in Babylonian times, when the baking of bricks was considered a religious sacrament, but progressively, humanity has divorced religion from work. Human greed coupled with technological progress has led to the increasing commercialisation of work so that it is now devoid of any spirituality. MSS wished to put ideals of service and vocation back into work. The following hymn directs workers to bring labour and spirituality together in the interests of the common good, reinforcing the notion 'Work is Worship'.

Wealthy are those who trade in the Name of the Lord,
Unite and earn the Lord's Name through delving in the Guru's
(shabad),

Abandon deception, malice and vengeance, and get exalted
through the Lord's company,
Trade and gather true wealth, and you shall never feel defeated,
Despite consumption and spending the true wealth never gets
diminished,
It is an unlimited treasure,
Says Nanak, through such trading reach the Lord's abode with
prestige and honour.

Members of the co-operative recite and contemplate these words at the beginning of each working day. The very name of the co-operative is suggestive of these sentiments which teach that when spirituality informs secular trading the latter is blessed.

To promote spiritual business practice beyond Birmingham and England, GNNSJ have established a technical school in a very deserving part of the world, Africa. The Nishkam Puran Institute (NPI) in Kericho, Kenya, was set up to provide education based on moral, spiritual and ethical social values so that its students can earn an honest living and serve the community through a practical application of faith. They are encouraged to work for the good of the community by establishing much-needed small businesses in rural communities after they graduate. They are reminded that, through their education at the Institute, they are empowered to do good deeds, not to be selfish and greedy, not to exploit others by maximising profits for themselves. A living wage is all they should desire. What a contrast to what our students are taught in Western business schools and economics departments!

*

IN THIS STUDY I have argued that today, at the dawn of the third millennium, our world, despite significant recent achievements in science and technology, medicine, transport and communications, is facing catastrophic socio-economic, political, cultural and environment crises. Neo-liberalism has been the vehicle in which we have travelled together to the wasteland in which we live today. Its philosophy of individualism, selfishness and greed shows little respect for the true human values of community, morality and justice. Neo-liberalism has kept us from knowing God and understanding the role religion can play in our everyday economic, political, cultural and social lives. This philosophy

has successfully promoted its own religion of the marketplace, centred on its god Mammon.

I have argued that the theoretical foundations of economics are very weak. The human model that underpins economic theory is abstracted from real human beings. For the purpose of analysing the market such abstraction may be justified, but we should not order the whole of society around *Homo economicus*. Human nature is little understood in this purely individualistic model; human needs have to be related to community. The virtual exclusion of the natural world from economic theory, moreover, renders it inappropriate at a time when the fate of the world hangs in the balance. The economy is far too important to be left to those who deal in abstractions, and society is too valuable to be placed at the service of the market. As Upton Sinclair said, 'It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.'

We should make a serious attempt at uniting economics and theology so that we can restore the balance between the material and spiritual elements of our lives and find true happiness. My arguments should be seen as inclusive rather than exclusive. It is only by empowering others to share with me that I empower myself to share with them; by empowering others to teach me, I empower myself to teach them. There is a 'common good' in all of us and in all religions. Many religious leaders, including Pope John Paul II, have spoken eloquently on this matter. Recent international inter-faith gatherings at Assisi are examples of religions working together to promote global peace and security.

At the end of 1999, at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Cape Town, Chairman Dr Karan Singh of the Temple of Understanding touched upon these issues. Because of its significance to this paper, I should like to quote part of his speech:

Impelled by science and technology, all aspects of life on our planet are, for better or worse, undergoing a process of globalisation – whether it is politics or economics, commerce or industry, environment or communications, language or music, or any other. The great religions of the world also have burst geographical boundaries and have assumed global dimensions. While we are thus being irresistibly propelled towards a global society, the consciousness needed to sustain such a society is still imperfectly developed. It is this dangerous time lag which is at the root

of much of the tumult and turmoil that we see around us today, and if the truly religious impulse is creatively projected it can go a long way in forging a new consciousness that would unite rather than divide the peoples of the world.

