



Special contribution

The principle of sphere-sovereignty in a time of globalisation¹

B. Goudzwaard
Emeritus Professor
Vrije Universiteit
Amsterdam
E-mail: bobgoudzw@gmail.com

Abstract

The principle of sphere-sovereignty in a time of globalisation

This article investigates the phenomenon of present-day globalisation from a Christian perspective to determine whether the principle of sphere-sovereignty can provide an antidote to globalisation's harmful consequences. Firstly, it is explained how the principle of sphere-sovereignty is founded on the biblical message, and that it includes two interrelated dimensions, viz. that of life-orientation and of responsible differentiation. Secondly, the following four characteristics of contemporary globalisation are reviewed: it is (1) of a more or less autonomous nature, (2) a seemingly unavoidable project, (3) a process of a dynamic nature, and (4) a product of Western modernisation. In the third place the implications of the acceptance of the principle of sphere-sovereignty for globalisation are investigated. It seems that globalisation, in many areas of life, is detrimental to healthy forms of differentiation – the first dimension of sphere-sovereignty. From the perspective of orientation (the second dimension of sphere-sovereignty), it becomes evident that the present project of globalisation has in some respects already deteriorated into a kind of blinding, oppressive ideology. This type of globalisation “ad malam partem” is finally

1 Speech delivered on 9 March 2011 at the annual Stoker Lectures of the School of Philosophy, Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University.

contrasted with a better road of globalisation “ad bonam partem”. This last type of globalisation – not driven by selfish greed, desire and power, but by love for our Lord Jesus Christ, and for one’s neighbours – may help to prevent the ominous crisis of our time.

Opsomming

Die beginsel van soewereiniteit in eie kring in ’n tyd van globalisering

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die hedendaagse verskynsel van globalisering vanuit ’n Christelike perspektief om vas te stel of die beginsel van soewereiniteit in eie kring ’n teengif kan bied vir die skadelike gevolge van globalisering. In die eerste plek word verduidelik dat die beginsel van soewereiniteit in eie kring op die Bybel gegrond is en uit verbandhoudende dimensies bestaan, naamlik lewensoriëntering en verantwoordelike differensiasie. Tweedens word aandag gegee aan die volgende vier kenmerke van kontemporêre globalisering, naamlik (1) die betreklik outonome aard daarvan, (2) dat dit is ’n skynbaar onvermydelike projek is, (3) die dinamiese aard van die proses, en (4) dat dit ’n produk van Westerse modernisering is. Derdens word die implikasies van aanvaarding van die beginsel van soewereiniteit in eie kring ten opsigte van globalisering ondersoek. Dit blyk dat globalisering in baie areas van die lewe gesonde differensiasie (die eerste dimensie van soewereiniteit in eie kring) teenwerk en selfs vernietig. Vanuit die perspektief van oriëntering (die tweede dimensie) word dit duidelik dat globalisering reeds ten opsigte van ’n aantal aspekte ontaard het in ’n verblindende, onderdrukkende ideologie. Hierdie tipe globalisering “ad malam partem”, word ten slotte gekontrasteer met ’n beter proses van globalisering, naamlik “ad bonum partem”. Laasgenoemde tipe globalisering – nie langer gemotiveer deur selfsugtige hebsug, begeerte en mag nie, maar deur liefde vir die Here Jesus Christus en ’n mens se naaste – mag ’n bydrae lewer om die dreigende krisis van ons tyd te help voorkom.

1. Introduction

About 35 years ago Prof Bernard Zylstra of Toronto and I brought a visit to the already aging Prof Stoker in his home. We spoke about apartheid, sphere-sovereignty, and the significance of the philosophy of the cosmomic idea for our time, and after that lively discussion he gave us both a copy of his two volume book *Oorsprong en rigting*. Being back in Potchefstroom after so many years, it is indeed the memory of that discussion which inspired me to choose today, as my main theme. “The principle of sphere sovereignty in a

time of globalisation". For while this principle of sphere-sovereignty brought Prof Stoker to a supportive, though not entirely uncritical view on the policy of *eiesoortige ontwikkeling* in his lifetime, in 2011, other, and in my view even more intriguing questions, are now at stake. Could this old truly calvinistic principle perhaps mean something for people like us who live in the context of a deeply infringing process of globalisation?

