Global Ethics in Dialogue:
Church Studies on Globalization in Relation to Global
Theories of Justice

- DOUGLAS V. SCOTT -
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Supervisor: Prof. Göran Collste, Linköpings universitet
Global Ethics in Dialogue: Church Studies on Globalization in Relation to Global Theories of Justice

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Author: Douglas V. Scott

Abstract: The globalization of political and economic processes is a growing moral concern for theologians and political philosophers alike. My thesis aims to outline, analyze, and compare church studies of globalization with global theories of justice. To do this, I draw upon recent studies of globalization made by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The WCC and LWF are two global reaching church organizations. They have a common aim of uniting churches for ecumenical dialogue and are involved in social, economic, political, and ecological questions. The WCC and LWF analyze globalization by applying biblical and theological principles from the Christian tradition. Out of this analysis comes an invitation to resist globalization and seek economic alternatives. Their work forms a moral discourse about globalization from a theological ethical perspective. In comparison, I consider theories of global justice by political philosophers in the liberal tradition (i.e., John Rawls). The two philosophers I draw upon are Thomas Pogge and Kok-Chor Tan. Their recent work forms a moral discourse that attempts to globalize Rawls’s liberal principles of political and economic justice. These principles challenge globalization and build an argument for greater global justice. This argument calls for a restructuring of today's global political and financial institutions. In my thesis, this work also acts as a lens for which to critically analyze the church studies. Finally, I consider a potential and positive relationship between these two kinds of global moral discourses, between theological ethics and political philosophy. This relationship helps the church develop ethics for a realistic global citizenship. More importantly, this relationship creates a reasonable and broad based consensus for global justice. Such a consensus is demanded in a global context of plurality and secularity.

Keyword: globalization, global justice, liberalism, Lutheran World Federation, theological ethics, World Council of Churches
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The globalization of political and economic processes is a growing moral concern for theologians and political philosophers alike. My thesis aims to outline, analyze, and compare church studies of globalization with global theories of justice.

To do this, I draw upon recent studies of globalization made by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The WCC and LWF are two global reaching church organizations. They have a common aim of uniting churches for ecumenical dialogue and are involved in social, economic, political, and ecological questions. The WCC and LWF analyze globalization by applying biblical and theological principles from the Christian tradition. Out of this analysis comes an invitation to resist globalization and seek economic alternatives. Their work forms a moral discourse about globalization from a theological ethical perspective.

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Key words: globalization, global justice, liberalism, Lutheran World Federation, theological ethics, World Council of Churches
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Soli Deo Gloria

Douglas V. Scott,
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Linköping, Sweden
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CHAPTER ONE
General Introduction and Overview of the Church Studies

1.0 General Introduction
The word globalization denotes a complicated process of political and economic interaction in today’s world. In the distant past, the interaction between social, economic and political agents was rather local. The extent of one’s daily life relationships did not go much beyond village, city, or at most, the nation. Of course, there existed world trade, travel, wars, and other international occurrences that affected lives. But rapid developments in communication technology and economic practices over the last century have changed our outlook and action to be more immediately global. This has uniquely expanded the scope of what it means to be a human agent. Today our daily life is somehow linked to and shaped by global processes. Thus we are becoming, if not already, global citizens. The expansion of our political and economic outlook and agency also means an expansion of our moral concern. Who is our neighbour? The answer to this question is a global one. If we seriously reckon with globalization, our neighbour no longer means just the person next door, or a fellow citizen of our nation. The neighbour is now thousands of miles away. And we are responsible for her well-being. Global connections mean global obligations.

For a long time the Christian church has had a global outlook. Missionary and aid activities often connected, for example, a church ladies group in Saskatchewan, Canada, with the plights of the poor in Papua New Guinea. A concern for the global neighbour is nothing new to the church in developed and less developed countries alike. But often this did not consider the deeper political and economic arrangements that lead to deprivation in the first place. People needed help and so the church responded with material and spiritual support. Christians continue this much needed aid activity in the 21st-century era of globalization. But the church now considers the deeper structural processes that lead to deprivation. This has lead to many studies that apply theological principles to political and economic life. The Christian faith motivates and envisions a political and economic reality conducive to human flourishing. In this ethical discourse, spiritual arrangements inspire material arrangements.
In this way the church is motivated to respond to globalization. My discussion considers the responses made by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. These two church organizations have recently made studies and recommendations on globalization. The method of their work relies primarily on empirical data about economic globalization. This data is matched with basic theological themes. In this way, the studies present a theological ethical critique of globalization. The people of the church are called to resist the ill affects of globalization and work for better political and economic arrangements.

At the same time, moral theorists in the liberal tradition of political philosophy have been working on global justice. These global justice theorists share similar concerns as the church about the ill affects of globalization on all people. While not theological in scope, I believe these theorists can add significant argumentation to the church's statements. Their work is relevant for both criticizing and building up the Christian view. By reading the church statements through a theoretical lens of recent global theory, a fuller understanding of globalization as an ethical problem is gained. Global justice theory can help the church sort out some of the weakness of its approach. In this both the 'political' side and a 'spiritual' side engage each other. Although these too sides are different types of moral discourse, I propose that they can work together. In this way, global justice theory can be an important friend and ally in the church’s prophetic call to resist globalization and work for alternatives.

Why is this thesis interesting?
This thesis is interesting on various levels of concern, general and particular. An underlying general concern of the thesis, of course, is to make a moral case for global justice. To do this I rely on two different ethical approaches, one philosophical and the other theological. Each can be said to work well independently. But more particularly interesting is how these two discourses can relate to create a broadly based and cooperative moral concern for global justice. This is demanded in a secular and plural context with a variety of religious, philosophical and moral views.

Aims and Analytical Questions
My thesis aims to analyze the Christian response to globalization through the lens of global theories of justice. This is achieved by comparing the church studies on globalization with the global theories of justice. The aim is to organize the church
studies in conceptual terms understood by political philosophy. To do this, the main analytical questions asked are: How does the church conceive globalization? What is the church’s conception of freedom? What is the church’s conception of political and economic justice? What is the role of theological motivation in inspiring global justice? The final aim of the thesis is to discover a relationship between theological ethics and global justice theory. The main question is how can we justify a relationship between two different moral discourses? Are there any underlying concepts found in theology or political philosophy that can help build a bridge between these divergent discourses?

Materials
On the theological side, the primary sources for analysis are two Christian studies on economic globalization. One is an ecumenical document entitled, The Island of Hope (2001), developed by the World Council of Churches (WCC). This is a communion of mainly protestant traditions. The second body of work is a denominational study called Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion (2001) and A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization (2002). The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a communion of Lutheran churches, developed these. They also are found in a larger LWF book called Communion, Accountability, and Responsibility (2004): Responding as a Lutheran Communion to Neoliberal Globalization. The thesis also consults several articles from this book. Both the WCC and LWF are institutions that are global in nature and involved in remedying political and economic injustice around the world. They are valuable in outlining the problem of globalization and the basic Christians themes developed in response.

On the political philosophy side, I use global theorists in the liberal tradition. Throughout my discussion, I call these the ‘global justice theorists’. This is a group of moral theorists working most recently on globalization. I take John Rawls's global work as a starting part and consider the globalization of his theory by Thomas Pogge and Kok-Chor Tan. I take Tan as the main global theoretical lens, finding his commitment to the individual as the ultimate unit of moral worth as the best critique and affirmation of the church's view.

Background foundational material in theology and political philosophy was consulted. This was to firm up my understanding of theological and political concepts arising in the paper, such as ‘prophetic ethic’, ‘the two kingdoms’ and ‘overlapping
consensus.’ I make reference to and often quote these sources in footnotes. The reader is encouraged to refer to these notes throughout.

Method

The thesis tries to be a back and forth dialogue between the church studies and global justice theory. Chapter One introduces the church’s work on globalization and as a matter for theological ethics. Chapter Two gives an overview of global justice theories, introducing the reader to principles of justice and their global implications. Chapter Three returns to the church studies and analyzes them further in light of the principles outlined in Chapter Two. Chapter Four goes deeper into the arguments of global justice theory. These also deal critically with the weaknesses of the church’s claims. Chapter Five critically analyzes how the church studies create theological motivation for global justice. Chapters One to Five culminates in a synthesis in Chapter Six, where I consider the two together. In Chapter Six, I show how theological ethics and global justice theory can be related.

Limits

Because theorists in the liberal tradition are ultimately committed, I assume, to egalitarian and feminist concerns, explicitly socialist and feminist theory is absent from my discussion. The main material of the thesis is limited to theorists in the Rawlsian tradition- Rawls, Pogge, and Tan. There is a plethora of books about globalization written for popular consumption. These are often highly polemic and ideologically driven. While valuable in some regard, these are omitted for sake of space and I believe the more academic works are the most reliable.

Likewise, the thesis is limited to only two particular Christian studies of economic globalization. There are more. One could also involve important Vatican studies on economics and globalization to engage a Roman Catholic view. The reader may notice that I spend more time on the LWF studies than I do on the WCC. And so the materials seem further limited. While I acknowledge a possible bias to the Lutheran approach (I am a Lutheran pastor!), the Lutheran study shows more systematic and detailed effort in developing theological principles in the discussion of globalization. Therefore, I needed to spend more time presenting and analyzing this material.
1.1 History and Development of the Church Studies on Globalization

Throughout this discussion, I will sometimes refer to the LWF and WCC simply as the “church.” This is for convenience and also for the fact that churches in the LWF and WCC see themselves as expressions of the universal church. They do not represent all of Christendom. But if one wants a Christian perspective on globalization, the LWF and WCC are reliable since they are global, multi-denominational, and in conformance with the historic Christian faith.

In the 1990s churches became intentional about studying the nature and impact of globalization. It became a topic of concern worthy for theological reflection and for the development of a Christian social ethic in the global era. The church’s global reaching institutions such as the WCC and the LWF are involved in matters of global justice on many levels—theological, political, and material. They have engaged in many programs of awareness, campaigns and development projects. The WCC and LWF combine ethical analysis with practical action. Therefore their ethical claims about globalization are relevant and interesting to analyze in greater detail. My focus is on the studies made by the church at a theoretical level where arguments are made for why the Christian should be concerned about globalization. These studies seek to make an ethical (as opposed to only an empirical) analysis of globalization and also call for an ethical response. There are other background and co-relating studies on globalization by these institutions that could be consulted. But since the studies I analyze in this paper are the prime working documents for the churches and intended for public moral deliberation, they are the focus for my comparison with the theories of global justice.

The World Council of Churches - The Island of Hope

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an association of many autonomous Christian churches from all over the world.1 The WCC is not a global “church body” and has no direct authority over various national or denominational churches. It is a council of cooperation of ecumenical dialogue and service. The Roman Catholic Church is not a full participating member of the WCC, nor are many evangelical protestant churches. Even though not all traditions are represented by the WCC, it does represent a significant number of Christian peoples and views, including some...
eastern Orthodox. The WCC study on globalization is formally called *The Island of Hope: An Alternative to Economic Globalization, Dossier 7*. This dossier collects international consultations on economic globalization that the WCC made in cooperation with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Council of European Churches. This consultation process began in 2001 and will be presented to the WCC’s main assembly in August 2006. The dossier’s purpose is “to trigger thoughts and actions on alternatives to economic globalization from the islands of the Pacific Region and other regions of the world” (WCC, 2001: 3). In this document, thoughts about globalization are developed from the perspective of the pacific island context.

*The Lutheran World Federation – Engaging Economic Globalization*

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a federation of autonomous churches in the Lutheran confession. Not all Lutheran churches are represented in the LWF. The LWF now represents approximately 66 million members. The LWF’s study considered here is comprised of two parts, each contributing to a wider LWF study program called “Holding Economic Globalization Accountable.” The first part is a larger working paper called *Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion*. This was completed in May 2001 by the LWF Department for Theology and Studies. Its purpose was to “stimulate a process in member churches of the LWF, and in their relationships (with other churches, faiths, sectors in society), for reflecting on the dynamics and effects of economic globalization and discerning how to respond in light of the faith we confess, the values we uphold, and the communion we embody” (LWF, 2001:2). The second part is a related and shorter summary document called *A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization*. This was presented for LWF assembly action in 2002 and acts as a “call”, or invitation to churches to give “attention to the theological, ethical, vocational and advocacy challenges raised by economic globalization” (LWF, 2002: 1). These two papers are also found in the book called *Communion, Accountability, and Responsibility* (2004): *Responding as a Lutheran Communion to Neoliberal Globalization*.

1.2 The Church’s Conception of Globalization

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2 For a full description of the Lutheran World Federation see: http://www.lutheranworld.org/
What is globalization in the church’s eyes? Both the WCC and the LWF answer this question by similar analysis. The church recognizes that globalization is a widening and speeding up of global interconnectedness (LWF, 2001: 7). This recognizes globalizing tendencies initiated by ancient and modern political and military empires. The church defines globalization today by reference to unique characteristics not found in previous times. Globalization is defined more narrowly as “economic globalization.” Both the WCC and LWF see economic globalization founded on the theoretical assumptions of neo-classical or neo-liberal economics. This assumes that the invisible hand of the market place grants individuals the optimum level to pursue unlimited desires (WCC, 2001: 9).

This economic paradigm is now expressed and practiced by global financial and business institutions. Institutions named by the church are, for example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and transnational corporations. The churches outline economic globalization as having the following features: mobility across borders; deregulation of government standards; corporate power; privatization; commoditisation of life; homogenization of products and culture; speculative investment; and loss of national sovereignty (LWF, 2002: 3). These are the empirical features of economic globalization. These are believed to widen the gap between the world’s wealthiest and the world’s poor, and to threaten the earth’s ecological life supporting systems (LWF, 2002: 4). And so this is the empirical reality the church’s moral sense reacts against. Overall, the LWF and WCC view the impact of economic globalization as negative.

1.3 The Role of Empirical Socio-economic Analysis

Before outlining globalization as a theological ethical issue, it should be noted how the church and global justice theorists alike use empirical analysis in their moral thinking. While a full social and economic analysis of globalization is not the purpose of my inquiry, it is important to note how empirical features show globalization as an ethical problem. Empirical features reveal to us ‘how things really are in the world.’ These features have no moral value unto themselves. But what happens in the world can go against our moral sense when observed. The moral theorist, as an observer, sees or experiences things that are in conflict with her sense of justice- of what is fair, what is right and good, or what should be. Whether rational
or intuitive or both, the moral sense is prior to what is experienced. It acts as a guide to right action in life to how things should be.

Both church theologians and global justice theorists see the negative impact of economic globalization. This grinds against their prior moral sense of justice and how things should be. Global justice theorists Thomas Pogge and Kok-Chor Tan share a similar analysis of economic globalization with the church. Although their discourse of ethical argumentation is different than the church, they share the critique of neo-liberal global institutions, adding the G8 and the World Bank as responsible global agents in need of reform. Tan argues that the neo-liberal economic paradigm governing these institutions has failed. This creates the need for principles of global justice. These principles, as we will see, do not depend on a prior existing socio-economic scheme. Principles of justice should act as society’s critic (Tan 2004: 34). In other words, the principles and standards of justice are valid whether economic globalization works or not. The fact that it has not worked for the world’s worst off, however, gives all the more reason to insist on global standards of justice. Yet for Tan, the role of empirical analysis is not as important as the church’s in setting up a theory of global justice.

Thomas Pogge’s empirical analysis of globalization helps set-up his arguments for global justice. Based on his analysis, our moral sense is disturbed and motivated to correct global injustices. He provides the reader with facts and figures emphasizing the contrast of abundance with extreme poverty. His number crunching shows how a significant reduction in poverty could be made with only minor adjustments to finance and trade; and with little sacrifice on the part of the wealthy. For Pogge there is an “obvious moral upshot” of this and “continuing our current global economic structures and policies unmodified would manifest a similar moral failure” (Pogge, 2001:14-15). His analysis precisely shows the failure of global financial and political institutions and how they can be redeemed. In my reading, the church’s empirical analysis does not create the same moral upshot, or moral outrage and motivation. Rather than a focused presentation of global inequalities as global inequalities, the church presents the facts of globalization primarily as an affront to the church’s being (see also Chapter Five). What the church’s analysis tends to expose, then, is not the stark inequalities suffered by people. Its analysis focuses on how globalization disturbs a mystical and theological conception of the church and human community. This is a minor criticism of how the church uses the empirical features in its ethics.
Inequalities are included in the church’s analysis but in a way which loses site of the universality and impact of the problem. That is, many people, not just the church’s being, suffer the inequalities of today’s global arrangements. For a more effective public witness, the church’s call for global justice needs to speak more clearly about inequalities and their disturbing features.

