One of the largest unexpected successes at the 1964 New York World’s Fair was a simple boat ride past three hundred interchangeable dolls wearing costumes from around the world. As the boats floated past stylized painted backdrops representing Western Europe, Asia, South America, and Africa, the dolls mechanically waved, stiffly rotated, and insistently sang in a variety of languages that memorable Sherman Brothers tune, “It’s A Small World.” Walt Disney, who designed the attraction along with his Imagineering team, described it as a “wonderland where all the world’s children live and play” (“Disneyland’s,” 20). With Pepsi-Cola as its official corporate sponsor, “It’s A Small World,” carried over 10 million riders through its global wonderland, making it one of the top five most popular rides at the fair, despite the fact that it (unlike other rides) charged a small admission fee, which was given to UNICEF (the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) (“Disneyland’s,” 22-23). Disney’s team designed three other fair attractions, including “Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln,” which featured a lifelike robot of the president created with the then-novel technology of audio-animatronics. However, in terms of popularity, the simple boat ride across the globe trumped that technological celebration of American history and values.

I open with this anecdote for two reasons: first, it suggests the ongoing tensions that we always find between nationalism and globalization, and second, it captures the pervasive
American interest in global issues during the first half of the 1960s, including a concern for what was then called “internationalizing” higher education. Our current interest in globalizing education is nothing new, and a brief survey of that earlier history may provide some useful background. It is especially instructive to consider the various reasons given for the necessity of internationalizing along with some of the rhetoric that characterized movements for educational reform. These different cases, or rationales, have produced different kinds of educational programs. As educational institutions think about how to globalize the liberal arts, they need to consider carefully why they are doing so, taking their own unique educational mission into account.

According to Frederick Rudolph, in *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636*, concern for internationalizing education began after World War II as “the American Council on Education, the President’s Commission on Higher Education, the philanthropic foundations, and the Congress joined forces to counteract the almost exclusively Western orientation of the curriculum” (264). The passage of the Fulbright Act of 1946 and the National Defense Education Act in 1958 kicked off these initiatives, followed by the work of the Ford Foundation’s Morrill Committee, a group of representatives from universities, foundations, business, and government, who issued a report in December 1960 that was “a systematic attempt to clarify the international role of American universities and to suggest ways that our institutions of higher learning might perform more effectively in the realm of world affairs” (*The University*, xv). The next decade saw a massive expansion of foreign language study, the inauguration of the first area study programs focused on the Soviet
Union and Asia, an influx of foreign students into American institutions with a matching flow of American students pursuing overseas study, and new research programs in international affairs (Rudolph, 265).

A major nonprofit educational organization, Education and World Affairs (EWA), was established in 1962 (with funding from the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation) to analyze and make recommendations about the activities of American colleges and universities in international relations. According to a report issued by EWA in 1965, the 1950s were “a period of experimentation and innovation . . . . Programs were launched in several key universities for the development of materials and the training of teachers looking toward the growth of international and non-Western studies among undergraduates, as part of liberal arts education” (The University, xv). The 1960s, the report optimistically projected, represented a “watershed” period for the continued growth and influence of international education: “the universities long-committed and long-engaged on the world affairs front continue active, reviewing their institutional arrangements, refining their techniques and often extending their involvement. And with every passing month, they are joined by new universities seeking paths into this intriguing, frustrating, yet promising and enriching area of international activity. On every sector of the front one finds portents of new developments in store for the years ahead” (The University, xvii).

Yet such enthusiastic efforts to revise the curriculum and develop new awareness and expertise in international issues had fizzled out by the end of the 1970s. What Joseph
Mestenhauser calls the phase of “euphoria” in international education was replaced by a second phase of “darkening clouds,” foreshadowed by the failure to fund the International Education Act in 1966 (“Portraits,” 10-11). Much of the initial financial support to internationalize education had come from soft money—funding from foundations—and the subsequent expected support from the federal government was not forthcoming. But “the most significant failure,” Mestenhauser assesses, “was that of universities to ‘mainstream’ international education into ‘hard item’ regular academic programs” (“Portraits,” 11), such as general education (GE). Such programs remained add-ons—an area study major or minor, some travel abroad trips—and only as long as the budget allowed. For example, according to an American Council of Education report in 1969: “The prevailing practice is that of no undergraduate requirements of courses explicitly treating other cultures” (Dressel and DeLisle, 18). The skies continued to get darker in the 1980s; Mestenhauser points to the Reagan administration’s enormous funding cuts of federal international programs as well as the replacement of university education with “quick-fix” training and consulting agencies (“Portraits,” 12) as further vitiating international education.

