WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?
GLOBALIZATION AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

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Among the many papers and forms I received from my university prior to beginning my first semester of undergraduate study (Fall 1967) was one listing the books every properly educated high school student should have read prior to beginning college. The document listed numerous books I had already read. Novels like *Great Expectations*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *A Separate Peace*, and *Moby Dick* dominated the list. But one of the books on the list had not made its way on my reading schedule until then: Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (McLuhan 1964). In fact, the local bookstore in my small hometown in Tennessee had a difficult time locating the book for me. The summer before my freshman year was spent trying to finish the list my university had assured me was "must" reading. It was not until several months after beginning classes that I discovered I was just about the only incoming student who had read all these books.

Buried deep within the technical jargon and philosophical language of *Understanding Media*, with its discussions of "hot" and "cool" media and the claim that the medium was the message (or, perhaps even more appropriately the *massage*), was the introduction of a concept that sounded revolutionary at the time: the rapid expansion of mass media had made former distinctions based upon national boundaries obsolete. McLuhan, and others influenced by his thought, began to describe the world as a "global village". The clear implication of this prophetic term was that rapidly changing technological advances, especially in mass media, had blurred former geographical distinctions based upon distance, time, and space. McLuhan focused his claims on the ability of television to beam images halfway around the world in a matter of seconds, and the impact of telephone accessibility to even the most remote of countries, among a long list of technological marvels. Such access, he and others believed, meant persons could no longer be regarded solely as citizens of their native countries, but must now be considered citizens of the world (McLuhan 1962, 43; cf. also Waterman 15).

The nearly four decades since that book appeared have seen incredible advances in technology. Suffice it to say that even McLuhan, who envisioned a cultural revolution resulting from this "paradigm shift", could not have foreseen the extent of the technology we now enjoy. McLuhan's prophecy envisioned philosophical, social, and psychological changes that would result from the blurring of national divisions. The period since his thoughts appeared have seen the "global village" change its focus from these more intellectual categories to one more practical in nature. The "global village" has given way to a global economy, with the emergence of transnational or multinational corporations accomplishing the crossing of national borders McLuhan described.

"Globalization From Above"

As I began to consider topics for the paper, I was in a nineteenth-century manor house approximately one hundred miles north of London, England, teaching World Religions in a program run each May by Florida Southern College. The manor house itself is an eclectic blend of several architectural styles, combining Jacobean, Baroque, and Gothic designs in a distinctive way. I sat in my room, looking out the window at a typically British rural scene: wide expanses of green grasses punctuated by the splash of brilliantly yellow rapeseed; a tiny, picturesque village with neat gardens; a castle on a nearby hill. I listened to the music of an early eighteenth-century German composer on a Japanese-built CD player while snacking on British "biscuits" and tea. Down the hall, I had the ability to converse with my son in Boston through instant messenger and e-mail (although I never mastered the effect of time-zone differences on telephone conversations).

The local and national news in England was dominated by the national elections, with two issues prominent in the debates: the "mad cow" disease/ hoof- and- mouth disease crisis (both of which had pan-European implications) and whether Great Britain should change its currency system to the "Euro". One poster on a wall in Grantham stated the case: "Europe, Yes; Euro, No". Europe seems to embody some of the basic issues confronting globalization. There is ambivalence about the benefits of the European Union. Few would question the opening of markets in other countries and the basic value of a free-market economy, yet many worry quite publicly about the loss of national identity and the fading of regional distinctiveness. The traditional English village neighboring our home abroad would have been just as happy to remain staunchly British and parochial; the reality of early twenty-first century life required that their village recognize its global nature instead.

There is little question that globalization is occurring all around us. The world in which we live is representative of the global economy and the ubiquitous presence of goods from around the world illustrates that in a dramatic way. My computer may be from South Dakota, but the parts of which it is composed a likely to have come from several different countries. Peter Waterman suggests, "Globalisation… does not only imply the increasing centrality of an inter-national <u>level</u> (transnational companies, financial transactions, the UN or the World Bank). It also implies experience of the world as a <u>single</u> place, and recognition of <u>global</u> problems, needing <u>holistic</u> solutions." (Waterman 3) We truly live in some sort of "global village". The question is whether this "global village" serves the same social, psychological, and emotional functions as the villages of the pre-modern and early modern eras. In an age when information is instantaneous and contact can be made with persons all over the world at the speed of light, one must ask whether anyone is really saying anything that goes to the soul of the individuals engaged in this discourse. Has globalization exacerbated the problems surrounding the human need for community?

Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith claim that globalization promised it could provide "(g)reater interconnectedness among the world's people" through a "'global village' in which the destructive antagonisms of the past (could) be left behind, replaced by global

cooperation and enriching diversity". (Brecher, *et al.* ix) At the heart of what Brecher, Costello, and Smith call "globalization from above" is "free-market capitalism", which has transcended national identities and participates (as, perhaps, a co-conspirator) in the much-maligned "new world order". Thomas Friedman, of the *New York Times* states, "Globalization is not just a trend, not just a phenomenon, not just an economic fad. It is the intentional system that has replaced the cold-war system…. Globalization means the spread of free-market capitalism to virtually every country in the world." (Brecher, *et al.* 4).

Brecher, Costello, and Smith believe what they call "globalization from above" has not only failed to deliver on its promises of a prosperous future, it has also created a global economy that has resulted in more widespread and more intense poverty, ecological disaster, and a "race to the bottom" in which traditionally impoverished countries have lowered their environmental standards and tax base in order to attract industry (especially technology-based industry), only to discover the companies thus attracted held precious little loyalty to the country and its people. (Brecher, *et al.* 4-5). One effect of globalization (and its economic counterpart, the multinational corporation) has been a degradation of democracy: "Of the one hundred largest economies in the world, fifty-one today are corporations, not countries…. The ability of governments to pursue development, full employment, or other national economic goals has been undermined by the growing ability of capital to simply pick up and leave." (Brecher, *et al.* 8-9) Further, few other countries around the world (especially in the two-thirds world) have the equivalent of the anti-trust and consumer protection laws that exist in the United States**.** "As a result, corporations are able to dictate policy to governments, backed by the threat that they will relocate." (Brecher, *et al.* 9) The economic policy that results has created a culture of inequality in which women, racial/ethnic, and indigenous peoples have suffered disproportionately. According to the 1999 U.N. Human Development Report, more than eighty countries in the world have per capita incomes <u>lower</u> than a decade ago. The World Bank reports that 1.2 billion people now live in what it calls "extreme poverty", with over one billion persons now unemployed worldwide. Meanwhile, in the same period of time, the net worth of the world's two hundred richest persons increased from $440 billion to more than one trillion dollars between 1994 and 1998. The assets of the three richest persons in the world are <u>more</u> than the combined gross national products of the forty-eight least developed countries in the world. (Brecher, *et al.* 6-7)

Critics of the process of globalization like Brecher, Costello, Smith and Waterman call for a new kind of global human community in response to the effects of globalization. Brecher, Costello, and Smith propose what they call a "globalization from below" which attempts to create solidarity among those persons who have been disenfranchised by the "globalization from above".   This "globalization from below" is a worldwide movement of grassroots resistance to the effects of "globalization from above". It takes numerous forms, including local campaigns against runaway plants to union organizing in poor countries to protest of indigenous peoples to resistance to corporate, genetically engineered foods. (Brecher, *et al.* 10-11) Waterman calls for global solidarity, in which many of the principles that have become familiar in discussions of local communities become characteristic of the kind of global feminism he describes. (Waterman 10-23). The kind of globalization these critics describe involves independent decisions of association based upon common tasks or shared concerns or issues. Such familiar slogans from

the not-so-distant past as "Sisterhood is global" and "Think globally, act locally" are representative of "globalization from below.

Globalization and Community

This discussion raises the question of the relationship between globalization and community. Is it possible to maintain a sense of community on a global scale, or is community by definition too local and personal to be translated to a global stage? What are the necessary conditions of community that need to be considered in this discussion? Is there an economy of characteristics of community that might be applicable regardless of whether the community being considered is where two or three are gathered together, a congregation, a village, or a global village?