1.4 Economic Globalization as a Problem for Theological Ethics

Although I question the impact of empirical analysis by the church statements on our moral sense, we are reminded that the overall purpose of the church studies is to understand economic globalization in theological ethical terms. Now I wish to make some preliminary comments on why globalization is a matter of theological ethics. How does globalization fail theological ethical standards? For global justice theorists, economic globalization fails a proposed standard of justice. For the church, economic globalization breaches theological conceptions and values. While the LWF and WCC studies overlap in their theology, I will take the salient features of each in turn and tease out any differences.

Theological ethics in The Island of Hope

The WCC study contrasts the ethics of economic globalization with its own ‘Island of hope’ ethics. Economic globalization is an “ethics of competition and domination, which favours individualism and foster consumerism at the expense of social cohesion and sustainability of the community of life.” The Island of Hope ethics are “based on the deep respect for the whole community of life. It fosters the culture of sharing and caring, based on justice. Its values reflect God’s care for creation and Christ’s teaching to love one another and do justice to the poor.” (WCC 2001: 12)

The WCC sees its ethics as aligned with God and the other as aligned with mammon, or wealth. The ethics evoke Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 6.24 to “Serve God not mammon.” This is one of the slogans, or rallying cries, of the dossier. The mandate of Jesus is likened to a divine command theory ethic. In divine command theory, moral values and the good (or not good) is commanded by God or gods (depending on the religion). God commands what is to be the right moral action. In this case, right action is to not serve mammon. Today mammon represents the

3 In the gospel of Matthew 6:24, Jesus says: “You cannot serve God and mammon.” Mammon is a Semitic word for money or wealth.
concrete effects of economic globalization - inequality, exclusion, division, and environmental destruction. God, as conceived biblically, represents renewal, an alternative community of sharing, solidarity and love among humans. These concepts also become concrete as Christians take on alternative economic practices. Mammon, as economic globalization, threatens and competes with theological values of human solidarity, justice, charity, peace and restraint (WCC, 2001: 23).

Theological ethics in LWF’s Engaging Economic Globalization
Whereas the WCC narrowed its theological ethic to one conceptual slogan- God versus mammon, the LWF draws upon major theological concepts from its tradition. Thus it spends more time on a broader and more systematic theological argument against globalization. Like the WCC, the LWF also contrasts God-given mandates with the mandates of economic globalization. The larger of the LWF studies structures its theological argument on the decalogue, the ten commandments. Economic globalization is like an ‘other god’ spoken against in the first commandment, “you are to have no other gods.” As a ‘god’ economic globalization has become the centre of meaning and value. The study quotes Harvey Cox’s The Market as God,

Now the Market is becoming more like the Yahweh of the Old Testament…the only true God, whose reign must now be universally accepted and who allows for no rivals…omnipotent. [with] the capability to define what is real…to convert creation into commodities…a radical desacralization that dramatically alters human beings and nature for the sake of higher profits. (LWF, 2001:12)

What is threatening for Lutherans is that people attempt to justify their lives by the promises of this market place and not in the promises of God. Unlike the WCC, the LWF recognizes that this is not a black and white distinction between Godly people and mammon. People cannot easily separate themselves from the economy, or stand above it in a theological safe zone. Yet economic globalization is thwarting the original purpose of the economy. Economy is conceived as the well-being of the whole household of God (LWF, 2001: 13). The market is becoming like a god to people and people are trying to become like God through the market. That is, the

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4 The ten commandments have a significant place Martin Luther’s Small and Large catechisms. So it is not surprising the LWF brings them in here. These catechisms articulate and systematize the central beliefs of the Lutheran Church, the most central being the doctrine of justification of grace through faith. As we will see later, this doctrine is important in Lutheran ethical thinking.
market allows one to go beyond their creaturely limits to seek power and accumulation.

The LWF document highlights an ethical concern for creation. Creation is also ‘high’ theological concept in Lutheran thought. Creation not only means ‘the universe and all in it’ but God’s ongoing work of creating and sustaining life. Economic globalization threatens God’s intended purpose for creation. It reduces human needs and desires to insatiable individual wants and consumerism (LWF, 2001: 14). Creation has a relational nature in the same way that God’s being is relational as Trinity: “God is community, relationship, and self-giving love. Created in God’s image (Genesis 1.27) we exist in relation to others” (LWF, 2001:14). When an economic ethic maximizes individual gain and self-interest, the relational character is broken. Individual self-interest is put above the community. The breaking of relationship to God and to the neighbour is a way of understanding and summarizing the Lutheran conception of sin. Therefore, the theological concept of sin is connected with economic globalization. Unjust economic practices are “sinful” because they break relationships.

Moreover, the prophetic biblical tradition speaks against the sin of impoverishing the weakest (see for example, Isaiah 10.1-3a6). Economic globalization strays from the biblical, prophetic priority of justice for the poor,

Throughout the Bible, as well in Luther’s Large Catechism, the ethical priority is on what happened to those who are marginalized or impoverished as a result of certain policies, practices or power inequalities in a society; [Luther wrote] “Stealing in not just robbing someone … but taking advantage of someone… wherever business is transacted and money is exchanged for good and services… The poor are defrauded everyday, and new burdens and higher prices are imposed…beware of how you deal with the poor…” (LWF, 2001: 15)

Luther also had a theological conception of freedom. In his conception, freedom is relation to others in service. This is not the unrestrained, self-sufficient competitive freedom over others prompted by an accumulative economic system. The LWF’s

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5 God conceived as Trinity denotes relationship and community. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a communion of relationship. God’s being itself is relationship and this metaphysical conception has implications for ethical thinking. The ‘ethical’ as derived from the metaphysical therefore gives priority to relationship.

6 There God says: “Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey! What will you do on the day of punishment, in the calamity that will come from far away?” (NRSV)
conception of ‘freedom as neighbour love’ means that one’s self interest is limited. Freedom means to be free to serve others. But globalization is against a Christian concept of freedom (LWF, 2001: 15). In economic globalization freedom means to accumulate and maximize self-interest.

Like the WCC, the LWF sees globalization reducing life to the measurements of mammon and the “economic man.” A holistic sense of life is therefore at stake,

What tends to be sacrificed through processes of economic globalization are spiritual values, cultural identity, and diversity, and other aspects of life that cannot be measured in economic terms. The poor or otherwise disadvantaged are especially vulnerable. These sacrifices-for the sake of economic growth or profit- pose a central theological and moral challenge today which the churches cannot ignore. (LWF, 2002: 4)

Again, we see that the interrelatedness of creation is adversely affected by globalization and goes against God’s purpose for the earth and humanity. We will return to some of these concepts when discussing how theological ethics gives the motivation for resisting globalization and working for alternatives.

Summary evaluation of theological ethics
The WCC and LWF studies see economic globalization as a proper matter of ethical discussion for the church. This combines a divine command theory with an interpretative approach to theological ethics. Here the meaning of a commandment, biblical verse, or catechism point can be expanded to relate to a contemporary issue. Life today can be structured and framed by the biblical narrative. A biblical concept like mammon is correlated to economic globalization. Mammon otherwise would be a concept locked in the past, particular to the time of Jesus. Since the bible is the basic text for Christians, this interpretative approach helps the church make sense of issues today. Conversely, issues today can help make sense of the meaning of bible. The interpretive back and forth is important for understanding how the church builds ethical motivation against economic globalization. By framing this through biblical and theological lenses, we have seen how it poses a moral challenge to the churches.

One could argue from a classical Christian viewpoint, or from a Lutheran viewpoint, that economic globalization is not an ethical challenge for the church. The faith is ultimately about God’s justification of the sinner through Christ’s death and resurrection. The sinner receives forgiveness and eternal life. How we structure our socio-economic sphere, or how we behave ethically, won’t change God’s action on
this part. The theological concept of ‘two kingdoms’- a conceptual distinction of the spiritual kingdom of the church and the earthly kingdom of civil government- could also foster this view. The two kingdoms approach has been used to separate matters of faith and society. The socio-economic construction of society is not a matter for moral deliberation on the part of the church. But the two kingdoms approach can be re-interpreted in a way that makes it imperative to connect faith and society. I will consider the two kingdoms approach later when discussing the relationship between theological ethics and global theory.

Another problem exists when discussing globalization from a theological point of view. This is a matter of interpretation- in what way do we choose to align our theological principles with the facts of ‘how things really are’? I think it is possible that Christian ethicists would not be as critical of economic globalization as the WCC or LWF. One could argue positively for the market economy based on other sets of theological assumptions. Here the neo-liberal economic regime is not contrary to a Christian social ethic. Christian ethics are either uninvolved in this question or argue that the faith is compatible with the market values. We are obviously reminded of Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. There the Christian faith was conducive and even drove the capitalist attitude. Today, this spiritually sanctioned capitalism is simply logically extended to the global sphere. In order to do that, such Christian ethicists would chose different empirical data, favouring the statistics and arguments that show how economic globalization helps the world’s poor. They would correlate the problem in a manner to fit their theological concepts, perhaps conceiving freedom and responsibility as theological concepts fitting with capitalism. So they also are engaged in an interpretative play in order to ground their ethics.

The divine-command/interpretative approach works well for the theological ethics of the WCC and LWF. It makes it possible for economic globalization to become a matter for the church. But an interpretive approach can also argue the opposite, leading to a slippery slope of ethical relativism. So it is here theological ethics perhaps becomes unstable. How do we make sense of the problem when theological conceptions are being use to back-up different interpretations of globalization? For

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7 See Max Stackhouse et al (1995). *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era* (Abingdon, Nashville). Some of the articles here, though concerned about global inequality, are not as critical of neoliberalism nor propose the kind of alternatives as the WCC and LWF.
some, theological motivations for or against something carry a lot of weight. In order to negotiate the choices between theological interpretations, I hypothesize that another independent analytical approach is needed. This approach would have arguments that further ground and centre the church’s view so that its conception of justice is not merely a matter of interpretation among interpretations, but a coherently argued presentation of why and how global justice is to be realized. We now turn to such arguments from global theory. It is hoped that the addition of global theory can help the church negotiate through different theological interpretations of globalization.
2.0 Introduction to the Chapter

For similar reasons as the church, globalization has become morally problematic for global justice theorists. Previous theories of justice are lacking in their understanding and application to the global sphere. The socio-economic sphere created by global political and economic arrangements have outgrown theories of justice that were conceived within the limits of nation-states. Global justice theorists wish to go beyond humanitarian assistance and offer principles of justice that would demand a change in the structure of global arrangements. This chapter provides an overview of global theories of justice in the liberal tradition from John Rawls to Kok-Chor Tan. Two important things are noted in this overview. The first is the critique of John Rawls. There I will show how the reaction against the inadequacies of Rawls sets up the arguments for global justice. Secondly, I will begin to lay down a general theoretical commitment, or “lens”, for which to address the question – what is our global moral obligation? This lens will be a useful guide in further analysis of the political and distributive justice concerns found in the church studies.

2.1 John Rawls – The Founding Father of Global Justice Theory?

Global theories of justice can be linked back to John Rawls even though he himself has not given good reasons for global justice. However, his theory has been “globalized” by others who see the possibility for application of his central principles to a global context. The foremost are Rawls’s two principles of justice, the political and the economic. Political justice is concerned with protecting political and civil rights. Economic justice is concerned with the distribution of material goods such as wealth, income, resources, etc.,. (Tan, 2004: 4)

The principles of justice are imagined theoretically under a hypothetical veil of ignorance where no one knows what status they have in life. Rational people would choose the following two principles of justice conceived by Rawls,

1) Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for all.

2) Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both
   a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principles, and
b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (Rawls, 1971: 266).

These principles are known to reconcile two previously thought incompatible principles, liberty and equality. This is an egalitarian form of liberalism, or as Amy Gutmann put it, “a liberalism for the least advantaged, a liberalism that pays moral tribute to the socialist critique” (Quoted in Tan, 2000: 159). Since globalization increases the plight of the least advantaged, it is fitting that global theorists wish to make both the political and distributive principles of justice a global ideal. But Rawls rejects their global application. Why?

*The Law of Peoples*

In *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls develops a conception of justice applicable to international law and practice. The conception theorizes a way that countries can relate to each other realistically but peacefully. With this in mind, Rawls recognizes that not all peoples are liberal and democratic. Despite that fact, there are a minimum set of principles to follow which would ensure nations get along with each other and so that their citizens enjoy a minimum set of rights. The argument for this is complex and beyond the scope of my inquiry. What is interesting for us here is that Rawls’s argument does not demand the above principles of justice to apply in all cases.

Part of the reason is that Rawls’s *Theory of Justice* was developed with the nation-state in mind. The nation was thought to be the extent of moral community and obligation. And *the Law of Peoples* is meant to address realistically what justice is possible in the interaction between liberal and non-liberal states. For Rawls, imposing a global ideal of liberal justice contradicts the liberal notion of toleration. That is, more liberal states are not supposed to interfere and change the ways of life in non-liberal states. Within the domestic sphere, liberalism respects the plurality of comprehensive doctrines- religious, philosophical, and moral- that citizens have. Viewing a ‘people’ like a citizen, this principle is extended to the international society of peoples. This of course keeps a minimum standard of justice at work,

Similarly, we say that, provided a nonliberal society’s basic institutions meet certain specified conditions of political right and justice and lead its people to honor a reasonable and just law for the Society of Peoples, a liberal people is to tolerate and accept that society (Rawls, 1999: 60).
A nonliberal society may not meet the political and distributive justice of Rawls’s two principles, but it is a close as we can realistically expect to get to fairness. However, the toleration argument does not adequately explain why there should be a different standard of justice expected from liberal and non-liberal peoples. Justice then is overly captive to the whims of culture. Instead, principles of justice should function to critique the elements of culture when they become unjust.

**Burdened Societies – A glimpse of global justice through assistance?**

*The Law of Peoples* creates a different set of distributive justice standards, one for the domestic society and another for the global context. Rawls argues for the reduction of inequalities within a domestic society. One reason, for example, is that it is unjust for citizens who are poor to be stigmatized and treated as inferiors (Rawls, 1999: 114). But Rawls does not accept these principles to apply outside the domestic society. He believes global obligations are covered by duties of assistance. It is important to outline these, as Rawls uses the duty of assistance argument to articulate his genuine concern for global inequality and for least advantaged societies.

‘Burdened societies’ are those who need assistance to become well-ordered (but not necessary liberal) societies. They are burdened because they do not have the organization and institutions of law needed to flourish politically and economically. It is important to note that for Rawls, it is not the global structure and institutions (WTO, IMF, UN, etc.) that create unfavourable conditions for a society. Unfavourable conditions are mostly the fault of the domestic society itself. So it is the duty for well-ordered societies to offer assistance to correct this fault.

The first guideline of assistance is to “consider that a well-ordered need not be a wealthy society.” Here a just savings principle creates just basic institutions for a well-ordered society and secures a social world where citizens can live a worthwhile life. Once this society is established the savings may stop. The first guideline believes that it is not wealth that is needed but just institutions. Once just institutions are established there is “no longer a duty of justice” to assist. Rawls says plainly that the aim here is not to maximize indefinitely the average level of wealth in society. (Rawls 1999: 106-107)

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8 The just savings principle is what a society is to save to ensure basic liberties and institutions are in place. See Rawls *Theory of Justice*, section 44, p. 257. In a global context, wealthier societies would save money in their budgets and assist unordered societies until they become unburdened.
The second guideline is related to the first. It states: “the political culture of a burdened society is all-important.” Again ‘throwing money’ at the problem is not what is needed. This is because Rawls believes that good political institutions will lead to wealth distribution. A burdened society needs to change its political and social culture. A lack of just political culture within a state affects its distribution of resources. A just political culture, then, includes a large measure of human rights. (Rawls, 1999: 108-111)

The third guideline of assistance sets a target point for assistance. The aim “is to help burdened societies to be able to manage their own affairs reasonably and rationally….”. Assistance is not forever and ends when a people are politically ‘on their feet’ to becoming a well-ordered society. Rawls recognizes that even if this is achieved a people may still be poor. The lack of target is also Rawls’s main criticism of global egalitarian principles, which he believes never let a people stand on their own. (Rawls, 1999: 111-112; 119)

These guidelines outline a concern for global justice where least advantaged societies can be assisted to flourish. This is a valuable approach and if the international community were to follow Rawls suggestions, many people would be all the better off. But this approach is fundamentally different than Rawls’ “globalizers”, such as Thomas Pogge and Kok-Chor Tan. They feel Rawls’s theory continues to fail to make the difference principle a global ideal. Pogge and Tan seek to go beyond duties of assistance and therefore will challenge some of the assumptions Rawls makes about international relations. In this they are not against Rawls. But they take more seriously the global nature of today’s political and economic life. Their reaction to Rawls enables them to globalize his core principles of justice.

