phenomenon of religious fundamentalism worldwide (Marty and Appleby 1991). Other
example from a growing body of literature on the subject are Gilles Kepel’s *La revanche de
Dieu: Chrétiens, juifs et musulmans à la reconquête du monde* (1991), Karen Armstrong’s *The
Battle For God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2000), and Jessica Stern’s
*Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (2003). Other forms of antiglobalism
that have been identified in our research in the Pacific Islands include ‘ethnification,’ which
can be described as a process of rediscovering a forgotten identity based on people’s cultural
unities. In this sense ‘ethnification’ is the assertion of a local identity “amid the experience of
social change and cultural instability” (Schreiter 2000: 23–24). Yet another form of
antiglobalism is labelled by Schreiter as ‘primitivism’ or ‘revitalization,’ which is described as
an attempt to go back to an earlier pre-modern period to find a frame of reference and meaning
in order to engage the present.
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This final section is an attempt to outline some features of an alternative role — other than turning to fundamentalism, or to the escapist strategies adopted by millenarian oriented churches, or to conformism as an attempt to keep the status quo — that churches and Christians can play in a globalized world.

It is liberation theology that is still the largest and most pervasive theological flow capable of forming an anti-systemic global movement to address issues of poverty, social injustice, economic exploitation and political oppression. Beyond Latin America it has appeared in different forms, for example, Dalit Theology in India and a Black Theology of Liberation in South Africa, to “form together an anti-systemic global movement, unmasking the lie of promises of progress, equality, and inclusion in the economic global system” (Schreiter 2000: 99). Liberation theology is the only recognizable important theology that actually addresses the living conditions of the majority of Christians and people in the world today. In the context of the Pacific Islands a move towards liberation theology will require a major reformation within the historic Protestant mainline churches. That the churches need reform and maybe a major reformation can be heard frequently from theological students and younger ministers from different Protestant churches of the South Pacific. Any reformation would require not only a theological reorientation to the challenges of today but also changes in the hierarchical organizational structure that widely excludes women and youth from decision making. Furthermore, it would necessitate a review of the close relationship maintained by most of the Protestant mainline churches with their national governments, which have adopted neo-liberal economic concepts for the benefit of a few rich at the cost of an increasing number of poor and marginalized people. In some cases governments claim that non-compliance with the requirements of the modern world economy would have more serious effects for everyone, without of course providing evidence since alternatives have not been tried. The churches could function as the critical conscience of society in the interests of the poor, and could offer their governments avenues for dialogue, since they represent a potential power of the masses that far exceeds the representative power of political parties (which come and go with rapidly shifting allegiances and loyalties and mostly pursue only one recognizable aim — to use their time in power to get as much personal benefit as possible from their ‘service to the people’).

It is evident that the conquest of the world by global capitalism has contributed more than anything else to the crisis of liberation theology. Especially after the collapse of socialism, liberation theology has certainly lost the vision of utopia and prophecy, and without such a horizon it will be even more difficult to focus, mobilize, and sustain a struggle for a better world than it was 15 to 20 years ago. Under these conditions what are the possible alternative directions?
First of all there is a need for social analysis to be included in curricula at all levels of religious education, not only for the few who are selected for training as ministers but also for all kinds of church workers and lay people. This social analysis needs to identify external factors such as the functioning of the world capitalist system and to attempt to find answers to the threatening challenges of our times. The task is enormous and needs to include:

- **Reconstruction**, in an attempt to identify and acknowledge the kinds of changes that have taken place and have negatively affected the lives of people;
- **Critique**, to uncover ideological underpinnings and connections in order to unmask how economic and political power is maintained;
- **Denunciation**, by assuming the prophetic role of identifying sources of evil and oppression;
- **Resistance**, by mobilizing those who are oppressed;
- **Advocacy**, by joining in solidarity in the struggle or in the promotion of specific projects in specified areas.

An orientation towards liberation theology will certainly not happen overnight. Whether it will stop people from joining new religious groups cannot be guaranteed, and severe internal challenges are likely. An infrastructure and resources would be necessary. The motor and focus for the introduction of a visionary new model of theology could be a new form of ecumenical co-operation, as envisioned by the Pacific Theological College. The new model must be an ecumenical one, as the alternatives are withdrawing into nationalism or being pushed aside by the combined forces of the new religious groups. A rediscovery and reformulation of ecumenism must include increased attempts at dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the mainline Protestant churches, and must keep the doors wide open for adherents of all other Christian denominations and non-Christian religions, as their adherents suffer the same consequences of the current aggressive and heartless global capitalism. Dialogue can take place only among those who are open to it. The identification of areas of common concern could be a starting point from which common witness and action could result. In all of this, ecumenism must maintain respect for other religions as a non-negotiable area that cannot be compromised. The task of discovering common ground and finding a common voice is enormous, as the pressure being exerted on societies by the forces of globalization is increasing. The challenge might seem too great and the obstacles insurmountable, but only a new vision can give direction and new life to the Pacific churches.

To conclude, I would like to repeat a question I raised earlier: how well are the church leaders and theological thinkers of the South Pacific prepared to deal with the re-shaping of Christianity in the region? My initial answer is not very encouraging. When we interviewed the leaders of the historic mainline churches about the rapid growth of new churches we found that most of them viewed the new groups with a mixture of bewilderment, fear, condescension and denial. There are, however, some promising signs. An increasing number of younger theologians, from both northern and southern countries, are placing the task of developing a theology of ‘other religions’ high on their agenda. Also, critical Pentecostal insiders such as Anderson (2004) are pointing to the danger in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, where most participants focus on success, health and wealth, and of neglecting the theology of the cross. This is evidence that not all charismatic churches are un-political or anti-intellectual.

An initiative that includes members of Pentecostal-charismatic churches and aims to move beyond historical divisions into new relationships of trust, co-operation and communion is the Global Christian Forum, which strives to create new opportunities for contact between
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Christians and the discussion of common concerns, in an arena independent of existing structures. Initiated in 1998 by the former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Konrad Raiser, this Forum has organized a series of consultations in recent years in different parts of the world, bringing together participants from a wide variety of church types and international Christian organizations, and including evangelical and Pentecostal constituencies (www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/0025pre.html). It is hoped that our present publication will encourage Pacific Islands theologians and lay people to seek in the same way for new forms of dialogue beyond denominational boundaries and ideological differences.

What the literature already available from other parts of the world reveals about the dynamics of globalization and changes in religious affiliation can be widely confirmed by the results of our research in the Pacific Islands. It is hoped that our findings on the mechanics of the spread of new expressions and forms of Christianity in the region will enrich our understanding not only of the various newer movements and churches but also of the range of dynamics that mark globalization and cultural changes more generally. We trust that this publication will be enlightening not only to students and academics but also to policy-makers and all those interested in the profound effects of globalization processes on individuals and societies in the Pacific Islands.

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