

Biblical Values and Principles For Global Economic Policies

MCC Washington Office 2001 Spring Seminar held in Washington, D.C. on April 1-3 was entitled "Economic Globalization: for Richer, for Poorer?" After listening to a range of speakers and attending workshops, seminar participants articulated a set of principles based on biblical values that they believe should guide the public policy decisions that shape global economic relations among peoples and nations.

I. Biblical Value: All people bear the image of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ confers a universal dignity on peoples of all nations.

Economics Policy **Principle:** All people -- not just elites in the United States and elsewhere -- should have a meaningful voice in determining global economic policies and practices

II. Value: All people are equal in value and dignity in the sight of God. Human beings are called to lives of servanthood and love of neighbor. God provides gifts and abilities to people be used for the benefit of all. God acts to bring justice for disempowered, impoverished and displaced people:

Principle: Public policy decisions should ensure that the benefits of economic activity flow equitably to all people, not to a privileged few. Economic policies should alleviate poverty and advance equitable power relations and fair economic relations among peoples and nations.

III. Value: The earth belongs to God; we are simply stewards.

Principle: Global economic policies and practices should foster ecological sustainability, not unbridled and wasteful consumption.

IV. Value: God intends that human enterprise nurture the fullness of life and creativity, not death and destruction.

Principle: Global economic policies should foster, not undermine, integral human development, nurturing such human values as the family, local communities, education, physical health, dignified labor, and enjoyment of the fruits of science and culture. Economic activity should produce

wholesome, life-giving products and services, not those that degrade and destroy.

V. Value: Workers should be treated justly.

Principle: Global economic policies should address the imbalance of power between capital and labor, fostering healthy and safe working conditions, worker participation in business decisions, stock ownership and, the creation of worker-owned co-operatives. Economic policies should help transform the nature of the relationships between management, workers, the community and the environment from that of exploitation to mutual respect and a more equitable sharing of power.

VI. Value: Human beings are "persons-in-community" where both individual uniqueness and social solidarity should be respected and operate in mutually reinforcing ways.

Principle: Global economic policies should respect the community, or collective, dimensions of economic life. Examples include protecting and fostering co-operative businesses, community-based agriculture, the accountability of corporations to the communities where they operate, and the collective rights of local communities to their biological resources, knowledge and technologies.

VII. Value: God has created a wonderful diversity of peoples and cultures to express unity in diversity and calls humanity to reject violence and domination.

Principle: Economic policies and structures must not be imposed on the nations and peoples of the world by dominant nations and institutions. While global links can nurture our common humanity, diverse peoples should be able to adopt a variety of economic models, compatible with their own cultures and consistent with values of freedom and justice. Economic policy makers must be willing to make room for alternative voices and models of finance, commerce and development.

<http://www.mcc.org/us/globalization/resources/values.html>