2.2 Globalizing Rawls, Part 1 - Thomas Pogge on Global Obligation as Global Solidarity

Thomas Pogge has come to understand global inequality as something very much to do with global institutions and practices. As said before, Pogge makes a precise contemporary analysis of the effects of globalization on the world’s poor. Rawls lacks an empirical understanding of global context. Perhaps this is partly why he cannot conceive of his theory as a global ideal.
In contrast, Pogge starkly reminds us of our global responsibility based on the empirical facts of the global economy. He believes the economic policies and global institutions that we impose make us causally and morally responsible. This idea is lost in Rawls and other theorists who do not take the facts of global connections seriously (Pogge, 2001: 15). I do not wish to restate these facts, but it is important to show the conclusion of Pogge’s empirical analysis.

The moral imperative of empirical analysis

In his article, Priorities of Global Justice, Pogge shows that the decision to tolerate starvation and preventable diseases is questionable in light of the fact that their reduction would not involve much cost or risk to developed countries. Developed states already had the power to eradicate poverty during economic growth period since WW II. Yet now, these states have cut their development aid funding and continue to support unfair global economic policies.9 His analysis considers that poverty goes hand in hand with an under fulfillment of human and political rights: “Desperately poor people, often stunted from infancy, illiterate and heavily preoccupied with the struggle to survive, can do little by way of either resisting or rewarding their local and national rulers, who are therefore likely to rule them oppressively while catering the interests of other (often foreign) agents more capable of reciprocation” (Pogge, 2001: 8).

Rawls might argue here that such poverty is ultimately caused by unfavourable internal conditions vis-à-vis the lack of just basic institutions. This is undeniable considering the existence of corruption. However, a case can be made that such poverty is linked to global economic policy despite the internal corruption. The open global market, even if totally free, would not likely bring prosperity to the world’s poor. As it is, wealthy countries impose unfair protective trade barriers that hinder the trading power of developing countries, thus hindering the economic growth needed to reduce poverty. (Pogge, 2001: 13)

From nation to globe

9 For example, the US government has stated that: “The attainment of any ‘right to adequate food’ or fundamental right to be free from hunger’ is a goal or aspiration to be realized progressively that does not give rise to any international obligations.” (My emphasis, Pogge, 2001: 10, quoting the US government “Interpretative Statement” of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, <http://www.fas.usda.gov:80/icd/summit/interpre.html>
So it is not fair to blame unfavourable conditions entirely on burdened societies. Yes, nations make bad choices but the burden is partly conditioned by the empirical global facts. These facts are the basis for understanding the global economic connections that create global solidarity. They become for us in ethical discourse the reason there is moral connections between people. Pogge develop three morally significant connections between “us and the global poor.” ("Us" in this case refers to the people of developed countries). He says:

1) [the poor’s] social starting positions and ours have emerged from a single historical process that was pervaded by massive grievous wrongs. The same historical injustices, including genocide, colonialism, and slavery, play a role in explaining both their poverty and our affluence.

2) Second, they and we depend on a single natural resource base, from the benefits of which they are largely, and without compensation, excluded. The affluent countries and elites of the developing world divide these resources on mutually agreeable terms without leaving “enough and good” for the remaining majority of humankind.

3) Third, they and we coexist within a single global economic order that has a strong tendencies to perpetuate and even to aggravate global economic inequality. (Pogge, 2001: 14)

Pogge could update his position on global solidarity with reference to how connections are speeded up as globalization relies more and more on information technology. In the technical sense we are even more ‘connected’ now than Pogge suggests. The LWF and WCC studies are sharp on this fact. Regardless, Pogge establishes the reality of global connection necessary to argue for a global moral obligation.

Rawls would agree that there is a reality of socio-economic connection that binds us morally. However, for Rawls those connections are limited to the nation. Pogge calls this a result of Rawls's “contextualist moral universalism” (Pogge, 2002: 104). This is a moral universalism, but one which is universal only within the limits of a self-contained society. In this society the difference principle does apply. Rawls acknowledges that within a nation economic life can be structured in ways that affect distribution,

[Rawls] requires that justice requires citizens to aim for a national economic order that satisfies the difference principle, that is, that allows social and economic equalities to arise only insofar as they tend to optimize the lowest socioeconomic positions (Pogge, 2001: 15).
Pogge sees no reason why the application of the difference principle to the global sphere cannot be analogous to the national. We have seen that Rawls rejects this because any economic restructuring assistance needs a target point. However, if no target is demanded in the national sphere why should it be demanded in the global?

Although I save Kok-Chor Tan’s overall theory for later, I think he speaks well to this question. So I bring him into the discussion now because he brings in an issue that helps develop Pogge’s argument further. Tan remarks that a global distribution principle would be for Rawls redundant in light of a duty of humanitarian assistance. He acknowledges the reason why Rawls’s worries about global distributive principles having unacceptable results. Some societies would use the benefits of distributive justice in prudence to improve their situation and others would “squander” theirs (Tan, 2004: 69). Rawls believes it is difficult to foresee which societies would do so in prudence and which ones would not. ‘Successful’ well-ordered societies would be unfairly transferring wealth to ‘squandering’ societies. So it is safer to offer humanitarian assistance until the target of well-ordered is reached. A deeper, ongoing principle of global distributive justice would have to apply as long as there are inequalities between societies (Tan 2001: 69).

But that is precisely the issue for Pogge and Tan. The ongoing task of distributive justice is to shape global institutions in the manner of the difference principle. Rawls is wrong to assume that the baseline global structure is just. Rawls’s argument would demand a global structure that is just in the way a national structure is just, say like Sweden. But the global society, as Pogge has forcefully argued, is not just as Sweden’s domestic society is just. Tan remarks:

Duties of justice speak directly to the basic structure; justice is concerned with the baseline distribution of wealth and resources, and the basic institutions and principles that and rationalize this distribution. To put it perspicuously, while duties of humanity aim to redistribute wealth, duties of justice aim to identify what counts as just distribution in the first place (Tan, 2004: 67).

This is not a matter of transferring wealth from rich to poor by means of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid is of course morally demanded. But justice demands us to re-conceive the global basic structure, especially to correct an initial unjust distribution (Tan, 2004: 67). There is no target point in this conception, other than the time and place where that correction is realized.

_The buck stops with us – the reality of global solidarity_
Our brief detour through Tan has helped us establish Pogge’s argument against Rawls that we are morally obligated at a global level. This means making the intra-national obligations of Rawls theory analogous to the global “nation.” This conception of global solidarity leads Pogge to go further in terms of our responsibility to eradicate poverty. He believes that global institutions as they are contribute to the harming of innocent people. More dramatically put, the solidarity is such that we in the developed world are responsible for deaths, albeit indirectly. It is not just the unelected villainous regimes that are responsible.

Deaths caused by global economic arrangements designed and imposed by our governments are a different matter: these governments are elected by us, responsive to our interests and preferences, acting in our name and in ways that benefit us. This buck stops with us. (Pogge, 2002: 23)

Thus we share the damage done by corrupt regimes. Pogge makes the empirical connections in global arrangements come with moral responsibility. Rawls’s moral contextualism therefore becomes uncomfortable. One may counter that we are not responsible globally unless there is some sort of world government. Later we will see in more detail how global responsibility does not demand a world government. Elected governments that we participate in can shape today’s global arrangements. We have agency and therefore responsibility. Such responsibility makes it reasonable to globalize Rawls’s two principles of justice. Pogge shows that because of global connection and solidarity, we have ethical motivation to eradicate harm caused by globalization.


Kok-Chor Tan is a liberal political philosopher writing recently in the area of global justice. He shares many of the assumptions of Pogge. Tan also reacts against the limitations of Rawls in *The Law of Peoples* and assumes the global solidarity found in Pogge’s analysis. But Tan takes a different route to build an argument for global justice. The ethical motivation for global justice in found in insisting on the moral priority of the individual. This priority drives the principles of political and distributive justice founded by Rawls. Prioritizing the individual makes justice a global ideal.
Comprehensive liberalism and political liberalism

Tan discusses the distinction made by Rawls between political liberalism and comprehensive liberalism in his first book, *Toleration, Diversity, and Global Justice* (2000). Liberalism generally defines the moral priority of the individual as autonomy. Autonomy is the capacity to examine, re-evaluate, and revise one’s ends and goals in life. In political liberalism, autonomy is primarily a political ideal shaping the basic institutions of society where public human interaction takes place. The principle of autonomy is limited to the political realm and does not override any comprehensive philosophical, religious, or moral doctrine an individual may have in non-public relationships. A comprehensive doctrine is an overall guide and conception of the good life. In political liberalism, comprehensive doctrines are tolerated so long as they don’t interfere with the autonomy of others in the political realm. Yet autonomy, as a principle, is not applicable to the whole of one’s life. For example, I may have a religion that could in some way limit my autonomy in a private realm. In this realm some things remain un-revisable. The limits of my autonomy are tolerated as long as it does not limit me politically— that I can still vote, receive public education and healthcare, or what have you. Toleration is fundamental and necessary for liberty. Liberty in this conception is the freedom to have comprehensive doctrines, yet also be able to participate unhindered in the political sphere. Political liberalism attempts to balance both. That is why it is a valuable theory in contexts with a plurality of comprehensive doctrines. (Tan 2000: 1-5)

Comprehensive liberalism, on the other hand, regards autonomy as an ideal applicable or comprehensive over the whole of life. It is not just an ideal for the public and political sphere. Since the individual is morally prior, the principle of toleration is subordinated to individual autonomy. The ideal is that one can and should be able to revise their conceptions of the good life. Comprehensive liberalism therefore justifies and provides protection for “autonomy conducing” cultural conditions needed when one is unfairly threatened. Culture and tradition is not a reasonable refuge for “illiberal” practices. These are practices that go against basic human rights, free expression and association, gender equality, equal liberty of conscience, and the equal right of dissent. Because the individual is the ultimate unit of moral worth, and not the group, Tan believes comprehensive liberalism must be invoked to protect basic human rights. (Tan 2000:1-5; 17)
Comprehensive liberalism’s troubles with Rawls

Tan finds that political liberalism risks protecting culture against autonomy and would fail a “global test.” The global context tests the limits of the toleration principle, because we have a diversity of comprehensives doctrines, some of which are unfortunately highly illiberal (Tan, 2000: 9). Tan finds this most troubling in Rawls’s *The Law of Peoples*. Basically, Rawls’s toleration of non-liberal but well-ordered peoples (Decent hierarchal societies, or DHS) remains a threat to individual autonomy. Tolerance sacrifices autonomy (as individual rights, etc.) for international political stability. Rawls rightly recognizes that not all states will be liberal and so long as they have a minimum guarantee of rights we can reasonably tolerate them (and, for example, not go to war with them or economically sanction them in order to liberate their people).

But Tan asks: why not insist on more rights for people in such societies? If liberalism truly regards the individual as the unit of moral worth, then Rawls’s worries are overstated. Decent hierarchal societies (DHS) deny certain rights in the political realm. Yet this wouldn’t pass in a liberal society. Tolerating DHS is analogous to tolerating non-liberal views in domestic societies. Like Pogge, Tan wishes to show that what passes for Rawls in liberal societies should also pass in the global context. Protecting individual autonomy is reasonable in DHS also. (Tan, 2000: 28-29)

Tan emphasizes a more striking reason for not accepting the toleration of DHS. Borrowing from Pogge and Charles Beitz, he recognizes that in a “global original position” individuals do not choose the society they are born in. In Rawls’s conception of a global original position, it seems that only the representatives of societies, like the leaders, would meet under the veil of ignorance. Some may be elected, and more troubling, others are not. Therefore individuals from across societies are not represented in the original position. But nationality is a contingency of an original position. Given the option, individuals would reasonably choose not to be born in a DHS. Tan follows Beitz in order to argue that a global original position is not dependent on existing cooperation and stability between nations, but on the fact that “individuals are self-authenticating sources of valid claims.” (Tan, 2004: 55-59)

Rawls may reply that the moral priority of the individual remains irreconcilable with the comprehensive doctrines of one’s culture. Recall that tolerating comprehensive doctrines of the good life is fundamental to liberty. To impose a
comprehensive sense of autonomy on people would be for Rawls to impose a sectarian doctrine. This is “an ideal of autonomy that cannot be reasonably expected of individuals affirming the various nonliberal but reasonable comprehensive philosophical, religious, or moral views one finds in a modern pluralistic society” (Tan, 2000: 47). This is amplified in the conception of a modern pluralistic global society, which makes this all the more problematic. In such a society there is a fear that comprehensive liberalism will undermine the cultural; the conceptions of ways of life, community, traditions, values, and language that makes up one’s identity. However, Tan responds to this fear by insisting that cultures are not single holistic conceptions.10 Nonliberal cultural practices are generally separable features of a culture rather than definitive of it (Tan, 2000: 34). What is up for critique is of course not the whole culture, but the unjust features within the culture. When it comes to culture worries, one does not need to throw out the baby with the bathwater, as the saying goes. Tan therefore regards comprehensive liberalism to be compatible with a plurality of doctrines, perhaps more so. We will go into this deeper later. For now we regard political liberalism’s tolerance of the unjust features of DHS as highly problematic. It does not allow the individual in a DHS to influence the features of culture that upset her access to political and distributive justice.

From comprehensive liberalism to cosmopolitanism
In his second and most recent work, *Justice without Borders* (2004), Tan develops a principle of cosmopolitanism further grounding the individual as being the ultimate unit of moral concern. This foundational principle is all-important in a global context. The cosmopolitan principle holds the individual is ultimate regardless of nationality and citizenship. As we have seen, Rawls tends to limit justice obligations to within the borders of a state or nation. Yet nationality and citizenship can prevent a concern for the individuals in other lands. For a global theory of justice to work, the moral borders need to be opened to those who are not the same nationality or citizenship. (Tan, 2004: 1)

Antagonists who are critical of Tan may propose that, like culture, nationality and citizenship are important aspects of one’s identity and should not be overridden by the

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principle of autonomy. Using the same logic he used to defend comprehensive liberalism against culture worries, Tan argues that the cosmopolitan view does not negate nationality or citizenship. Like culture, these remain compatible with individualism and need not be given up. I won’t go too much into this argument here. More important is that we understand how Tan’s view motivates the two principles of justice to maintain a global egalitarian commitment. The position sum total that Tan defends follows in his own words.

On a cosmopolitan conception of political justice, individuals are entitled to an equal range of political and civil rights regardless of where they live… On the cosmopolitan view [of economic justice]…principles of distributive justice ought to apply equally and impartially to all persons and ought not to be constrained by the border of countries. It is worth noting that neither cosmopolitan political justice nor economic necessitates a world state or government. What cosmopolitan justice calls for fundamentally is the creation of the necessary forms of global institutions in which the basic rights and liberties of persons can be equally protected and secured and in which persons are treated with equal concern. (Tan 2004: 4)

Tan reminds us that most of the public concern with global justice in the West has focused on political justice, a fetish of human rights, and not the economic (Tan, 2004: 5). As we will see, this is where the church studies would fair well for Tan in their insistence on economic justice. Tan wishes to hold the political and economic tightly together for all concerned. He addresses his call for the two senses of justice to both liberal and non-liberal countries alike.11

**Tan’s moral cosmopolitanism – our theoretical lens**

Tan’s cosmopolitanism is “a moral claim about the scope of justice” and is not so much about individual identity or a world state (Tan, 2004:12). His theory shows who we are morally obligated to as global agents and what those obligations entail. In this case, every individual counts. So we are to adjust our political and economic arrangements to allow an individual to flourish, wherever they may be. This is a rigorous theoretical, and eventually, practical task. But it is a task I suggest we

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11 Tan elaborates: “It is an empirical fact of our world that most of the affluent countries, the countries that would be asked to assume the burdens of distributive justice, and from whom resistance to attempts at equalizing resource and wealth distribution globally is most likely to come, are liberal countries. On the contrary, nonliberal countries, which tend to be less well off economically, have historically been the advocates for greater global redistribution of wealth and resources. So while the demands of political justice are directed primarily at nonliberal countries, the demands of economic justice are directed primarily at liberal countries.” (Tan, 2004: 8)
commit to throughout the rest of this discussion. I suggest that a global theory of justice seek to give priority the individual. This will be the lens, or standard, or test, of how for example, the church is fairing on the global question (theological ethics may at times coincide with this lens, other times it will clash). And we will continue to look through the lens as we go deeper into liberal arguments for global justice.
CHAPTER THREE
Analysis of the Church Studies

3.0 Introduction to the Chapter
So far I have outlined some of the basic arguments for global justice as developed in reaction to John Rawls. This gives an overview of the basic principles and possible controversies liberals have in applying the two prongs of justice globally. It is with this overview we return to the church’s work on globalization. This chapter will outline the sense of political and economic justice in the WCC and LWF studies. The following Chapter Four will return to Pogge and Tan to further develop global theory’s arguments in response to the claims of the church.

