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POVERTY AND GLOBAL ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN OUR ERA

Dozie UDEZE, CMF

1. Introduction

Today, our planet Earth is confronted by a peculiar crises as she never faced before – a crises that threatens the very existence of many of the life forms that populate its lands and seas. The human species which played a regrettable role in causing most of these crises, must now take the responsibility of doing something about eradicating them. This global responsibility staring us in the face is weighty, depressing and frightening. It behooves on mankind to assume this challenge and responsibility – intelligently and diligently – so as to pass on to the next generation a world that they will not find very difficult, if not impossible, to live. In fact, it has become obvious that our global village has suddenly become threatened. The crises that it is exhibiting constitute a weighty global responsibility. The depressing, confusing and frightening structure of these responsibilities may not be fully comprehended without the help of some kind of witty articulation because these crises have to do with the pervasive, horrible reality of suffering.

It is indubitable that Conscious, reflective experience of emotions and pains (be it physical or mental), are part and parcel of the major attributes of sentience especially among the intelligent beings like humans. This means that humans

are imbued with the capacity to decipher which conditions and activities that is conducive or none conducive for them at all times. They are susceptible to conditions and realities that confront them at each given moment of their existence. However the distinguishing factor in intelligent beings like humans is their 'reflective power'; this power in them gives intensity and consciousness to their experience of pain and sorrow, a dimension that is referred as 'suffering'. It is particularly the helplessness, the inability to escape or diminish pain (whether the pain in question is excruciation of the body or an anguish of the mind or spirit), that is the very essence of suffering. It is this 'helplessness' at the core of suffering phenomena which wrench the fundamental question, WHY?

Suffering has not really meant the same for all people since by its nature and circumstances, it often manifest in different forms, ways and degrees. For instance the lush and plush cities which the West considers their 'suburbs' can never compare with the subhuman terrains that made up what the Africans call suburbs/villages; the same applies to other socio-economic and even psychological worldview of these different peoples of the globe. However, considered objectively, suffering is what creates evil. Evil in turn, is ontologically *privatio boni* 'absence of the good,' a deprivation of what should be. Descriptively, evil is any instance of pain or conscious suffering endured by a sentient creature. When pain or conscious suffering is as a result of human (individual or social) agency, such evil is called moral evil. When suffering or conscious pain is rather as a result of nonhuman agency (acts of nature) it is called natural evil. The scope of this endeavor is more of moral evil than it will handle natural evil. The suffering in question is manifesting

with a totally new impetus which could be articulated under two categories: human and environmental.

2. Poverty and Other Dimensions of Human Suffering

Perhaps to discuss this comprehensibly, it will be helpful to examine and connect three realities of our modern socio-cultural exigencies – poverty, victimization and violence. Let us take a closer look at these realities and their inextricable links to the reality of human suffering.

2.1 *Poverty*

Poverty may have been spiritualized and explained away by socio-political and cultural or even religious bodies to counter balance affluence; yet a critical and realistic understanding of that same phenomena reveals that it is destitution that rightly fall under the aegis of evil described above. This scummy insolvency depicts 'unwilling loss' of inalienable right or simply what a person holds dear. It means a subhuman level of subsistence; an unwilling subjection to helplessness at the face of excruciation of the body or an anguish of the mind or spirit. It creates situation of lacks especially lack of the possibility of attending any human higher value and aspiration.

Poverty, as it exists in our contemporary world, is in large measure artificial. By that, I mean it is a byproduct of the act of economic systems which determine the values and availability of material goods. For instance the poverty of the so called third world countries are in a large extent caused by their inability to participate in the economic order as it is manipulated and controlled by the so-called first world. So if

we must redress our increasing global economic imbalance; it becomes imperative to re-examine our social structures especially capitalism and other socio-economic scientific cultural maneuvers. These among others, give unearned power to some and leave out others in social, political and economic marginalization. These structures are identified as being responsible for diminishing the ability of increasing number of participants in global economic enterprise in a dignifying manner. These structures form tools in the hands of the privileged who erode the sense of responsibility and the energy that comes from economic security of their victims. They systematically are designed to drain the poor and the underprivileged psychologically and spiritually and leave them sedated while the privileged bilk on their inalienable rights. In a nutshell, the increasing/upsurge of poverty level in our modern time is a case of paucity in the midst of plenty; it is a case of unequal distribution of wealth. Indeed, equality of all humans is a battle in progress with a success in view especially as globalization makes a great impact on cultures all over the globe, but the battle of equity is yet to begin. Equitable management of the world wealth is an imperative challenge of our time, this is because poverty stands in stark contrast to article 25(i) of the UN declarations, which states,

Everyone has a right to a standard of living which is adequate for health and well being for himself or herself and his or her family including food clothing, housing, medical care, and necessary social services and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other livelihood in circumstances beyond his or her control.