This narrative of decline parallels a similar narrative in the history of general education. The campaign for a common course of study for college students, we should remember, is a 20th-century phenomenon, addressing a crisis caused by the fragmentation of the 19th-century classical curriculum with the institution of the elective system and the development of disciplinary specialization. Turner and Roberts describe the crisis as including a loss of coherence, unity, and transcendent meaning. They note, “Even a
cheerleader for the elective system like [Harvard] President Charles W. Eliot felt that students needed *something* to glue the pieces together, to enlarge their perspective on their specialized studies, to situate knowledge within the business of living as a moral being. In short, young barbarians required civilizing, even at Harvard” (81). Hence, the rise of the humanities as a “civilizing” agent. Through the study of western history, culture, art, and literature, students would become better persons, richer human beings, and more ethical and spiritual. With the elimination of the overtly Christian moral philosophy courses of the 19th-century college, character building became the responsibility of the humanities. While the 19th-century college aspired to produce good Christian men, the early 20th-century college aspired to produce ethically and aesthetically sensitive men and, increasingly, women.

Rudolph explains, “The general education movement . . . began as a response to the sense of bewilderment with which many young students faced the freedom of the elective course of study. It received clarification during and after World War I, when a consciousness of Western values and national problems found expression in courses designed to orient students to their cultural inheritance and their responsibilities as citizens” (236-237). Columbia, Reed, Chicago, and Stanford initiated surveys of Western civilization, and between 1920 and 1940, at least 30 colleges and universities adopted general education programs (Rudolph, 256). The GE movement received a huge boost in 1945 when a Harvard faculty committee issued what came to be called the “Red Book,” advocating for general education as a way to prepare responsible human beings and citizens, as a complement to the occupational preparation provided by a major. “In urging
a revitalization of general education, Harvard proposed to democratize what had once been the education of a gentleman and an aristocrat and make it the education essential to the responsibilities of every citizen” (Rudolph, 259).

Both general education and international education, then, were prominent reform movements in the 1940s and 1950s, but they had little interaction with each other. General education courses were instituted in humanities, history, and social sciences, but few included strong international components or requirements. The language and rhetoric used to advocate for both, however, shared the common diction of “nation.” General education was concerned with preparing better citizens in a rapidly expanding democratic nation, even as “international” education was concerned with relationships between nations, especially after the Second World War. And both fell victim to the changing social and political winds of the 1960s and 1970s. Rudolph explains, “Where highly publicized general education requirements reshaped the course of study in the 1940s and 1950s, less publicized erosion of those requirements took place in the 1960s and 1970s” (253). Rudolph’s history of curriculum, published in 1977, was one of three volumes issued that year by the Carnegie Foundation calling attention to “the disaster” of general education. The subsequent calls for GE reform that began in the 1980s included the addition of what was now termed “global perspectives.”

It’s sobering to realize that some 20 years later, not much has changed. Mestenhauser comments that global education has been “on the verge of becoming [a] mega-trend, but [it] never quite made it” (Introduction, xvii). A recent study funded (again) by the Ford
Foundation concludes that “in spite of an apparent growing interest in international education, relatively few undergraduates gain international or intercultural competence in college” (Hayward, 1). Consequently, we are once again hearing calls from governmental, educational, and industry leaders about the importance of the larger world picture in education. One of the key current initiatives of the Association of American Colleges and Universities’, “Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility,” seeks “to support the Academy in its vital role of expanding knowledge about the world’s people and problems and advancing democracy and justice both at home and abroad” (AAC&U). The American Council of Education (ACE) has published 30 monographs since 1989 as part of their International Initiatives Program. Their webpage announces, “ACE recognizes that international perspectives are critical to solving contemporary problems and developing a competitive workforce” (ACE). The significance of globalization for primary and secondary education prompted the 1991 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development to be devoted to ways in which to implement global education into lower school curricula (Tye, 1–2).

On January 5 and 6, 2006, over 120 college presidents (including my own college president) convened to participate in “a dialogue on the need for government to work collaboratively with the non-governmental sector on the future of U.S. higher education in a global arena.” Co-hosted by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, the University Presidents Summit on International Education featured an appearance by President Bush at which he announced a wide ranging plan to enhance foreign-language study. “Under the plan, President Bush will
request $114 million in the 2007 fiscal year . . . and the Department of Defense would allocate more than $750 million during the 2007-2011 fiscal years” to improve foreign language skills (Capriccioso and Epstein). In a State Department press release, Karen Hughes, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, stated that in addition to encouraging exchange programs, "Of equal importance is seeking investment in educating globally competitive U.S. students to work in fields of international interest" (U.S. Department of State).