George Rupp raises Max Weber's standard categories of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* when he states the basic issue at hand: "The promise of the theme of community in contemporary literature and social commentary testifies to the deep sense of its lack, at least in the consciousness of the cultural elites of the West. This sense of absence or loss all too often indulges in not only nostalgia for an idealized past but also inattention to the continuing power of traditional communities." (Rupp 202) In traditional communities, like the village of approximately three hundred residents that bordered our study abroad center in England, "community is so often construed, consciously or unconsciously, as small, settled, rural, and homogeneous". Such traditional communities would be represented by the song whose title is a part of the title of this paper: "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" Rupp compares this type of community with "society" which is "large in scale, mobile, urban, and pluralistic". (Rupp 203) Rupp continues:

> This sense of deficiency correctly identifies the fact that, for modern pluralistic societies, common bonds cannot simply be taken for granted. The implied contrast is also defensible: in more traditional communities there are such taken-for-granted bonds because of close proximity over long periods of time. Mobility and anonymity first loosen and then often break ties that depend on genealogy and geography, on blood and soil. That such common bonds cannot be taken for granted does not in itself justify the conclusion that here is no sense of community in modern pluralistic societies, but it does focus attention on the extent to which a sense of participation in community is an achievement, not a given. (Rupp 203)

Rupp continues by discussion Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam (the "great missionary religions") and their secular counterpart, Marxism. He claims all four have as a goal the creation of a universal community "based on commitment, allegiance, or solidarity rather than exclusively on natural bonds." (Rupp 205) This kind of universal community, which he believes is intentionally inclusive, "provides critical leverage over both the provincialism of traditional communities and the complacency of established social order". (Rupp 206-7)

Many have suggested that the modern pluralistic society of which Rupp speaks has been superseded by a current condition of postmodernism. Modernism, with its roots in Enlightenment themes of objectivity, detachment, devotion to the written rather the oral,

emphasis upon universal philosophical principles rather than the particular, a shift from the local to the general as the source of human understanding, and an overarching triumph of the masculine at the expense of the feminine, has led to a human condition of domination and of dehumanization. (Brueggemann 5) Rebecca Chopp claims that, in modernism, "knowledge is located in the masculine realm, the public, and seen as objective, universal, autonomous. (Chopp 29) A variety of factors have led to the demise of modernism. The scientific method, which so dominated the academy (including the theological academy) in the nineteenth through the middle of the twentieth centuries, has been challenged by such internal arguments as Thomas Kuhn's discussion of "paradigm shifts" within scientific fields of study themselves. Feminism has challenged both the "sins" of patriarchy and the "masculinization" of knowledge that might be said to have characterized modernism. Various forms of liberation theology have rejected the modernist turn toward the universal and the general, placing emphasis upon the very local, very particular concerns of the poor and the oppressed. What modernism once considered fringe or peripheral issues in theology have become the center of theological investigation. The old, white, Western, male, affluent "center" of modernist intellectual thought simply cannot be seen to hold as the norm for theology in our time. (Lakeland 1-38)

An "Economy" of Global Community

If, as many claim, there exists a sense of community in some sort of global context, what would be the characteristics of that community? In a postmodern environment, in which the focus has shifted to the local and the particular, is there truly a way to discuss a global community? The remainder of the paper will list and discuss several characteristics that have been suggested by feminists, liberation theologians, and proponents of "globalization from below". The list is meant to be suggestive and representative, rather than comprehensive. I propose that one solution to the dilemma would be to discuss communities of solidarity, dialogue, embodiment, and practices.

Community of solidarity

Peter Waterman has written extensively about solidarity as a "specific form of knowing that has won over colonialism". (Waterman 9) The epistemology he describes is intersubjective in nature and is based upon a kind of reciprocity that was ignored by both a premodern and modern view of the world. As Waterman states,

> solidarity can be modeled as an interaction involving at least three persons: I ask you to stand by me over against a third. But rather than presuming the exclusion and opposition of the third, the idea of reflective solidarity thematises the voice of the third to reconstruct solidarity as an exclusionary ideal for contemporary politics and societies. On the one hand, the third is always situated and particular, signifying the other who is excluded and marking the space of identity. On the other hand, including the third, seeing from her perspective, remains the precondition for any claim to universality and any appeal to solidarity. (Waterman 9)

In other words, solidarity participates in the conditions of postmodernism in the sense of its particularity and emphasis upon the local, but also shares a universal claim with modernism.

