Introduction

A World for All?

We live in an intriguing period of human history. The last century has seen the exponential growth of the human population—from 1.5 billion in 1900, to 2.5 billion in 1950, to over 7 billion today. Yet, with this burgeoning growth in the human population, there is also perhaps a greater awareness than at any stage of human history of our essential interconnectivity and inter-relatedness. The collapse of both ideological and physical barriers erected during the Cold War, and the technological and economic "developments" of the last two decades mean that, notwithstanding the differences and diversity of "human civilizations" spread across the globe, there is a growing realization of our existence as inhabitants of a single "global village."

This sentiment, that at the beginning of the twenty-first century contemporary human civilization is characterized by a new reality of "connectedness" and "openness" is conveyed in the script of an advertisement screened on New Zealand television for tertiary education institution, *The Open Polytechnic of NZ-Kuratini Tuwhera*. Accompanied by the image of a developing baby in a placenta, the advert begins, "Your world, was once a small one. As you grew, it did too. But now your world is bigger than it's ever been before and it has no boundaries." To a montage of digitally-animated images—the word *boundaries* disintegrating into butterflies, closed circles being burst open, and climaxing with the distinctly iconic New Zealand image of new life, a koru—the advert continues its acclamation of this new "open" world, proclaiming:

> We are no longer limited by tradition, language or distance.
> What once was fixed is fluid and there's no one path.
> We work more jobs, learn more skills and share more ideas than ever before.

> And, we don't have to stop our lives to start new ones.
> When we understand this: Our world is infinite.
> Everything is possible. Everything is open.

Evangelists for this social phenomenon of globalization and for the new "open" world with no boundaries it gives rise to, are not hard to find.[1] Commentators such as Thomas Friedman point to the enormous economic growth and the associated increase in quality of life that has stemmed from the implementation of neo-liberal economic theories and an adherence to free-market doctrine. The globalised market, free of the limiting boundaries of economic regulation, such proponents argue, is one in which all have equal access to the market-place, and thus to greater wealth and happiness. Similarly, American computer scientist Vint Cerf, the so-called "Father of the internet," in an article in *The Observer*, speaks glowingly of the way in which the world-wide-web has the capacity to expand and improve people's world. Echoing the laudatory tone of the Open Polytechnic's advertisement agency, Cerf asserts that, the "social repercussions" of the internet "will take decades to be fully understood, but it has already done much to *benefit the world*. It has provided access to information on a scale never before imaginable, lowered the barriers to creative expression, challenged old business models and enabled new ones."[2] Cerf states: "After working on the internet for more than three decades, I'm more optimistic about its *promise* than ever. It has the potential to change unexpected parts of our lives: from surfboards that let you surf the web while you wait for the next wave to refrigerators that can email you suggested recipes based on the food you already have."[3]

Cerf concludes his ode to the promise of the internet declaring: "We're at the cusp of a truly global internet that will *bring people closer together* and democratize access to information. *We are all free* to innovate

1. To speak of the social phenomenon of "globalization" is itself rendered problematic by both the complexity and the apparent contradictions contained within the phenomenon. A description offered by the United Nations Development Programme in its *Human Development Report 1999* recognizes these competing characteristics of "globalization" and provides a useful working definition: "Globalization, a dominant force in the twentieth century's last decade, is shaping a new era of interaction among nations, economies and people. It is increasing the contacts between people across national boundaries—in economy, in technology, in culture and in governance. But it is also fragmenting production processes, labour markets, political entities and societies. So, while globalization has positive, innovative, dynamic aspects—it also has negative, disruptive and marginalizing aspects."

2. Cerf, "If You Thought the Internet Was Cool," 35. Emphasis added.

3. Ibid. Emphasis added.

on the net every day and *we should look forward to more people around the world enjoying that freedom*."[4]

But does the process of "globalization" really offer a new world of unfettered promise, a new reality of unlimited opportunities and *freedom* where "everything is possible, everything is open"? While living in a world celebratory of *difference*, is it really true that in such a world "all voices are heard"? Is the "global village" of the twenty-first century really the land of *promise* that many suggest?

