

LUCE DELHI TRANSCRIPT

[Manoranjan Mohanty]: We wanted to start on time because we need every moment of today to discuss a very important theme of our time: The Role of Religion in Global Civil Society- A South Asian Perspective. A very hearty welcome to all of you. My name is Manoranjan Mohant –we will have a round of introductions shortly.

When the proposal for us to link up with the Luce Foundation Project begin, about which Mark Juergensmeyer will say more, I was quite interested in this for two reasons: One, during the last 20 years in Delhi University and then in the city of Delhi as a whole – thanks to JPS Uberoi and T. N. Madan and Mark Juergensmeyer himself who has been part of that process in Delhi in our Religion in Society Research Group Program and then in the Developing Countries Research Center, this program took some shape. Thanks to Vidyajyoti, and now ISI (Indian Social Institute's) vice president, Dr. John Chathanatt, who is sitting here, this program acquired a very important shape. A key person was Manindra Thakur, who is also here. Manindra and John Chathanatt became the core of this initiative. Whenever Mark was in Delhi he spoke to us and we had half of this group present in those moments. That's one reason we thought we should continue that process that we had initiated in Delhi University 20 odd years ago.

The other reason is the substantive question of religion, society, and politics in South Asia. We are so delighted that I.A. Rehman from Pakistan and Rounaq Jahan from Bangladesh have joined us. We have been part of several South Asia sub-continental initiatives. I.A. Rehman is a founder of the Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy, as well as the non-governmental Pakistan Human Rights Commission of which he is the general secretary and the main force along with Mubashir Hasan. I am the Indian chairman of the Pakistan-India People's Forum, and we have worked together during the last 20 years closely on these issues. There are so many here and some who could not come, Swami Agnivesh and Asghar Ali Engineer, they were busy so they could not come. We have worked together in all the post-communal riot situations, together with John Chathanatt and his colleagues in Vidyajyoti, Father Tika John and many others. These issues will come up again and again, whether it is the Maliana massacre in U.P. Meerut area, the Delhi riots in 1984, the Ayodhya related riots, the Mumbai riots and – you must be reading about all of the judgment coming in the next few days – and the Jammu-Kashmir situation during the last 20 years, the Punjab situation particularly in the 1980's, the Gujarat riots, the Orissa Kandhamal anti-Christian riots and so many more. In all these things several of us has been involved in trying to probe the nature of these conflicts. I am a part of PUDR, People's Union for Democratic Rights, which has participated together with PUCL and many other peace groups in investigating and producing civil liberty reports, the latest being the Kandhamal Report on the anti-Christian riots. So friends you can understand, I think the very small group which has met here, has come for a very involved, intimate, frank discussion on these issues, and also for finding out how we can continue this conversation so that religion is brought to the core of academic disciplines and is placed at the core of civil society initiatives and political discourse and political action so that we build a society that is democratic, harmonious and fulfilling of the aspirations of individuals, groups and regions. So with these words I welcome you all.

[Mark Juergensmeyer] Thank you Mano for that very helpful introduction and thanks to each one of you for taking the time and energy to come and join us on what I suspect might seem a

kind of peculiar event. Yesterday, someone who was planning to come today asked where the papers were so they could be read in advance, and I had to disappoint her and tell her we have an interesting format for the meetings of this project, and that is to gather together a group of interesting people who come from disparate backgrounds, in terms of religious community, ethnicity, and nationality. We try to keep a balance between academics and practitioners, people who are involved in social movements and INGOs to come together to have an honest discussion and encounter.

Our experience has been that in occasions such as this some of the most fruitful and interesting interaction comes in the discussion after the papers. What we've learned is that if we have only a brief time such as this, if we have only one day for our engagement, we're better off without the papers. An exciting aspect of this meeting today is going to be its spontaneity, its creativity and your engagement with the issues as they surface without any preconception about what we are going to talk about, how you are going to respond, and how the issues should be framed. I know that may seem like a daring proposition, but take it from me, we have done this now on several other occasions and we have been extremely pleased with the quality of the interaction and of the outcome of the discussion.

One of the things this means is that in order to get a product that is a written product, a report, insights that are permanently recorded from our activities today, it'll be essential for us to record our comments, and we are doing this not just with audio recording but also with a video camera. We will use this primarily for the purpose of creating some sort of working document, a report similar to the one you see in the folder that's been given to you. In the folder you will find several of these reports on "Religion and International Affairs: Challenges for Non-Governmental Organizations", which is a seminar, an overview, on the kind of topic that we're going to discuss today and which I'll be talking about more in just a second. I think there are two particularly on Latin America, one from a seminar we had similar to this in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and one that we had in Santa Barbara, again focusing on the Latin America situation. We will produce a little booklet something like this and as you'll see, they're based on comments and insights from the discussion that we are recording with the video camera. We may also have for our own website short clips from the discussion, so we may use them for that public purpose. For this reason we would like to ask you each to, before you forget about it, to take out these release forms that have been given to you in the folder and fill in your name and sign them, which will give us permission to use this video for the purposes of creating a report and also for short clips that we might use on our website. I promise you this is the only purpose that we have for these videos. They don't go to the C.I.A. or the I.S.I. or any other nefarious organization, not that they would care about our topic anyway.

Now let me say just a word about the topic; I will introduce that before I ask each of you to introduce yourselves. As Mano said, I'm Mark Jurgensmeyer, my background is in political science but also in the study of religion. I taught for many years in Berkeley and then for the last 15 years or so at the University of California at Santa Barbara, another campus of the University of California. My own research work has been on the interaction of religion and politics, globally. I've done quite a bit of work in India, a part of the world which I love and where I've lived for a number of years, primarily at Punjab University but also here in Bihar. I don't know whether you knew this, but I was working with Jayaprakash Narayan in family relief work in Bihar. I had a

longstanding intellectual interest in the relation of religion and politics, but this project is not mine in a narrow sense, it belongs to the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies with which my colleagues, such as Victor Fassel and Dinah Van Wingerden who are associated, and we collectively came up with the idea for a project that would look at the way in which issues of religion are conceived by academic programs teaching international politics and international affairs and training people to go into careers in foreign service and journalism and also, increasingly in the United States, training people for careers in INGOs and leadership in social movements.

It is this last category which has been under-studied, and little attention has often been paid in the United States, so we decided to focus this series of conferences and projects and publications and develop teaching resources that would be useful for academic programs in trying to understand the role of religion in civil society within different parts of the world and within an emerging global society as people try to reach out from one part of the world to help people in other parts of the world and, of course, religion is part of the cultural mix. When a group of people traipse from Europe or the United States to Pakistan to try and help with the flood relief situation – which is of course a situation of enormous urgency and a crisis of unbelievable proportions, no doubt their aid is welcome and their relief is also welcome – it is a process not only of an engagement of agencies, but it is also a human engagement, an encounter between people of different cultural backgrounds. Often perceptions about the needs of people, perceptions about how to help and how to provide support, are complicated and sometimes assisted by religious concepts that are maybe different from those that the people came with from other parts of the world. But it is a part of this engagement, as I said, for either good or for ill. What we want to explore in this session is what we have been exploring in these other contexts, of other parts of the world in the other seminars in which we've been engaged, and that is the way in which religion plays a role in social movements, movements of social change, and of international NGOs that are intended to support human rights or relief or social service. How religion can be an obstacle in some cases, how religion may create difficulties as this aid and this assistance and issues of human rights are promoted, or how in some cases it might be a positive thing, maybe help to provide this service or to promote these human rights; how religious organizations themselves have taken the lead in movements of social service and how they interact and engage with movements that are not defined as religious.