Two important remarks should be made before applying our lens to the WCC and LWF papers. First, both works are light on political justice, assuming a general view of human rights. The focus is on economic globalization and thus the distributive issues take precedence. Yet this is where the global justice theorists will come to aid the discussion in chapter 4. Though, as we have seen, they also emphasize distributive issues. Second, the WCC and LWF papers do not make a distinction between political and economic justice, nor develop an overall moral justification of global justice. The purpose of the theoretical lens is to organize the church statements and understand them in light of the concerns of global justice theory. This will help create a dialogue between theological ethics and global justice theory. From that we can see how there is a relationship on the question of globalization and the challenges of such a relationship. This chapter poses three analytical questions to the WCC and LWF studies. One, what is the conception of political justice? Two, what is the conception of economic justice. Three, what is the role of global institutions?

3.1 Political Justice in WCC’s The Island of Hope

Conception of the individual
Although not explicitly stated, The Island of Hope document understands the individual as radically immersed in community. Traditional communal and indigenous cultures are envisioned as the ideal conception of moral community. There is little sense of the individual in this conception. “Individualism” is denounced as fostering consumerism “at the expense of social cohesion and
sustainability of life” (WCC, 2001: 12). Individualism here means the tendency to be self-concerned. The communal sense of being with and for others also is the basis for the WCC’s vision of economic justice.

Conception of political agency
The communitarian sense here holds through the document. Political participation is the ability to be connected with the decisions of the community. This relies on a reference to the dignity of every person. Yet individual dignity is conceived insofar as it is linked to communal participation. Dignity is compromised when the individual is denied the right to participate in decisions affecting them (WCC, 2001: 8). Globalization denies power to the weakest people in making decisions. These often are women, children, and minorities. So the WCC advocates a principle of political justice favouring power to the poor. But it doesn’t specify the kind of rights and liberties that would be adequate. Therefore it does not speak so much in the terms used by global theories of justice. Rather it talks about four political things need to promote human development. These are:

1) adequate support for the poor, unemployed, and other vulnerable groups
2) environmental protection
3) transparency and accountability in government, and
4) effective participation by civil society (including labour unions). (WCC, 2001: 22)

From these principles, the WCC insists on democratic forms of decision-making to “reinstate” democracy at all levels- local, national, and international. A call to “reinstate” democracy comes out of the WCC’s critique that globalization erodes democracy. Globalization gives power once held by democratically elected governments over to influential international bureaucracies, transnational corporations, media-owners, and movers of global financial capital (WCC, 2001: 23). The WCC believes the state should protect the most vulnerable from the ill-effects global agreements. The state remains the most effective area for political participation. This echoes the views of political theorist favouring a conception of nationalism, like David Miller, and even John Rawls, who also sees the nation as the effective and relevant political body to secure justice. This body is also the chief securer of the ‘common good.’ The WCC recommends policy decisions that
strengthen local and national power. Governments are to choose international actions that best serve the common good of their citizens (WCC, 2001: 24).

3.2 Economic Justice in WCC’s *The Island of Hope*

Communal conception of wealth distribution

The caution against individualism and the priority of the community is consistent through the WCC’s approach to economic justice. As political justice in WCC favours the agency of the weak, so does the conception of economic justice. The communal call to “share what we have” is made explicit in order to maximize the quality of life of the poor. The following statement articulates the communal sense governing and linking the conceptions of political and economic justice,

Spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect are components if the concept of the Island of Hope which prioritizes relationships, celebrates quality of life, and values human beings and creation over the production of things. The Island of Hope is an alternative to the project of economic globalization which entails domination through an unjust economic system. (WCC, 2001: 5)

The ideal of distributive justice is rooted in this communal conception, which is also a theological conception. The communal experience of pre-Western society suggests a greater sense of shared material wealth. Examples of the alternatives to economic globalization are found in traditional wisdom from around the world: in Asia as, “gotong-royong” (togetherness); in Indonesia as “bayanihan” (collective living); in the Philippines as “panchasila” (five principles of peaceful living); and in India as “daedong yundae” (great solidarity) (WCC, 2001: 13). Communal arrangements had been previously based on non-monetary, non-consumer, and subsistence economies. These are in contrast to today’s global economy that is based on individualism and competition (WCC, 2001:13). The WCC encourages the development of traditional economies.

Parts of these traditions have an economic ethic compatible with Christian principles. For example, while some traditional values had negative forces, the best of the Pacific society’s lived-traditions are similar to the Kingdom of God values taught by Jesus.

Jesus called us into the kingdom of God. God’s inheritance is one of generosity and reciprocity and the sharing of communal resources…The practical outcome of this understanding is communitarian sharing and
distribution of resources with the absence of selfish pursuit of wealth. While Western economies revolve around profit and economic growth, the traditional economies of the Pacific are concerned with people and the total quality of their lives….While traditionally these values operated mainly within the context of the wider family or clan, Jesus challenges us to extend them to all, because we are all members of the family of God. (WCC, 2001: 7)

The “extension to all” above seems to safeguard a communal conception of economic justice from possible criticism that it gives too much priority to local tribe and culture.

But this criticism still needs to be brought up. This is that traditional life perhaps was not so ideal and contained much inequality and hierarchal structures. This could be a case of reminiscing romantically about a past that did not in fact reflect the values of Jesus. Yet the WCC wishes to highlight the aspects of communal life seen to reflect Jesus’s values and maximize wealth distribution. Perhaps this is akin to how liberal theory sees that a culture is not a totally. There are some values in culture that are life giving, and correlate to the ethic of Jesus. And there are other values of culture that are the opposite (in liberal theories of justice these are called ‘illiberal’ values). But the WCC does not show how it is highlighting the ‘good’ values of a culture. It does not critically reflect enough on how some values of culture may be contrary to the ethics of Jesus. This ultimately makes an uncomfortable connection between the cultural values of sharing and the ethic of Jesus.

3.3 The role of global institutions in The Island of Hope
How does the WCC view the role of global institutions in challenging globalization? Pogge and Tan also take up this question. They propose that global institutions align their policies with the moral principles of global justice. As we have seen, the WCC is concerned about the sovereignty of nations. A diminishment of sovereignty means people lack political agency. Thus the WCC wants to re-establish the authority of democratic local and national governments. This suggests the moral community, as civil society, is best limited to the nation. The WCC recognizes the need for political and economic regulation at the international level. Yet global institutions- political and corporate- are to be subordinated to the national. The WCC wants to “make multinationals accountable and transparent to civil society…make international organizations (IMF, World Bank, WTO) subject to democratic decision-making” (WCC, 2001: 15). The thrust is to encourage the development of domestic economies. This can overlook the already interconnected global economy and seems
to locate distributive justice principles nationally, as Rawls does in *The Law of Peoples*.

**3.4 Political Justice in the LWF’s *Engaging Economic Globalization*…**

*Conception of the individual*

The LWF study echoes some of the concepts in *The Island of Hope*, but articulates them in different ways. The LWF also envisions the individual as part of community. Globalization sets the individual over and against others, rather than in relational community with each other (LWF, 2001: 12). Community as the unit of moral priority expresses the freedom of the individual. Human freedom is realized, not in self-sufficiency, but in mutual participation and solidarity, and what the individual can contribute to community (LWF, 2001: 16). Such freedom is vital to both a conception of political and economic justice.

*Relation as moral community*

The LWF keeps to a more general ideal of community as relation. What is the basis for this relation? Culture or nation? This is not as clear as in the WCC, who emphasized local cultures. As I will show later, relation for the LWF is derived from a theological concept of *communio*. This will be the basis for an ethical motivation for *global* solidarity and obligation. Thus the LWF expands its conception of moral political community beyond nationality.

At the same time, the LWF seeks to protect local cultures from the “homogenizing” effects of globalization (LWF, 2001: 10), but does not give it the moral status as the WCC does. We could say that this is a more thin conception of culture in line with liberalism: a respect for a plurality of cultures but not *a priori* necessary for justice. The LWF acknowledges that domestic sovereignty is affected by globalization and its own programs seek to work in cooperation with local governments. Yet the LWF does not overly insist on re-instating participatory democracy at the national level. Here the LWF recognizes the already powerful and interwoven global context. Political justice is focused more on shaping international institutions. To shape justice, the LWF makes greater reference to the role of political rights and encourages policies that favour the world’s most vulnerable. It supports the human rights instruments that secure economic, social, and cultural rights through
international treaties and organizations (LWF, 2001:22); and it challenges patterns of
corruption within domestic governments by insisting on transparent and democratic
processes (LWF, 2002: 11).

3.5 Economic Justice in LWF’s Engaging economic globalization
In its 1990 assembly, the LWF stated that: “A just economic order includes the right
of people to control their own resources so that all have the possibility to live a
dignified life.”12 Here economic participation is an obvious result of political
participation. This is complicated by globalization because participation is neither
direct nor local: “Those who previously were separated from one another, pursuing
their own economic activities, are now competitively linked” (LWF, 2001: 11). To
counter this view, the LWF sees the economy (as oikos, the well-being of the whole
household) as an expression of community “sharing and enjoying that which each
contributes to the whole community” (LWF, 2001: 14).

The economic community in this conception is a global one. It does not seem we
can go back to a time when economies were isolated and local. And not all of
globalization is terrible. So the global reality is more taken up and reckoned with in
the LWF’s conception of economic justice. It expands domestic conceptions of
economic justice to the global reality so that “the ethical priority is on what happens
to those who are marginalized or impoverished as a result of certain policies,
practices, or power inequalities in a society” (LWF, 2001: 15). Meeting the needs of
the global neighbour takes precedence.

3.6 The Role of Global Institutions in LWF’s Engaging economic globalization
To meet the needs of the global neighbour the LWF focuses on international
institutions. It does not subordinate the role of global institutions to domestic
governments as the WCC. Rather, the LWF sees both national and international
institutions working together in order to be accountable to the “justice for all that God
intends.” The document includes five practical principles or actions which would
make these institutions more accountable. In these we can see an interaction of
political and economic justice principles ‘concretized’ for shaping institutions.

12 This echoes Thomas Pogge’s proposal for a Global Resources Dividend. Here people gain right to
the resources in their lands (e.g., petroleum, metals, etc.). Corporations/governments are required to
share the profits with the people in natural resource development and sales. See Pogge (2002), World
1) Participating in the Jubilee Campaign to cancel the external debts of severely indebted countries.

2) Encouraging greater transparency and democratic participation in international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization.

3) Supporting the development of Human Rights instruments (including economic, social, and cultural rights) through international treaties and organizations, and monitoring governments at different levels to fulfill their responsibilities in this area.

4) Promoting coherence between social policy (including human rights obligations) and economic policy, both nationally and internationally.

5) Advocating for fair, more just trade policies and practices within and among countries. (LWF, 2001: 22)

These governmental and public organizations are not the only institutions to be held accountable. The LWF also includes corporations under its standards of economic justice. This comes with the empirical recognition of the power of corporations in shaping political and economic decisions. Corporations now have global range. This demands examples of socially responsible standards for corporate practices related to child labour, worker compensation, and environmental protection (LWF, 2001: 22).

3.7 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Church Views on Global Justice

A general question to be asked is: how does the church’s view on justice conform to and enact Rawls’s difference principle? This principle was stated in Chapter Two (2.1) and is foundational for uniting political and economic justice. I believe both the LWF and WCC documents in their own way propose arguments that realize Rawls’s principles. And they go further to globalize them, sharing the aims of Pogge and Tan. This is an analytical jump, however, as we are comparing two different moral discourses each with their own methods and strategies. One is theological and written for public deliberation. Its rhetorical strategy is emotive and polemical, and often written in a manner of a manifesto or Sunday sermon. The other discourse is political theory, written for a narrower academic audience. This employs precise argumentation and is polemically cooler. However, the divergence of methods is not enough of a reason to prevent a useful dialogue between.

Albeit less explicitly, *The Island of Hope* addresses this too, when it speaks of privatization as undermining the infrastructure of eastern European economy. See WCC, 2001: 21.
**Strengths**

A strength of the church papers is that they insist on maintaining the economic needs of people, especially the least advantaged. Recall Tan’s criticism that the West has been largely concerned about political rights. While I would have liked to see more about political rights and how they enshrine economic rights (see ‘weaknesses’ below), the church studies do not fall back into that pattern. The alternatives to economic globalization generally conform to Rawls’s difference principle that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged.

**Weaknesses**

The conception of culture is not questioned enough in both WCC and LWF studies. This leaves it prey to the culture concerns of global justice theory discussed in the next chapter. Women and children are acknowledged as vulnerable under globalization. But the studies lack a conception of the individual with liberties and rights apart from culture. The somewhat romanticized priority of culture and community, especially in the WCC paper, seems to undercut potential gender and class issues. As I hope to show, a global theory giving moral priority to the individual will deal with these concerns in such a way neither negating culture nor giving up a theological concept of communion.

I understand how the theological concept of community, interdependence, and solidarity works as a metaphysical understanding of the nature of God and reality. But for a more practical and political ethic it is too thick of a conception, allowing not so much dissent or revisability of ways of life. This is akin to the communitarian conception of the self as embedded. The communitarian bent could be a result of there being little discussion of political rights and freedoms, a major weakness of the papers. This could be a matter of anti-enlightenment ideology working in the background. In any case, the communitarian ideal expressed in the papers as they are fails to consider realistically the drawbacks of culture.

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14 I believe is not superfluous to bring up that many liberationist oriented theologians have engaged the postmodern critique of all things western, liberal, rational, and enlightenment based. This tradition is suspect for being colonial or gender oppressive, etc. Thus there is, in the background, perhaps a reticence to fully engage the discourse of rights and freedoms. Ironically, these do have liberationist goals, too. But they also challenge illiberal cultural practices. In postmodern/colonial “antiessential”
As said before, the communitarianism in the WCC paper gives a significant role to local and national governments in meeting the demands of justice against the ills of globalization. This is fine if such societies are well-ordered. But it leaves many individuals unprotected in burdened societies that are ill-liberal and un-ordered. Giving more political and perhaps economic power to global institutions (short of a world-government, of course) is reasonable, not only from Tan’s view coming soon, but by way of a theological view. That is, the church is like a global institution - one’s membership transcends nationality and culture. One’s rights and benefits (to sacraments, salvation, etc.) are universal. Although we have national expressions of church like Church of Sweden or Romanian Orthodox, the church ideally expresses a universal reality of human unity (The church as *ecclesia*, literally meaning ‘the called out ones’, here could also express a meaning of being called out from culturalisms and nationalisms, to be in service to the global neighbour). Therefore the church already models a concern for every individual, a concern not contingent on nationality, culture, or gender. In this way, it seems logical for the church to emphasize a greater role for global institutions to protect individuals. We will see if the church as a model of global unity mirrors the global theory we will now dive deeper into.

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moral discourse it can be wrong to challenge even illiberal practices, so long as they are part of culture. For that would be a repetition of Western superiority and colonization. Tan has already debunked this view for us and liberal feminists, such as Benhabib have also. Susan Moller Okin (1994: 20) has written that, “Under the banner of their radically and politically correct ‘antiessentialism’ march ancient religious taboos, the luxury of the pampered husband, ill health, ignorance, and death.” This should serve as caution to those who quickly discard liberal principles of justice in light of the postmodern critique.
CHAPTER FOUR
Further Analysis of Global Justice Theory

4.0 Introduction to the Chapter
Some concerns and weaknesses of the church studies have been brought forward. Now I wish to make a further survey and analysis of the global theories of justice developed by the liberal tradition in political ethics, especially as done in Kok-Chor Tan’s work. First I address some potential criticism of global justice theory as a way of grounding the relevance and importance of liberal political philosophy to the discussion of global justice. And I include some foundational understanding of rights and duties. Then, in the manner previously employed above I will make a division between political and economic justice. These are written so as to respond to the church’s view. But there are also important matters discussed which help deepen the liberal global justice position. These are also included, though they don’t exactly correspond to the church’s concerns. Yet they may help cover some places where the church’s position is lacking.

4.1 The Ideal and the Real

Why does global justice matter?
To begin a deeper analysis of global justice theory, I return to a fundamental question—why does global justice matter? The church answers that the empirical features of globalization have harmed and likely will continue to harm peoples and lands. This harm is a distortion of God’s intended purpose for creation and God’s justice for the poor. Global justice theorists also share this empirical view, as we have seen. They understand how economic and trade imbalances adversely effect people, thus demanding a moral response from the international community. But as briefly mentioned earlier, global justice theory seeks to be prior to social and economic arrangements. It begins with forming a conception of equality. This ideal conception is the judge of “how it really is” in the world and acts as a moral guide for action.