During this last half decade of ups and down, a number of different reasons have been given in favor of globalizing education. One rationale, identifiable in both the 1960s and today, stems from concern for national security and power. This rationale tends to emerge in the context of a perceived political failure. The 1965 EWA report, for example, states, “We had learned a bitter lesson during [WW II] concerning our national ignorance of peoples, cultures and languages outside the Western European tradition. Taking that lesson to heart, [educational] leaders . . . and the foundations collaborated on the first area study programs, which focused on the Soviet Union and Asia” (The University, xiv). Rudolph similarly claims that curricular changes in the postwar years were “both an expression of government policy and an expression of academic perception of the need for making the course of study less parochial” (264). The launch of Sputnik, the increasingly chilling Cold War, and the threat of atomic war lay behind the 1960s’ interest in international education. As the diction of international suggests, the focus was on the relationships between political states, or nations, with a clear concern that the United States maintain its technological and political momentum. Internationalizing
education provided a way for the U.S. to stay ahead in the “race”—whether competing for nuclear power or to be the first man on the moon.

Similar concerns are frequently expressed in our post 9/11 world. In the 1960s, we had the National Defense Education Act, whereas the current plan to enhance foreign-language study (primarily in Middle Eastern languages) is called the National Security Language Initiative and would be funded by the Department of Defense (my emphasis). As the Department of State press release notes, the University Presidents Summit engaged the government and leaders of U.S. higher education “in a renewed partnership to strengthen international education, emphasizing its importance to the national interest” (U.S. Department of State). In speaking to the university presidents, President Bush announced that his proposal for globalizing education is “a broad-gauged initiative that deals with the defense of the country, the diplomacy of the country, the intelligence to defend our country, and the education of our people” (Capriccioso and Epstein).

A second political rationale makes a more general case for preparing students for their responsibilities as American citizens. This argument emerges in the late 1970s and early 1980s when talk about citizenship, international education, and general education begin to merge. In response to the Carnegie indictment of general education in the 1970s, Jerry Gaff identified the addition of “global perspectives” as one of the newly “Emerging Curricular Patterns”:

*Statesmen* claim that *Americans* must think in global terms . . . . We live in a world ever more interdependent, drawn together by rapid transportation and
communication and by trade and security pacts, a world ever more threatened by acts of international terrorism and environmental degradation. (92, my emphasis)

Gaff continues by quoting Robert Leestma, a former U.S. government official,

“Educators are the single most important group in helping generate a critical mass of *citizens* capable of recognizing the global age, its impact on their future life, and their responsibilities as *American citizens* in an interdependent world” (92, my emphasis).

Notice the shift from “international” to “global” language, which comes from a new recognition of the ways in which all parts of the globe are connected—through technology, the environment, religious movements, cultural phenomena, and the economy. Conceiving of the world as a “shared social space,” not only a contested political space, expands the rationale for educational reform (Held et al, 1). Yet Gaff’s early (1983) language still maintains the emphasis on the role of “American citizens” in an interdependent world, as do many more recent arguments for globalizing education.

A third rationale, which seems to be increasing in intensity, emphasizes economics. The sociological construction of “globalization,” with its concern for the growth of world trade, the internationalization of the economy and market, and the emergence of powerful transnational corporations (Coulby and Zambeta, 8), has led to a pragmatic concern that the U.S. remain economically competitive. “If our nation and its people are to prosper in the new environment of the 21st century,” the ACE Commission on International Education claims, “our colleges and universities must truly become institutions without boundaries” (quoted in Turlington, xi). The need for American education to change so that we can “compete in the global economy” has become a mantra. See, for example,
some of the testimony before the U.S. Department of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education in 2006. Global education, it is alleged, is crucial for students’ future economic success as well as the future economic success of American society. A similar kind of economic competitiveness informs reform movements in other nations, including the United Kingdom. The U.K. Department for Education and Skills announced in 2001, “To prosper in the 21st century competitive global economy, Britain must transform the knowledge and skills of its population” (Osler and Vincent, 18). Understanding globalization as an economic phenomena encourages us to think pragmatically about how to succeed within this new kind of market. As Evie Zambeta notes, “Globalization is used by governments and decision-makers as a prescribing factor on domestic policy for transforming education into an instrument for raising the country’s competitiveness in the global arena. In other words, education is increasingly perceived as a means of increasing wealth” (77).