While acknowledging that a percentage of the 7 billion village inhabitants do now have a higher "quality of life" in terms of basic material needs—food, water, shelter and health—than at any other time in human history, there is also no denying that such advances in standards of living, the benefits accrued from participation in the global free-market, are by no means equally, nor universally, shared. Indeed, while Cerf speaks of the promise of refrigerators offering gastronomic inspiration to the culinary-challenged, a large percent of the globe's population are still not connected to the world-wide-web and, at least 1.4 billion citizens of the village living in *extreme poverty* will go to bed each night with neither food in their non-existent refrigerators nor, more significantly, with sufficient food in their stomachs.[5] While the minority of individuals living in "developed" Western countries may indeed feel as though life offers an infinite smorgasbord of new opportunities and that their existence is characterized by a multiplicity of "open" paths they can choose to travel down, for a significant number of twenty-first century global village inhabitants life consists of an endless struggle for survival.

For, despite the rhetoric of "freedom" and "openness," what is increasingly apparent is that in the global village, free and equal access to the market-place where goods are bought and sold is an illusion. Far from the well-lit and palatial architecture of the village centre, down murky and hidden lanes, one can discover inhabitants with terrible tales of the dark side of village life. In the global village of the twenty-first century, "the undeniable progress of inclusion" is, as Croation theologian Miroslav Volf suggests, built upon "the persistent practice of exclusion."[6] Volf believes there are three modes of exclusion that feature in the contemporary world: (1) exclusion as *elimination* or in its more benign form as *assimilation*;

4. Ibid. Emphasis added.

5. Statistics on the percentage of the global population who are connected to the internet vary between 34–75 percent.

6. Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 60.

(2) exclusion as *domination*; and, (3) exclusion as *abandonment*. Volf's classification of "exclusion" provides a useful framework which we will employ to reflect further upon the current global reality, and specifically, to understand the plight of those who, rather than enjoying the so-called benefits of the new "open world" are, to use a biblical motif, contemporary "aliens and strangers," existing on the margins of global civil society.

Elimination and Assimilation, Domination and Demonization

The first mode of exclusion, *elimination*, is undoubtedly the most brutal, and due to its lack of subtlety and sophistication, when exposed, is also widely condemned. From the haphazard clearing of squatter camps and slums on the periphery of the major metropolitan cities of the "developing" world—where millions seek to eke out an existence for themselves from the drips that "trickle-down" from the economic fountain-head higher up—through to the "death squads" that roam the streets of major cities in Guatemala, Brazil, Honduras, Argentina, Colombia and Philippines, engaging in "social cleansing," *elimination* is the macabre, vicious and socially-unacceptable mode of exclusion.[7]

In contrast to the silenced voices of these "undesirable" squatters or street children are another stratum of *aliens and strangers* and new breed of "global traveler": the international migrant worker. Unlike *undesirables*, who with no access to capital therefore have no role either as *producers* or *consumers* in the global village, international migrant workers find themselves playing a lowly, but critical role in the functioning of the global economy.[8] Attracted to industrialized/developed countries with greater economic rewards than their own countries of origin, these migrant workers provide the cheap and unskilled labor required in industrialized economies—engaging in work that inhabitants of these countries no longer wish to do—and simultaneously assist their home economies through the sending back of remittances. Often having little or no legal rights,

7. For an account of the existence of "death squads" that *eliminate* social *undesirables*, see MoLoney, "Vigilante Heaven," 22–24.