Waterman's definition of international solidarity is divided into the following categories: identity, substitution, complementarity, reciprocity, affinity, and restitution. Identity (or identity creation) concerns the claiming of common conditions of oppression and the naming of common commitment to selfhood that would underlie socialist calls for international solidarity. Waterman recognizes that this characteristic of solidarity can be reductionistic and negative. Substitution "implies standing up, or in, for a weaker and poorer other". This characteristic can be supportive of the plight of the poor and the oppressed, but it can also lead to a kind of patronization in which a dominant party acts and speaks for the other rather than helping to empower the other. Complementarity attempts to provide what is missing in the condition of the oppressed. Reciprocity "suggests mutual interchange, care, protection, and support". Affinity refers to a "relationship of mutual respect and support" and would have more to do with "values, feelings, and friendship" than with the more political and social conditions of the previous characteristics. Restitution refers to "the putting right of an old wrong". (Waterman 10-12) Waterman is convinced that solidarity and its connection with the condition of the oppressed engages in both the most local and intimate situations of personal and communal suffering, and in the possibility of global community among feminists who stand with each other in the ways he describes.

Sharon Welch provides helpful categories for understanding the nature of solidarity as well. She maintains, "Solidarity breaks the bonds of isolated individuality and forgetfulness—the bondage of sin—and enables the creation of community and conversion to the other." (Welch 45) Drawing upon Michel Foucault's "genealogy" and "archeology" of knowledge and power, Welch discusses both the formative and the transformative nature of solidarity. Solidarity engages the theologian in transformation as she or he works with those who are victimized, marginalized, and forgotten in their struggles for justice. At the same time, standing in solidarity with the oppressed is in some way constitutive of community with the oppressed: "Within a liberating faith, to be a Christian is to belong to a community that extends beyond the individual, and to find meaning in participation in the affirmation of the struggle for humanity." (Welch 45) Thus, solidarity "is located in an explicitly circular pattern: it emerges as central only from an already existing identification with the oppressed and it evokes further identification with the oppressed." (Welch 46)

Welch, Rebecca Chopp, and many other feminist theologians would argue with Waterman that, although there is a strong sense of solidarity among feminists on a global scale, any attempt to speak of solidarity on a purely conceptual level is inconsistent with feminist theology. Welch claims that solidarity is "inherently practical, and the thought that comprehends it is also intrinsically related to specific practices." (Welch 46) As the theoretical content of liberation theology, solidarity can be understood in three ways: 1. one is aware of solidarity and its centrality in the theological enterprise "only through a particular practice, through participation in the resistance struggles of the oppressed" 2. solidarity serves as a principle of critique, providing the criterion by which institutions like the church and other social institutions may be assessed; 3. solidarity is linked inextricably with political action. (Welch 46)

Likewise, Rebecca Chopp claims that feminist theology is theology directed toward "emancipatory praxis". (Chopp 85) Its focus is upon actual practices of the faith, not upon theoretical constructs of faith: "Feminist theology is performative and productive rather than merely descriptive, interpretive, or explanatory." (Chopp 86) By its nature, it is directed toward transformation, even as it emerges out of a formative community.

Solidarity, then, is those practices of an emancipatory community that engage its participants in a commitment to and identification with the conditions of oppression in which the other exists. Being in solidarity with others means to stand with them in their struggles for identity and for justice. And solidarity must refer to actual practices of commitment.