A deep reflection on the above declaration therefore means that a positive action against this misery (poverty) is no longer optional but a duty of all citizens of the globe, if we must redress the turbulence of our time.

It has been observed that after nearly five decades of unprecedented global economic growth, in the twenty-first century the globe still have more than a half million people in poverty. This implies that about 1.5 billion people, which is about one out every four human beings who are living today, is living in abject poverty. And about forty million persons die each year from hunger or hunger-related causes in a world that claims to be at its best ever. Fourteen million children die every year before the age of 5, mostly of diseases that are preventable in Europe and North America not to talk of Africa and Asia. More than two million deaths a year are linked to polluted water and poor sanitation. One adult in four is unable to read and write in our world basking in affluence and technological advancement. This is a serious challenge to our globalizing world. But the stab of conscience becomes all the more painful and also frightening when such poverty is linked to the reality of victimization.

2.2 *Victimization*

Actually, poverty is caused by a variety of factors but the question is, do the poor have to be poor? Certainly if equity and equality should be given a chance among human beings, the poor would not be poor. Injustice and structural violence are on the increase, poverty is a direct consequence of those remote misconducts of humans unto fellow humans. So the truth is that most people are poor because other people are making or keeping them poor. Whatever we may identify as

the chronic cause of this paucity. Today people are recognizing that most physical sufferings are not natural; they are caused by the way some human beings treat other human beings or use others for their egoistic purposes. In their victimized situation, the poor often constitute the people who supply the economic resources which have sustained the course of history. Yet they are ill-remunerated and their human right are bilked by the greedy rich or bourgeoisie.

This victimization and the injustice that lurks behind it are evident in the undeniable and incredible differences in the way the goods of this earth are distributed among the peoples of the earth. The evidence of the above economic injustice abounds in our globe. For instance, there is something terribly wrong and unjust when the nations of the North (mainly in Europe and North America), who make up only one-fourth of the world's population, possess five-sixths of its riches. There is something wrong and unjust when the three-fourths of the earth's peoples who constitute the so-called 'developing world' can make use of only one-sixth of the world's wealth, or when the richest one-fifth of the world's population enjoys 150 times the income of the poorest fifth. The poorer peoples of the world are sinking ever more deeply and hopelessly into debt to the peoples of North America, Europe, and Japan.

What makes the fact of so much victimization not only painful but dangerous and threatening is that the victims are waking up, as never before, to realizing that they are victims. In other words, humans are becoming wiser and more conscious of their rights and becoming more appreciative of who they are and the dignity of that 'uniqueness and otherness.' They are realizing that the ordeal that asphyxiate them is not natural; it is not God's will that they should be poor and have nothing to

eat. It is, rather, the will of other human beings. So the previously silent majority of oppressed people is no longer silent. Centuries of injustice are irrupting in the consciousness of the suffering people. And they are demanding change – a change in the unequal distribution of the goods of the earth, a change in the way some people use and victimize other people. The absence of this change broods trouble; many of the victimized are therefore rightly or wrongly, ready to take up arms. And this leads us to the third link in the chain of human suffering: violence.

2.3 Violence

The reaction to their situation by the exploited and victimized is not the only cause of violence; rather, it is more of the economic or political violence that victimizes them, and of cause, the physical violence that is used by governments or nations to squelch even the nonviolent efforts of victims. All of this leads to the specter of power and armed or military conflict also known to be perpetrators of human suffering. A critical tour down the memory lane, has evidently substantiated the fact that no other epoch has witnessed such myriads of horrendous violence throughout the globe as our epoch.

