

Globalism

In Alan Greenspan's new book, *THE AGE OF TURBULENCE*, he has several chapters on "globalism" and its affect on the United States. He also has chapters on China, India, Korea, Russia, and other emerging economies. A fully "globalized world" is one in which production, trade, and finance are not restricted, and are driven by profit taking and risk taking that DO NOT RECOGNIZE BORDERS. The lowering of barriers around the world to the free movement of goods, services, and capital has meant that cheap labor is available to American companies, and our superior technology and capital is available to these emerging markets. In another chapter entitled, "The Conundrum", Greenspan admits his surprise (along with all the other experts) of the impact of these changes and their affect on interest rates and inflation. In 2004, the Federal Reserve was concerned that sustained prosperity in America would produce emerging price inflation, therefore the Fed increased the federal funds rate. To their amazement, yields on ten year treasury notes declined. The market place was actually anticipating lowering inflationary pressures. In February of 2005, the Fed continued to tighten and increase interest rates, but again market forces actually lowered long term rates. Greenspan was surprised and called this a "conundrum". In time he was able to better understand the impact of globalization as a disinflationary force. In one speech he said, "Something different is going on in the world. It is difficult to find inflationary forces anywhere in the world. Accelerating technologies, downsizing of products, a decline in transportation costs, and a decline in communication costs have produced outsourcing around the globe. There is a combination of rising capital efficiency and falling unit labor costs. This is a new phenomenon."

Developing countries with a history of high inflation were benefiting greatly from this new global economy. Even countries like Mexico were able for the first time to market long term bonds. Inflation had been subdued across the globe. Developing countries had averaged an annual increase of 50% in prices between 1989-1998, but by 2006, price inflation had fallen to less than 5%. A major part in this conundrum was the entrance on the world's competitive market place of over a billion educated and very low paid new workers over the last decade. These workers came primarily from east Europe and Asia.

China very quietly and gradually had discovered the virtues of free market capitalism over a ten year period without ever admitting that it was moving in that direction. This worldwide movement of cheap labor into the global market place reduced world wages, inflation, and interest rates. At the same time these forces vastly increased economic growth.

Spiritual Globalism in the First Century

Many of us have asked why God chose the first century to enter the world as a human being through the INCARNATION. Don't forget that the incarnation is actually what we celebrate on Christmas. We don't know what the actual day, month, or year it was; but we certainly know Jesus lived in the beginning of the first century and was crucified between 29 and 32 A.D. Our best estimate is that Jesus was born between 4-6 B.C. Nevertheless, why that era, why that period? Why didn't God send His Son to save the world way before? This question can only be answered by God, but there were certain conditions prevalent in the first century that allowed for Christianity to spread rapidly around the known world—a spiritual globalism. In previous times, barriers such as guarded borders, poor roads, religious persecution, and unknown languages would have prevented the spiritual globalism commanded by Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples of all people in Judea, Samaria, and the whole world.

Pax Romana

The Pax Romana, or Roman peace, made it possible within all the various nations in the Mediterranean world to travel freely between nations to trade and share information. The well used saying, "all roads lead to Rome" was true in the sense that the Roman engineers and legions of soldiers were excellent road builders. They built highways all over northern Africa, the Middle East, Asia Minor, and Europe. These roads made it more possible for the Apostles sent out by Christ to travel to every nation to share the Gospel. Another barrier which had been brought down favoring the spread of Christianity was language. The uniformity of language was actually begun almost 400 years before by Alexander the Great who conquered the Med. World. One of his directives for all the conquered territories was to bring in the Greek language and culture which his generals and their descendants successfully did. By the time of Christ, Greek was the universal language. Most people spoke their native language and Greek as well. Greek was the language of business and commerce. Most communication between countries was done in Greek, therefore all the New Testament letters from the Apostles to the churches were originally written in Greek. This common language was very important in the early spread of Christianity to Samaria, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece.

Another benefit for the Apostles provided by the policies of the Roman Empire was freedom of religion. Historically, conquering nations required the conquered to adopt their religion, but the Roman policy allowed nations to maintain their own religion. Christianity was initially viewed by Rome as a form of Judaism, so for the first 30 years Christianity had no interference by the state. The only persecution came from the Jews who felt threatened by this great movement towards Christ. Remember the first church was in Jerusalem, and all the

initial Christians were Jewish.

The Dividing Wall

Another significant barrier to spiritual globalism was what Paul called the “dividing wall” in Ephesians 2:14. This term had a literal physical significance as well as a spiritual metaphorical significance. Literally there was a wall in the Temple compound in Jerusalem called the dividing wall. This wall separated the court of the Gentiles (where any race could go) from the court of the Jews where only Jews could go. An inscription on the wall warned of the death penalty for any non-Jew who went beyond it. Historically, there were Gentile converts to Judaism called proselytes, but they were not allowed inside. God had called Israel to be a “kingdom of priests” to represent the one true God to the world, but they had never participated in any evangelism or outreach. They sincerely believed that God’s redemptive program was only for them and what few proselytes God might call in from the outside world. Therefore, the question must be asked, “How did the Gospel of Jesus Christ break out of Jerusalem and cross borders of race, culture, and religion?”

Amazingly, even though Jesus had been very clear in His directives to His Apostles to go out to the whole world, they were very reluctant to take the Gospel to “the world”. Ten to twelve years after the resurrection of Jesus, we find His Apostles still in Jerusalem ministering only to Jews. Evangelism outside of Jerusalem was being done during this time by Jewish Christians who had been forced out of Jerusalem by persecution, “a great persecution arose against the church and they were scattered throughout the regions...except the Apostles (who stayed in Jerusalem)” Acts 8:1. The powerful ties of tradition kept Jesus’ closest disciples from understanding and obeying Jesus’ intentions for them as well as the Old Test. prophecies. In many passages like Isa.49:6 God had said, “I will make you (the Messiah) a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” Paul quoted Isaiah in Paul’s sermon in Acts 13:47 on his first missionary journey in saying that God had sent him to the Gentiles. Nevertheless, ten years after Christ’s ascension, the Apostles were not realizing this or participating in it.

Who Was I to Stand in God’s Way ?

In Acts 10-11 Peter was awakened to and hit over the head with the reality of spiritual globalism. God spoke to Peter through a vision that their traditions which prevented them from going to the Gentiles had come to an end. The grip of these traditions was such that it took three times for God to get his attention. God sent Peter to a Gentile city to share the Gospel with Gentiles who gladly received the truth and were converted. God made this clear to a doubting Peter by visibly manifesting the Holy Spirit in them so that Peter said, “I most

certainly understand now that God is not One to show partiality, but in every nation the person who responds to God is welcome.” Still, when Peter returned to Jerusalem the Apostles “took issue” with Peter for going to Gentiles. Peter convinced them three ways: 1. God revealed it to me in a vision, 2. The Holy Spirit sent me there, and 3. God gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit after they believed in Jesus just as He did us. From this time on the Gospel would spread rapidly through the known world through these enlightened Apostles. Next week—What about spiritual globalism in the 21st century, and what part in that do we play ?

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