National citizenship lies at the heart of all of these cases for globalizing education. But another case speaks of citizenship more broadly, with reference to the fourth-century Cynic Diogenes’ description of himself as a “citizen of the world,” or cosmopolitan. One of the best cases for cosmopolitanism as an essential part of a liberal education has been made by Martha Nussbaum in *Cultivating Humanity*. Drawing on Stoic philosophy, Nussbaum argues for globalizing education both in pragmatic and ethical terms. Pragmatically, a global education provides valuable self-knowledge, as we see ourselves and our customs more clearly by means of contrast; and it helps us guard against the manipulation and potential damage prompted by narrow partisanship. But globalizing
education also allows us to see Others not as opponents, aliens, or inferiors, but instead as human beings, recognizing “in people . . . their aspirations to justice and goodness and their capacities for reasoning” (60). Nussbaum argues that we should not give up our local allegiances and identities, but rather think of ourselves as surrounded by a series of concentric circles: self, family, neighbors, city, country, world. “Our task as . . . educators who prepare people to be citizens of the world, will be to ‘draw the circles somehow toward the center,’ making all human beings like our fellow city-dwellers. In other words, we need not give up our special affections and identifications, whether national or ethnic or religious; but we should work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern, showing respect for the human wherever it occurs, and allowing that respect to constrain our national or local politics” (60-61). Nussbaum’s liberal humanist position is compelling, and in many ways I affirm it, but there are some aspects that give me pause. It depends upon an optimistic view of human nature, assuming that we all aspire to justice and goodness; puts a high premium on universal reason; and in the long run still prioritizes a national or local identity.

Speaking as an educator at a faith-based institution, let me approach globalizing education from a different perspective and with a different kind of language. While agreeing for the most part with Nussbaum’s goals, I would re-draw her schema. Instead of beginning with the self at the center, I would begin with the cosmos as the foundational circle, encompassing both the human world as well as the natural world. This cosmos, according to Creation theology, was formed and evolved through God’s will, with human beings created in God’s image, the *imago dei*. Rather than initially
thinking of ourselves as free individual selves; as American citizens with political, economic, or moral obligations; or even as ethically responsible citizens of the world, we should begin by understanding that we are a part of God’s created cosmos, One World, as the popular white bracelet given out at U2 concerts proclaims. This assumption has a number of significant implications, beginning with the ecological relationship between the human and the natural world. Think, for example, of the way in which the air pollution of one factory—which it be in Kenya or Connecticut—contributes to global warming; the way that the butterfly’s beating wings famously changes the weather on the other side of the world.

Furthermore, within this cosmos, I see human identity and social groupings less rigidly than Nussbaum’s concentric circles. Within God’s cosmic whole, we find selves with family and community identities. But for many in today’s world of migration, exile, and upheavals, the family circle will not be confined to the geographic community. And although the local neighborhood or city will be a smaller part of the national circle, in today’s world of hybridity, creolization, impurity, and border crossings, there are many cultural and ethnic neighborhoods with hazy geographic borders. While my primary identity is as a beloved child of God, I have many other embodied identities swirling, mingling, rising, diminishing, contesting: woman, American, Dutch, middle-class, mother, Seattleite, small-town girl.

Within this complexly interwoven natural and social cosmos, human beings have been given the responsibility to work toward what the Hebrew writers called *shalom*, a state of
flourishing relationships with God, the human world, and the natural world. The most common definition of shalom is peace, but in Hebrew shalom also incorporates justice, reconciliation, and delight. “This appointed human destiny of shalom,” philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff writes, is a “vision of the just and responsible community of delight” (23). For the true flourishing that is shalom, we must have a justice in which each person enjoys his or her rights, we must have a community of reconciliation in which we all act responsibly, and we must take delight in these relationships. As educators, we must teach for shalom, help our students learn how to “be agents and celebrators of shalom” (24). And that can only be done within a global context.

Wolterstorff argues that central motif of liberation that guides humanist models of education—that of liberating us from our parochial particularities into the great cultural heritage of humanity and universal human consciousness—is deficient in that it does not respond “adequately to the wounds of humanity—in particular, the moral wounds; none gives adequate answer to our cries and tears” (22).

The respect for humanity grounded in their common imago dei and the love for neighbor stipulated by the Christian scriptures are not limited to national, religious, or even geographic proximity. When Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan in response to the lawyer’s question, “Who is my neighbor?” he tells of how those of similar religious and cultural identity ignore a man who has been mugged and robbed, while a Samaritan, a man from an ethnic and religious group loathed by the Jews of Jesus’ day, stops and assists him. The neighbor is not someone who lives next door, or goes to the same synagogue or church, or claims the same national identity; the neighbor is anyone in need
who we encounter. Learning shalom, then, means attending to the cries of the wounded and working to alleviate their pain. The only significance of being American, in this context, is the greater responsibility with respect to issues such as world poverty, hunger, and AIDS that economic superiority mandates.