8. In 2008, the United Nations estimated that there were over 200 million migrants worldwide (up from 180 million in 2000), 2.9 percent of the total global population. Of this figure less than 10 percent are regarded as refugees, the rest are part of the growing phenomenon of migrant workers, leaving their "homelands" in search of lives of greater economic prosperity elsewhere. United Nations, *Trends in International Migrant Stock*.

international migrant workers find themselves subsumed and *assimilated* into the global world market, their employers ensuring that the slave-wage they receive is earned through their blood, sweat, tears, and often their lives.[9]

And what of those countries, regions, or people who, too visible to be *eliminated* nor easily *assimilated*, find themselves living an uneasy existence on the margins of the global system? Such is the hegemonic logic of the ideology of "social inclusion" that those outside the global market, construed as threats, must be, for the security of the system, brought back into the fold. Alistair Kee provocatively concludes:

> Any group that is described as "excluded" cannot be allowed to get away. They must be brought into the body of mainline society. Attention is focussed on their plight and their problems. Ideology chuckles behind its hand. No evaluation is required of mainline society. Its essential health and virtue are simply assumed. Its part in exclusion is never examined. The possible and potential role of the excluded in the regeneration of society is not even envisaged. The fact of their exclusion is not seen as a symptom of disorder, neither as a witness to corruption. . . . Blessed are those who exclude. And twice blessed are the excluders who graciously attempt to draw the victims into the kingdom of this world.[10]

With the defeat of the old enemy of communism, global capitalism is now the only economic "game in town." Yet, despite the celebration of *difference* and *otherness*, such is the assimilative and totalizing dynamic at work that ultimately capitalism, in a twist of irony, subsumes, conflates and *consumes* these differences. In a bid to ensure its own perpetuity, those unenthusiastic about this new game must be, either by "carrot" or "stick," cajoled or coerced into participation in the global market. Such re-inclusion of the unfortunate "excluded" occurs in a number of ways. While new legislative bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) penalize nations who are averse or unwilling to abide according to the rules of global capitalism, another mechanism employed is that of military intervention.

9. Multiple reports from the International Labour Organisation, Human Rights Watch, and other agencies draw attention to the ongoing abuse that characterize the lives of "international migrant workers" in various global contexts. For one example of the plight of such migrant workers, literally engaged in the construction of "islands of happiness" while living lives of exploitation and abuse see Human Rights Watch, "Island of Happiness."

10. Kee, "Blessed Are the Excluded," 352.

Countries who refuse to participate in the new "open" market, whose resources remain locked up unable to be accessed, are perceived as a risk to the stability and security of the global market, and find themselves termed as "threats to civilization," "haters of freedom,"[11] and demonized as "terrorists." Such "rogue states," potential participants in the "axis of evil" are accordingly brought, through the process of *liberation*—i.e., Volf's second mode of exclusion: *domination*—out of international exile and into the global economy, their oil, gas, and other natural resources now made available to trans-national corporations (TNCs). In a seldom noticed irony therefore, despite their supposed differences, both neo-liberal markets (*assimilation*) and neo-conservative foreign policy *(domination)* achieve the same result: *enforced inclusivism*.

Indeed, this close collaboration between the economic interests of TNCs and US foreign policy, far from being conspiratorial, is rather a frank admission made by ardent advocates of globalization. Thomas Friedman, in his influential book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, stresses that the benefits of capitalism and democracy will not be brought about automatically through the dynamic of the free market. Rather, Friedman sees America as "the ultimate benign hegemon and reluctant enforcer" and contends that "the hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. . . . And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."[12] Whether those who have been on the receiving end of this *unveiled* fist are fully aware of the benefits of capitalism and democracy they have received, is, of course, at least to Friedman, a moot point.

The nonsensical, absurd-like nature of this ideology, in which one is either within the system or demonized as the "Other," a "terrorist" who threatens the established status quo, is observed by British journalist, Robert Fisk. In a striking passage, Fisk notes how the face of evil changes depending on one's perceived enemy at the time and also how "us–them" logic commits one to an endless cycle of conflict.