We live under the fear of imminent danger of extermination, a suicide of mankind may become our fate, especially, as all nations seek to become nuclear powers. The situation of the common/poor man has become precarious especially as all these violence rage at their expense. In fact, it is like mankind is sitting on a 'keg of gunpowder;' we are at the mercy of the evil geniuses of our time. This craze of violence and its slaughtering spree and blood spilling proficiency is

alarmingly graphic. Even at that, arms production and trade that feeds such violence are still booming. Most ironically in almost every instance of these armed conflicts, the violence is incited or justified out of a situation of injustice or victimization in which one side feels it is being used or abused by another. The ubiquitous presence of these kinds of violence have even deceived many to think that violence is innate in humans and therefore it is normal. Bad logic!! In fact if we continue to live with violence, we won't continue to ever exist. Worst still, the quantity and quality and, the nature of armed violence is different today. Given the kind of weaponry we have created, given the vastness of its destructive power and the remoteness of those who pull the triggers, warfare today has gone insane and need control. Even more grave is the nuclear fall-outs emitted into the atmosphere from one part of the universe which affects all humans breathing the same air. Innocent civilians, in ever increasing numbers, are the victims of wars.

Generally violence has a strong pejorative connotation. This is because a mere mentioning of that word conveys a message of harming, unacceptable and illegitimacy of the action in question. Violence, in the actual sense, connotes more than just physical phenomena; it is dramatically more complex than we recognize or perhaps want to recognize. According to Jack David Eller,

Violence need not even be directly interpersonal, that is, a clear case of one person hitting another person. What has been called structural violence refers to less direct, more pervasive, and sometimes even unintentional or at least "invisible" harm (up to and including real and serious physical harm)

caused by the very arrangements and institutions of society.¹

Structural violence is present in most of our modern societies today, it accounts for the chasm between the impoverished and the affluent, and has been subtly denying a large percentage of the world's population access to medical care and other necessities of life. As a result, the world's impoverished are condemned and obliged to die in silence behind this seeming blinding wall dividing the rich and the poor. This is mostly the case in most so-called third world countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where few corrupt politicians in power divert the resources and wealth of their countries to private use. This is the worst experience that the Nigerian under-privileged masses are suffering. This subtle kind of violence is more dangerous because it is exerted or wielded so systematically into the very fabrics of human social order that it could hardly be identified.

David Eller has the best expression of its ironical twists. According to him, it has a way of making its victims to feel guilty of being inferior people rather than people subjected to and technically immersed in inferior circumstances.² In other words, injustice and violence have gone tactical and subtle in our modern world that at this age of sophistry, it no longer comes physical but couched neatly into the normal societal structures and systems unnoticed by many yet rends untold havocs on the underprivileged. Hence, the discomfort it provokes is more despicable and consequential to many and

¹ Jack David ELLER, *Violence And Culture: A Cross-Cultural And Inter-Disciplinary Approach*, Belmont, California: Thomas Wadsworth Publications, 2006, p145.

² ELLER, *Violence and Culture*, p145.

so demands attention if we must do justice to socio-cultural analysis of any given society. Structural violence is synonymous with structural injustice. It forms the bed-rock of poverty, victimization and violence. The aforementioned social maladies, not only constitute a stab on human conscience; it also interferes with the accurate analysis of the cross-cultural evaluation of the various cultural settings of our recent world. This is because, considering Pavlov's theory of conditioning whereby the conditioning of the individual determines the gravity, extent and nature of his action.³ This is precisely why there are so much violent circumstances in the world today.

3. African Situation X-rayed

The African situation could be rated as the worst as it crisscrosses these global realities. In the mind of the media today (local and international), the African continent has become a land with a wounded face, a land doomed with a tragic bleak future, and one branded a continent of misery. The African Continent today has become synonymous with structural violence, ecological disasters, hunger, drought, warring factions/kidnappings, economic depression, unemployment, dictatorships, and civil wars, primitive cultural practices that directly contravene human Rights, the plague of AIDS, Ebola and other deadly diseases. Refugees and millions of displaced destitute have taken possession of the streets without any hope of rehabilitation. Worst still, in most African nations today, guns are still brandished and romanced by 'Child-Soldiers' and killing-spree/its blood-flows are endorsed and glorified by egocentric politicians.

³ ELLER, *Violence and Culture*, p46.