Religion has always been a major factor in the growth of human civilisation. Whether it is art or architecture, music or literature, philosophy or law, moral codes or spiritual texts, many of the glorious achievements of the human race can be traced back to the tremendous impetus of the world's great religions. But we have to admit that there have also been terribly negative aspects – mass killings, pogroms, inquisitions, torture, persecution, vandalism and bigotry have all, at some place or time, been perpetrated in the name of religion. And the crowning irony is that these have been done in the name of a divinity which every religion looks upon as being beneficent, merciful and compassionate!

This being the case, the question before us is whether we are going to revert to the medieval pattern of religious wars and internecine conflict, or move onwards to a new dimension of interfaith dialogue, harmony and understanding.

The task of Interfaith dialogue has become all the more urgent because around the world a number of fundamentalist and fanatical religious groups have emerged with the avowed intention of using violence to subvert constitutionally established regimes and terrorise whole populations. This rise of fundamentalism, while it obviously threatens civil society, in a deeper sense is an even greater threat to the religions themselves, because if they become associated in the public mind with violence and terrorism, it will be a major hurdle towards building a sane and harmonious global society in the century that is beginning.

The universal values inherent in all the great religious systems of the world need to be clearly articulated in terms of contemporary consciousness and the compulsions of the global society. For this, it is necessary to highlight the golden thread of mysticism and gnosis that runs through all the great religions of the world. Whether it is the glowing vision of the great Upanishadic seers or the Jam Tirthankars, the luminous sayings of the Buddha or the passionate outpourings of the Muslim Sufis, the noble utterances of the great Rabbis, or of the Sikh Gurus, the inspired utterances of the Christian saints or the insights of the Chinese sages, these and other traditions of ecstatic union with the Divine represent an important dimension of religion. It is, in fact, this spiritual dimension that ultimately links all human beings into one, great extended family – Vasudaiva Kutumbakam – as the Vedas have it. Fanning the glowing spark of potential divinity within each person irrespective of race or religion, sex or nationality, into the

blazing fire of spiritual realisation is, indeed, the true role of the great religions of humankind.

It is only with such an inclusivist approach that religions will fulfil their true dual purpose to lead us inwardly towards the spiritual light and outwardly towards peace, harmony and global consciousness. Let us all who are present here, men and women of religion, pledge to work for furthering the universal principles of love, harmony and mutual understanding, and in opposing all types of fundamentalism and fanaticism. Then only will we fulfil our true Dharma in this exciting and extraordinary age in which we are privileged to be living, as we hurtle headlong into the future astride the irreversible arrow of time.

It is also worth remembering the centuries-old wisdom of the Persian poet, Sa'di:

Human beings are like parts of a body
Created from the same essence.
When one part is hurt and in pain,
the others cannot remain in peace and be quiet.
If the misery of others leaves you indifferent
and with no feelings of sorrow,
You cannot be called a human being.

Another of his poems is inscribed at the entrance of the Secretariat of the United Nations in New York:

The children of Adam
are limbs of one another;
in terms of creation
they're of the self-same Essence.

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Reviews and Endorsements of *Globalisation for the Common Good*

Globalisation for the Common Good is a helpful and readable contribution to the whole debate about globalisation. This challenges the view that 'there is no alternative' and helps us to think about what that alternative might look like.

Christine Allen, Executive Director,
Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), London

Without any doubt, this book marks a turning point in the debate on what type of economic education we need to receive in the new age. The time for economics of individual greed and interest is fast passing or should pass as it has led to a world of disparity, self-delusion and irresponsibility. We need, instead, an economic education that teaches common ground, common interest, participation, cooperation and social accountability. Arguments of this type, to be made by an economist working in the mainstream higher education community are most daring. Many will surely ignore and object but many more will eventually join. All new ideas are originally dismissed as outrageous but later accepted as breakthroughs ... This book is enormously stimulating, provocative and enriching.

Hooshang Amirahmadi, Professor and Director, Middle East Centre,
Rutgers University, and President, American-Iranian Council

Kamran Mofid is no defender of globalisation as it is evolving, but he certainly does not join the growing legion of motley souls who denounce globalisation without recognising that the freedom of people in country A to trade with those in country B, without politicians interfering, is a principle worth upholding. His globalisation for the common good shows how we can reconcile that principle with justice and morality. It deserves to be read by everyone who voices opposition to the global economy.