The conception of equality where each individual has certain unalienable political and economic rights can get lost in bridging the ideal and the real. That is, a concern for global justice is lost in the interpretation of empirical facts of “how it really is”. Thomas Pogge has discussed why global justice is rationalized away as not being
morally significant and not mattering so much to us. This is partly due to misconstruing a connection between the ideal and the real. Here people can rationalize away their affluence despite the presence of severe poverty in the world.\textsuperscript{15} They are morally disconnected from the least advantaged and give less attention to them. (Pogge, 2002: 4-5)

Such rationalizations are a causal factor for ignoring world poverty, according to Thomas Pogge. He notes four possible reasons for ignoring world poverty. These and their refutation is summarized by me as followed:

1) Preventing poverty is counter-productive because it leads to overpopulation and further deaths. But the evidence shows this not to be the case and in fact a reduction in poverty shows a reduction in birthrate.

2) World poverty is too gigantic a problem to be eradicated any time soon in a way unburdensome for rich societies. But it would not take a burdensome amount of money to lift the world’s poor out of poverty.\textsuperscript{16}

3) Money doesn’t help and development programs do not show results. Yet development programs, though not perfect, still help and are better than nothing. The failure of development programs give reason to think harder about better ways of attacking poverty.

4) World poverty is disappearing. While some countries economies can be said to grow (i.e., GNP) this neo-liberal economic measure does not reflect the lived-reality of many people. (Pogge 2002: 6-10)

Pogge’s argument perhaps is more of an analysis of people’s moral psychology. But it shows why a theory of global justice cannot be based solely on interpretations of “how the world is.” For these facts can be skewed to reflect the interests of the interpreter and can be used to decrease a sense of global moral obligation. Again, the empirical reality is important in making an argument for global justice because ‘how things are’ clash with out moral sense of ‘how they should be’. A prior ideal conception of justice is needed as an arbiter of empirical facts. The ideal sets up a sense of obligation for which either the real world succeeds or fails in maintaining.

\textsuperscript{15} He says: “One’s interests and situation also affect the concrete judgments one derives from one’s moral values. Unconsciously, at least, people tend to interpret their moral values in their own favor and tend to select represent, and connect the facts so as to facilitate the desired concrete judgments...But few citizens of the affluent countries have such outside contacts which might interfere with their embrace of two going moral prejudices: that the persistence of severe poverty abroad does not require our moral attention, and that there is nothing seriously wrong with our conduct, policies, and the global economic institutions we forge...Moral norms, designed to protect the livelihood and dignity of the vulnerable, place burdens on the strong. If such norms are compelling enough, the strong make an effort to comply. But they also, consciously or unconsciously, try to get around the norms by arranging their social world so as to minimize their burdens of compliance” (Pogge, 2002: 4-5).

\textsuperscript{16} Although it seems ridiculous to base a moral argument for helping the poor on the fact it won’t cost much to the rich. A moral argument should hold in all cases and may even demand the rich sacrifice more than Pogge suggests.
Is global justice too abstract?

To make global justice matter, liberal theories generally begin with an ideal conception of justice principles, like equality. There is a lack of equality in the global political and economic arrangements. So it is the task of the moral philosopher to be concerned with inequality. But the church may counter argue that such conceptions are too abstract. This is a common concern with the liberal tradition in general.

Equality cannot be conceived of as a universal, disembodied, decontextualized “generalized other” under a veil of ignorance (White, 1989:102). In ethical-political thinking one must rather keep in mind the “concrete other”, not the hollow or bare citizen of liberal egalitarianism. This other is one with “concrete history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution,” so that she “feels recognized, and confirmed as a concrete, individual being with specific needs, talents, and capacities” (Behabib in White, 1989: 103). Empirical awareness helps concretize the issues, make them ‘real’.

A more intimate or concrete concern with another’s identity is helpful in building moral obligation on the question of equality. For Benhabib the concrete other “signifies the unthought, the unseen, and the unheard in such theories.” (Behabib in White, 1989: 104) The individual in this case is not an abstract identity but is fleshed and clothed, a unique somebody to give our empathies. However, the concept (or non-concept!) of the concrete other was not developed with the enormity of the global context in mind. Maintaining such a concern by “putting a face on the other” could be difficult in a global context considering the distance and enormity of scope.

Although welcomed in a discussion limited to the scope of the ‘neighbourhood’, or on the topic of moral psychology, this attitude is not necessary to a global justice theory. Of course, empathy created for the other in recognizing their identity is not unhelpful to global justice. So it is reasonable to add the concerns of Benhabib to ours. But a global justice theory does not fail for being primarily concerned with a general other, the “bare” citizen, or in employing universal concepts.

Furthermore, Charles Beitz in Does Global Inequality Matter (2001) has argued that liberal egalitarian concepts of ‘equality’ and ‘inequality’ are not so abstract after all. That is, we have reasons to be concerned about global inequality that are not dependent on the concept ‘inequality’ as being bad in itself. He wants to show why global inequality “should matter to someone who does not believe that global equality should appeal to us for its own sake” (Beitz, 2001: 109). Here we will begin to see
how an ideal conception if justice, such as equality, is connected to the real. That is, it is not abstract, in-itself, or for its own sake, but is expressed for the sake of real world need.

Beitz argues for derivative reasons as to why inequality as a liberal concept is important. One set of reasons is that inequality is associated with material deprivation. This deprivation creates suffering. The relief of suffering is desirable because it improves the material conditions so one can “live a reasonably successful rather than only a minimally decent life” (Beitz, 2001: 111). This linkage is a reason to make inequality objectionable. Another derivative reason is that humiliation and denial of agency is a result of inequality. Humiliation is a state that is obviously not morally permissible. It is a harm of social inequality. This linkage makes reducing inequality the manner in which to reduce harm. Whereas inequality may not be seen as always a bad thing in itself, once we connect the concept causally with harms, it becomes morally objectionable. Beitz also connects inequality with abridgement of liberty and procedural unfairness. He goes on to “globalize” these objections to inequality, concluding that global inequality does matter (see Beitz, 2001: 110-119).

Beitz’s contribution is important in two ways. First, it addresses the above criticisms that the moral subject in liberalism is too abstract, and thus, ineffective, in questions of justice. This point will help us to accept Tan’s conception of the individual by not fearing it as too abstract. Second, Beitz further helps to answer the overall question: why does global justice matter? It matters, not because its concepts are nice ideas, but as a priori, they help create favourable conditions for people as concepts are translated into policies. As contemporary theology leans to the concrete, the incarnational, I anticipate it shying away from liberalism. But global justice theory ultimately keeps in tension the universal and the concrete. Neither has to be forsaken.

4.2 Realizing Rights

If liberal justice concepts are important and effective, and not just grasping in the air, how are political and economic rights realized and realized globally? Pogge has shown that our moral psychology is unreliable because we can rationalize our way out of obligations. The justice concepts of liberalism are reliable because they are prior to these rationalizations. But more must be said on how they are realized. This part of the discussion is also a matter for legal theorists and policy-makers. They can
envision how rights are to be translated from moral principles into institutional enforcement. Before rights become laws and policies there continues to be an in-between area of justification we can analyze. Because we cannot guarantee that a government or other such institutions will enforce rights, we need another morally reliable manner of speaking to their realization.

_Taking rights seriously – Tan on duty_:

To do this, Tan connects rights with duties. According to Tan, both utilitarian and duty-based theories of justice give some account of rights. Tan favours a deontological conception of justice over a utilitarian.\(^\text{17}\) So Tan defines rights as the “legitimate entitlements and claims that people have against relevant others...Because rights are claims against others, they generate correlative duties (on pertinent others) to avoid violating these claims...All rights, properly understood, entail the three duties of non-violation, protection, and assistance, and these duties involve both forbearance and positive actions” (Tan 2004: 47).

Tan rejects the idea that there is a division of positive and negative rights because all rights entail duties with positive and negative actions. Following Henry Shue’s rights-based approach to global justice, Tan identifies two basic rights: the right to security and the right to subsistence. He points out that these rights are _basic_ because their enjoyment is necessary for the enjoyment of other rights. Quoting Shue, basic rights constitute the “minimum reasonable demand upon the rest of humanity” (Tan 2004: 48).

All higher level rights are founded on the basic rights to security and subsistence. Without basic rights in place, other rights and pursuits are practically unrealizable. Some human rights theorists, like Michael Ignatieff, believe that for the time being, these basic rights are the best we can hope for in a global context. For Ignatieff the most we can hope for is even more minimal. This is the basic political right to protection from violence and abuse (Ignatieff, 2001: 83). This is the starting point for human agency. He argues that historically we have failed to protect this minimum (e.g., the Holocaust and other atrocities where a basic respect for human dignity was denied). So to achieve this minimum respect for human agency in a global context would be a moral victory for humanity. This what we can expect to be a universal duty and all cultures should be compliant with this minimum. But as for other higher

\(^{17}\) See Tan’s discussion of why he favors the deontological over utilitarian in (Tan, 2004: 41-46).
rights, Ignatieff is pessimistic because of strong cultural practices not easily undone anytime soon. For example, we can at least expect women in gender oppressive countries to not be abused. But as for a right to equal participation in government, this is beyond the minimum. Basic rights do not include higher social and economic rights. Higher rights are a long shot in a realistic conception of global justice at this time.

But Tan believes the individual deserves more in terms of both political and economic rights. He goes beyond Ignatieff’s minimalism to include as on par with political rights, the basic right to subsistence. The right to subsistence, or basic needs, is covered under the first principle of justice in Rawls’s theory. The first principle deals with political and civil rights and is lexically prior to the second principle that covers social and economic rights. But since the global context is one where not all basic needs are met nor protected under political rights, the social and economic rights need to be ranked alongside the political. (Tan, 2004: 48-49)

If political and economic rights are on par with each other, it is important to see more closely how Tan expects duties to realize rights. Tans basic assumption is that rights need to be declared with corresponding obligations. Rights should come along with a “declaration of responsibilities which has the function of reminding us of our various duties vis-à-vis these rights, and of the need to specify, allocate, and enforce these duties” (Tan, 2004: 49). The specific allocation of duties is important because rights are often declared without saying who bears the responsibility to realize them. If one has the right, for example, to basic subsistence, then who will ensure that basic subsistence is met? This question is unanswered in “manifesto” or “empty rights.” These create imperfect obligations because they do not identify responsible agents. Perfect obligations, such as the obligation not to physically assault one another, identify who the agent is, what her exact responsibility is, and to whom she owes that responsibility (Tan, 2004: 50).

In global justice, it is important to see rights as manifesting perfect obligations that are allocated and identified. Rights need to be assigned enforceable duties to various peoples and institutions, as in the case of the right to basic subsistence.

Concerning global distributive justice, a duty-based approach will press on us, concerned moral agents, the importance of fostering and establishing the appropriate global institutional scheme by which to specify and allocate our duties of justice to the poor, and through which, subsequently, their rights to subsistence can be meaningfully claimed. (Tan, 2004: 51)
Rights and their corresponding duties work together to bring about a moral enforcement of justice. It is not that duties are more important than rights or vice versus, “Rights and duties are different sides of the same coin on a deontological perspective” (Tan, 2004: 53). They work together to ensure basic needs are met. But Tan, like the church, is not only interested in the minimum. Rights and duties are seen to play a role in equalizing distributive justice. In this they are not empty and abstract. Global distributive equality is the aim of both Tan’s cosmopolitan justice and the church’s alternatives to globalization. Duties help realize rights to be effective and actually do something for people.

4.3 Going Deeper with Tan on Political Justice
Before we saw that culture, nationality, and citizenship are contingencies when making the individual the unit of moral concern. In Tan’s approach to global justice, equal concern and respect applies to all individuals in all areas of life. Why does this conception best serve the aims of justice? A simple answer is that ways of life-in culture or nationality- are not reliable in protecting the rights and freedoms of people not sharing those ways of life. History has revealed this in the conflicts between ethnic groups. To make a long story short, culture as the moral unit of worth has lead to discrimination and other illiberal practices. People are discriminated against for contingencies beyond their control. Being viewed as an individual, however, changes this. Contingencies cannot be held against an individual, for she has certain undeniable rights and freedoms having nothing to do with those contingencies. This is basic civil rights ethics that needs no further elaboration and which I covered in Chapter Two (2.3).

Defending the conception of the individual
What is more interesting is why individualism tends to be rejected, for example, by the church. What is feared? A part of this has to do with confusing individualism as an ethical conception with a psychological conception of individualism as egoism-selfishness and self-centredness- where one pursues an aimless and disjointed life (Tan 2001: 140). I also think that the rejection of individualism is an aesthetic value. A Western individual is void of culture, tradition, and is an egotistical consumer, the McHuman doing whatever she wishes, etc. While this is in some sense true at times,
it is not the conception of individualism that liberal theorists promote. Tan asserts that individualism is none of these things. Individualism does have values and limits, “the rule of law, order, individual social responsibility, the family, and social values are all important liberal interests” (Tan, 2000: 141). Liberals take collective goals and values seriously. What is different here is that one can evaluate and revise their socially conceived ends in life, especially the illiberal ones. The appearance of egoism is more a product of laissez-faire capitalism. Tan views such egoism as one practical failure within liberal societies but not a failure that refutes liberal theory (Tan, 2000: 141).

The main fear of the individual conception is again that it is seen to obliterate cultural identities. But how basic rights and freedoms deny or dilute culture has not yet been adequately proven. Many liberal states have seen generations of people keeping their cultural practices intact while enjoying individual rights and freedoms. But more importantly, Tan believes a concern for the individual well being entails a concern for the cultural context within which individuals form and pursue their ideas of the good life (Tan, 2000: 130). A concern for the individual enshrines a concern for their culture, especially when they find themselves in the minority. Again this does not mean protecting the illiberal practices of a culture. The illiberal practices are aspects of a culture not the whole of the culture.

I stress again this argument for the individual as morally prior to culture because: 1) liberalism and culture are compatible, given Tan’s arguments, and 2) the church tends to over-emphasize culture in its priority of the “communal.” Much of this could be uncritical romanticism about culture. The church’s concern to protect culture is valid and laudable. Of course we do not want people to be McHumans. And the tendency for globalization to universalize a uniform consumer culture and neo-liberal economic practices is troubling. Yet the individualism advocated by Tan is not, at a theoretical level, a participant in this process. It is a universalism and individualism committed to each person’s well-being. While some tensions between individualism and culture remain in Tan’s theory, he helps to see the possibility for human flourishing in liberal theory’s moral prioritization of the individual.

The concern for the individual is echoed in the Christian tradition. Although one is a member of a body- the body of Christ, or a people, or communio, the people of Israel (biblically speaking)- a concern for the individual is present in many biblical texts. The lost sheep, the lost coin, the good Samaritan, are examples. Sometimes
this concern goes against cultural practices of the time. Consider, for example, the story about the adulterous women in John’s gospel, Chapter 8.1-11. She has committed a wrong, which in her culture’s conception of justice, demands her to be stoned to death. Jesus comes along and rebukes the angry crowd. His divine forgiving sense of justice contradicted the culture. In this, her individual well-being becomes prior to harmful and unjust aspects of culture.

4.4 Going deeper with Tan on Economic Justice
The significance of the moral priority of the individual may well become more apparent when discussing distributive justice. The ultimate aim for both global theory and the church is to address economic inequalities. In this case, contingencies of nationality or culture do not deny economic rights. Economic inequality is a matter of concern between states and within states. Within wealthy liberal democracies we find the poor. Within poor illiberal regimes we find the rich. These disparities are no longer easily conceived in terms of the nation-state. Globalization effects how economic goods are distributed within and between states. A distributive concern therefore moves from a national conception of moral community to the global.

Individualism versus the state
Tan asserts that global injustices inflict suffering on individuals rather than on some abstract collectives like the state (Tan 2004: 36). Recall that the WCC document advocates giving sovereignty back to local and national governments. Economic globalization erodes sovereignty. But there are problems with making a collective the moral unit of worth. In an international scope, one state may be privileged over another for various reasons such as economic gain or military strategy. For example, the wealthy USA is concerned about Iraq, where as Sudan could use much more attention. More problematic is the inequality within states. Tan shows that economic indicators, such as Gross National Product (GNP), do not reveal how people are actually fairing. A state may increase its GNP, but do the lives of all individuals in that state improve? The state, as ultimate unit of moral worth, is not a guarantor of well-being for two reasons. First, it may be an illiberal regime and not make distributive justice a priority. Second, the well-being of individuals in a global interactive economy does not depend solely on their nation-state. Much of people’s lives are affected now by what goes on outside their borders. (Tan, 2004: 29-37)
World government?