Community of justice

A second element in the economy of global community would be justice. Rebecca Chopp describes what she calls a "counter-public sphere of justice" as characteristic of ekklesia (which she, along with Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza and Rosemary Reuther, sees as the church characteristic of feminist theology). Chopp maintains the modern American definition of justice has been a "nonconstitutive act of community" that has to do with the distribution of goods on an equal basis. She proposes a communicative model of justice in its place. Here, justice is seen as the "rights and responsibilities of self-determination". This understanding of justice is, she claims, "constitutive of community." (Chopp 62) She continues: "Feminist ekklesia implies this 'communicative' notion of justice, relying on biblical, theological, and critical theoretical resources to become a just community, a community in which each participant has a right to have a voice in self-determination and community determination." (Chopp 63) Rita Nakashima Brock links the concept of justice within the community to God's intent in creation: "For the fullness of God's creation to be made manifest—for the greening and ripening of creating—all beings must be provided a chance to fulfill their potential to create, to celebrate, and to care. For our lives to be lived at their fullest, human beings require a just, peaceful, and whole world, and a safe, healthy environment." (Brock 141)

George Rupp affirms "the ideal of community that is respectful toward the whole of reality and therefore also to all members of the human community, because it is in principle universal rather than limited by ethnic or geographical qualities." (Rupp 218) Sharon Welch quotes Gustavo Guttierez, who states: "The interlocutors of liberation theology are the nonpersons, the humans who are not considered human by the dominant social order—the poor, the exploited classes, the marginalized races, all the despised cultures." (Welch 58) A communicative form of justice empowers the participation of all in the community in terms of finding their own voices. Nelle Morton has described a function of women's communities as "hearing one another into speech" (Morton 127-9) Communities of justice are based in real practices in which a kind of intentional listening and solidarity with the other not only allows them to have a voice, but provides them with the support necessary for them to find a voice. Only as the dehumanization and oppression of modernism are answered by those practices that recognize the essential personhood of all involved and give voice to those silenced by patriarchy, bigotry, and slavery can a community of justice exist. Communities of justice empower the participation of all in their own self-

determination. Chopp maintains that, "Justice,… involves deliberation, representation, and construction within community. Justice means that everyone gets a voice in self-determination, and that everyone is allowed and encouraged to have the resources necessary to write his or her life." (Chopp 45)

Waterman sees justice as one of the essential characteristics of the global feminism he proposes as well. His understanding of solidarity is "informed by and positively articulated with equality, liberty, peace, tolerance, and more-recent emancipatory/ life-protective ideals." (Waterman 10) While justice is practiced in person and within local contexts, it is also constitutive of the liberating approach to the condition of the poor, oppressed, and marginalized wherever they exist. Liberation theology is committed to empowering those who are suffering in the squalor of small villages and barrios while also being committed to giving a voice to the universal human conditions of those living in oppression. Feminist theology is concerned for the individual woman who suffers abuse at the hands of her lover as well as for the conditions of patriarchy, which it labels as sin. (Chopp 55) Justice is both involved in the individual life and in the global reality of our response to injustice. As Chopp reminds us, ekklesia does not just denounce sin (especially the sin of patriarchy), it also announces grace. It "[e]xists to be a space in which persons find new forms of relating, in which new discourses are formed, in which new experiments of transformation take place." (Chopp 61)

Community of dialogue

A third condition of global community focuses on the centrality of dialogue as the means of communication within the community. Dialogue requires a commitment to the other that considers her or him a subject, rather than an object. The dehumanizing and marginalizing of persons that result from oppression, patriarchy, racism, and other forms of triumphalism result in refusing to grant those persons their voices and, as a result, their identities. Dialogue is a condition of community characterized by careful and intent listening to the claim to truth being made by the other. This intentional listening to the other helps that person find his or her voice, allowing full participation in the dialogue. Jack Mezirow discusses the nature of discourse in what he calls "transformative teaching" as "that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief…. Discourse is the forum in which 'finding one's voice' becomes a prerequisite for free full participation." (Mezirow 10-11) He continues:

> Discourse requires only that participants have the will and readiness to seek understanding and to reach some reasonable agreement. Feelings of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy are essential preconditions for free full participation in discourse. Discourse is not based on winning arguments; it centrally involves finding agreement, welcoming difference, 'trying on' other points of view, identifying the common in the contradictory, tolerating the anxiety implicit in paradox, searching for synthesis, and reframing. (Mezirow 12-13)