Religious concepts are being transmuted and religious sects/institutions hijacked for nefarious and egocentric cravings of politicians and the privileged Africans. Issues of legitimacy, responsibility, conscientious governance, accountability and justified distribution of national wealth are simply non-existent. Added to these burdens are: the breakdown of law and order, corruption in high and low places, especially and embarrassingly by agents of law enforcement and judiciary. This dispiritedness and social imbalance, indeed, is tantamount to value disorientation and large-spread gross injustice that besiege the African Nations.

O my Africa!! We are indeed beleaguered by betrayals, setbacks and stormy waters. The vestiges of the slave trade and its attendant colonial and neo-colonial tentacles still overshadow our present tense and even worsened by the subtle post enlightenment mental enslavement that precipitates from our much acclaimed Western education. O my Africa!! You are privileged as the cradle of civilization. The origin of mankind is conclusively traced to you. How did this poverty of the mind attack, overwhelm, and engulf you? How are the mighty falling!! How have you become a janitorial towel that is now treated without respect or dignity in international matters? Whether this is exaggerated or a reality remain the challenge of sincere humanitarian analysts. We are free to be pessimistic about the tone of these horrendous saga told of Africa or we can be disturbed about its battered image but the undeniable sublime veracity of all these ramblings is that:

In almost all our nations of Africa, there is abject poverty, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social

disorientation. The results stare us in the face: misery, wars, despair. In a world controlled by rich and powerful nations, Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected by all.⁴

But it is not about lamentations it is about resilience and courage. It is all about reawakening to the consciousnesses that a new Africa can only be possible when Africans cultivate an in-depth spiritual balance which leads to a mental emancipation that radicalizes economic sustenance, social regeneration and political resurgence. At the bottom-line, Africa's fate lies in the hands of Africans, and as Philip Emeagwali puts it, "For Africa to take the center stage in today's economic world, we have to go out and compete on a global basis, there is no other way to succeed."⁵ Emeagwali was right, it is a globalizing world, an epoch of constructive self-assertion. A world where we must contribute our rare gem and also invite or woo others to savor our unique heritage. This is our chance. Before giving more attention to this global economic imbalance, let us make a further trust into the global economic justice.

4. Global Economic Justice

Today, the global flow of information, goods, money and services happens at an unprecedented speed and its social impact is unimaginable. Money unlike we use to know it, has

⁴ *The Challenge of Justice and Peace: the Response of the Church in Africa Today*, Vatican City, 1998, p23.

⁵ Philip EMEAGWALI, "How to move Africa Forward", A Keynote Speech delivered at the University of Alberta, Canada, 23rd. September 2006.

taken the forms of protons, electrons and neutrons. It has become electronic impulses that circulate the globe instantly. Globalizing factors coupled with economic growth, science and technology's advancement has made it possible for more people than ever to live longer, healthier, and more productive lives. However, just as Pope Benedict XVI warned, "Without guidance of charity in truth, this global force(Globalization) will cause unprecedented damage and create new divisions within human family...humanity runs the risk of enslavement and manipulation."⁶

The good intentions of globalization is being misconstrued, muddled up and taken advantage of by some disgruntled nations. In the real sense of the word, globalization does not imply or promote neocolonialism or a kind of larger units overshadowing/ eliminating the local or smaller polities. It simply refer to the increasing interdependence and interconnectedness among humans and nations, mostly propelled by our techno-scientific culture and global commerce. So the term 'globalizing world' here defies geographical locations and muses on the flow of people, money, cultures, information, objects and biophysical processes across space and time; especially as these flows are becoming almost planet-wide. Since this flow cut across the socio-cultural, political, economic and religious perspectives and human interactions; it therefore reveals the depth of interdependence and inequalities of our world. One major hypothesis of globalization is therefore its undeniable proposition that we are no longer just citizens of our local communities, but citizens of the world. This

⁶Pope BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Caritas in Veritate*, June 2009, nos.33, 26, 29.

interconnectedness compels those of us living in this epoch to new levels of creativity and cooperation in order to forge a path through our present uncertainties toward more viable and humane future. Our new challenges therefore require a pluralistic mind-set as a prerequisite mental attitude towards attaining that goal. With this attitude, the achievement of economic justice would include redressing the negative effects of globalization and distributing its benefits more equitably among all people. Social justice which champions the welfare, values, worth and dignity all humans is imperative. A resort to economic justice as a solution is a way forward. If the objective concept of Justice is still "giving to each his or her due," then our option for fairness and equity expressed essentially by distributive justice, becomes imperative. Though economic justice is the paradigm of this endeavor, but it is worthwhile we take a glance at Social justice which forms a bed-rock on which economic justice strives.