It would have been helpful if Tan argued that the moral status of the state is a contingency, like a culture is a contingency. But this may be pushing it, for we need to recognize some role for the state in improving the lives of individuals. State communitarians believe this to be the case:

It is as members of a state individuals come to learn moral rules and acquire the motivation to comply with them; that these rules are justified solely in terms of the traditions and the shared goods of the state; and it is as citizens that individuals are engendered and sustained as moral beings. (Tan 2000: 89)

State communitarians say that rights and freedoms are realized within states, and not by anything external. So, would not the individual be more closely cared for by the state and its domestic policies? Communitarian theorist Michael Walzer has argued that rights require a location, a place where moral agency can be exercised. This is called the ‘morality of states’ approach where states are seen as the moral agent of concern. But as we have already discussed a global expression of moral agency exists in today’s world. And again, states can be illiberal and unreliable.

So the state communitarian does not address how the individual fares better in a global context. Perhaps this conception would demand some sort of world government. Each individual would then be under the care of one government with one set of distributive rules. Obviously this is a utopian and impractical. Justifying a global moral agency does not require a world government, Tan argues. Global arrangements are already in place. Tan remarks that a marketplace without borders means justice without borders. Our actions are global actions and therefore we have a Kantian duty to each other.

Poverty is being caused and sustained by pervasive inequality in the distribution of global resources (Tan 2000: 162). Global actions can

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18 Walzer states, “[The] political community is probably the closest we can come to a world of common meanings. Language, history, and culture come together (come more closely together than anywhere else) to produce a collective consciousness.” (Walzer in Tan, 2000: 90)

19 Tan considers, like Pogge, the empirical reality of economic “mutual connections”. Again, his conception of justice is prior to a shared social scheme. Justice makes demands on a social scheme not the other way around. Yet the mutual connection is important for duty. Tan writes: “Broadly following Kant, considerations of justice come into being the moment our actions have implications for each other. As Kant writes ‘The concept of Right, insofar as it is related to an obligation corresponding to it (i.e., the moral concept of Right), has to do, first, only with the external and indeed practical relation of one person to another, insofar as their actions, as facts, can have (direct or indirect) influence on each other’ (Kant, 1993 [1797], p. 56). To put it differently, so long as others are vulnerable to our actions or omissions, we have certain duties of justice towards them.” (Tan, 2004: 33-34)
be shaped into alternatives that would maximize the well-being of the worst off individual (Tan 2004: 62). The state is important in effecting these alternatives more locally. Therefore the state as a moral agent remains obligated to realizing global agreements that are best for the worst off. Overall it must be considered that many of our global arrangements are outside the state and effective even though they are not construed as a world government.

**Individual Well-being as a Global Conception**

A global concern for the individual is a forceful principle in, 1) calling illiberal states to increase the well-being of their citizens in conformance with global principles of justice, and 2) making all states interact in normative ways so that the distribution of resources can be more even across the globe. The principles of distributive justice here assess the background conditions against which individuals and associations interact (Tan, 2004: 29). These are structural conditions that are both state and global.

Economic globalization has failed to make structural conditions meet the criteria of individual well-being. Tan develops the criteria of well-being below:

> A focus on individuals, which is central to the cosmopolitan idea…would remind us that what is basic to human well-being is not just a country’s aggregate income, but its people’s level of education, its literacy rate, its degree of gender equality, its infant mortality, the life expectancy of its population, its healthcare standards, and so on. These individual-based indices give us a better overall picture of comparative human development that the state centred one bases on increases in GNP. Focusing on states as the basic subjects thus obscures the sorts of things we should seek to equalize if we are truly concerned about individual well-being. (Tan, 2004: 37-38)

Tan exposes the problems here of the morality of states argument for distributive justice. This is as much a problem with economic indicators as with moral principles. But to make the state ultimately and morally prior to the individual, many peoples are not represented and protected. The state as a whole may be faring well, but some of its citizens are not. A word of caution then can be offered when the church seeks to give governments the main role in enacting justice.

**4.5 Role of Global Institutions in Tan’s Theory of Justice**

Following from the above discussion of economic justice, Tan retains the focus on the individual when considering how to adjust the programs and policies of global institutions. He also insists on the Kantian priority of justice over already existing
institutional schemes as “justice can call on us to establish common institutions where none existed if doing so is necessary to facilitate its ends” (Tan, 2004: 34). Tan is thus critical of the institutions today that do not meet the requirements of justice. These, such as the IMF, have favoured a state centred approach over a concern for human development in an individualist approach (Tan, 2004: 38). A state centred approach maximizes the indicators of the whole economy. The cosmopolitan individualist approach maximizes those factors (discussed above) that increase individual well-being. 20 This shapes institutions so they give the kinds of goods, services, and programs that matter to individuals (Tan, 2004: 38).

The requirements of justice also mean global institutions should go beyond duties of humanitarian assistance. They engage an on-going distribution scheme across the globe “as long as inequality between societies persists” and no matter what the cause of this inequality is (Tan, 2004: 69). Individual suffering of inequalities can be caused by contingent, undeserved factors – war, drought, and bad political or economic choices of corrupt leaders. Because distributive justice is prior to this, global institutions do not have to hold contingencies against individuals, like as a punishment. They would continue to apply the principles regardless. Again, this shows a concern breaking through state and culture to the individual. It is not fair to withhold distributive services or programs from individuals when it is the elites of their countries who make bad choices.

More importantly, going beyond humanitarian assistance means a basic restructuring of the global economic order under the requirements of justice. This is where the church and global theory meet. They both call for alternatives. Tan alludes to global taxation schemes and ways to practically realize a global difference principle (Tan, 2004: 71). But he also recognizes the criticisms that this realization is not practically possible, short of a world government. This does not mean all is lost or that the theory fails. There are limitations of this theory in terms of the enforcement of its principles “given existing institutional lack, and entrenched habits and customs.” But there is no reason to set a lesser goal for a more just world for, “The aims of an ideal theory of justice is to provide us with a standard to aspire to” (Tan, 2004: 82).

20 Note Tan’s point of clarification here: “By ‘individual-based’ I do not mean that these are goods that are never produced and enjoyed socially or nationally. I mean simply that these are goods that are crucial for an individual person’s well-being” (Tan, 2004: 38fn).
5.0 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter returns to the church documents to consider what difference theological ethics makes to global justice. What can it add? The previous chapter ended by proposing that an ideal theory of justice provides us with a standard to aspire to. So global theory of justice creates and argues for an ideal standard. However, given the non-ideal reality of the world, how can one be motivated to aspire to this standard? This is perhaps where theological ethics comes in. The LWF and WCC documents show the non-ideal. They show what is bad about globalization. And they propose ideal alternatives to it. These alternatives can be seen to be their standard for a just world. The interesting thing here is the motivation for aspiring to that standard. Liberal theory has its motivation too. For liberals, to counter global injustice is motivated by a conception of justice as fairness - “the world should be fairer.” Or, one is motivated by the existence of suffering. Suffering is morally wrong so we should alleviate it. There are other motivations that also could be included. I think liberal theory appeals both to an intuitive feeling for justice and to a rational conception of what is right. In that sense it is not purely calculating and coolly rational, as its critics may assume. It uses rationality to realize intuitive feelings of justice and compassion.

What is absent is any metaphysical or religious motivation. Liberal theory argues for justice without any conception of God or higher authority other than the arguments themselves, arguments which organize an intuitive concern for another’s well-being. In this way, liberalism has a rational philosophical foundation for its theory of justice. For the liberal, the addition of religious doctrine is unnecessary to a conception of justice as fairness. It defeats the original (Rawls) purpose of coming up with a theory of justice independent of comprehensive metaphysical or religious doctrines of the good life. Recall that these doctrines are tolerated as long as they do not interfere with one’s autonomy in political life (though recall too that Tan promotes the principle of individual autonomy in both political life and in all of life, see Tan, 2000: 51). For some, however, these doctrines become foundational in the sense of ethical motivation. An additional religious doctrine of the good life acts as a guide and impetus for ethical action. This chapter explores when a comprehensive
doctrine is added, in this case the religious Christian concepts of God, etc. How does this motivate one in aspiring to global justice? In the attempt to dialogue the two approaches, the aim is not to simply add theological “salt” to the global justice theory (or liberal salt to the theological). Rather, it is to help understand how these two paths converge and diverge on their way to a common goal of global justice.

Beyond Divine Command Theory
The ethical motivation to resist and find alternatives to globalization is found in the divine command aspect of the WCC or LWF statements. Simply, the motivation is a direct command from God. Recall the phrase: “Serve God, not mammon.” The LWF study appeals in a direct way to Luther’s teachings that caution against the developing capitalistic trading practices of his time. One could find other sacred and authoritative writings in the bible, the early church, and confessions that speak directly about money or economic matters. These are statements that could, with some interpretation for today’s context, directly motivate the believer to resist globalization and act in just ways. A sense of “thou shall not…thou shall” is correlated to today’s issues. I have shown how this divine-command interpretive approach works in Chapter One. But the theology in and behind the WCC and LWF documents does not only rely on this approach. The divine command approach itself is a form of moral argumentation and motivation that is not conceived as easy as: “God says, so you do.” In any case, the church statements go beyond this approach and develop motivation for global justice with greater theological sophistication and reflection. This I outline below and after I make some critique.

5.1 Theological Motivation in WCC’s The Island of Hope
The central idea governing both the WCC’s and LWF’s is that economic globalization threatens and distorts the church’s vision of human community, which is the essence of the church, or the being of the church itself. This essence is named in various ways- the kingdom of God, the kingdom of peace, or communio. This essence is the ideal manifestation of God’s reign. Economic activity must be aligned with this vision of community against the vision of economic globalization. The WCC is bold to say, “God can only be glorified when peace on earth is enjoyed by ALL the people of God, especially women and children, minorities and the vulnerable” (WCC, 2001: 8, my italics).
Resisting globalization and working for alternatives which conform to God’s vision for humanity involves choice, responsibility, and accountability.

Following Christ, we must make a choice... We are obliged to choose between serving God or Mammon, power or people. Everyone, politicians and business people included, are responsible for the consequences of their actions. We will be held accountable by the people who suffer the consequences. We have a chance to turn around (Mt 6:12-13). We also hear the promise of the Gospel that choosing life will create an alternative and truly ecumenical community of sharing and solidarity (Mt 14:13-21; Acts 2: 41-47) in response to the prayer “that all may be one as we are one” (Joh 17:11). (WCC, 2001: 12).

Part of this ethical motivation is to inspire alternatives that transcend the acceptance of life as it is. Reinhold Niebuhr remarks that an ethics of a prophetic religion points beyond “life-as-it-is” because all things have source and fulfilment in God: “The ultimate moral demands upon man can never be affirmed in terms of the actual facts of human existence. They can be affirmed only in terms of a unity and a possibility, a divine reality which transcends human existence” (Niebuhr, 1935: 30-31). A prophetic religion neither capitulates to existence as-it-is nor disregards it. The ethics do not escape into other-worldly realms. But its sense of transcendence makes demands on what exists to be transformed. Liberal theory of justice is similar here in that its demands are also prior to the conditions of existence. The WCC statement has this prophetic sense of being responsible to alternative visions of how things could be. Thus one should not be pessimistically de-motivated by how things are and by the facts of human existence being sinful and deterministic.21

The church is a living symbol of how things could be. The church has a symbolic and material life of sharing and community. This is to be realized not only in the church but in society: “Christianity had to learn the hard way that the good news of the Gospel has to be contextualized in order to be meaningful for God’s people in their diversity. The same applies to the economy. The economy is to serve and not

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21 Niebuhr comments that orthodox Christianity (not meaning eastern orthodox, but classical Christianity as distinguished from liberal Christianity) often accepted the political realm, even commending the order of things. This was in part to a religious interpretation of life that does justice to the ultimate problems of human existence, good and evil, life-after-death, etc., but not to the relative questions of existence in the political order, which it found too pessimistic to deal with. Liberal Christianity, while trying to realize a law of love in the political order, does not fare any better in Niebuhr’s analysis, for it was a sentimental moralism and optimism that disregarded ultimate problems, like evil. Niebuhr’s project here is to hold in dialectical tension the eschatological ‘vertical’ demands of a prophetic ethic with the ‘horizontal’ realities of social and political life. See his important contribution here in An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (1935), 84ff. How the WCC and LWF studies live-up to Niebuhr’s criticism and reconstruction of Christian ethics would be an interesting matter to pursue further given time.
dominate society” (WCC, 2001:14). Motivation comes in translating the theological vision into the concrete spheres of life. The WCC’s concern is that the churches will withdraw into a private sphere where the faith becomes unrelated to socio-economic problems.

The Christian understanding of oikonomia, of the world as God’s household, embraces relations between people and God, social harmony and peaceful coexistence…This urges churches and Christians to show the world the example of living according to the principles of cooperation, interdependence, and compassion deeply rooted in the Trinitarian basis of our faith…Will the churches have the courage to engage with the “values” of a profit-orientated way of life as a matter of faith, or will they withdraw into the “private” sphere? This is the question our churches must answer…or lose their very soul!” (WCC, 2001: 25)

I believe the above is overstated and there is more rhetorical value to some of this than coherent argumentation, although I will save my criticisms about that for later. Yet what does the WCC add here in terms ethical motivation that is not found in liberal approaches? The point of the WCC’s formulation here could be said more to inspire. Elisabeth Gerle, who has studied earlier WCC documents dealing with global ethics, remarks that: “A Christian version of global ethics has more relevance when it comes to inspiration and implementation of ethics than by providing an absolute ethical foundation or justification” (Gerle, 1995: 211). That is, it can help deepen or clarify the ethical demand. Following Niebuhr she sees a role of Christian ethics in challenging all established norm systems and orders of justice.

While the love ideal of Jesus, according to Niebuhr, is an impossible ethics for social relations, it exerts an influence on the natural ethos, especially with respect to the justice and equality ideals. The borderline between what is possible and what is impossible is, according to Niebuhr, not static. Therefore, Christians cannot simply accept prevailing moral values and orders of justice. The Christian love ideal should always launch a prophetic critique against present justice and equality interpretations and implementations trying to close the gap between the more modest ideal of justice and the love ideal in the teaching of Jesus. (Gerle, 1995: 211)

The teaching of Jesus is a transcendent ideal that is empirically unattainable in the social realm. However, as an “impossible possibility” it has the ability to judge and criticize orders of justice. These orders could, even as fair and equitable, relapse into inequality given the reality of sin. The eschatological element in the ethic of Jesus always “keeps us on our toes” lest we think we have attained perfect justice.
The WCC statement, while providing moral inspiration to transcend the way things are, seems to imply that such justice is attainable, or arrived at in some point in time. Along with being overly utopian, this departs both from the eschatological sense of critique in the teaching of Jesus and liberal theory’s insistence that we need a form of critique that remains as long as there are inequalities. Niebuhr says: “The Kingdom of God is always at hand in the sense that the impossibilities are really possible, and lead to new actualities in given moments of history. Nevertheless every actuality of history reveals itself, after the event, as only an approximation of the ideal; and the Kingdom of God is therefore not here. It is in fact always coming but never here” (Niebuhr, 1935: 36). Theological motivation may not be the path to establishing a foundation or justification for justice, for such foundation is elusive, an ideal yet to come. So theological ethics rather acts as a critique of all foundational claims made for justice and insists on more. Theological ethics could be better conceived as being foundational for the motivation for justice. Therefore its role is more to inspire.

5.2 Theological Motivation in LWF’s Engaging Economic Globalization

Un-imperative theological motivation

The LWF creates motivation in similar ways as the WCC. It seeks to translate a theological vision into concrete socio-economic existence. The theological motivation of Lutheran theology begins ironically with a call not to be ethical. In Lutheran theology ethics and its corresponding concepts of responsibility and accountability is linked in a reversed way with soteriology—how one is saved. Ethical action is not motivated to please God in order to obtain salvation. Ethical action is a result and response to God’s saving action. The main theological concept in the LWF, as we will see more fully, is communio. Communio is the interdependence of life in the church and also for creation. It is not something made by humans. In this way, the LWF makes a distinction between an ethic of the imperative and an ethic of the indicative.

Communio is an indicative, not an imperative – a gift, not something we make happen. It establishes a foundation for a much different kind of moral agency.

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22. The core principle of Lutheran theology is that one is saved by grace in faith—that no kind of work, earthly or spiritual—can justify the believer before God. God’s grace and mercy is given regardless. This is the central principle that determines Lutheran ethics, following St. Paul, as being indicative rather than imperative (see the next foot note for a more detailed commentary on this).
than one based on imperatives or goals, whose pursuit can lapse into moralism. We are freed from being obsessed with “doing right,” or from trying to measure up, or acting out of guilt over the stark inequalities of the world. All these can work against and destroy community. Yet through the gift of communion we are also implicated in a calling or task – to live out this reality beyond the church. *Communio* has significant implications for how we are formed morally, for how we deliberate on ethical issues amid all our differences, and for the expanse of our moral vision and scope of our action (LWF, 2001: 20).