Editorial, *Worldreview*, Volume 5, Number 1, 2002

Increasingly, it is being recognised that the grave problems facing humankind today are at heart moral and spiritual. Kamran Mofid in his timely and visionary book, *Globalisation for the Common Good*, shows that professional economics, with its narrow focus on self-interest and competition, has ignored the importance of co-operation for the common good. A fairer, more just and peaceful world needs to be based on the ethical values that are shared by the great religions.

Kamran Mofid points the way to the urgently needed application of these values to the worlds of business and politics.

(Rev) Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths,
Patron of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford,
Co-founder of the Three Faiths Forum and
author of *Pilgrimage of Hope, Faith and Interfaith
in a Global Age*

Kamran Mofid has written a short but lucid critique of globalisation as understood by conventional economics. In its place he offers us a value-centred approach to the economic organisation of human affairs. He sets out the first principles to which economic activity in a globalising world must give effect and on the basis of which governments, corporations and international organisations must be evaluated. *Globalisation for the Common Good* is an important call to ethical policy-making and critical research.

Joseph A. Camilleri, Professor of International Relations,
La Trobe University, Australia and author of
States, Markets and Civil Society in Asia Pacific

It is rare that an economist discovers the social, ecological, ethical and religious dimensions of his subject. Mainstream economics is characterised by reductionism. It continues to sharpen the saw by which society is cutting down the branch on which we are sitting. As an economist himself Kamran Mofid is not only brilliantly and credibly criticising this dangerous situation but also giving clear guidelines for alternatives. His convincing theological and ethical arguments are thus translated into perspectives of a life-enhancing economy.

Ulrich Duchrow, Professor of Systematic Theology,
Heidelberg University and author of *Alternatives to
Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History,
Designed for Political Action*

Is economic globalisation the hobgoblin of the 21st century? In this remarkable book, Kamran Mofid admits that the current global economy robs from the poor and gives to the rich. However, unlike many of his colleagues, Mofid describes how the impending socio-economic, political, cultural, and economic crises can be avoided. His plan would substitute collaboration for greed, ethics for corruption, and fairness for injustice. The result is the most penetrating analysis I have read on this topic, as well as the proposal that is the most optimistic.

Stanley Krippner, Professor of Psychology, Saybrook Graduate School
and Research Centre, San Francisco and co-editor of
*The Psychological Effects of War on Civilians:
An International Perspective*

Kamran Mofid has presented a visionary and humane critique of globalisation that merits broad and urgent attention. As an economist, he writes with particular conviction of the need to leaven an interests- and profits-based 'science' of economics with a consideration of justice and the common good. Based on a sensitive reading of diverse cultural and religious traditions and a healthy scepticism towards prevailing academic and political orthodoxies, this book offers both a trenchant criticism of the status quo and a thought-provoking guide to a compelling alternative future.

**James Piscatori, Professor of Islam and International Relations,
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Wadham College, Oxford,
and author of *Muslim Politics***

Kamran Mofid's book raises important questions about the way students are taught and is a critical challenge to the profound assumptions which allow the separation of academic study and spirituality from the injustices of our world which urgently needs to be remedied.

**Christopher Rowland, Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of
Holy Scripture, Queen's College, Oxford**

In 1970 the world religious leaders met and confessed that religions had not failed but that religious people had failed. This confession brought into being The World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) which has enabled religions to work together for the common good. Kamran Mofid in this important and timely book pleads with his fellow economists to work together for the common good and not to forget the true human values of faith, spirituality and ethics in their work and recommendations. This is the challenge Kamran Mofid is laying at the doors of all of us. We should rise to this challenge.

**Jehangir Sarosh, President, World Conference for
Religions and Peace (WCRP), Europe**

Kamran Mofid: A Biographical Note

Dr Kamran Mofid, a British national who was born in Tehran, Iran in 1952, received his BA and MA in economics from the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada in 1980 and 1982 respectively. In 1986 he was awarded his doctorate in economics from the University of Birmingham, UK. In 2001 he received a Certificate in Education in Pastoral Studies from Plater College, Oxford. Since 1980 he has been teaching economics, business studies, international business and the political economy of the Middle East. In recent years Dr Mofid has developed short courses, seminars and workshops on economics and theology, the economics of the common good, and an inter-faith perspective on globalisation. He has also developed a special programme, 'Religion and Spirituality in the Workplace', as part of an overall training package to address Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility. He has been a frequent speaker at major international conferences in Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, Russia and the Middle East. In addition to many papers in various journals, he is the author of *Development Planning in Iran: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (1987), *The Economic Consequences of the Gulf War* (1990) and *Globalisation for the Common Good* (2002), which has been translated into Japanese for publication in February 2003 and is currently being translated into Russian for publication in the summer of 2003.