Likewise, Parker Palmer understands teaching to take the form of dialogue. He quotes Nelle Morton's phrase, "hearing into speech", then asks, "What does it mean to listen to a voice before

it is spoken? It means making space for the other, being aware of the other, paying attention to the other, honoring the other…. It means entering empathically into the student's world so that he or she perceives you as someone who has the promise of being able to hear another person's truth." (Palmer 46)

Dialogue, then, requires listening to the other who serves as a partner in dialogue, and that listening helps give voice to that partner. In order for this kind of listening to occur, dialogue requires respect for the other. One must regard the other as a fellow subject in order for dialogue to take place. The model of the community of dialogue is based on a condition of intersubjectivity. Chopp claims, "Dialogue requires real interaction among embodied persons, with openness and respect for mutual critique." (Chopp 107) Dialogue is only possible as an exchange between persons who regard each other as fellow subjects with a legitimate claim to the truth. It is within those spaces of dialogue that solidarity is possible and where freedom and justice can occur. Palmer describes that space as one which is both bounded and open, hospitable and charged, a space in which we invite the voice of the individual as well as the voice of the group, a space where we honor the "little stories" of the individual as well as the "big stories" of our disciplines and traditions, where we support solitude while surrounding it with the resources of the community, and where we welcome both silence and speech. (Palmer 74-77)

Dialogue becomes a global as well as a local condition as we consider the voice of the "generalized other" in addition to the actual partner in the dialogue itself. Again, Waterman's discussion of solidarity described the voice of the third party as an additional voice in dialogue, even when that third party is the oppressor. Dialogue does not involve only the claims of two partners in conversation. Palmer recalls the words of Robert Frost: "We dance round in a ring and suppose/ But the Secret sits in the middle and knows." (Palmer 105) At the center of theological dialogue is a subject "that continually calls us deeper into its secret, a subject that refuses to be reduced to our conclusions about it." (Palmer 105) Indeed, Palmer claims, "True community in any context requires a transcendent third thing that holds both me and thee accountable to something beyond ourselves." (Palmer 117)

Community of Embodiment

One of the major contributions of many Christian feminist theologians to the discussion of community is their insistence that Christian community is always an "embodied" reality. Kristine Culp begins her discussion of the "nature of Christian community" by referring to two divergent images of the body: the character of "Baby Suggs" from Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and the image of the church as the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12. (Culp 156-8, 164) "Baby Suggs" is the slave woman whose beaten, battered body, bad hip and all, has taken so much abuse at the hands of her owners that all she has left to give is her "great heart". (Morrison 87) So "Baby Suggs", holy, carries on a preaching mission among the slaves, runaways, and others who made it across the Ohio River to "freedom". In a remarkable sermon, "Baby Suggs", holy, reminds those gathered in the Clearing of the precious gift that exists in their bodies. This gift is even more precious as she reminds them that those who own and mistreat them do not love the individual parts of their bodies. She leads her congregation through a recitation of the parts of

their bodies, instructing them to love their hands, and their necks, and especially their hearts. They laugh, and they dance, and they cry as they celebrate their bodies, bodies that are a gift from God. (Morrison 88-9) Morrison reminds us that our bodies, and the individual members that make it up, are holy and should be celebrated by persons of faith.

Likewise, in the familiar passage from 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes the members of the church as the Body of Christ. This text is famous for its recognition of the interdependency of the organs and other body parts it lists. "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member rejoices, all rejoice together with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26) This is a remarkable image that identifies the immense diversity of gifts of community provided by the spirit of God.