These are the general topics that we have, that are of interest to us, and which have been a part of previous projects. I should say that all of these seminars including the one today are supported by funding and support from the Henry Luce foundation in New York City. This is a humanitarian and philanthropic organization that, in the last several years, has been concerned with this larger issue of the way in which religion is taught in the field of international affairs and international politics and has tried to promote, in different centers of excellence in different parts of the United States, a re-thinking of the role of religion in the academic subject of international affairs. They have supported, for example, the work of the Berkeley Center at Georgetown with which Katherine Marshall, one of our colleagues, is associated. We were very grateful that they decided that our project was worthy of support as well. We're grateful to Luce Foundation and very pleased to be a part of this larger circle of interaction with other universities and academics centers in the United States who are looking at other aspects, other facets, of the role of religion in international affairs. However, ours is the one project that *distinctly* looks at the training of

leadership in NGO's and social movements and the role of religion in international affairs in the training for these kinds of international positions.

I hope this explains a little bit about who we are, and why you are here and what we want to do. We have a series of questions that are going to frame our discussions, but they all depend upon your own insights, your own comments, and your own response to other people who are here, which means that the next few minutes are not just a nice little gesture to make you feel like we recognize who you are by introducing yourselves, rather, they're very important parts of our conversation. We want you to take a minute or two to tell a little bit about yourself, your organization, and we would like you to say just a word about what you do. But then we would also ask each of you to say a word or so about the main theme of the topic today, the role of religion to civil society in South Asia and global civil society throughout the world. Just a word about your own position on the table, on whether you feel that religion plays a positive or negative role; whether the situation between religion and movements of human rights and social change is changing; whether the political and cultural trends within the country are in fact making things worse. Take an opportunity not only to introduce yourself, in terms of your organization and your background but also a thought that you might have to put on the table for the larger topics that we are going to address this morning.

In India, whenever we circumambulate a temple we have to imagine a *murti* in our midst. We are all always careful to keep our right shoulder towards the *murti* so for that reason we always move around to the left. I am very conscious, you know, and I am in the habit of doing that now in the United States and I have to explain to people why it is important to do so, but I think that here it will come without any problem. For that reason, Professor Mohanty, just because you are one of the organizers, just because you are one of the hosts, it does not mean that you are off the hook in introducing yourself and placing an idea or two on the table for all of us to consider.

[Manoranjan Mohanty]: Well, I am Manoranjan Mohanty, I retired from Delhi University in 2004, where I taught for 40 years. I started as a College lecturer in Zakir Husain College, which at that time was called Delhi College. Then I spent about a decade in the Chinese-Japanese studies department, because my specialization is in Chinese and Indian comparative developments. So I am kind of a China Scholar, and then, in the political science department for the rest of the period. I have been part of a China study group, which is now the Institute of Chinese studies, and I am the Chairman of that. In Delhi University we started a Developing Countries Research Center, and some people here are part of that process, where I mentioned we had started the Research Group on Religion and Society. Currently I am attached to the Council for Social Development after my retirement, where my principle concern is to do practically what I was doing, which was Comparative Development studies. I just completed editing the India Social Development report for 2010.

Now I said I am a member of PUDR from its foundation, in 1980, until today. PUDR constantly makes my intellectual activity put to the test. My civil liberty activity is also put to test, in terms of my ideas that I have, from my books and teachings and from my students, who are my greatest teachers. There is one other organization I must introduce besides PIPFPD Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy, about which I am sure Rehman *sahib* will say more, but one of the organizations, which is very meaningful to my life, is the Orissa Gaveshana Chakra.

It's a development resource institute in Orissa, which we founded more than 20 years ago, and which keeps me tied to working in Orissa together with working in China - almost equal involvement academically and research time wise, which has seen the study of poverty and communal conflicts, the study of natural calamities like the Orissa super cyclone in 99, and also a study of the increasing communalization of Orissa. When Graham Stein was burnt to death together with his two kids in January 1999, we studied that whole process and we have been following that case. One of the principal's accused has been convicted and given a death sentence, and he has appealed. That was one sort of incident which symbolized what was happening to Orissa. Another high point was the Kandhamal riots in August 2008, about which I will talk later. The Orissa Research has given me this dimension, which is extremely significant.

Since after my retirement, I go and spend every spring with the Santa Barbara Group, which really connects me with the Global and International studies program. I teach research methodology in Global and International studies before the groups of students are sent for internships for six months in different parts of the world. I teach them how to do research in the third world. Now, one other point I want to make about what I expect this conversation to help me in - I think Mark has been engaged in the study of global religious violence, particularly terrorism, which has interested me in a very special way because I have been interested in the study of violence, per se, of all forms, beginning with my first work in 1977 on revolutionary violence in the book, "A Study of the Naxalites". He, for the first time, told several of us through his works, that "religious violence" is about an alternative vision of the world. Just as religion is about a vision of the world, "religious violence" also is about this - what drives them to locating and transmitting the existence of the practitioners of the violence to that world of the religious visionary, the alternative vision, and why? What are the pressing events which propel people? What kind of vision drives the violence perpetrator, the suicide bomber or whomever, to commit that violence? So this connection with an alternative vision of the world, I took seriously for the first time after reading Mark's *Terror in the Mind of God*, or even his earlier book, *The New Cold War*, which is about the secular state versus the challenge to secularism from religious violence. So, I have been following that argument of his. When I put that in the Indian context, the South Asian context, or even into the study of so-called "global terrorism" - because of my interest in China, India, Russia, - being involved in coping with this problem of terrorism, and we are trying to find what different ways they can have other than the Western, the Bush era, approach. So we are all engaged in alternative approaches to the understanding of terror. I hope that I will get some more help in understanding religious violence from these conversations.