What we might call the humanitarian case for global education is not uniquely Christian; international organizations such as UNESCO and regional inter-governmental organizations such as the Council of Europe have long advocated for international education that promotes “peace, democracy and human rights” (Osler and Vincent, 1). In a 1994 meeting of the UNESCO’s International Conference on Education, Ministers of Education determined, “to strive resolutely . . . to take suitable steps to establish in educational institutions an atmosphere contributing to the success of education for international understanding, so that they become ideal places for the exercise of tolerance, respect for human rights, the practice of democracy and learning about the diversity and wealth of cultural identities” (quoted in Osler and Vincent, 3). Rather than striving to be politically powerful or economically competitive, global education can be motivated by a desire to address the evils and responsibilities of globalization: the worldwide sex trade, global warming, and sustainable development. Such goals provide important common ground between Christian and secular communities for an understanding of cosmopolitan, rather than national citizenship.

Learning shalom and becoming a cosmopolitan will also involve receiving the blessings and gifts of other cultures, growing in wisdom and delight by exposure to the rich variety
of human living. With Nussbaum, we can agree that our conceptions of justice or rights may become richer, more nuanced, and less parochial, as we engage in conversations across the globe, in the same way that our palate has become less parochial. We move toward a richer grasp of shalom when our cultural assumptions are unmasked, even, or perhaps especially, those assumptions about Christianity. We tend to encounter and experience our faith within a North American context, but we can “rediscover” Christianity, as Father Vincent Donovan did when living among the Masai, in global contexts. Today, significant theological innovations are occurring as African, Asian, and Latin American Christians read and live the scriptures within differing cultural contexts. And while demographically Christian faith ebbs in the North and West, it continues to rise in the South and East. In 1900, 80 percent of the world’s Christians lived in Europe and North America, but in 2000, 60 percent of the world’s Christians were living in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Barrett and Johnson, 25). The World Christian Encyclopedia projects that by the year 2025, the largest single bloc of Christians in the world will be found in Latin America: 641 million. Africa will be a close second, with almost 634 million Christians, and Asia will have 460 million. In The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity, Philip Jenkins points out that by 2050, only about one-fifth of the world’s three billion Christians will be non-Hispanic Whites (3). This demographic shift will have significant ramifications for understandings and articulations of Christianity. Since the imago dei includes existence as social and cultural creatures, we can only apprehend the Christian message within some kind of social and cultural context. Thus our particular conceptions of God, Christianity, justice, and ethics are simultaneously limited and valuable. We need dialogues and exchanges with people
across the globe in order both to work through our cultural limits and to identify our cultural contributions.

In the final vision of cosmic reconciliation painted in flamboyant colors in the Revelation of John, we do not find amorphous human beings stripped of all particular identifiers. Instead, we are told of “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9 NRSV). Being part of God’s family does not eliminate our embodied, cultural nature, and we will bring the delights of those aspects of our identity into the final kingdom.

When my son, Joseph, was about five years old, we took him to Disneyland, where we rode on “It’s a Small World,” which had been dismantled and shipped to California at the conclusion of the New York World’s Fair. I had never been particularly fond of this attraction, with its cutesy dolls and annoying song. But as I glided across an imaginary globe with a wide-eyed Joseph, I found myself caught up in his childish delight. “Look!” I would say, “Do you see the windmills? What country is this?” And he would happily reply, “It’s Holland!” The dancing leprechauns signaled Ireland, and he quickly identified another figure’s red plaid kilt, tall fur cap, and bagpipe as being Scottish. The howdah topped elephants were from India, he declared, and the boys leading llamas came from South America. In the final segment of the ride, most of the dolls reappear in a large tableau, still wearing their national costumes, but now all dressed in white, without the bright colors and printed fabrics of their original appearance. As we entered this
shimmering sea of white-clad children, Joseph blurted out, “I know where we are now, Mommy!” “Where?” I asked. “This is heaven,” he rejoiced. Of course it wasn’t heaven, and the fact that in this room all the dolls now sing *that song* “in universal English” provides a significant subtext that the critical theorist in me is quick to identify. But Joseph had caught a glimpse of shalom.

When we educate students, our goal could be to produce better individuals, better American citizens, or even better cosmopolitans, but I believe that the Christian college’s particular mission is to educate globally for the kind of shalom my son experienced that day at Disneyland.
Works Cited


<Footnotes>

¹ For an extensive look at this constant tension, see Coulby and Zambeta.

² See, especially, Gaff.