> "Terrorism" is a word that has become a plague on our vocabulary, the excuse and reason and moral permit for state-sponsored violence—*our* violence—which is now used on the innocent of the Middle East ever more outrageously and

11. "They hate us and they hate freedom and they hate people who embrace freedom." United States President, George W. Bush's dictum explaining the motivation for terrorism, given during an interview on Al Arabiya television, 6 May 2004.

12. Friedman, *Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 466.

> promiscuously. Terrorism, terrorism, terrorism. It has become a full-stop, a punctuation mark, a phrase, a speech, a sermon, the be-all and end-all of everything that we must hate in order to ignore injustice and occupation and murder on a mass scale. Terror, terror, terror, terror. It is a sonata, a symphony, an orchestra tuned to every television and radio station and news agency report, the soap-opera of the Devil, served up on prime-time or distilled in wearingly dull and mendacious form by the right-wing "commentators" of the American east coast or the *Jerusalem Post* or the intellectuals of Europe. Strike against Terror. Victory over Terror. War on Terror. Everlasting War on Terror. Rarely in history have soldiers and journalists and presidents and kings aligned themselves in such thoughtless, unquestioning ranks. In August 1914, the soldiers thought they would be home by Christmas. *Today, we are fighting for ever. The war is eternal. The enemy is eternal, his face changing on our screens*. Once he lived in Cairo and sported a moustache and nationalized the Suez Canal. Then he lived in Tripoli and wore a ridiculous military uniform and helped the IRA and bombed American bars in Berlin. Then he wore a Muslim Imam's gown and ate yoghurt and planned Islamic revolution. Then he wore a white gown and lived in a cave in Afghanistan and then he wore another silly moustache and resided in a series of palaces around Baghdad. Terror, terror, terror. Finally he wore a kuffiah headdress and outdated Soviet-style military fatigues, his name was Yassir Arafat, and he was the master of world terror and then a super statesmen and then, again, a master of terror, linked by his Israeli enemies to the terror-*Meister* of them all, the one who lived in the Afghan cave.[13]

So, what of those who have nothing to contribute to this all-inclusive global system? What becomes of the *Others* who cannot, either through *elimination/assimilation* or *co-option/domination*, be brought to participate as *consumers* or *producers* in this new world order? Speaking of this third mode, exclusion as *abandonment*, Volf adeptly observes that: "If others neither have the goods we want nor can perform the services we need, we make sure that they are at a *safe distance* and close ourselves off from them so that their emaciated and tortured bodies can make no inordinate claim on us."[14]

13. Fisk, *Great War for Civilization*, 464–65. Emphasis added.
14. Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 75. Emphasis added.

Such is the plight of the Palestinians. Living for sixty years as refugees, without an officially recognized home, crammed into small tracts of inhospitable land, the Palestinians find themselves *abandoned*, their predicament only gaining international attention when politicians—whether US, European, Palestinian or Israeli—reinitiate the peace process arguably for their own electoral purposes, or, when the volatile powder keg erupts into a new round of tit-for-tat violence and thus offers news-worthy scenes for public titillation. Likewise, Africa remains the "forgotten continent." While TNCs tap natural resources such as oil in Nigeria and diamonds in the Democratic Republic of Congo and local power-brokers use the revenue from such deals to maintain their control, the vast majority of the population continues to live in dire poverty, wracked by the catastrophic effects of global climate change, natural disasters, civil war, and AIDS.[15]

While international worker-migrants are *assimilated* and "rogue states" *dominated*, millions of others find themselves *abandoned*, as they flee from the violence, oppression, and starvation that often wrack their countries. These conditions frequently stem either directly from the intervention of their *liberators-dominators* or begin to emerge as their nation suffers the negative consequences of a forced *assimilation* into the new free-market economy.[16] While those seen to pose a risk to the security of the system are demonized, becoming larger-than-life figures, the *abandoned others* are for all intents and purposes, invisible. A UNICEF report, reflecting on the "disturbing muted response" to the fact that 25,000 children die each day in the global village, comments:

> They die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being

15. The Democratic Republic of Congo is one example of this structural dynamic in which TNC's profit from their access to natural resources, Western *consumers* therefore receive new products, and local militia are thus provided with funds for armaments to assert their control, all-the-time while the local population remains empty-handed, doomed to lives of ongoing poverty and misery. See Hari, "How We Fuelled the Deadliest War."