4.1 Social Justice

Often times Social Justice is articulated in terms of fundamental human rights. The first thing that often comes to mind when articulating this kind of human right is having a say in the decision making machinery of the state and more elementary right of protection against arbitrary arrest and torture. But recently there has been an increasing shift to an economic aspect as well. There has been an increasing talk on individual and family's right to a sustainable job, education, food/shelter and good health. On the international sphere; the right for the poorer countries to get a fairer price on the world market for their products, and the right to an access to direct market with the bigger countries as well as rights to the

technology therein (which is often manipulated by the richer/developed countries) are all accentuated. Also included on the list of these rights are; rights to cultural expression as opposed to cultural imperialism that has propelled racism and segregation in the past years. So what I call Economic justice will strictly address these rights in vogue.

4.2 *Economic justice*

This segment of human justice literarily refers to a standard of justice whereby all economic policies promotes and strictly advocates equal distribution of benefits to all. It depicts a situation of fairness, whereby both individual, group and indeed the entire social order is taken into consideration in the distribution of available goods/benefits. Economic justice consists of moral principles which guides us in designing our economic institutions. It aims at giving freedom to each person to engage creatively in an unlimited manner, in the socio-economic matters of the world order. It ensures that all are participants as well as beneficiaries in economic matters of our social order. It determines the ethical manner with which each person earns a living, enters into contracts, exchanges goods and services with the other. It designates the basic and well accepted principle of fairness where the consequence of official policies should be the equal allocation of benefits among participants in a given economic system. This is exactly the mindset of our great Popes – Pope John XXIII, Paul VI and Pope John Paul II – when in their bid to protect and achieve a universal human dignity, they insisted in their encyclicals on the fact that the order of human rights should not only emphasize basic civil rights but also socio-economic rights such as rights to job, shelter food, clothing and medical care. Pope John Paul II particularly insisted that

human dignity also includes one's participation in determining the political economy that shapes human life. For instance human labor is an expression of human dignity especially when the labor in question is self-directed not forced or done under duress. The encyclicals collectively share the view that authentic dignity of humans are restored when the social structures (including governments) protect and promote common good and human dignity in general.

So the issue is then, how can such an ideal like we mentioned above be achieved in a complicated gamut of economic systems of our globalizing world? In other words, how do we get the speed of our globalizing exigencies to grow in tandem or match with economic justice so that the negatives of this paradigmatic shifts of our epoch will be checked? Perhaps paying attention or giving cognizance to global interdependence and interconnectedness, which is the major goal of globalization, will be a wise decision. The vehemence with which globalizing realities impinge on the modern mind, compels those of us living in these times to new levels of creativity and cooperation. This compulsion constitutes a new challenge to us, a challenge which require a pluralistic mind-set in dealing with the other. This mind-set must recognize the inalienable rights and respect for the 'otherness' of the other.

In order to forge a path through our present uncertainties; in order to attain a viable and humane future moderated by economic justice, we require a new relational attitude which must recognize the dignity and rights of others. We must move from our present dominant paradigm of individualism, which sees the components of all realities as primarily individual, separate, dualistic, competitive, and hierarchical, to a model of interrelatedness that envisions the world of

persons and nations as essentially relational, interdependent, inclusive, cooperative, and holistic. In other words, we have to redefine and feel ourselves, in our relationships to each other and to this earth, as living organisms whose parts live in each other rather than as machines assembled from preexisting components.

Though the nature of the problem here is socio-political, the answer may essentially be sought within the ambient of humane relationship of humans with others. There may have been voices raised against injustice and violence ranging from politicians, governments, laws, scientists etc. These voices may have heightened the awareness of these horrendous human acts. But like ever before humans have always excelled in their relentless efforts to pacify human excesses. In fact, laws have been promulgated, its enforcement agents have grown so sophisticated technologically and otherwise. However, the fact remains that no matter how comprehensive and wise these norms, laws and structures of governance are, it may still be difficult to enforce laws imposed from outside of us if they have not become accepted norms in our hearts and minds. The truth is that inner laws are often stronger than the laws codified by the state, social or political authorities. It is imperative then that we also develop norms or laws in our own hearts and minds that reflect a sense of shared responsibility for the common good of our neighbors in the global community. We must re-awaken to the reality of common good (*bonum commune*) or (*Koinonagathon*); the good of a whole to which the parts are subservient. We need a disposition which emphasizes the community interest though not to the detriment of personal interests of the individuals.