The foundation for motivation is made indicatively as opposed to imperatively. That means ethical action is indicative, and follows from, as a result of God’s saving activity. An ethic of imperative means God’s saving activity would somehow be earned by a person’s behaviour. Simply put, one is rewarded for good behaviour. The WCC seems to make its ethical motivation an imperative, and one on which the soul of the church depends. This kind of moral imperative seems to exist in the WCC statement and creeps in a little in the LWF statement. In my understanding this is contrary to the reformation understanding of grace and the church, an understanding that does not depend on ethics, or more traditionally put, on works. The indicative nature of moral motivation should have been emphasized first and more clearly in the LWF document. In this way, a theological ethics on globalization is consistent with the reformation doctrine of justification.²³

*Communio*

The LWF has an eschatological vision that sees beyond the inevitability of the present order of economic globalization and which opens up a space to hope and act

²³ Again, the concern is that the ethical motivation is consistent with the Lutheran doctrine of justification. Here God creates and redeems the world by God’s own fiat and love. Humans don’t earn this by their own effort and God remains faithful even when humans err. This is the essence of the Gospel, good news. In traditional theological language, sanctification (being made holy and acting in accordance with God’s “way”) follows justification (God’s salvation). This emphasizes that we are not saved by good works, but for good works. Moral transformation then is a sign of the indicative working in the believer’s life. On a conscious psychological level, the ethical imperative means acting in fear or to seek reward from God. However, the indicative and imperative cannot always be so easily distinguished as I do here. It is a distinction that continues to confound many, as it can imply moral license and antinominalism. But the importance of this is never diminished, as different Christian denominations are coloured by how they understand the relationship between justification and sanctification. This understanding effects their moral teachings and can be linked to why Christians disagree on many ethical issues, and in a larger historical picture, why different kinds of churches exist today since the 16th-century reformation.
differently (LWF, 2001: 16, 17). This vision of *communio* inspires motivation to resist and change things.

This wider communion – or eschatological communion – is called, gathered, and maintained through God’s action as we know it through the triune God. This is the communion within God’s self into which believers are received through baptism... The communion with God and one another, based on the Holy Spirit, is manifest and realized in a communion that can be experienced, tasted, and seen. Communion points to close organic relationships, mutual participation, and imparting of life benefits... A new sense of belonging emerges, and with it, new possibilities for ethical action. (LWF, 2001: 19)

In an ultimate or spiritual sense, communion is the essence or very being of the church. The sense of belonging witnessed in this communion is then to be translated into socio-economic action. Communion is a reality to be lived out beyond the church. Motivation in the LWF document is built on the theological concepts having concrete implications. Ethical motivation in the economy is a result of this communion.

*Luther’s economic ethics*

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda elaborates on the LWF’s conception of *communio* as ethical motivation.\(^ {24} \) She finds five Lutheran theological strains showing how communion is a source of “moral-spiritual power” for resistance to economic globalization (Moe-Lobeda, 2004: 146). I consider two of the main theological strains here. The first strain is the economic ethics in the sacrament of the Eucharist (or Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion, Mass). This is the primary worship service of the church and has ethical implications in the world. She believes economic practices flow from the Eucharist: “The fruit of the Eucharist, ‘properly practiced’, is a communion of moral agency that attends to human needs and privileges the vulnerable” (Moe-Lobeda, 2004: 146). In the Eucharist, all who are present are fed and receive God’s gifts, no one is left out. In this, the love of neighbour is ideally conceived. Such should be the case in the economic realm. She also refers to the concept of neighbour love in Luther’s teaching, *On Trade and Usury*. This treatise writes against the act of profiting from the neighbour. The moral norm of economic activity should be to serve the neighbour (Moe-Lobeda, 2004: 147). Neoliberal globalization is exploitation rather than a serving of neighbour. Moe-Lobeda is aware that Luther’s

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24 These reflections are found in “Communio and a Spirituality of Resistance” in Karen Bloomquist, (ed.), *Communion, Responsibility, and Accountability* (2004), 145-156.
teaching cannot be directly applied to today because he was not overly progressive about social questions. But there are some normative teachings about capitalism and the care of the poor in Luther’s teaching that can speak in today’s context.

The second strain for motivation in communion is based on the concept of Christ’s indwelling. Here “As unmerited gift, Christ dwells within and among communities of believers and gradually transforms them…toward a manner of life that actively loves neighbour by serving the neighbour’s well-being in every aspect of life…The moral life is simultaneously gift and imperative, a mystical as well as physical reality, ontologically communal while also individual, a necessary outflow of the sacraments”. She believes the normative implications of this are “fascinating” and give rise to “moral-spiritual power” (Moe-Lobeda, 2004: 149). Again, the outflow is to be realized in economic terms. This is a moral source of power not gained by exerted human effort. It is God acting through the church and creation to embody justice-making and neighbour love. The task is to find, or live out, the economic practices that are aligned with the vision of communion. In that sense, I don’t think this just happens by way of God’s transformation. Some human response must be consciously exerted in order that communio is lived out ethically and concretely.

Going back to the LWF statement itself, we see that communio is a basis for moral agency which is more practically responsible and accountable. Communio sets a standard for obligation, even though living up to that standard doesn’t get us into God’s good books, to put it crassly. In communio, moral agents are “moved to act out of a sense of relatedness (communion or solidarity), responsibility (for the effect of our decisions and actions have on others) and accountability (holding other members of the communion, as well as political and economic institutions accountable to the values we affirm)” (LWF, 2002: 5). Here the agent is not helpless to the way things are, but has a responsibility and a mandate to aspire to a higher ethical demand. In this way the LWF motivates its members to challenge economic globalization and work for alternatives.

5.3 Criticisms of Theological Motivation

Mysticism and rhetoric
The nagging concern that comes up when reading the WCC or LWF is how more explicitly does economic globalization go against the church and its theological
conceptions? And conversely, can theological conceptions be so easily translated into the practical and political ethics of justice making? For the uninitiated, or the non-believer, the discourse of the church is incomprehensible. Those who do not have prior experience with biblical or sacramental concepts could find themselves swimming in a sermonic rhetoric. Granted, these studies were published for the representative churches, not for the wider academic or human community. Yet even for the initiated believer the arguments connecting theology and globalization rely on a discourse highly emotive and preachy. It is a discourse to inspire, but is it a discourse appropriate for rational argument?

This, as I will discuss later, is why teaming up the church’s study with liberal global justice theory is a valuable undertaking. This does not mean that global justice is not in the church’s scope of ethical concern. But it raises questions as to what extent the church adds motivation. An easy mixture of empirical analysis and theology concepts could undermine the force of motivation. Motivation also demands clearer sets of arguments as a way of inspiring. The LWF brings up these concerns by including a critical article in its larger work on globalization, _Communion, Responsibility, Accountability_ (2004). In _Neo-liberal Globalization: A Casus Confessionis_?, Guillermo Hansen writes in response to the LWF documents and other theological studies of neoliberal economics. His work also speaks about a more appropriate relationship between the spiritual and socio-economic sphere. This I take up in the next chapter.

_Fuzzy analysis and Status Confessionis_

The main question Hansen raises is whether the theological language, as _status confessionis_, is a good strategy for confronting the challenges of globalization. _Status confessionis_ is the language the church uses when its very essence and proclamation is threatened. It is the act of confessing and defending the faith against threat. This threat comes in a historical situation and typically refers to when the church is persecuted or when the state is acting in a manner contrary to the gospel. This assumes a two kingdoms view, the spiritual kingdom of the church and the political kingdom of the state. When the state overpowers the church, it is in _status confessionis_. For example, the church’s confession was threatened when it acquiesced and was overpowered by the Nazi state ideology during the Second World War. _Status confessionis_ gives the motivation to act in resistance to such threats to
the church. Hansen’s concern is whether globalization calls for this language of confession for its ethics. In past historical struggles “The effectiveness of this language rested in the visible threat of counter-theologies which undermined not only the existence of the evangelical church, but also the truth of the gospel. But where do these counter-theologies appear today? Could we point to neoliberalism and globalization as their contemporary incarnations?” (Hansen, 2004: 163-166, 167) The language of the WCC and LWF documents suggest that the church is in *status confessionis*. Globalization does erode the state’s role in the common good. The church’s gospel is also for the sake of the common good, therefore it, along with society, is threatened by globalization (Hansen, 2004: 167).

While acknowledging the threats, Hansen questions whether globalization really puts the church in *status confessionis*. One reason is that globalization is so complex that the threat is not as visibly apparent in the empirical analysis. The church’s analysis is overly concerned about economic neoliberalism. But globalization’s structure is much more multi-dimensional, including assaults on political and social values: “In this way the central problem is not simply located in the mechanisms of ‘empire’ or economy, but includes social, cultural and political processes, which are both susceptible to the expanding dominion of the neoliberal logic as well as being places of tacit resistance” (Hansen, 2004: 169). The church statements in question, however, do include these processes. But Hansen is arguing that the all-pervasive reality of globalization demands more than just ethical motivations for economic alternatives. And because of the multi-dimensional nature of globalization, it is unclear how the church is directly threatened. When analyzing globalization the church uses language of *status confessionis* that imagines globalization as a totalitarian domination, when it is actually more fluid and flexible (Hansen, 2004: 170-171).²⁵

The church’s analysis needs to be focused more precisely to show, as Pogge does, how inequalities are moral troubling and worthy of action. Such action may not be as necessarily “alternative” as the church proposes. Recall how Pogge’s analysis showed global structural changes need not be so drastic to increase the well-being of

²⁵Hansen comments: “In the era of globalization, economic interests and forces have the supreme capacity to not only slip away when directly attacked, but also to ensnare vulnerable areas in the political and cultural spheres. Hence it is useless to accuse neoliberalism of being idolatrous or sinful, not because from a Christian perspective this is ‘untrue,’ but because it creates the illusion that this sinfulness can be overcome by means of some conversion of moral offensive with a clear target.” (Hansen, 2004: 171)
the least well off and yet conform to the two principles of justice. I think we can begin to see the role of global justice theory here helping the theoretical task of dealing with globalization’s all-pervasive and multi-dimensional advance. Recall that global theory is a prior universal conception of justice for the sake of the individual. So it takes a comprehensive view of the political and economic. The principles of justice in global theory can cover many spheres of struggle.

Lost in translation

The problems of analysis above reveal how the moral urgency in church studies can be de-motivating. One does not know where to direct their energy. Hansen shows how theological concepts do not have the force to motivate as they presume. Although he doesn’t put in a Niebuhrlian way, this really is a lack of eschatological demand. Believer or non-believer alike may not be moved by the church’s rhetorically emotive appeal for justice. Theological concepts become lost in the translation to political action.

Idolatry, mammon and rampant selfishness are correctly identified as being ruthless realities in our present context. But, to be frank, who is shaken by accusations of idolatry, or calls to re-establish God’s sovereignty? Does the vamping of the status or processus confessionis really affect the economic and political dynamics of our societies? To take refuge in new biblicalisms (including “popular” and of the “left”) will not take us very far. At most, it will lead us to combat windmills, to delude ourselves in messianic utopianisms or to launch a hunt for heretics (today, in the “ethical” sense after Uppsala ’68). But they will not lead us toward the fundamental cultural and political task which the new time requires: to constitute the institutional and social web as an effective resistance and counter strategy against the onslaught of transnational capitalism (Hansen, 2004: 171-171, cf. Hardt and Negri).

So Hansen finds that the theological language currently employed by the church is inappropriate for challenging neoliberalism. It tries to transpose a sense of “holiness” onto the world without considering the political mediations required to negotiate the problems of justice. Hansen seeks an expression of faith that is mediated though political action as citizenship. As we will see in Chapter Six, this considers the appropriate relation between the two kingdoms, the spiritual and the temporal. And for us this will become a way of relating theological ethics to global theory of justice. (Hansen, 2004: 174-175)

Hansen’s criticisms show how theological concepts can ignore the political dimension. It puts all answers to questions on the church’s shoulders and views the
church as the primary victim of globalization when in fact all people suffer (Hansen 2004: 175). Globalization is not just a plot against for example, *communio*, or the church’s essence. Although at a deeper level *communio* is a mystical-ethical conception of the interdependence of all creation, it could be construed as just meaning the church. Thus *communio* is not a universal conception that confers the spiritual on all of the temporal. It can remain an exclusive concept, privileging the church and its people. Also the church body is a saint-sinner conception and itself implicated in the sin and complexity of globalization. That is, because of sin one cannot rely on an out flowing of ethical action will take place and in the places most needed. The LWF acknowledges this in its statement, as does Cynthia Mo-Lobeda, but perhaps not in a way constructive in showing how one is reasonably motivated for the ethical challenges of the political realm.26

**Summary Comments on Theological Motivation**

These criticisms are not meant to defeat the notion that there is no theological motivation for ethical action. I think the WCC and LWF statements just conceive it in a way needing clarification. Of course there is a line between Christian values and socio-political action, which they attempt to make. What is problematic is where and when that line is most reasonably drawn. In the criticisms we have seen a concern that ethical motivation is consistent with the church’s theology- that imperatives do not supplant indicatives. This is an issue for the theologian in the reformation tradition and may not be of concern to all who seek global justice. But it does open up a space of discussion on how the church and its theology relates to the political. If it is too political, it denies its theological message of hope and promise that transcends any structural arrangements humans come up with. On the other hand, if the church’s theology is too mystical, it obscures what is politically demanded in the world as it is.

26 Note bene: “We need a theological vision that can help us to visualize not only all the dangers neoliberalism poses for the gospel, but mostly for the world. Consequently, a good theological interpretation should account for action by the church as well as by citizens in their different spheres. For the Christian conscience, both spheres are closely linked, but even so they have to be differentiated. Without the gospel, which forms the ekklesia (or communio), there would be no record of the promise that awaits creation. From there we engage in a world from a vision and from values of an order based on God’s peace and justice; this nourishes our public engagement. Nonetheless, from a political prospective, the church is not an apt instrument for efficiently working out these values. It is not that the church cannot do so institutionally when the situation allows it, but because the core of its existence, the gospel, is not in itself an efficient means for realizing this political project.” (Hansen, 2004: 173-174, my parenthesis)
The criticisms have shown that we need not deny the role of theological ethics, but to narrow its motivating role so as to allow other discourses to speak, and perhaps allowing then for theology to speak together with those discourses.
CHAPTER SIX
Relating Theological Ethics and Global Justice theory

6.0 Introduction to the chapter
This chapter shall consider how a constructive relationship should be made between theological ethics and global justice theory. I used global theory to organize and critically analyze the church statements on globalization. There I showed how the church conceived political and economic justice. Some of these conceptions were similar to global theory. In others, global theory challenged what the church was saying (e.g., culture). Then I showed how theological ethics adds motivation for aspiring to global justice. I discovered some problematic points in the theological ethical conception even though it can inspire the Christian to be more obligated to the global neighbour. These problematic points do not nullify the church’s argument and advocacy for global justice. But they suggest the church’s view needs clarification for its view. Hansen notes that when discussing globalization “what we often call reality is the result of opinions rather than analysis, superficial theological ideas (substituting social analysis for biblical categories), or a semantic mixture that does not help much to focus and clarify the problem” (Hansen, 2004: 168). It is reasonable therefore to hold global theory in tension with theological ethics. Global theory seeks to remain focused and sharp in its arguments. As well, its knowledge of the political demands and negotiations is something needed when discussing global justice.

6.1 Awakening the Two Kingdoms
Global theory can be called upon and considered because the (Lutheran) theological system inherently allows for non-theological thinking and practices. Wolfram Stierle remarks that “to some extent earthly issues can be settled through earthly good sense, without immediately having to argue about their theological aspects...God has more than one way of carrying out God’s will” (Stierle, 2004: 140). Global theory in the liberal tradition is an earthly good sense the church is free to consider.27 Stierle is referring to how a two kingdoms view can be involved in social ethical thinking.

27 Reinhold Niebuhr explores the tension between theological ethics and the function of reason, or critical intelligence, in the interest of justice. One can be used to check the other and vice versa. He says: “If the force of spirituality in religion and the consequent perfectionism results in an undue pessimism in regard to the immediate possibilities of a higher justice, it is the function of reason to explore these possibilities in defiance of traditional religions, just as it is the function of a profound religion to discover the limits of these rational processes and reveal the canker of moral idealism. The
Although I have alluded to this before, it is important to introduce this concept more clearly.