16. Important to note is the increasing number of a new category of refugees, that of the Internally-Displaced Peoples (IDP's). In Sudan, Colombia, and as already mentioned, Congo, the forced relocation of population as well as brought about by violence, human rights abuses, or natural disasters, is also often the result of so-called "development displacement." For example, rural poor in Colombia displaced from their land for the "development" of palm-oil plantations—an ingredient in many luxury items found on the shopping list of the world's richer countries.

> meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more *invisible* in death.[17]

Keeping the Other Distant

If however, we live in a new "open" and "fluid" global village, one with "no boundaries," how is the Other actually held at a *safe distance*? There is a chilling poignancy in a passage written by French economist Jacques Attali, who in the early 1990s predicted:

> By 2050, 8 billion people will populate the earth. More than two-thirds will live in the poorest countries. Seeking to escape their desperate fate, millions will attempt to leave behind their misery to seek a decent life elsewhere. But neither the Pacific nor the European spheres will accept the majority of poor nomads. They will close their borders to immigrants. Quotas will be erected and restrictions imposed. (Renewed) social norms will ostracize foreigners. Like the fortified cities of the Middle Ages, the centres of privilege will construct barriers of all kinds, trying to protect their wealth.[18]

Twenty years after being penned, Attali's frightening vision of the future is already coming to pass. In a disturbing trend, as the "war on terror"[19] being waged by "free" countries exacerbates violence and instability in certain regions, thus contributing to the diasporas of global refugees, concurrently the domestic immigration policies of these same countries become more restrictive. In response to the threat of "global terror," border security of these "open countries" is beefed up and legislative bodies pass stringent new immigration policies making access to "lands of freedom" for would-be asylum seekers and refugees increasingly difficult. In spite of the rhetoric of freedom, the open boundaries constitutive of the globalised village, in reality, is largely limited to the flow of bits and bytes on the world wide web, or to capital transferred in international financial markets.

The incongruous nature of this emerging global village is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the construction of the "US$1 million-per-mile border security fence" on the US-Mexico border, a fence that

17. UNICEF, *Progress of Nations 2000*, 20. Emphasis added.

18. Attali, *Millennium*, 74–78.

19. Re-branded during the later years of the presidency of George W. Bush to: "struggle against violent extremism."

"delineates, for the first time, a frontier that was previously just a four-strand cattle fence at best."[20] Caroline Moorehead, in her deeply moving book, *Human Cargo*, reflects on this inconsistency in which wealthy nations desire cheap migrant labor while simultaneously seeking to ensure that the unwanted masses do not pose a threat to their lives of privilege and wealth. Referring to the already existing portion of this fence in California as part of the American's "myths of arrival," Moorehead writes:

> The fence is part of the myth. It is about a poor country looking across the border and seeing money and opportunities, all the lures that enticed the first settlers, and wanting to have a share in them. It is about the way that, ever since anyone can remember, poor Mexicans have migrated north in search of the American dream, which for them has meant jobs in agriculture, factories, the building and service industries, and the way they have been welcomed and discouraged by turn, and have simply kept on coming, even during times of determined and brutal rejection, and the way that the Americans have feared being swamped and losing their own identities and livelihoods. It is the old and simple story of exclusion.[21]