At first sight that seems an impossible task. Already in its wordings the term *sovereignty* reminds us of other times than ours, times in which either a sovereign church or a sovereign state could indeed threaten the independent existence of all other "spheres of life". But in the debate about present globalisation it is not the presence of these classic institutions, but far more their absence which sets the tone. The end of the nation-state has already become a common theme in the present discussions about globalisation.²

Sometimes feelings of embarrassment are, however, helpful. In our case they make us aware that simple conclusions are not available. Our ship has to look for deeper waters. Let me, therefore, begin by telling you something of the original meaning of this, in my view, still fully living principle. Only on that base we may hope to see a possible connection with the present dynamic process of globalisation.

2. Sovereignty in own sphere revisited

2.1 Formulated by A. Kuyper

It was during the occasion of the opening of the Free University in Amsterdam in October 1880, that the famous Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper delivered his well-known address on the principle of *Soevereiniteit in eigen kring*. In that lecture Kuyper touched the roots of that principle in a very specific way. He referred directly to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all dimensions of life and culture. When Jesus the Messiah suffered at his cross on Golgotha, the reason for his execution was publicly announced above his head: *Rex Judei*. Kuyper continues:

King of the Jews, so *Bearer of Sovereignty*, that was the accusation why he had to die ... And because of that Sovereignty,

2 See for instance: Ohmae, Kenichi. 1996. *The end of the nation state, the rise of regional economies*. Harper Collins; and The Group of Lisbon. 1995. *Limits to competition*. MIT Press.

because of the existence of the power of that first-born son of Mary there is now, just as in the first three centuries, a vehement turbulence among thinking spirits, among ruling powers, and among nations living together.³

2.2 God as the final Authority

What strikes here in the words of Kuyper is not only an outspoken deep spirituality, which from the outset rejects all forms of neutrality: no ruler can, at any time, avoid the choice for or against this King of Kings. What is even more striking is his interpretation of the word *sovereignty* itself. The usual interpretation of the principle of sphere-sovereignty underlines the authority of “office-bearers” in their own realm, rights which ought to be respected by everyone. Kuyper, however, in full accordance with the teachings of John Calvin, follows another interpretation. The basic question is if in all realms of life the authority of the living God and of his Messiah is honoured and respected.⁴

The obedience to the ways or ordinances of the living God in all life-situations is indeed the kernel of the principle of sovereignty in own sphere, but it has from the outset two dimensions: the dimension of orientation and the dimension of differentiation. Firstly it questions the prevalent *life-orientation* of all human societies, confronting them with the intriguing choice who or what they ultimately wish to serve in all the aspects of their life. It will be clear that in relation to that basic question, it is not enough to point to any kind of self-chosen goals or political achievements. The issue of orientation is not about

3 Kuyper, Abraham. 1956. Soevereiniteit in eigen kring. (*In De Gaay Fortman, W.F., ed. Architectonische critiek: fragmenten uit de sociaal-politieke geschriften van Dr A Kuyper. Amsterdam: Paris. p. 41.*)

4 That the principle of sphere-sovereignty has indeed nothing to do with any type of glorification of the own power of “leaders” of churches, families, peoples, governments or enterprises, is made very clear in the following statement by Prof Gerbrandy (the Prime Minister of the Netherlands during the Second World War):

The principle of sovereignty in own sphere, pre-eminently christian, pre-eminently reformed, is being violated in the life and thoughts of people to a kind of sovereignty of the patron, which excludes all rights of say of others; while the most characteristic of this idea is the sovereignty of divine ordinances in each sphere of life, for whom master and servant, government and people have obediently to bow together. (Gerbrandy, P.S. 1927. *De strijd om nieuwe maatschappijvormen*. p. 107.)

us and our *goals*, but whether in all the domains of life, the *ways* of the Lord are followed.

2.3 Life-orientation

The element of this normative way-orientation of life and culture is, however, usually neglected in discussions about this principle – which is puzzling. For even the concept of *sphere* refers directly to it. Kuyper, for instance, explains in the same address that no circle or sphere can exist without a centre; and that this centre, drawn with a firm radius (*getrokken met een vaste straal*), is equal to its own law or principle of life, given by God in his creation.⁵ Human science, for instance, so Kuyper says, is placed by the living God under the supreme authority of the divine principle of Truth (the Dutch term is *opperhoogheid*).⁶ In other words, all spheres of life are thus for Kuyper realms of God's rule, which is characterised by living and binding commandments⁷ or ordinances as radiations of the enduring Lordship of our sovereign Jesus Christ.