[Rounaq Jahan] I am **Rounaq Jahan** from Bangladesh, and at present the distinguished fellow at the Center for Holistic Dialogue in Bangladesh. I suppose that if you live long enough then it is very difficult to very briefly tell people what you are engaged in. I started my academic career as a Professor of Political Science in Dhaka University in Bangladesh, from 1970 to 1981, where I was mainly teaching political science and I also had an interest in Comparative Politics. Because Bangladesh was a newborn country at that point, I also got quite involved in the women's movement, because in the early 70's they were becoming an international movement. So both nationally and internationally I got engaged in that. Also in Bangladesh, right after independence, there were a lot of new civil society NGO initiatives in a whole variety of areas, and there were not that many women in those days who were willing to get involved and go to villages and play some role in mobilizing or bridging the rural-urban gaps. I got also quite involved with a number of these

old civil society organizations as well as the new civil society organizations, mainly developmental organizations that were working with health, education, and microcredit. I, myself, set up the first women's research center in Bangladesh, in 1973 called *Women for Women*, which still exists. My interest in women's and gender issues gradually led me to more regional and international work. I worked for the United Nations between 1982 to 1990. I headed a woman's program at UN Asia Pacific Development Center, based in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and which was mainly for the Asia-Pacific region. After that I was heading the women's program at the International Labor Organization based in Geneva. That work also involved part research and part management.

Anyway, after a number of years as an international bureaucrat I realized that I am not cut out for that life and I was debating whether to go back to Bangladesh or to the United States. I met one of my old friends, who was then the Dean at Columbia University, and he asked me to take an affiliation at Columbia. I was there since 1990 up to last year. That was Ainslee Embree at the South Asia Institute at the School of International and Public Affairs, and there I was doing part research, continuing my interest in research on politics as well as gender issues, and also keeping quite involved with civil society organizations in Bangladesh as well as internationally. I also got quite interested in a number of developmental issues, health being one of these, and I worked quite hard to set up a health oriented advocacy network in Bangladesh called *Bangladesh Health Watch*. The main idea was that all these policies are really framed by negotiating between government and donor agencies, and citizens really have absolutely no role in that. The idea was to really give some voice to citizen's voice in policy making, as well as to bring a gender perspective, because, again, women's priorities really don't get reflected in budgetary allocations. Every year we publish an annual report on the state of health in Bangladesh. And to do a little bit more focused work on Bangladesh, which I had always wanted to do, but somehow got by-laid and started living in New York, I decided that now I will spend more time in Bangladesh. I've taken up affiliation as a distinguished fellow at the Center for Policy Dialogue, and I will be working now more on governance related issues. Since we were all asked to make one or two statements about that topic and where we stand, I must admit that I kept asking Manoranjan why am I in this meeting on *Religion in Civil Society*, because I have not really done any academic work on religion. I am also a little bit weary about religion in civil society, being in Bangladesh, on two counts. First of all, I think that many of us have been involved in civil society activities in Bangladesh, but not faith-based. We've worked since the 1970's on a number of issues and we thought that religious organizations really have not played a very positive role, particularly in terms of women's empowerment, for instance. And then, of course, in recent years, the religious institutions are also getting more and more involved in civil society. They *are* a part of civil society, so on a democratic principle you cannot negate their role, but what role really are they playing? So I keep a watch on this. I remember, that, many years ago, when one of Bangladesh's very well known writers, Taslima Nasreem had to leave Bangladesh because of all these conflicts. I was giving a talk at Columbia and Dick Bullet stood up and said, "You are talking like a secular fundamentalist!" I see that that term also is coined here in one of your reports, so I got even a little bit more worried as to how I am already now positioned in terms of this debate.

I think for many of us after 9/11, particularly people who live in America and as a Muslim by birth, this has become a personally very disturbing sort of issue. I was born a Muslim. Islam is part of something which is extremely personal to me in terms of the religion and practices, but in terms of any public manifestation I had always been, as I said, very weary about this. First of all because I

was also a part of this role in women's empowerment. Many of us were involved with the liberation movement for Bangladesh. In Bangladesh that was one of the cases where we rejected a definition of nationalism based on religion and that was our main contention with Pakistan. We didn't want a political use of religion. But I remember that, and this is very disturbing for many of us, that right after 9/11 one of the civil society organizations in New York, who's president is a very good friend of mine and who I have known for 30 years, suddenly asked me to speak at a breakfast meeting with a lot of these rich ladies, and other donors, as a Muslim. So after 30 years, where which she has known all along that I am a Muslim, she discovers that I am a Muslim. I think, and I have to say that I am borrowing this from Professor Amartya Sen, I have multiple identities. Yes, first and foremost, I am a Bengali, and as a Bengali I share certain things with millions of other Bengalis. Secondly, yes, I am a Muslim and as a Muslim I also share many things with an even larger group. But third, and most importantly, I am a woman and as a woman I share, again, many things with more than half of the world's population. But I think that this "War on Terror", and the way it is being handled has implications globally, and also nationally, and has made many of us really pay much more of an interest in the role of religion. That is why I thought that it would be interesting for me to come to this meeting and to see what it is all about. I thought that the theme is so big, and it will answer many questions. I will come back to what role - yes, it depends, it could be positive, it could be negative, it depends on the place and time. Thank you.

[I. A. Rehman] I am I. A. Rehman from Pakistan. I spent 40 years in active journalism, but retired as the chief editor of Pakistan Times, in 1990. Since then I have been working as a human rights activist with Human Aids Commission of Pakistan, a non-governmental organization. As Professor Mohanty kindly referred, I have also been active with the Pakistan-Indian People's Forum and have been involved with the South Asia Forum for Human Rights which is based in Kathmandu. I am also associated with South Asians for Human Rights in Colombo and I was also one of the founding members of Asian Forum for Peace and Democracy, functioning out of Bangkok.

We have had a long history of use and abuse of religion in this part of the world. About a hundred years ago religion was used for positive purposes, for tolerance, for **mishurk/mutual?** and good co-existence. But, for the last 70 years or so, religion has been used to divide people, and in the last couple of decades religion has been abused to commit violence against people. In Pakistan, I can say, religion has been abused by the state to discriminate against minorities and any political dissent, including our Bengali compatriots who were with us until 1971. Religion was also used to justify military action in, which was then, East Pakistan.

At the moment we have serious problems of violence within religion, which is sectarianism, and between religions, which is again Muslims and non-Muslims. We think that religion is the freedom of everybody, and all freedom should have religion, and all people following their faith should have freedom, but nobody should have the right to force one's views through violence. It is a matter of great concern and we are addressing it to the best of our ability. We are trying to reverse the current trend because, at the moment, religion is being abused to commit violence against different sects, to justify suicide bombing, to justify extreme and barbaric acts against civilians, women and children, and for us it is a matter of crucial concern because we believe that a society which is involved in this kind of religious violence, is shortening its life as a nation.

