

GLOBALIZATION—INTEREST GROUP

Convener: Gemma Tulud Cruz, Australian Catholic University
Moderator: Daniel Finn, St. John's University, Collegeville
Presenters: Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S, Catholic Theological Union
Peter Phan, Georgetown University
David Hollenbach, S.J., Boston College

This year's session considered key political, cultural, and religious dimensions of globalization. The session had three panel presenters. The first presenter, Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S, looked at globalization and culture. In his three part presentation Schreiter reflected, first, on what constitutes the global and the local then described five readings of the local: (1) the local as territorial; (2) local as a site of resilience and the transformative power of memory; (3) local as a site of diasporic thinking; (4) local as a site of the alien gaze and; (5) local as a site of cosmopolitan vernacularism. Schreiter then concluded with some theological suggestions, including, among others, the challenges to theologies of community and communion as well as the need for a theology of belonging where space becomes place.

Peter Phan's subsequent presentation considered the impact of globalization on religion as it relates to church and theology and, in particular, in relation to the Asian context. Phan noted how globalization influenced religion vis-à-vis spiritual path. He also pointed out how popular religion or popular devotions, e.g. among Filipinos and Vietnamese, illustrate Schreiter's reference to the local as a site of resistance. Phan then looked at the challenge of migration to the religious landscape, e.g. in Japan and the need for diasporic thinking as well as spiritual bilingualism/multilingualism.

In a final presentation, David Hollenbach reflected on the plight of refugees, especially as it relates to human rights. Hollenbach noted that, while the very poorest rarely migrate, the vulnerability of 11 million refugees worldwide allows them to make a claim on us. Hollenbach then examined two prevailing options with regard to refugees, namely, Open Borders or Closed Borders.

The presentation was followed by a discussion on several issues that relate to the presentations. These include (1) the absence of the First Nations or indigenous peoples in discussions on the global and the local, (2) globalization as reverse colonization not so much from the West but from the local elite such as those in China and India, (3) neo-colonization (e.g. China's acquisition of resources worldwide such as mines in Zambia), (4) challenges of social inclusion and social cohesion, particularly as far as refugees are concerned, (5) the phenomenon of multiple religious belonging, and (6) the Responsibility to Protect (or the question of intervention) in conflict-ridden countries to stem forced migration.

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