It is important to note that next to a creational dimension also an eschatological dimension is from the outset present in this principle. One day, so writes Paul in Ephesians 1, the entire universe will be recaptured under the Headship of Jesus Christ, according to God's own administration of time (the Greek word is *oikonomion*).⁸ The basic orientation of the principle of sphere-sovereignty can therefore also be understood as a continuous invitation to people in all the

5 Kuyper, Abraham. 1956. Soevereiniteit in eigen kring. (*In De Gaay Fortman, W.F., ed. Architectonische critiek: fragmenten uit de sociaal-politieke geschriften van Dr A Kuyper. Amsterdam: Paris. p. 44.*)

6 Kuyper, Abraham. 1956. Soevereiniteit in eigen kring. (*In De Gaay Fortman, W.F., ed. Architectonische critiek: fragmenten uit de sociaal-politieke geschriften van Dr A Kuyper. Amsterdam: Paris. p. 55.*)

7 Groen van Prinsterer, the leader of the Dutch Reveil spoke in a similar way:

The Gospel teaches us, that every (human) authority ... has direct and immediate its source, its standard, its guarantee, and its restrictions in the Will of God ... in the realm of its own rights (*in den kring zijner rechten*). (Groen van Prinsterer, G. Grondwetsherziening en Eensgezindheid. p. 334.)

8 The word *oikonomion* or *Gods design* was also chosen by the first meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 as a starting-point to confront existing economic systems after the World War (Man's disorder and Gods design).

domains of life to come to an opening-up, a “disclosure” of their own respective life-spheres to the dynamics of the kingdom of God.

2.4 The disclosure or unfolding of creation

Disclosure is a Dooyeweerdian term. It implies that God’s good creation is not destined to be seen in a restrictive way as an end in itself. It is destined to be opened, to become a multicoloured answer to our coming Lord. His living Word from the beginning asks for an answer (*een antwoord*), from all living people in the great dialogue of his creation. If someone, for instance, uses and values power as a goal in itself, it finally becomes a destructive kind of power to him. But it can also become an answer to the living Lord and his Messiah when justice is done and human rights are respected. Then power is disclosed. In the same way human sexuality is destined not to be or remain an end in itself, but is meant to become an expression of sincere mutual love. Love opens, discloses sexuality. Economic life is in Kuyper’s view just another sphere of our human existence. Its disclosure implies that the possession of economic resources is not seen in a restrictive way, as an end in itself, but as a means to participate in Gods *oikonomia*, in the careful and fruitful administration of all that He entrusted to us. In Kuyper’s view of sphere-sovereignty business corporations, for instance, are summoned to make themselves serviceable to the human community by acts of real stewardship. I quote:

The truth is this: absolute property belongs only to God; all of our property is on loan from Him; our management is only stewardship. Therefore, on the one hand, only the Lord our God can discharge us from responsibility for that kind of management. (But) on the other hand, under God we have no right of rule except in the context of the organic association of mankind, and thus also in the context of the organic association of man’s possessions.⁹

2.5 Responsible differentiation

There is more to say, however. Next to the aspect of a necessary basic *orientation* to Gods ordinances, the principle of sphere-sovereignty includes room for responsible *differentiation*. This mandate follows immediately from the centrality of Gods authority over the

9 Kuyper, Abraham. 1991. *The problem of poverty*. Edited by James Skillen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. p. 67.

fullness of life. Our Lord ought to be obeyed not only in the social and political realm, in science and in family life, but also in the arts and economy. So each sphere is entitled under his rule to have its own development, while no sphere of life should dominate or be seen as more holy than the other. For in each of these dimensions or spheres of life we stand directly before God's face (this is the reformational credo of living *coram Deo*). Therefore, no human power is entitled to place itself between this Lord and his servants as a kind of intermediary or supervening authority. Life in all its forms should have an own room or space to develop itself, according to the life-principles which God meant for that domain. All spheres of life together give a multicoloured answer to the one living Word of God.

My predecessor at the Free University, Prof T.P. van der Kooy, in this context once coined the beautiful expression of the need for a "simultaneous realisation of norms". The norms or ways of justice, love, human community, justice and *oikonomia* show namely a deep coherence. They should guide us together in a balanced way to the development of a wholesome human society.¹⁰

Does all this help us now that we have to deal with an ultra-modern process like globalisation? Yes, I really think so. But to make that clear, I would like to turn to a short exposition of what globalisation really is, how it works, and also its changing over time.

3. Globalisation

In my view there is no need to give a detailed exposé of the entire process of globalisation. All of us share its ongoing impacts and consequences almost every day. Four short comments may, however, be helpful.