[Richard Falk]: My name is Richard Falk and I am part of the Santa Barbara group. I am here really as an observer rather than a participant, so I will spare you a full response to Mark's introductory statement. But, just let me mention three aspects of my own interest in this theme. One, I wrote a book a few years ago, called *Religion and Humane Global Governance*, which makes an attempt to relate the importance of religion as a source of global influence. The main thesis of the book could be described as a Hindu response, in the sense that I tried to argue that religion was both positive and negative, not one or the other in relation to global issues. Second, after 9/11 I also wrote a book called *The Great Terror War*, which was my attempt to deal with the encounter between explicitly religious extremism, what might be called fundamentalism, and what has already been described as *secular fundamentalism* – the one had this unfortunate post 9/11 response that went in that direction. The third aspect of my background that is potentially relevant, is that I was in Iran during the Iranian revolution and had the opportunity to meet Ayatollah Khomeini, and other religious leaders, during that moment when one had the experience of touching the live tissue of revolution. It was an extraordinary personal experience for me. It was prior to the shaping of the Iranian experience in such a repressive and oppressive direction, and it was at a moment where the atmosphere was one of a religiously generated emancipation from the oppression of the Shah. It was a very short interval between that moment of emancipation from secular oppression to the transition toward the tragedy of religiously-oriented oppression.

[Lingam Raja]: Good morning to all of you, my name is L. Raja. I come from Gandhigram Rural University in the southern part of Tamil Nadu. In the introduction I would just like to say a few words about what I am doing now. I was born to an illiterate family in a tiny village in Tamil Nadu. I educated myself, trying to understand my own religion - I belong to the Hindu religion. After my graduation I joined the Tamil Nadu Sarvodaya Mandal, it is a Gandhian organization, where I was trying to understand Gandhi in action. I went around several villages trying to understand the people. To me, poverty is more important than the religion, because religious institutions and religion is there always, right from the beginning. But poverty, it kills the people more than religion disturbs. So I started working with people, trying to help them in our own way through the Tamil Nadu Sarvodaya Mandal, working with great Gandhians like Jagannathanji and others. Then I joined with the Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha, in Sewagram Ashram, which was later instituted by Shri Ravindra Varma. He was the man who was holding the boat, I was working with him. Then I joined with the Dr. Aram, who was the Vice Chancellor of Gandhigram University, and later became a member of Parliament. He restarted an Ashram, a Shanti Ashram, and I was working with him for a few years, basically on inter-religious dialogue and inter-religious work.

While I was with Sarvodaya Mandal, we started a Gandhian youth movement, for the first time in Tamil Nadu, for the youth to come in and work for peace, and try to understand the participation of youth in action. We had a long peace walk from Kanyakumari to New Delhi for six and a half months, every day walking 40 kilometers. The aim of the walk was to have communal harmony and world peace, with forty inter-religious and international people. That was a wonderful walk that we did. Also I participated in another peace walk in Sri Lanka - Sri Pada to Colombo, for about seventeen days, there again, for interreligious communal harmony and peace. And I have conducted many cycle *yatras*. The first one was with forty youth for forty days, and again it was for communal harmony and was held in Tamil Nadu only.

I have been having close access and relationship with all kinds of religious people, particularly

Buddhist people, Bahai, Christians, Muslims, Jain, and Sikh people. We have been having close understanding and are working together for common problems. I believe in action and, as I said earlier, I have conducted a lot of action research while I was at Gandhigram Rural University. I was the chief organizer of Shanti Sena. It is the only university that has a Shanti Sena unit wherein we give training for the youth on non-violence. In other universities and colleges they have NCC's, Nations Cadet Corps, but this is the only university that doesn't have the National Cadet Corps. Instead of that, Shanti Sena was introduced by the founder Dr. G Ramachandran and Dr. Soundram Ramachandhran. Through that we did a lot of activities, because the Dindigul District, where I come from in Tamil Nadu, is a religious tension prone area where the Hindu, Muslims, and Christians fight each other. In one of the villages, by the name of Perumal Patti, it is one community but with different religions. For about ten to twenty years Christians and Hindus were having enmities, killing and massacring each other in the same village. When we took up Shanti Sena, and when I was the chief organizer of Shanti Sena, we initiated this small initiative with the district collector and district judge. For three days we created a campsite to bring them together, to express their ideas and their agonies, mental agonies and all. After three days, a good thing that happened - for twenty years they could not celebrate their religious ceremonies, and then they came together and said yes, we will celebrate from now onwards, and for three years they have celebrated very well without having any conflicts. However, later on violence erupted. That is how we have been trying to solve this problem. We also participated in a peace walk in Srivilliputhur, it is one of the very interior areas in Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu, where communal tension of takes place. Coimbatore, which some of you might have heard about, is also an [action or accident] prone area between Hindu and Muslims, and on many occasions the people are involved in violence and kill each other. Through the Shanti Ashram and through the Gandhigram activities, we conducted a lot of work towards that and we were able to bring a kind of peace. Finally, I am involved in projects like the Child Care and Child Rights project, which I am getting help from the Italian Focolare Movement, which is one of Christian movements which helps, supports, and gives assistance for about a hundred and twenty children. So to me, more than the religion, humanity, human relationships, and trying to eliminate poverty, this is the area in which I have been working, thank you very much for your patient listening.

[Anindita Chakrabarti]: I am Anindita Chakrabarti, I teach at the Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur, in the department of Humanities and Social Sciences. My doctoral work was on a religious movement. I have studied since my MA at the Department of Sociology at Delhi University. I would just like to say a few words about my research, not taking too much time. How I came upon studying a religious movement, and my doctorate work was on Swadhyay in Western India, was a through an engagement with the voluntary sector in Delhi. One of the puzzles that was discussed at that point of time, was that when we are working for a voluntary organization, trying to promote a certain kind of voluntary work, it was very difficult to get volunteers - the mystery of voluntarism, what makes people work. I was told that in Swadhyay when the leader, Pandurang Shastri Athavale, asked for volunteers to come forward, they are there overnight. This was the kind of discussion that got me curious about the movement, and so I went to find out. I thought that this was not an easy answer, you need to understand the soteriology of what is going on, and any humanitarian activity is not without a soteriology. There is a theory of salvation and they would say that when we are going to do that voluntary work, we are not there to help others, we are there to help ourselves - as though saving the self depended on taking care of the other. I found this soteriology to be so crucial, and that propelled me to study more about this movement.

When I was in Gujarat I found another very interesting movement within Islam called the Tablighi Jamaat, which went door to door and had the same motto, that we have come to save ourselves, and not doing anything for others; very interesting parallels I found. That led me to study the Tablighi Jamaat in Gujarat and I have some of my observations for later that I would like to say - what kind of role it played, especially in the context of the violence in 2002. I would just briefly like to say a few points about the problems of doing sociology of religion in contemporary times. I am developing a course to teach in my institute on the sociology of religion. The first thing is to convince people that religion in itself, sociologically, is an interesting thing to study. When you tell your friends that you are studying religion seriously you lose half your secular liberal friends and they say, "Couldn't you do something better"? And if you are doing it to say it is unequivocally bad, then its fine, there is a kind of agenda. But for it's own sake, you have to be somewhere closer to Indology, where there is lot of serious work. But if you say I am doing sociology, half your friends are gone. If you say you are studying Hinduism, you know that there is an interest in Hindu sectarian traditions, you will still retain those friends. If you say that you are also studying Islam seriously, that is also pretty much an intellectually tight position. The tools of the sociology of movement are so much at logger heads with the conceptual tools which we have in sociology of religion, and it's a terrible marriage when you try to bring them together. But it is everywhere in our civil society. Religion is so important and so crucial and we really need our intellectual conceptual tools to be sharpened, so that we appreciate them and recognize their work. The purpose of this meeting, to come out in the open about what they're doing, is, in my opinion, not so much about good or bad. Only time can tell and as we know in sociology things are full of unintended consequences. But can we take it seriously and delve in it seriously and keep our minds open? That would be the question for me. Thank you.