The actions of tightening restrictions on refugees and asylum-seekers and the construction of literal fences to prevent the "poor nomads" from entering are not, however, unique to the United States but are, as Attali predicted, a growing global phenomenon. Citizens of such far-flung countries as Australia and New Zealand have watched—with either disgust or delight dependent on one's political persuasions and ethical convictions—as asylum-seekers and refugees arriving to their distant shores have experienced similar hostile receptions. In many cases, refugees have been met with imprisonment in solitary confinement—due to the suspected "security threat" they pose—internment in processing camps in the inhospitable environment of the Australian outback or on remote South Pacific islands, or, relocation to their troubled "homeland" of origin. The words of Hannah Arendt, written to describe her own sense of statelessness and exile in the turmoil of World War Two, ring as true in the supposedly new reality of the "global village" today as the day they were written. "Contemporary history," Arendt wrote, "has created a new kind of human being—the kind that are put in concentration camps by their

20. Von Drehle, "New Line in the Sand," 28.

21. Moorehead, *Human Cargo*, 72.

foes and internment camps by their friends."[22] Fellow Jewish writer, Elie Wiesel, succinctly summarizes the lot of contemporary *aliens and strangers*: "Refugees live in a divided world, between the countries in which they cannot live, and countries which they may not enter."[23]

This fear of the unknown Other and the desire to keep at a distance those seen as a threat to "centers of privilege" and "wealth" is not simply the domain of national governments, outworked in immigration policy and the construction of border barriers. Indeed, the very popularity of such political decisions is indicative of the extent to which an atmosphere of fear has become prevalent in many affluent Western nations. The breakdown of community in contemporary Western societies, which sociologists refer to as a loss of "social capital" or the decline of "neighborliness," is evidenced in the increasing popularity of exclusive "gated communities" and the growing fascination with fence-building within suburbia.[24] Despite the statistics showing that physical and sexual abuse is far more likely to be perpetrated by those known by or related to the victim, the myth of "stranger-danger" continues to be expounded by concerned parents to their children. No longer allowed to walk to school, children arrive daily at the school gate, disembarking from the "safe" cocoons of family vehicles.

But if such is the state of our contemporary world, how are we to respond to the plight of the "poor nomads," to those who seem to bear the burden of the benefits that others reap from the new "openness" and "freedom" of global consumer capitalism? What individual and communal practices and virtues are required to respond to the immediate plight of the excluded Other and to provide an alternative way of peace for societies and countries?

The Philosophy and Practice of Hospitality

Seeking to respond to such questions, in recent years the concept of *hospitality* has gained eminence in philosophical and religious writings, with the work of philosophers Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida being

22. Arendt, *Jew as Pariah*, 56, 60.

23. Source unknown. Quoted in Moorehead, *Human Cargo*, 1.

24. The classic text on this phenomenon is Putnam, *Bowling Alone*. While Putnam sees the decline in volunteerism as evidence of the loss of "social capital," another indicator of such a shift in societal dynamics is the physical composition of our built environments. "Gated-communities" and the building of fences are simply physical embodiments of the desire to protect one's own wealth from the threat of others, a desire grounded in a paranoia about the Other, which is nourished by the discourse of fear perpetuated by contemporary media.

heralded as of particular merit. In contrast to the conflictual and competitive logic of both capitalism and the discourses of "terror," in which it is the unknown nature of the Other which provides the fertile soil for seeds of fear, Levinas and Derrida affirm and celebrate both the *difference* and the incomprehensibility of the Other. The Other, they argue, is not first and foremost one to be understood, but rather one whose ethical plight we are called to respond to. Drawing upon the Abrahamic religions which shape their own intellectual and cultural identity, Levinas and Derrida point to the practice of hospitality, the *welcoming of the stranger*, as the constitutive element of what it means to be human.