Our epoch must re-awaken to the necessity of distributive justice in which the utilitarian formula of 'the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number of people is achieved. So with due respect to other plausible solutions to redress the economic negatives of our globalizing world such as global governance etc, we need to diversify our concept of globalization. We need also to develop norms or laws in our own hearts and minds that reflect a sense of shared responsibility for the common good of all our neighbors in the global community. This will require still other forms of globalization. These other forms include a globalization of human consciousness, worldviews, wisdom, ethics, and moral codes, so that we see and act for the global common good. These other forms of globalization must include: globalization of human conscience/compassion, in such a way that we be more conscious of the undeniable presence of 'the other' and accord them their inalienable dignity. It also implies an ever-deepening awareness, love, and care of our ecosystem, on which forms of life at present and lives of future generations depend. These new forms of introspected globalization must be aimed at creating the awareness in our minds that life is a process some have begun, but most of us still have a long way to go. It requires that we keep struggling without sinking into despair or cynicism, but use these times as a springboard for transformation, growing from what we are to what our deepest longing and knowing draws us to become.

5. Conclusion

So far we have been preoccupied with exposing the worldwide growing, horrible and threatening reality of suffering. We have described the horrendous effects of human suffering that results from poverty, which denies one out of

every four people living on this planet the food, shelter and medical care they need to lead healthy lives. We also talked about victimization by which some people have the power to use and abuse other human beings for their own advantage and so keep them in poverty. Violence, also was portrayed to be intrinsic within poverty and victimization which sparks off violence that lead to armed conflict and war. Poverty, victimization, and violence are not just horrible social sores in so-called third-world countries; they crisscross the globe; festering humanity in every nuke and cranny of continents of the world. They stare every sane mind in the face, whether we choose to care or not. But the fact remains that people all over the world are crying out, struggling and suffering for social justice. Unfortunately the sincere demands for justice have been ignored. Non-violent campaigns for justice have met with violence by those who hold the power. And when the oppressed groups finally resort to violence it often provokes oppression on a massive scale.

At this juncture we must reiterate the point that inner-laws, that is, laws flowing from the mind, are often stronger than those externally promulgated and codified by the state. The implication of this statement is that a lot has been done by our technological culture and civil authorities with their sophisticated judiciary outfits, yet injustice still threatens the human family. So this work suggests that a recourse be made on human religiosity for possible plausible solutions. As most modern minds would stubbornly ask, why call on the religions in spite of the flaws identified with the discipline? The answer is not farfetched. Religion, in spite of all its 'human face' has proven to be the source of hope and confidence that there is a meaning to life. It proves that humanity is not just caught up

in shackles of selfishness, there is hope: we are destined for greater values.

So, although religion is often hijacked by human exuberances, it is still very clear that it is the only discipline that can offer a credible fundamental ethical value (global ethics) that will guide the conduct of all peoples of the world. It is actually more of a challenge on the world religions than the civil/secular sectors could offer such plausible set of ethics to the world. Some of the deals of such global ethics may include: Set of ethics that emphasize the dignity and worth of the human person; ethics that recognize the worth of this planet Earth and all its life-forms; ethics that emphasize the need for a just distribution of the goods of this earth, ethics that recognizes that today all persons and nations are interconnected and that the well-being of some requires the well-being of all. Above all the set of ethics must qualify and offer the nations of the world the basic ethical consensus to work for greater peace and justice. These ideals should also be inculcated as prominent vision and message of all the religious communities of humankind. In different ways, all the religions must call their followers to move from an 'ego-centered' to 'other-centered' existence. This may perhaps be a good starting point.

Conclusively, therefore, our contemporary world, given the devastating dangers resulting from poverty, exploitation, and violence, stands in need of hearing and believing and acting upon these positive values of these religions as they bear messages of transformation and communion. So then religion, despite the very evident dangers it carries, provide, or can provide, a valuable if not necessary contribution to the future of humanity.