[Bidyut Mohanty] I am Bidyut Mohanty and I work in a research institute of Social Sciences, in New Delhi. My interests are the visibility of women in local government institutions. I also go for a semester to the University of California at Santa Barbara, like Professor Mohanty, to teach a course on Women, Culture and Development. Now my interest in religion is purely indirect, as a practitioner of a living tradition in rural Orissa. Professor Mohanty has talked about the fundamentalist side of Orissa, taking Kandhamal as an example, but there are other traditions, which are quite tolerant to inter-religious groups, both Muslim and Hinduism. In fact, Mark has written an article highlighting these living traditions in the honor of Professor T. N. Madan. I am also interested in looking at the female feticide issues, why this female feticide is taking place in certain states and not taking place in certain other places, such as the cultivated areas like Orissa and Bengal, where you find areas quite favorable to women compared to cultivated areas. I noticed that these living traditions, namely worshipping Lakshmi, the goddess of corn, and particularly in the context of Orissa, there are *vrata kathas*, tales which are recited by women while worshipping the goddess of corn, or Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. It not only highlights the honor and recognition household work, but also highlights overcoming caste barriers. Unlike the other *vrata kathas*, which talks about... "Ok, if you do not worship me, I am going to curse you", and "If you worship me, then I will give you boons", like that. This story tells, "Ok, if you don't respect my role as a preserver of grains, or my role in household activities, then you are going to suffer", and that acts as a challenge to her husband. Lakshmi is described as the wife of Lord Jagannath, and she rarely visits different places in Puri. Each and every woman in rural Orissa, particularly in the peasant cast, recites that and it goes on and on from generation to generation.

This story was written in the 16th century when the second wave of the Bhakti movement was at its peak, as well as the Buddhist movements. In other words, I have done some work looking at the associations between work participation rate and rice cultivation, and I noticed that it is, indeed, very high female work participation. The substance of it is the ritual and economical visibility of women in rice based culture. By the way, there *are* certain ritual practices which are observed by both Muslims and Hindus. One such ritual is just before the farmer takes their plow to cultivate their land, there's a belief that the earth becomes fertile, and that ritual is being observed by both Muslim and Hindu communities together. Thank you.

[Rowena Robinson]: My name is Rowena Robinson and I teach at the Center for the Study of Social Systems at JNU. I have worked as a social anthropologist both among Christians and, later on, in the context of ethnic violence, among Muslims in western India. It is out of both of these field works that my interest in questions of Christianity, with regards to social justice and development, arose and also, with regards to Muslims, the question of the role that faith-based organizations, Islamic organizations, have played in the giving of aid or the provision of relief in the aftermath of ethnic violence. This second work actually linked up with another Luce project which came out of the University of Washington in Seattle, where they were looking at religion and human security issues. It is very clear from my own work, as well as the work that other members of this project bring up, that the role religion plays with civil society organizations in the provision of aid, or provision of human welfare, or any such activity, is very complex and the outcomes are sometimes quite unexpected, both in terms of what happens with regard to sub-groups within a religious community, for instance, with regard to women among Muslims, and also with regards to their engagement with other secular organizations in the provision of this kind of aid. So my interest in this workshop, is with the key theme of this workshop, because I think that religions are not similarly socially based; their social base or their social location is different, and the kind of engagement that they can have with civil society is therefore structured by their different social locations. I am interested in the comparative study of religious structures and religious organizations within India, as well as among different countries, in the context of their role in civil activities also. Thank you.

[Ravi Bhatia]: My name is Ravi Bhatia and I was trained as a scientist both in Delhi University and in the USA. Manoranjan Mohanty and I were together in a hostel, together in **????** college. He mentioned that he retired in 2004, as did I retire from Delhi University in 2004. As a scientist I taught physics and mathematics, and occasionally I still am asked to take quantitative aspects of research methodology in the Department of Political Science in Delhi University or sometimes in the Department of Sociology. Incidentally, I also worked for several years in NCERT, which is devoted to school education. These days I don't work in the area of science, I work in the areas of education and social sciences, a little bit of work in political science also, and religion. One of the persons I feel very much inspired by is Gandhi, his book *Hind Swaraj*, which was written a hundred and one years back, is still, I feel, highly relevant on so many different issues, whether it's the issue of education or development or the type of development that is required, or whether it is the issue of religion. On all these aspects, and other aspects, which I need not mention here, I feel that the study of Gandhi is an important aspect and that is what I try to work on, in my own simple way and without much institutional support.

One of the things that amazes me is the role of religion in South Asia, in India in particular,

whether it is a marriage, whether it is a death, whether it is a birth, or whether there are some special occasions, like we had Ganesh Utsav a few days back and also Eid ul-Fitr on the same day. The number of people who participate in these gathering is enormous - it's extraordinary the number of people. What is it that pulls people towards these religious gatherings? There are not only thousands, or hundreds of thousands, but even tens of millions of people on some special occasions like the Kumbha Mela or on Eid. What is it that pulls people towards these religious gatherings? One of the things which I feel, maybe I am over simplifying, is that the social fabric is breaking up and that you can see in Western countries, European countries, but also in India. The type of social structures we had are, if not breaking up, at least much less effective in maintaining peace and harmony among social groups, among families and among neighborhoods. So perhaps it is religion that is proving to be an alternative. That is one of the questions which I would like to have this gathering address. The other question that I think of is when all religions, or most religions, talk of common values like peace, like harmony, like love, like forgiveness, why is it that there is such much conflict between one religion and the another? These are some of the questions that I would like to seek answers to. Thank you.

[Prashant Trivedi] My name is Prashant Trivedi. After doing my Ph.D in Sociology, I have been working here at The Council for Social Development with Professor Mohanty. I think this meeting will help me understand the phenomena of resurgence, or the increasing role of religion in civil society, and that too, in the era of neo-liberal globalization. We have been experiencing, at least in this part of the world, the role of religion in politics, which has been increasing like never before. It is often becoming violent and targeting minorities. This whole process of the increasing role of religion in politics almost coincides with the neo-liberal policies of globalization adopted by the government of India. I hope this meeting will help me understand this phenomena. Thank you.

[Dinah Van Wingerden] My name is Dinah Van Wingerden and I am the project coordinator for the LUCE Foundation sponsored initiative at the Orfalea Center, and my role as project coordinator is to organize and produce the workshops where we will gather the content to produce the publications and the final tools that professor Juergensmeyer talked about earlier. It is my job to carry out the logistics of gathering scholars and practitioners. We do our best to find out who the people are that we should be inviting and who should be at the table, and I beg your forgiveness if we have left anyone out or overlooked anyone who should be at the table – I take responsibility for that.