But does a philosophy and the practice of hospitality have the capacity to overcome the totalizing discourses of global capitalism and the "war on terror" which are relentlessly reinforced by the media of our technological societies? Christine Pohl, in her book *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, notes the way the rich Christian tradition of hospitality has, over the centuries, gradually been eroded by other social and economic discourses and dynamics. Early Christianity was a social movement known for its care of the sick and poor and its attention to the needs of the stranger. However, with the development of commercial inns during the sixteenth century, the growing secularization of civic institutions such as hospitals and "poor relief houses"—originally established by the Church in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth century—and with the State taking on welfare in the twentieth century, the practice of hospitality, Pohl contends, has largely been forgotten by the Ecclesia. This ancient ethical practice has now become the domain of secularized commercial and professional institutions and become increasingly depersonalized and institutionalized.[25]

Consequently, for the vast majority of those in Western societies, the concept of "hospitality" is immediately associated with the—arguably oxymoronic—term: "hospitality industry." Accordingly, the Other is, at best, construed as simply another *producer/service provider*, one with whom, in our patronage of bars, restaurants, or accommodation providers we enter into contractual agreements to give or receive *hospitality* services. Alternatively, with the contraction of the welfare state, and the accompanying emergence of specialized and "professionalized" caring agencies the Other is conceived as a *consumer/client*, to whom professional carers, are *duty-bound* to provide quality care and service.

25. See Pohl, *Making Room*, 7, 53.

On the other hand, at worst, the Other, is conceived according to the dictates of the respective discourses of paranoia and the market. The Other is thus the dangerous stranger, a potential terrorist or criminal who has come to harm, and thus not to be granted welcome, but best kept at a *safe distance*. Or, following the atomized logic of the "free-market"[26]—the Other is construed as a competitor for the limited resources available for consumption, one with whom we may collaborate for mutual advantage but who, once no longer useful for our advancement, we discard.[27]

The Project in Brief

This work contends that the practice of hospitality, offered as a corrective to the exclusions which blight our global village, is itself only possible if one first responds to the distortion of the notion of hospitality itself brought about by the ideologies of the contemporary world. That is, the recovery of the life-giving and redemptive practice of hospitality depends upon the concept of hospitality first being freed from its cultural captivity to the dual discourses of the market and fear, and also from the assumptions which underlie many postmodern philosophies offered in the name of "hospitality." Such a freedom is only conceivable if the concept of hospitality is reestablished upon theological foundations.

To undertake this rehabilitation of the term *hospitality*, this work is split into two sections. In section one we begin by considering the philosophies of Emmanuel Levinas (chapter 1) and Jacques Derrida (chapter 2). Such has been the significance of their work in drawing Western thought back to questions of ethics, and the plight of the Other, that it would be remiss to ignore their valuable contribution. Levinas' belief in the "infinite responsibility" that the subject has before the "transcendence of the Other" and Derrida's advocating of a radical "unconditional hospitality," offer powerful reinterpretations of the nature of human ethics. In engaging with their respective thought, two questions will be addressed: (1) The extent to which their philosophical work is able to respond to the particular problems of the contemporary predicament outlined above, and therefore, (2)

26. Perhaps expressed must concisely in former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's famous quip: "Society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families . . ."

27. Television programs such as the reality-show *Survivor* vividly portray such an approach to human relationships in which "alliances" are made and broken depending on whether they best serve one's own interests.

the extent to which their philosophical projects offer resources for the development of a more explicit Christian theology of hospitality.

While sympathetic towards the Levinasian-Derridean project, there are particular aspects of their thought which are troubling. Chapter 3 offers a summary of both the strengths and deficits of the work of Levinas and Derrida and highlights the major areas of concern. Ultimately, it is noted that our unease regarding Levinasian-Derridean notions of selfhood, inter-human relationality, eschatology and teleology, stems from a deeper concern regarding the *differential* ontology upon which their ethical account is grounded.