3.1 An autonomous process

Firstly, it is a fact that globalisation is surely more than an ongoing process of overcoming all national borders by a worldwide – though unequal – expansion of production, consumption and the global spread of new information and communication technologies. It reaches further than that. Perhaps its most remarkable characteristic is that it possesses, to some extent, an own dynamic autonomy, just

10 Van der Kooy, T.P. 1954. *Over economie en humaniteit*. Wageningen; and Van der Kooy, T.P. 1953. *Op het grensgebied van economie en religie*. Wageningen.

as a satellite which revolve around the earth in its own orbit. A satellite which in this case is driven by the boost rockets of a continued liberalisation of trade, a gradual unification of the world's financial markets, and the enormous on march of the new techniques of transportation, information and communication. The world, as a whole, has thus become a platform of new global initiatives. Thus we speak not only of transnational corporations, but also of global markets and global capital, and even of global hit parades. It looks as if another dimension is added to our existence. We all became world citizens, if we like it or not.

3.2 An unavoidable project

My second remark is that globalisation is not only an ongoing *process*, though not without deep shocks and disturbances, but also an extremely important *project*, at least in the eyes of many politicians and business-leaders. They often demand that, by all means, all national barriers for their global activities are removed or liquidated. Often this is propagated under the slogan that there is no alternative available (*TINA* is a term which was first coined by the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher). An ongoing process of globalisation is namely often seen as the best guarantee for more economic growth for all nations, not only the rich but also the very poor.

3.3 Dynamic character

My third remark is related to the utmost *dynamic* character of globalisation. It changes the world, but itself is also been changed continuously. One of the most remarkable changes in the last years is the growing dominant role of international money and of global financial markets which tower over all national economies.

3.4 A product of Western modernisation

My fourth and last remark is about the historical and cultural *origins* of globalisation. In my view globalisation is firstly and mostly a Western project of ongoing *modernisation*. It is a direct expression of Western modernity, and therefore mainly rooted in its rational and mechanistic worldview. Globalisation is derived from the faith in the expansion of market mechanisms and the democratic mechanism. It also measures happiness in a mathematical-statistical way, namely in terms of the growth of our own and other's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

What are in this context the possible implications of the reformed principle of sphere-sovereignty?

Let me first say that in this principle we cannot find anything which rejects economic and technological development or rejects the growth of international trade as such. Also, a far-going voluntary cooperation between nations in, for instance, social, cultural and ecological matters can be seen as fully in line with our calling to do good in God's creation.¹¹ On the other hand, we should not forget that this principle places all domains of life, also our economy, technology, and policies in a normative context, which is a context of both obedient orientation and responsible differentiation. What are the implications of such an approach?

4. The implications of the principle of sphere-sovereignty for globalisation

4.1 The question of differentiation

Let us begin with the dimension of a necessary room for *differentiation*.

At first sight the principle of sphere-sovereignty seems to be fully antiquated. We already realised that neither the supremacy of the national state nor that of the church is typical of present trends in globalisation. Globalisation is about the free development of economies, without any intervention of national states.

However, we should remind ourselves of the true origins of the principle of sphere-sovereignty. Was the intention of Calvin only meant to reject the dominion of the national government or of the Catholic Church? No, of course not. Every pretention of any ultimate or mediating force in the development of human society had to be rejected. That gives this principle an utmost actual significance for us today. For there are sufficient arguments to defend the thesis, while in the mediaeval era it was the *church* which tried to be in command over the fullness of life. In the last two centuries, especially in the countries of the East block, it was the *state* which violated the

11 In the later part of his life Kuyper defended a somewhat different position, namely in his Lecture for the Anti-Revolutionary Party meeting in Amsterdam. In this lecture he attacked the dogma of free trade "in which the nation has to make place for general humanity". (Kuyper, Abraham. *Heilige orde* (holy order), lecture of 13 May 1913.)

sovereignty of business and family life. In our time, however, it is mainly and foremost the domain of economy and finance which tries to dominate over almost all other sectors of life. International finance is, in the words of George Soros, now placed in the driver seat, so that finance and economy together sometimes easily violate the sphere-sovereignty of almost all other domains of life.