Just as a word of how I came to be involved with the Orfalea Center: I found out about the Orfalea Center, and also the new Masters program on Global and International studies, in my capacity as a trustee at the Orfalea Family Foundations, and as such, I was privy to the grants that were being made out of the different funding pots. I was the trustee of one of the funds and we were allowed to see how the family was distributing funds over all. I happened to notice that they had given a rather large grant to the University for a Masters Program, and so I inquired about the program, found it very interesting and I ended up being part of the first class of the Masters Program. It was just what I needed at the time. Then fortuitously, just as I graduated from that program, I was approached by Victor and Mark asking if I wanted to take a role at the Orfalea Center. I am very grateful that they have given me something very interesting and engaging to continue working on. That is how I came to be involved here, thank you

[Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya] I am Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya, I am from the department of East Asian Studies in Delhi University, which Professor Mohanty referred to as the Department of Chinese and Japanese studies. Now it has a new name and is called East Asian Studies. Basically I am trained in Religious Studies, I got my Ph.D from the Department of Religious Studies in Tokyo University. I worked in Japan where I was teaching for 5 years, and I just joined this department last year. My work has been basically in East Asia and South East Asia, and now I am looking at India also. One of the traditions if you are in East Asia, which you cannot miss out, is obviously Buddhism. My work has been on Buddhist movements in East Asia, and as I was looking at East Asian Buddhist movements, and now gradually my interest has shifted to the refugee problem. Because if you look at all these Buddhist countries, right from the Tibetan problem, to the Cambodian issue, to Laos and Vietnam, they all have fallen to communism one after the other. One of the things has been that many of the people, particularly Buddhist, had to flee from their country and go and live outside. Of course, this gives rise to a diaspora of East Asian and Southeast Asian Buddhist communities and when denied a territorial place, what remains is actually the religion and the culture. My work now examines how religion then becomes one of many sources of identity and also how religious symbols and religious associations actually take on new meanings. I mean a temple in a refugee camp is not just a temple, it is also a center for the giving of food, of donations – in order to get a visa you have to get a certification from these monks. So I look also at all the new roles that Buddhist monks take up in these refugee camps. Now I am looking at how some of the very successful refugees have been doing - the Tibetan refugees and how they actually prop up various Buddhist movements in the countries where they have gone, and one of them is obviously India. One of the works that I am doing now is to look at the linkages between various Buddhist communities within India, between the Ambedkarites and the Tibetan Buddhists. Actually, I am very thankful to Professor Mohanty for inviting me to this program today. My interest is looking at global society and how this transnational networking between different religious communities and what is their significance, particularly in reviving the civil society movements and particularly with faith-based civil society movements. Thank you very much.

[Hilal Elver] Thank you very much, my name is Hilal Elver, I am also from the University of California, Santa Barbara. We came here for a series of meetings and this is the third one. I teach international environmental law, international human rights law, and I am originally from Turkey. Recently, I finished a book on the head scarf controversy in Turkey, comparing it to the United States and Europe. Being from Turkey, I had a strong interest about secularism and modernity and how it has shaped in Turkey, from the comparative perspective, focusing on recent and earlier, women's positions in this secular environment, in a very strong Muslim country. I am happy to be here, thank you.

[Victor Faessel] My name is Victor Faessel and I am the Program Director at the Orfalea Center, part of the organizational infrastructure of both this project and several other projects at this center. I have research interest in mythologies, old and new, but I am here mainly as organizational support for the project. I am very glad, along with Mark, Mano and Dinah, and everyone else, to see you all here today. Thank you.

[Acharya Shrivatsa Goswami] I am Shrivatsa Goswami and I bring greetings to you from Vrindavan, which is a gift of Islam to Hinduism, not only the most popular Hindu pilgrimage

destination today, but a Muslim gift to the Hindu, a gift of political power to the religious institutions. From today's historical point of view, it is a gift of Pakistan to India. In 1598, Akbar was sitting in Lahore, and he sent Abul Fazl to my ancestors, Jiva Goswami. He said: "Take these 100 *bighas* of land and create a revenue entity called Vrindavan. There was no Vrindavan on the map, it was always on the religious and literary canvas, but there was no geographical, civil, correlate to that. In 1598 it came about.

What do I do? I serve at Shri Radha Raman Temple, which is the seat of power for the Chaitanyites of which the Hare Krishnas are the Western kids of the movement. In that temple my duties allow me to play with Krishna, I know you all know him, who is an amazing player and who can play equally well in politics and religion. He can play at ease in economy and aesthetics, seamlessly. He doesn't mind any boundaries. Why am I here? I agree with Krishna who agrees in turn, with Mahatma Gandhi, and both of them wonder, together with me, that religion is inseparable from civil society, they are together. So Krishna tells me at times, go and find out in these learned talks and seminars and conferences and discussions like this, why religion is unilaterally thrown out of civil society and all the processes of civil society. This break of alliance, what you said about the marriage, this break of alliance in Krishna's and Gandhi's understanding, brings suffering of all kinds and also makes development suffer. So, how can we restore the dalliance, *the alliance*, between the two processes so that the dalliance can bring about a positive note on the side of development? Interestingly enough, I being a Chaitanyite, aesthetically, we do not subscribe too much to the highest value of the marriage. We believe in polity of power - relationship outside marriages, because marriage somehow gets bogged down in the vested interests. So if religion and civil society processes are based on vested interest, it will bring havoc. But if it is an alliance, out of love for each other, I am using a figurative language, then there is a complete dedication, and complete commitment, and the question of breakdown doesn't come about. But the golden question is to me, for this octagonal, or hexagonal, table, is that how can that dalliance be sustained? How can dalliance work? Thank you very much.

[John Chathanatt] My name is John Chathanatt. For about eighteen years I was teaching Religion and Social Ethics at the Vidyajyoti College of Theology, very close to Delhi University. For the last one year I have moved to the Indian Social Institute, a little different pattern of work. It is a research institute basically, and I am directing research specifically oriented on marginal people. So we have five departments there, five units, looking at the tribal, the Dalit, the women, and unorganized labor, looking at the research specifically from the marginal and rejected section of the people. I am coordinating and directing the research there at present. My interest in religion goes back right from the beginning, from my own formation as such. I did my PhD doctorate from the University of Chicago, from the Divinity school, in Social Ethics. Gandhi had been a fascination for me right from the beginning of my school days. My thesis was on a comparative study of Gandhi and Gutierrez - we can say two fathers. One is the father of our nation, the other, Gutierrez from Lima, Peru, is known as the father of Liberation Theology. I looked at how these two figures, one from the East, the other from the West, looked at social transformation.