In section two drawing upon the rich imagery that saturates Levinas' and Derrida's philosophies of hospitality, while simultaneously responding to potential conceptual weaknesses within their thought, we seek to offer a constructive theological account of the ethic of hospitality. The question of ontology is the focus of chapter 4. In contrast to the differential ontology offered by Levinas and Derrida, the Christian Doctrines of Trinity and Creation, we argue, offer an alternative and distinctive ontological account. With particular engagement with the thought of Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, we contend that hostility and violence, far from being woven into the fabric of *being*, exist due to the failure of humanity to accept the *free* gift of the Trinitarian God and live in God's all-encompassing love and grace. It is communion and hospitality, not conflict and hostility, which are primordial.

In chapter 5 we argue that it is the gift of Christ which overcomes this *hostility* brought about by humanity. In contrast to moral and exemplarist Christologies, we claim that the life and death of Jesus only has salvific merit if understood ontologically as a gift-giving event of the Triune God. Responding to accusations of *violence* proffered by our philosophical interlocutors and also by atonement critics, we posit that God's salvific action of overcoming this *hostility*, and the responsive action of speaking about this—that is, "doing theology"—are both non-violent, non-coercive activities.

Having outlined an alternative ontology and given an account of how, in Christ, the *hostility* that exists in the world has been overcome, chapters 6 and 7 extrapolate the nature of human personhood and ethics that flow from this. In chapter 6 in contrast to the "fractured" and "divided" self offered in Levinasian-Derridean thought, we suggest that authentic personhood is discovered as the self, through the "disturbing" and renovating work of the Spirit, is brought into an ecclesial existence. Our account both

affirms the concept of a self-identity while recognizing that this identity is shaped by a relation with *otherness* and, due to its eschatological nature, still awaits a final revealing. Chapter 7 then gives an account of the shape that human relations, reconfigured according to this ontology of *communion*, take. We suggest that lives undergoing the transforming work of the Spirit and incorporated into the Ecclesia are re-narrated and thus drawn into a different script, one in which genuine gift-giving and the welcome of the stranger once again becomes possible. Such gift-giving/hospitality rather than stemming from duty, becomes a free outward expression of the love that the self, dwelling in Christ, is experiencing.

A Final Preface

Finally, before commencing further, it is important also to explicate clearly what this work is, and what it is not. While offering a close reading of Levinas and Derrida, by no means should the work be conceived of as primarily one of "pure" philosophical theology. Neither though, does it fit neatly into the various categories subscribed to by some, whether that be systematic theology, political theology, public theology, biblical theology, historical theology, contextual theology, or Christian ethics![28] Rather, the work itself, one could suggest, is consciously "hospitable." Seeking to respond to the themes outlined above—the issue of hostility and exclusionary violence in the world—the work draws widely upon different theologies and traditions—Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant—to develop its case.

To employ a metaphor from the realm of hospitality, the work could therefore perhaps be best construed as a dinner party. As with all good parties, there are a number of notable—one could almost say distinguished guests—who through sheer force of personality and insight, provide a focal point to the conversations that ensue. As well as Levinas and Derrida, other significant contributors to our conversation include John Zizioulas, John D. Caputo, Kathryn Tanner, Miroslav Volf, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and John Milbank. None of those assembled dominate the conversation, but rather the collective pooling of their wisdom and reflections hopefully lead to a greater clarity and coherence. Such, at least, is the hope of the host of this conversation and author of what follows.

28. As such, if a category is required, then the work could be regarded as an example of constructive theological ethics.

Also, akin to good parties, sometimes the intensity of conversation with multiple voices can—particularly if one is an introvert—become a little overwhelming. On such occasions it is often the retreat from the hubbub of the party and a secluded one-on-one conversation which often proves to be the most stimulating, provoking and enriching. Accordingly, in the second section of this work between each chapter, we change pace and tone and accompany *side by side* a number of Biblical characters, entering, as it were, into a *tête à tête*. It is our hope that the "deconstructive" and imaginative rereadings of the well-known biblical narratives offered in these interludes will reiterate and reinforce themes already raised and thus further develop the case we seek to put forth.

With such prefatory remarks now made, it is time to swing open the doors, for the guests to arrive, and for the conversation to begin.