4.1.1 The role of global capital

Let us for instance look to the increasing role which so-called global capital is playing in the present world economy. It is well known that about 80% of these enormous daily financial flows are of a speculative nature. Speculative investors can bring a lot of capital into a country, but also withdraw it overnight, and so force national currencies down to a desperate, low level, as happened for instance during the so-called Asia crisis. Many national states, especially in the Southern part of the world, still live and act in fear for what the global financial markets can and will do with their economies. It seems to them that a new big brother is watching us. Indeed, globalisation has, since the turn of the millennium, been on the move in the direction of a growing lordship of money in our economies. The so-called real economy of the production of goods and services has to a high extent become dependent on the whims and volatilities of the financial markets.

4.1.2 The world economic crisis

There is even a link here with the present deep economic world crisis and its persistency. Joseph Stiglitz is one of the authors which have explained this process in a recent book which he perceptively gave the title *Free fall* – a fall which does not stop.¹² In this book he explains how in recent years big banks easily took the lead in most Western economies by loaning enormous amounts of money to especially speculative investors, like the so-called hedge-funds. It was this oversupply of money, made possible by their greed, which, to a significant extent, caused the present crisis, which started by the explosion in the mortgage and housing markets. Remarkably, these large banks were also the first to be saved by their respective governments! Now they are busy to restore their dominating role again. Financial markets decide over the life or death of several national economies. If this is done in a speculative mood it can

12 Stiglitz, Joseph. 2010. *Free fall: America, free markets, and the sinking of the world economy*. Norton & Cy.

without doubt been seen as a violation of other life-spheres, for money has to serve the human society and not to rule over it. This is a principle which was also underlined by Lord Jesus in his sermon on the choice between two masters, God or Mammon.

4.1.3 Transnationals and their governments

Another example of distorted developments in the present globalising economy is, in my view, the enormous pressure which is sometimes exercised by transnationals on (for them) foreign governments, just to implement laws and to receive privileges which are favourable for them. With this effort they disturb a just weighing of interests by those governments and so also violate their sphere-sovereignty of the state.

4.1.4 Intensive advertising

To give a last, but very different illustration: Is the growth of very intensive advertisement campaigns, often directly related to the subconsciousness and also directed to young children, not also a kind of violation of the own sovereignty of the life of families? That seems like an undermining of the God-given authority of parents. Economic life can indeed collide with a harmonious family-life, educating us to be increasingly jealous and greedy.

But let us turn our attention finally to the important question of the *basic orientation* of all these processes, and more specifically of the project of globalisation itself.

4.2 The question of orientation

How far is globalisation's present basic orientation in accordance with Gods laws and ordinances, or how far removed from them?

4.2.1 Concern about worldwide insecurities

Let us firstly observe that especially rich nations are at this very moment deeply concerned about a number of growing worldwide uncertainties. They do have their concerns about the coming confrontation with new rising economic powers like China and India, but also about the availability of enough energy and resources in the future. The present revolts in Arab countries seem to them as signs written on the wall. They are really in fear that these various developments will sooner or later undermine their economic power, and by consequence also their high standard of living which on its turn is based upon a continued high economic growth. The maintenance of

a high material standard of living seems in this context to be crucial, and thus also the attachment to a thoroughly materialistic project of globalisation. A rising standard of living, John Kenneth Galbraith once wrote, is seen as an article of faith in Western societies. Its maintenance is a so-called *vital interest* – for which some countries are even willing to fight, as recent history shows. Also, the project of a continued globalisation, the deliberate effort of breaking down all national barriers, is used by them for the promotion of their own economic interests.

4.2.2 On the way to an ideology?

Formulated in this way, this extreme demand indeed looks like a goal or target of last resort, as an indication of something without which states simply cannot live. That sounds in fact as nothing less than a kind of ideology. On account of such an ideology, sacrifices may be asked from everyone.

The ideology of a rising standard of living for the already rich, nationally and internationally, reminds me strongly of the work of the French catholic thinker Rene Girard. He has pointed to the presence of a hurricane of desire (*een wervelwind van begeren*) in the world of today, from which there is almost no possibility of escape.¹³

It also looks like the fulfilment of what Kuyper said in his last (sixth) Stone Lecture about the spirit of modern life. I quote:

The spirit of modern life is most clearly marked by the fact that it seeks the origin of man not in creation after the image of God, but in evolution from the animal. Two fundamental ideas are clearly implied in this: (1) that the point of departure is no longer the ideal or the divine, but the material and the low; (2) that the sovereignty of God is denied, and that man yields himself to the mystical current of an endless process, *a regressus and progressus in infinitum* (italics from Kuyper – BG). And somewhat further in the same lecture he says: ‘And the end can only be, that once more the sound principles of democracy will be banished, to make room this time not for a new aristocracy of nobler birth and higher ideals, but for the coarse and overbearing *kratistocracy* of a brutal money power’.