We have been very much interested in the whole aspect of religion, and Professor Mohanty mentioned we had two conferences already that looked especially at the social healing part of religion. A book has been edited on that, both by Dr. Manindra Thakur and myself. When I look at it, there are three things I would like to mention and that I would like to learn from this dialogue.

Number one, why is religion amenable to manipulation? Politics can use religion? Why is this phenomenon? It is amenable to political manipulation, for any type of manipulation. Can we use that in a positive sense, for example, removing poverty and integrated development?

The second aspect would be, what is the role of religion in bringing social healing in a wounded history? When we look at history itself, right from the beginning, whether we like it or not, we fight. There is conflict, so how can a religious phenomena bring healing and bring people together, and finally bring peace.

Then the third aspect would be, the power of religion. Whether we like it or not, even if we throw religion out, religion will not throw us out. It's as somebody jokingly mentioned, that religion is even in our curry. It is there and even if we threw it out, it will not throw us out, it's part of us. So there is a power in religion. There is a lot of wisdom and insights coming from religion. Can we use this power, this insight, say for example, to remove poverty in the economic aspect and to remove racial oppression, like the caste system? Also, can religion purify politics? We may have to go back to Gandhi there - how religion can purify, bring back an authentic political development, a ruling. So these are my three various interests, specifically for our discussion today. Thank you.

[Manindra Thakur] I am Manindra Thakur. I teach at the CPS JNU, as Professor Mohanty mentioned. We have been working on this theme for many years and we have organized civil conferences and programs around this, and we are planning to pursue it farther. I was teaching in Delhi University and now I am in JNU and it is hard to relocate this project in a center, which has generally not been philosophically oriented. Fortunately, we have agreed and I got some funding to organize a round table on religion in the near future, and we will launch a program on religion and politics at the center.

I will just briefly mention my interest, and at some stage I can come back to it. One of the major problems that I am facing at the moment is the whole idea of conceptualizing religion itself, and I do not want to get into the East-West debate, but, is it that what we are treating as religion, is it very difficult to fix up a boundary for that? There is no need to fix up a boundary, the more we try to fix up a boundary, the more we lose the content of that, and probably that is where I want to engage with the earlier generation of professors who have worked on religion, including Professor Madan and Mark. I think that there is a common ground between religion, philosophy, and knowledge systems, and when we talk of religion we mainly talk of the religious communities, and with that we miss a lot of what is called "knowledge system". So I want to reclaim religion as a knowledge system, and then we have the autonomy to really engage with that in different ways.

Why I am saying this? Well I think that the Asian societies have a particular kind of vantage point, because most of the major religions have emerged in Asian societies. Why have they emerged in Asian societies? I am trying to probe that. What is a consequence of that? Is it that that really shapes our thinking differently about religion itself? That has taken me to whole lot of questions of religion and Marxism, and I have tried to explore the philosophy of science debates and its relations with Marxism and religion. I've discovered that probably now, the new philosophy of science emerging out of the new developmental science is allowing us to engage with religion as a knowledge system much more than it was earlier. I have two major interests at the moment, one is History and Social Healing, and we are trying to find out what have been the experiments in

Asia about the healing processes. I would take a look at like traditions like Baul and Nyaya philosophy in Mithila. For instance, Mithila had, what Amartya Sen calls, an argumentative tradition. Surprisingly when we look at the crime data of India we found that in Bihar and in other parts the rate it is very high, and in Mithila the crime rate is very low. One of the reasons we think this is, is due to Nyaya philosophies dominance, it is still prevalent in that area and in the collective consciousness.

The other is the new religious movements, where I am trying to engage with Ainslee Embree's categories that he has developed to discuss these movements. I think, they are really old and I am trying to develop new categories, particularly from the point of view of these new religious movements engagement with social reality. And, one of the major things that one can think as common in these religious movements is the philosophical discourse that they are creating. I think that one of the problems that the West is facing at the moment is due to this Cartesian duality, which Zizek brings into focus so heavily. These movements are basing their arguments on this whole idea of unity of mind and the body, and that is what is making it very popular. So I will come back to that.

[J.P.S. Uberoi] I am Jit Uberoi, I'm a pensioner at Delhi School of Economics. When I was teaching there, for many years, we were trying to establish a course in the "Sociology of Science", that was my first interest, and then, secondly, the "Sociology of Religion", which has not been taught in Indian universities, especially the progressive ones like Jawaharlal Nehru University, where the attitude is that there is no point in teaching something which has no future. Of course, they also don't teach science, they only talk about it - they have a sort of dual standard. Now the rumors about the death of religion are greatly exaggerated, especially since the Second World War, when everybody expected that religion would decline in public affairs. Some people, during the Pope's visit in the United Kingdom right now, still think that the Pope is still addressing what he calls "aggressive secularism", and there is a lot of that. My third topic was Political Anthropology, I say anthropology rather than sociology in this case because it was focused on the problems of societies where the institutions of the State were not well developed.

Mohanty's view is that if you want to study something, then you go and study it. But that is not my view, my view is that if you want to study something, you should study it in absentia - that is the most important thing. So if you want to know what the State does, you should look for a society which does not have a State. If you want to know what religion does, you should look for a society which does not have religion, because, if you keep on looking only at the presences, you never get to the basics. That, of course, is what was in common between the sociology of science and the sociology of religion and political anthropology, namely, to look at the basics. Not in terms of religion, I am agreeing with you, but in terms of modes of thought, codes of conduct, and principles of social organization. That was the common framework, and it doesn't matter whether it was economics that we were studying or religion or the relationship between those two. The fact that I was interested in basics, and not in current affairs or practical things, does not mean that we are not interested in politics, that is not the case. I was associated for many years with the People's Union for Civil Liberties, which is a rival organization to the People's Union for Democratic Rights, and we did try for many years to bring the two together, but we did not succeed. So we settled for not bringing them together as organizations, but coming together on issues, and I frequently found myself on the platform on the same side as Mano Mohanty in those

thirty years.

What we can hope today is to use whatever experiences people have, whether from South Asia or from the United States, to ask questions about what religion is; not to get a definition the way the United Nations might want, a sort of legal kind of definition, or the way it is important under the Indian Constitution, to know what is a religion and what is not. Are Free Masons a religion in the United States? Some people think that they are not, they are a social movement and I can believe whatever I like, because it is a secret social movement. Whatever I say about it you cannot contradict me. You cannot say that this is what the boss of the Free Masons says, because they do not have anyone, and if they have one they don't tell us. There is another organizations which has a rival Pope also, so it is rumored. There I am careful not to say anything because I have been a student in Vidyajyoti, and I still look up to my teachers there so I'm not going to say anything about the Jesuits.

