

some of the primary extended quotations from Locke's works to prove this in his book. In the end, he seems to make Locke's works into a wax nose, perhaps feeling somewhat justified by the abundance of scholars who find Locke's thoughts on reason and religion to be contradictory. This interpretation of Locke that runs counter to Kurun's does not, however, overturn his points that liberalism finds roots in Christianity and that we might consider legal pluralism as a way forward. In fact, I hope that we will see more from Kurun, especially works that fill out the skeletal structure of the legal pluralism with which he concludes his book. He seems to have a fine handle on the dangers of approaching religion, politics, and morality in a compartmentalized fashion. His book is refreshing.

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## Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission, and Our Hyperconnected World

**Bryant L. Myers**

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017 (304 pages)

Bryant Myers has written, as the title suggests, an engaging book about globalization. Many titles have appeared promising a critical or constructive encounter between globalization and Christian theology or ethics. Unfortunately, few have delivered on the promise, tending to either concentrate on economics with a bit of broad theological rhetoric attached as an afterthought, or propounding a theological or moral critique that often displays little working knowledge of the markets undergirding contemporary globalization. In contrast *Engaging Globalization* weaves together a sophisticated and informed understanding of economics and missiology in a nearly seamless manner.

The primary thesis of the book is that the global markets, integrated economies, and migration patterns characterizing globalization have created a series of challenges and benefits. The challenges include economic disruption, political unrest, and environmental degradation. Yet globalization has also prompted great strides in poverty alleviation, technological innovation, education, and economic opportunity. From a macro perspective, the benefits of globalization outweigh its liabilities, and the problems it has created are not necessarily unsolvable. More importantly, globalization has helped create a world that in many respects is potentially more receptive to the gospel and offers new and welcomed opportunities for the church's mission.

Myers makes his arguments through a series of historical and thematic expositions. He traces the historical development of modern market-based economies, focusing particularly on previous eras of globalization. Unlike many other forms of economic exchange that are zero-sum based, markets emphasizing free trade tend to do a better job of alleviating poverty and creating wealth since all parties presumably benefit when engaging in production and consumption of goods and services through international trade. This is exemplified in the current phase of globalization in which nearly a billion people have

escaped abject poverty, primarily as a result of liberalized trade policies in China and India, and the generation of unprecedented wealth on a global scale. Never before has the world been so materially rich.

Concomitantly, Myers reviews the history of Christian mission. Within the current phase of globalization, it should be acknowledged that Christianity is being recovered as a global rather than Western religion, and that the centers of Christian faith are shifting from North America and Europe to Africa and Asia. Evangelization is no longer a one-way road but a globally dispersed phenomenon in which mission takes on a wider range of tasks and venues. For Myers, these changes are not to be disparaged but embraced, for they present an opportunity for the church to leave its spiritual sequestration and reengage the world through more public expressions of theology and ethics. In this respect, globalization both describes and is helping form a world in which the church can be more faithful to its mission and ministry.

Although there is much in globalization to praise, Myers is clear that it is not without its problems. Although globalization has gone a long way in alleviating poverty there is much more that needs to be done. The unprecedented levels of wealth that have been created have not been fairly distributed. Even though many societies enjoy the long-term benefits of globalization, too little has been done to help short-term “losers” adjust to rapidly changing workplaces and economic circumstances, adding fuel to political unrest around the world. The greatest defect, however, is the flawed anthropology accompanying globalization. It is simply assumed that the forms of human association being created by globalization are (or should be?) thinly secular and overtly materialist. Such an assumption, at least for Christians, will not do, however, for it ignores spiritual and moral realms that give life both depth and meaning. Globalization should be rightly praised for improving the material well-being of many, if not most people, but it is not enough. If humans are to flourish, they need more than copious amounts of bread.

In the final chapters, Myers offers some prescient Protestant and Catholic theological resources for addressing this anthropological deficiency. He contends that the church needs to reengage the world in ways that acknowledge and embrace the new realities created by globalization. This can be accomplished through theological and missional contributions to forging a global civil society and moral ecology, and solidifying links between justice and spirituality. These endeavors should not oppose or displace market-based efforts to improve the material well-being of individuals and communities, but supplement, complement, and enrich them. Only time and the church’s openness to the work of the Spirit will tell whether the church is up to such engagement. Myers is quietly confident that it is.

*Engaging Globalization* is a timely book. It is refreshing to read a theologically informed economist defend globalization through interrogative discourse rather than declarative rhetoric, especially at a time when nationalism and protectionism appear to be in the ascent. The book is well written and accessible, lending itself as a useful text in seminary classrooms.

—Brent Waters

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