In 1994, at the personal invitation of the late George Bull, former Director of the Anglo-Japanese Economic Institute, Dr Mofid joined the Advisory Committee of the International Minds Forum, which publishes the journal *International Minds*. In 2002, at the invitation of Sir Sigmund Sternberg, co-founder of The Three Faiths Forum (an inter-faith dialogue forum for the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam) Dr Mofid joined its Advisory Committee.

Dr Mofid has organised and convened major international conferences, including 'Japan and the UK economy', 'NAFTA and the EU', 'Japan and the Global Economy', 'Iran and the Emerging Global Order' and 'Forgiveness and Reconciliation'. In 2002 he founded an annual international conference, 'An Inter-faith Perspective on Globalisation'. The first conference took place in Oxford in July 2002; the 2003 conference will be in St Petersburg (co-convened with Dr Tatiana Roskoshnaya, Director, Land and Public Welfare Foundation, St Petersburg, and Advisor UN-HABITAT, Kenya), the 2004 one in Dubai (co-convened with Dr Raymond H. Hamden, Director of the Comprehensive Medical Centre in Dubai). The 2005 conference will be in Nairobi and Kericho, Kenya, in association with Bhai Mohinder Singh Ji, Chairman of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, Birmingham.

Dr Mofid has been a frequent speaker on the BBC World Service and on BBC Coventry and BBC Radio Oxford. He is currently carrying out research into spirituality, religions and globalisation, to demonstrate how religions can be a force for good in conflict resolution and peace building.

Dr Mofid, in association with Dr Raymond Hamden, is seeking to establish The Centre for Globalisation for the Common Good.

Website: <http://www.commongood.info>

WITH OTHER global issues competing for our attention, we may think the Enron/WorldCom scandals are over, and that concerns about unethical globalisation are yesterday's news. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Economist Kamran Mofid, writing in jargon-free language, views such scandals as symptoms of a deep-seated malaise infecting business ethics, corporate social responsibility and globalisation through a total disregard for the spiritual and moral nature of man by modern economics. This dichotomy has hindered the development of practical policies for eradicating poverty. Many social ills have sprung from a denial of the fundamental human right of billions to decent living standards.

'The art of government in fact', wrote Archbishop William Temple in 1942, 'is the art of so ordering life that self-interest prompts what justice demands.' This is difficult to achieve in a culture where a leading Cambridge economist, Joan Robinson, could recommend that students 'forget all that ethics rubbish'. Regrettably, this attitude is the norm today. Economics students are taught that moral discourse is not directly relevant to their profession. The economics departments of our universities and our business schools have become spiritually arid wastelands. The marketplace is not just an economic sphere, 'it is a region of the human spirit'.

Economics was not always divorced from moral and ethical considerations. Adam Smith, the father of modern economics, had been Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University before he wrote *The Wealth of Nations*. To him and later classical economists like Ricardo, Mill and Henry George ethical considerations were of prime importance.

Economic justice for the whole world is the key to solving many of our political and social problems. For economic answers we must turn to the classical economists, but a global, multi-faith approach to a system of economics based on ethics is advocated.

This study is an appeal to the deep instinctive understanding of the common good that all people share. It is an appeal to our essential humanity. It deals with some of the most pressing concerns of people the world over, concerns which every generation must consider and answer. It is written in the hope of inspiring idealism and the desire to give the practical help the world so greatly needs.

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A donation of 10% of the cover price of each copy of this booklet sold will be donated to the author's chosen charities, Oxfam and Cafod, to support their work in promoting fair trade. The author has also donated his royalties from the first printing of *Globalisation for the Common Good* to fund future reprints and generate additional donations to Oxfam and Cafod.