Culp makes six claims about the model of Christian community she calls the "Body of Life". First, she discusses "human bodily existence as a means of grace", claiming that "providing care for human bodily exitence may offer the means by which persons experience grace profoundly." (Culp 164) Second, Christian community is an embodiment of God. This is the essential claim of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Culp states, "Christian community, like all human life, is embodied; it has economic, social, political, temporal, and linguistic dimensions…. God dwells in the world and we dwell in God in and through our communities, language, and actions—frail and feeble as they may be." (Culp165). Her third point describes Christian community as a body of Life. This terminology "expresses this faith as the conviction that our lives and communities of faith are encompassed by the power of the divine, immanent in and empowering earthly life. It emphases that God lives near to us; God can be known as 'Life Dwelling in the Many'." (Culp166). Fourth, she speaks of a "finite and mortal body". In discussing this claim, Culp states, "Thus to imagine and live Christian community as the body of Life requires accepting responsibility for human abilities and recognizing human inabilities in the context of an encompassing universe of agents and existence." (Culp 167) Her fifth point describes the work of the church, which she claims is "to embody and midwife the integrity of Life in the midst of the world. The task set before Christians and their communities is to uphold and fashion a holy wholeness of life before God from the fragments of our lives." (Culp 167) Finally, Culp addresses the continuing incarnation of God in the world. "It is not only that we live and move and have our being in the Divine Life but also that this One who is the utter abundance of Life lives and dwells in, through, and with earthly life as companion and encourager." (Culp 168)

Likewise, Rita Nakashima Brock has devoted much of her research to the investigation of embodiment. Her book, *Journeys By Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*, describes "Christa/community" as a community of erotic power which is the "connectedness among the members of the community who live with heart." (Brock 1988, 70) Eros contains the primal energy of created interconnectedness. Rebecca Chopp claims, "This erotic power, seen by Brock as the fundamental connection of Jesus and communal redemptive existence, or what she calls Christa/community, heals brokenness, even the brokenness suffered by the most vulnerable." Chopp 49) She continues,

> The spirituality of embodiment has to do with how we experience the vitality of God's spirit within us and within the creation in all that we do in Christian life….A spiritual praxis of connectedness and embodiment seems, in my judgment, necessary to counter

the practical spirituality of detachment and separation…. In patriarchal spirituality, transcendence as the highest value occurs only through separation from others and control of the body. A spiritual praxis of connectedness is that which both heals and resists patriarchal spirituality." (Chopp 69)

Community of practices

It should be clear that the kind of community being described is one in which the primary focus is upon the embodied practices of the community, rather than upon an intellectual conversation about community. Sharon Welch links her discussion of practice with solidarity, claiming, "Solidarity is inherently practical, and the thought that comprehends it is also intrinsically related to specific practices." (Welch 46) The connection between these two significant concepts can be seen in three ways: first, "one is aware of solidarity and its centrality only through a particular practice, through participation in the resistance struggles of the oppressed"; second, solidarity "serves as a principle of critique"; and third, solidarity "provides impetus for political action." (Welch 46)

Rebecca Chopp also claims the truth of community is to be located in its practices. "In feminist practices of ekklesiality, spirituality is a praxis, a way of living. Spirituality as a praxis is invoked and created in part by the symbols and doctrines, in part by the rituals and community…. Spirituality, in a very real sense, is not what we have but what we do and who we are in the ongoing web of connections." (Chopp 66-7) She claims that feminist theology as emancipatory praxis means that theology works, or functions, within the emancipatory praxis of feminist liberationist Christianity. She also believes theology as emancipatory praxis is itself transformative: "Feminist theology is performative and productive rather than merely descriptive, interpretive, or explanatory." (Chopp 86) It is only within the actual practices of the community that the redemptive power of God's presence serves to overcome patriarchy and oppression through God's grace.

Conclusions

The economy of characteristics of community we have discussed begins to address some of the concerns about the character of global community as well. It is clear that the majority of these characteristics are addressed primarily to the local, particular communities in which persons may participate. However, several of the characteristics are also applicable to the kinds of global communities described by Brecher, Costello, and Smith as "globalization from below" and by the global feminism that Waterman proposes. The themes of solidarity, justice, and dialogue that are representative of community are as applicable to the global situation as to the local. While the themes of embodiment and practices seem more appropriate to small, intimate communities, the feminism inherent in these themes would suggest their applicability wherever women and men are working together to counter the effects of patriarchy, dehumanization, and injustice. There are always universal implications to the commitment to giving voice to the other, even when the actual practices are local.

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