The two kingdoms view is a theological conception sometimes called the ‘two realms’ or ‘two regiments’ or ‘two governments’. This makes a conceptual distinction on God’s relationship to the world. God is sovereign over two ‘kingdoms’, the spiritual (the church), on the one hand, and the temporal (political society), on the other. Note this is only a conceptual or epistemological distinction and not an ontological reality. This does not mean there are two different worlds or creations! Each kingdom represents a unique relationship and role for God and people.\(^{28}\) The church’s role is spiritual - to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. Or in the context of my thesis, this means the church exists conceptually as *communio*. In the civil kingdom, the state’s role is to maintain order. This order conforms to God’s mandates of creation. Anders Nygren points out that the two kingdoms view does not mean the political sphere is an autonomous realm, separated from the law of God,

Thus there is neither confusion nor separation between the two kingdoms. The spiritual order does not claim ecclesiastical domination over the temporal, but on the other hand the temporal must not be permitted to become secularised, for the worldly government stands under the judgment of God and is bound by His will. (Nygren, 1949: 20)

Nygren counters the notion that the two kingdoms view creates a separation between two autonomous realms in a way that they no longer have anything to do with each other. This has been the common criticism of the two kingdom’s view. It has allowed the state a free reign unimpaired by the church’s moral dictates. The language of the Augsburg Confession seems to imply a stark separation between

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\(^{28}\)Although primitive and undeveloped, the Augsburg Confession of 1530, the central doctrinal formulation of the Lutheran church, makes reference to the distinct vocations of the church and civil government. See for example Article 16 (Of Civil Affairs), and Article 28 (Of Ecclesiastical Power):

“…For civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries, and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace. Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church has its own commission to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments. Let it not break into the office of another, let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world; let it not abrogate the laws of civil rulers…” See Augsburg Confession at http://www.bookofconcord.org
church and state. But when Luther’s own writings and other studies are consulted, the intention of the two kingdoms view shows an interaction.  

The two kingdoms reconsidered as a theoretical relationship

A more nuanced discussion of the two kingdoms view would be demanded in order to understand its claims and the controversies surrounding it. Space permits me from elaborating further. But a basic understanding of the two kingdoms view is employed in my thesis to advocate for a dialectical relationship between two different ethical discourses. This creates a “two kingdoms” approach on the theoretical level. The spiritual kingdom is the discourse of theological ethics and the temporal is the discourse of liberal theory. This is then re-interpreted for a global context. Remember that the ordinary conception of the two kingdoms distinguishes the different but convergent moral and social roles of the church and state. The state’s basic role is to maintain order and justice in the society. This order is hoped to reflect God’s mandate for creation. The church’s basic role is to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. This is an oversimplification of the two kingdoms approach. But the main thrust of the approach I want to emphasize is that the realms check each other for abuses. When the church fails its role, the state is there as critic. When the state fails to maintain order and justice, the church critically responds. For example, theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer developed three options for the church to respond to state abuses: 1) demand that the state take responsibility 2) help the victims of the state’s abuse, or 3) direct political action (Hansen, 2004: 166).

As Hansen has argued in Chapter Five, it is not yet clear how the church is to respond to globalization on a historical and practical level. So the two kingdoms approach in that sense remains problematic. The two kingdoms approach has not been sufficiently re-interpreted for a global context where there is no ‘state’ as ordinarily conceived. The global era also comes at a time of secularity and plurality. Luther’s approach assumes a Christian nation-state, at a time where the “princes” and rulers were more than nominally Christian. Luther would not advocate a secular state as we have today (Nygren, 2002: 19). In our age of secularity, it is problematic that

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civil consciences be held accountable to one conception of God’s (i.e., Christian) law. The current clash between some churches and the state on same-sex marriage in various countries is case in point. Here the state argues on the basis of its justice principles and the church’s by its comprehensive doctrine. The two are in conflict. So the global and secular context creates the possibilities, beyond my thesis, for novel and nuanced interpretations of the two kingdoms view.

In the framework of my discussion, however, the two kingdoms distinction can be helpful on a theoretical level to relate theological ethics and liberal theory. At this level, each can check the other. The impossible ideal of prophetic Christianity can challenge whether or not liberal theory adequately conceives a law of love. Does it hold on to its prior justice principles? Or does it become too modest? A theological ethic always will push the moral ideal to eschatological limits in the political realm.

Likewise, liberal theory helps theologians consider the importance of the political realm and how the Christian can live out responsible citizenship. Although there is no “direct line” from faith to citizenship, theological discourse is meant to compel the Christian to shape political and civic life, along with people from other spheres of interest (Hansen, 2004: 174). But theological ethics within itself can be divided on how it interprets political and economic issues. This interpretative game means theological ethics can motivate different and competing visions of the political and economic order. It can motivate citizenship in different ways. The blessing or cursing of neoliberalism, for example, depends on the way both theological concepts and empirical data is interpreted and whose interests those interpretations serve. There is a danger here for religion as a comprehensive doctrine of the good life to be used as an easy trump card in making political or economic claims. The role of global theory is important as a neutral place for which to sort out those competing interpretations. This is to reflect on which theological interpretations best serve the needs of justice for the world’s people (and not serve a religious agenda). Global theory acts as an arbiter for competing claims. For the church to be clear about justice, it needs a vision of justice and global citizenship that has been developed independently.  

By “neutral” one never assumes a completely value-free space. Liberal theory is itself not free from bias and interpretation. Thus we remain conscious of the critiques of enlightenment rationality as neutral and objective. For our purposes, liberal theory is neutral in the sense that it provides a space to address competing religious claims. In this theoretical space, competing religious claims are given equal consideration and evaluated according to how they meet the two principles of justice.
The Good Citizen

In a pluralistic world where the church has been disestablished in the political realm, theological ethics can no longer assume all the moral responsibility for justice concerns. Today, the interests and actions of various groups mediate the political realm. The church is now only one of the religious, political, and social actors in a global and secular context. Recent historical development has shown a side-lining of the church to the margins in terms of its social and political influence. In this context, the two kingdoms view takes on a new meaning in terms of citizenship.

The categories of the two regiments thus liberates us from the anxiety and anguish of believing that all alternatives should be born on Christian shoulders, or to believe that all that happens in the world is a plot against Christian values. Likewise, it gives us a new framework for interpretation, emphasizing the world of politics. The public arena is the space we live out our Christian and civic vocation, and where the counter proposals against disillusion can be channelled. In this way, we avoid falling into the same logic which imposes an economic-reductionistic interpretation of globalization...This implies by no means a call for a bygone omnipresent state, nor limiting our conception of state to the “nation-state” model. Rather, it is a call to engage with the very idea of state and public realm and its multiple requirements and contributions to civil society, globally as well as locally. (Hansen, 2004: 175)

The two kingdoms view calls the Christian to good citizenship. Here the church is not attempting to manage culture as it did in the past, but to trouble it.31 Citizens formed by theological ethics bring their concerns into the political realm. In order for them to do that, however, they need to be theoretically aware of the political discourse and the ways of mediating justice claims. After all, justice is realized socially and historically in the civil realm. Justice is not a concept belonging only to the church as a spiritual ideal. Within itself as communio the church tries ideally to be a just institution- i.e., all people have equal access to its spiritual goods as they are administered generously and fairly. The church hopes for such a justice to be realized

31 Harry O. Maier writes on the notion of Christian informed citizenship: “I argue that the task of the sidelined Christian church in Western secular society is not to transform or manage culture but to trouble it... The vocation of this way of being human is to express the lavish self-giving of God in the most routine features of everyday life and ethical decision making even if (especially if!) that brings it into direct conflict with pungent religious discourse from the public sphere. For such a vocation is troubling to the secular world’s normal way of doing business. On such terms will Christians discover the virtues necessary for what Mark Kingwell calls ‘the good citizen,’ namely, the communal formation of individuals equipped ‘to make sense of themselves, as citizens, within the larger demands of life itself.’” (Maier, 2002: 28)
similarly in the political realm, so that the political realm could be like *communio*. However, justice in the secular world is not mediated, theoretically or practically, by the means of *communio*.

[Luther and Bonhoeffer] knew that the “spiritual” and the “temporal” are means by which God does his work in order in Christ to recapitulate all things. But while in the “spiritual” sphere the means of action is God as Holy Spirit, in the secular field divine action is mediated and refracted through social institutions and ordering. In the spiritual field there are no ambiguities, since the task is that of communicating *agape* [love] as an eternal attribute. In the temporal field, the law exists as an instrument to harmonize divergent human interests; justice is furthered in the midst of people’s asymmetric demands. The political and public organizations are institutional mediations for implementing the goals of such justice. (Hansen, 2004: 174)

Good citizenship implies an awareness of the theoretical and practical mediation of justice in the political and public space.

Earlier in this paper, I introduced the theoretical justification of global justice in the work of Kok-Chor Tan. To understand the meaning of good global citizenship, the theological ethicist should familiarize herself with theoretical material such as Tan’s. To recap, two reasons for accepting the role for this global theory have been shown by considering the two kingdoms approach. The first is that (Lutheran) theology allows for other discourses - “earthly good sense” - to settle earthly issues. The second is that by including a political discourse such as global theory, one gains a greater awareness of the justification and mediation of justice in the political sphere. In this case the sphere is a larger political context, the global sphere. Recall that the language of theological ethical motivation cannot be easily translated into political mediation. Global theory allows the Christian ethicist to know “how things work” in the temporal realm - know the political language, justifications, mediations and claims. And today this knowledge demands a global scope. Then the Christian ethicist can align herself with those mediations that implement the goals of justice complementary to and motivated by her Christian faith.

6.2 **Overlapping Consensus**

Earlier I showed how the LWF and WCC, and Pogge and Tan, share the same concerns for global justice and on what points they differ. For example, recall one difference being that global theory gives moral priority to the individual where as the LWF/WCC favours culture. We could say more on how each approach says what the
other is thinking but in a different mode of discourse. In general, their concerns and goals are the same. But I would like to explore further and lastly the importance of global theory for the church’s theological ethics. We have seen it as useful lens of analysis and criticism. The drawbacks of theological ethics in mediating questions in the political sphere shows something else is needed to help Christians form good global citizenship. The door to other earthly discourses is open. But why in particular is it important to consider a global theory vis-à-vis the liberal and Rawlsian tradition?

Re-visiting Rawls on Overlapping Consensus
First of all the liberal tradition, while not accepting any one comprehensive or religious doctrine, does not deny any either. Its claims for justice do not ask to give up a total religious conception, either theoretically or practically. It may resist the sub-concepts of a religion that interfere with liberal principles of justice. For example, when a religion denies political and economic rights in the public realm. Liberal principles tend not to extend much beyond the door to a religious community’s inner-life. This is to protect another key principle of liberalism, religious freedom. It suffices to say that liberal principles cannot be invoked to change a religious conception- e.g., change a male-only priesthood or some other long-held belief. One may say that there are times when liberal principles, as principles of the ‘state’, should critique and override illiberal aspects of religion that are gross violations of basic rights. Some religions may find liberal principles idolatrous or blasphemous, like gender equality. Thus difficulties can arise here about the extent of religious freedom in a pluralistic context.

I write from a mainline, protestant Christian perspective. In my understanding its theology would not find threatening or idolatrous the tenets of liberal justice theory and its global expression. This is partly due to a two kingdoms view and, for better or worse, the church’s historical relationship to a liberal state culture that has evolved to be secular. Much of liberal values have been fostered in protestant state cultures. The ongoing relationship between liberal theory and theological ethics is similar to Rawls’s conception of overlapping consensus. I borrowed the two kingdoms view

32 Liberalism should not be confused obviously with the economic term, ‘neoliberalism’. The church, as we have seen, does find economic neoliberalism threatening. But even this is not threatening enough as to invoke status confessionis.
from theology to help understand how two discourses can relate and serve the aims of justice. Now I think it is important to borrow a concept of overlapping consensus from political philosophy. This concept also justifies an interaction of different moral discourses.

The concept of overlapping consensus seeks to answer the question posed by John Rawls: “How is it possible for there to exist over time a just and stable society of free and equal citizens, who remain profoundly divided by reasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?” (Rawls, 1993: 133) Rawls believes such a society can exist when we acknowledge that different groups, albeit through different reasonable arguments, agree on common political principles. These arguments are based on comprehensive doctrines. Simply put, Christians, Muslims, or atheists, etc., all may share values and agree on principles of political justice and rights. Their reasons may be different, but their arguments lead to the same conclusion. This agreement is an overlapping consensus. Rawls summarizes this conception:

In such a consensus, the reasonable doctrines endorse the political conception, each from its own point of view. Social unity is based on a consensus on the political conception; and stability is possible when the doctrines making up the consensus are affirmed by society’s politically active citizens and the requirements of justice are not too much in conflict with citizens’ essential interests as formed and encouraged by their social arrangements. (Rawls, 134: 1993)

The aim of overlapping consensus in a pluralistic society is to establish a broad theoretical and motivational support for a justice principle; and Rawls believes that the difference principle, for example, would have broad based agreement from various doctrines (Collste, 2005: 55). Again, the difference principle is that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged.

For my discussion, the concept of overlapping consensus functions at a theoretical level to show how two different discourses can interact and agree on basic principles. As I have proposed, both global justice theory and the church documents seek to fulfill the two principles of political and economic justice. They have overlapping consensus on these principles. This theoretical consensus leads to a more practical agreement on what is demanded to be a good global citizen. I see the relationship between theological ethics and global justice theory meeting Rawls’s criteria that a
consensus is made at a fundamental level of moral values and is not just an agreement about institutions:

…First, the object of consensus, the political conception of justice, is itself a moral conception. And second, it is affirmed on moral grounds, that is, it includes conceptions of society and of citizens as person, as well as principles of justice, and an account of the political virtues through which those principles are embodied in human character and expressed in public life. An overlapping consensus, therefore, is not merely a consensus on accepting certain authorities, or on complying with certain institutional arrangements, founded on a convergence of self- or group interests. All those who affirm the political conception start from within their own comprehensive view and draw on the religious, philosophical, and moral grounds it provides. (Rawls, 1993: 147)

Rawls goes on to say that the affirmation of a political conception by a comprehensive view does not mean it becomes less philosophical, religious, or moral “since the grounds sincerely held determine the nature of their affirmation.” (Rawls, 1993: 148). Thus one need not worry that a Christian view is being necessarily ‘watered-down’ in its agreement with global justice principles. In overlapping consensus, a balance is struck between giving voice to comprehensive views on the one hand, and not allowing one view to override another, nor override a public political conception of justice, on the other. This balance is needed if we are to be realistic about the pluralistic context at national and global levels.

It is not my intention to resolve in my discussion the issue of whether or not overlapping consensus adequately negotiates a stable social unity in a pluralistic society consisting of multi-cultural and multi-religious groups. Like the two kingdoms view is often problematic for theologians, overlapping consensus is a controversial conception in liberal theory. Its concession to culture may diminish the extent of individual moral autonomy in ‘private’ life (re: see my Chapter Two). With Tan, I have advocated a commitment to the individual as the ultimate unit of moral worth that neither capitulates to nor denies cultural identity. This is an essential principle for a global theory of justice and one that finds overlapping consensus with theological ethics. And I think that Tan’s cosmopolitan liberalism allows for a concept of overlapping consensus, yet one that gives priority to individual moral autonomy. This perhaps demands further discussion. Ultimately, I hold that

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33This is Rawls’s major concern. For an evaluation of overlapping consensus as applied to religious pluralism, see Göran Collste (2005), ‘Is Religious Pluralism Possible?’ in Possibilities for Religious Pluralism, 48-61.
overlapping consensus helps justify how different moral discourses can reasonably relate and interact.

6.3 Conclusion
Along with the two kingdoms view, overlapping consensus is a key concept in my overall argument that there can be a relationship between global justice theory and theological ethics. This furthers my thesis that global justice theory can be employed by the WCC and the LWF in promoting global justice. The kind of relationship I have proposed calls the church to interact with these friends and allies ‘in the world.’ This is important at a time when the mainline protestant churches in the North are becoming disestablished and a part of a pluralistic society. This historical shift tends to makes the Christian witness more counter-cultural, socialistic, and subversive, often pushing theologians to seek overlapping consensus on justice issues with more radical and marginal moral discourses (e.g., Marxist-liberationist). The WCC and LWF statements show this to be the case at times. However, the liberal justice principles are not incompatible with the church’s persistent, radical, and eschatological push for justice. Recall that the two liberal principles of justice pay homage to the socialist critique. Global theory itself makes demands that the mainstream business world would find subversive and counter to the way things are. There is an overlapping consensus with the challenging ethic of Jesus and his vision for how things should be among people.

But a theory’s compatibility with theological ethics should not only be based on how subversive it is. Rather it should be based on how it guides the church in being aware of the political realm in a most realistic and rational way. Liberal global theory is rooted in a long-standing tradition shaping the liberal democratic political system. It is the political system we find ourselves contending with today. It is not a perfect system, in theory or in practice, nor does it exist in all corners of the globe. But as our justice concerns move beyond the borders of our nation-states, this tradition now is being theoretically extended to the global context. Global theories of justice make reasonable arguments as to why we are obligated to each and every individual, in spite of where they are born. These are arguments and conceptions that the church can employ when speaking against globalization and when speaking for justice.
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