13 See *Insights with Rene Girard*, video-interview of 9 December 2009, Youtube.com, uploaded by the Hoover Institute.

4.2.3 Two different types of globalisation

What does all this mean to us? Should we conclude that globalisation is only a wrong or distorted worldwide development? I do tend to a different conclusion, again on the base of the same principle of sphere-sovereignty. There is obviously a type of globalisation *ad bonum partem*, which is deeply way-oriented, and the project of a globalisation *ad malam partem*, which starts from the premise of reaching absolute goals. The last type is, as discussed before, coloured by the will and pursuit to make the whole world serviceable to the own economic and political interests of the already rich nations, which claim almost all resources of the earth for their own further growth of production and consumption, and show no respect at all for other cultures and for the vulnerability of our global environment. There is, however, also a process of globalisation *ad bonum partem* possible, in which the basic principle is not the survival of the fittest, but the survival of the weak.

4.2.4 Questions to the rich countries

“Is not the Western view of human beings and society a delusion”, asked the poor churches of South-East Asia during the Asia crisis to the rich churches of the North

... which always looks to the future and wants to improve it, even when it implies an increase of suffering in your own societies and in the South? Have you not forgotten the richness which is related to sufficiency? If, according to Ephesians 1, God is preparing human history to bring everyone and everything under the lordship of Jesus Christ, his shepherd-king – God’s own globalization! – shouldn’t caring for and sharing with each other be the main characteristic of our lifestyle, instead of giving in fully to the secular trend of a growing consumerism?¹⁴

14 *Letter of the Asian churches to the churches of the North*, Bangkok 1999. See the Website of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, WARC. The (more) complete text runs as follows:

Next to the pain and suffering in the South, there are the threats in the North. We heard about poverty, coming back in even your richest societies; we received reports about environmental destruction also in your midst, and about alienation, loneliness and the abuse of women and children. And all that, while most of your churches are losing members. And we asked ourselves: Is most of that not also related to being rich and desiring to become richer than most of you already are? Is there not in the Western view of human beings and society a delusion, which always looks to the future and wants to improve it,

Indeed, in this remarkable view of the churches of the South we find the perspective of another, of a renewed type of globalisation, which is in accordance with God's own work in human history. It is based on the way of caring and sharing for each other instead of on the project of endless pursuit of more for the already rich. It is a type of globalisation, in which various kinds of economies are willing to live in peace together, like an orchard of blossoming economies.¹⁵

5. A way to go

How could this be turned into a reality?

Here again I would like to mention the name of Rene Girard and his fascinating metaphor of an overwhelming hurricane, which stands for the overwhelming desire of peoples and nations. Each hurricane, so says Girard, has a centre in which there is silence and where you see the blue sky. What could this mean for us and for a desire-sick world?

Girard uses two concepts. Firstly, he uses the concept of *love* and secondly, instead of the word *imitation*, he uses the concept of *following*. For in love, the things, the goods, which stand between jealous people and nations and divide them, is substituted by the will and desire to give room to others, to sustain the other in life.

The will to follow is even a deeper concept. It is related to the will to substitute our own plans of dominion and our mimetic desires with the expectation of the coming of a Shepherd King – a Shepherd King who indeed cares for the survival of the weak, and who already can be followed by us. Bonhoeffer speaks here about living in the penultimate (*in het voorlaatste*) – in sharing the bread with the hungry. Our mimetic desires, kneeling before our neighbours, are replaced by the kneeling before another Mediator.

even when it implies an increase of suffering in your own societies and in the South? Have you not forgotten the richness which is related to sufficiency? If, according to Ephesians 1, God is preparing in human history to bring everyone and everything under the lordship of Jesus Christ, his shepherd-king – God's own globalization! – shouldn't caring for and sharing with each other be the main characteristic of our lifestyle, instead of giving fully in to the secular trend of a growing consumerism?

We call for concrete acts of solidarity to alleviate the massive suffering in our nations in the North and in the South.

15 See the report of economic experts written for the WARC-Council held in Accra 2008, WARC-website.

Globalisation *ad bonum partem* looks like something far away, but it is the only realistic path for the present world to prevent the madness of repeated wars and continuous disasters.

Key concepts:

differentiation
disclosure (unfolding)
globalisation
modernisation
sphere-sovereignty

Kernbegrippe:

differensiasie
globalisering
modernisering
ontsluiting
soewereiniteit in eie kring