Similarly, what is an institution? What is society? Some people think that we have religion and we have society, and then you can connect them, like thinking we have religion and we have politics. I mean Mark is like that, he thinks he knows what *is* politics and what *is* religion and now he wants to discuss what is the relationship. Well, that is not how I see it; how I see it is that society itself is a religious idea, it's quite the other way around. In fact, secularism has been invented by religion, it is not that secularism is opposed to it - the Pope has got it all wrong, people who are practical they get these things wrong. It might be that the question of violence also requires some discussion of the basics. I mean, if a person, starves themselves to death for a particular cause is this an action of violence or an action of non-violence? Just as they are suicide bombers, there are...you know, the world record for starving oneself to death is held not by a Gandhian, I wish it were, but it is actually held by an Irishman. He starved himself for so many days. This is a political issue; now are we going to say that this man is committing suicide, and therefore, should be tried for a crime because in Ireland suicide is a crime. Or, are we going to say that he is like Jesus? I mean if Socrates provoked his death, are we going to say that this is an act of violence? I mean, was he a suicide bomber or are we going to say that he was a prototype for self-sacrifice? So the world has need still of self-sacrifice. So what is missing there, when I say basics, is a principle of vicariousness. I had a lot of difficulty, on discussing this principle of vicariousness, in the Delhi School of Economics, because in the Delhi School of Economics every man and woman is for him or herself and there is no taking on oneself the sins of others. Where as in Vidyajyoti, of course, if there was no principle of vicariousness, there would be no Christianity. That's the sort of thing I think that we should find time to discuss.

[Katherine Marshall] Good morning, I am Katherine Marshall. I am very honored to be here in this group. I am currently at Georgetown University and I also head the World Faiths Development Dialogue. For those of us who have been around for a long time, as someone pointed out, it takes a while to tell the story, but my basic story is that I have worked for most of my career on development with the World Bank, mostly on Africa, Latin America and East Asia; too little in South Asia. I was drafted involuntarily, about 11-12 years ago by the President of the World Bank, Jim Wolfenson, who had started an initiative with the archbishop of Canterbury at the time, George Carey, to try to bridge what they saw as an enormous and damaging gulf between the worlds of religion and development. They brought together a relatively small group, first at Lambeth Palace and then in Washington, and agreed that it was important and wise to have a

small institution that would try to do this work. I was asked to help create the World Faiths Development Dialogue in late 1999, before 9/11. I don't want to tell the whole story, but what was interesting is that this exploded into an enormous international controversy. Jim Wolfensohn was proud of saying that out of 185 member countries, members of the World Bank, 185 opposed this initiative. We spent a great deal of time trying to explore why - why something that seemed so logical, the complete exclusion from development thinking and activity, at least as it was perceived from the United Nations and the international organizations, why was this so controversial?

Very briefly I put it in four, three D's and an E - religion was seen as divisive, self serving, political, dangerous for development and contrary to development purposes, particularly on gender and reproductive health rights, and third, the basic notion that it was basically defunct. In other words, that religion would become less important. I add an E which interestingly parallels the fact that I have also been on the cusp of thinking about gender issues over the years, that people used to, to my mind actually still do, often approach issues of gender not with their brains, but with other parts of their systems, very emotionally. It is very difficult to have a rational discussion about gender issues, and I was interested to find that with religion it was very much the same phenomenon. Having a thoughtful discussion about what religions roles are, what it is, proved to be extraordinarily difficult. People are very influenced by what they believe, not what others believe, by their own prejudices, positive and negative, which has colored the discussion. So that is, in a sense, why for the past twelve years my focus has been development and religion. I moved about four years ago from the World Bank. I am still an advisor to the World Bank, but sadly the current leadership is singularly uninterested in these issues. There is less controversy now, but much less engagement at any practical level. I am now based in Georgetown in a Center called the Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and also run the World Faiths Development Dialogue, which is now an NGO based in the United States.

So what am I doing here? Briefly, Mark and I discovered the Orfalea Center, we were doing very similar work, or parallel work, also supported by the Luce Foundation. At the Berkeley Center, where we also have a grant, we essentially have two major projects: one, is what we call a mapping of faith-inspired organizations, and faith-inspired work which has covered most regions of the world and we are currently actively engaged in looking at South Asia. We are hoping to have a workshop not too dissimilar from this one in December, probably in Bangladesh. I came here to learn and also to try to have as much synergy as we can. Our most recent meeting was in Phnom Penh last December on Southeast Asia. We have reports, all of them on the web site, but I brought at least the report of the meeting that we had which is available for anyone who is interested. We also have taken an issues-based focus, we started really with health, like HIV-aids, malaria, and we have just finished a report on tuberculosis. We also looked at gender issues, shelter, and corruption, which we see as a major issue. We're working now, and it gets a little hazy as to relationships, but we're working at the request of the Gates Foundation on Agriculture and Religion. Just to give you an illustration, a couple of you mentioned issues on agriculture, but one that we are delving into a bit is the issue of GMO's and the role that religious organizations have and might play in that. Our approach is similar - we've also concluded that having people write papers is not necessarily the best way to get a thoughtful discussion going. What we do though, and I have an ulterior motive in mentioning this, is intensive interviews with people and most of them, about a 150 of them I think, are on the Berkeley Center web site, and they include Ela Bhatt, Swami Agnivesh, and some others who might be relevant here. In other words, we talk

for an hour or two to people, write it up, agree with them on a text, and then have those as a basis for hopefully going beyond speeches into an immediate conversation, into practicalities. We haven't worked out exactly where we are going to have our meeting, but we have the potential of working with the Aga Khan network or the Bangladesh Rural Academy.

Just to mention a few issues: these are an extraordinary and wonderful set of issues and I share many of the questions and concerns about why there is this gulf between civil society and faith-inspired organizations. We call them faith-inspired organizations to try to bring in some of the movements and some of the organizations that don't consider themselves FBO's in the rather rigid definition. Just to add one other illustration, I went to a meeting last week by Sir Abbott of BRAC. I have talked to him before and it was quite interesting. Bangladesh is an extraordinary laboratory for organizations, but when I asked him a couple of years ago how he dealt with religion, his answer was, "As little as possible". There's a relatively new book on social entrepreneurship, which is a big thing, but it is quite fascinating that social entrepreneurship is sort of a civil society area; there is almost no religion in it, even though the word "faith" appears often. There is really a tension, a perceived tension, between the sort of social entrepreneurship and some of the new social movements and religion, which I think that we might be able to play a role in bridging.

Very briefly, here are some of the issues that we are specifically concerned with when looking at South Asia. We are doing a background review and the issue of gender is a natural. It is, to my mind, the major reason for the gulf between religion and secular development, the lack of an engagement and of a thoughtful discussion. Women's roles are so important and they are very difficult to deal with. That brings me to two projects we are working on: one is on Women, Religion and Peace, which we are doing with the United States Institute of Peace on Women's roles; because often when you have peace, religion isn't there, and even if you bring religion there, the women are not there, it is all men's faces. So, what is happening? We had a fascinating meeting on that in July. There is a new initiative, which is quite interesting, on child marriage, where I am seeking ideas. The Elders, the group that was started by Nelson Mandela, with others, is interested in that, and I am an advisor on that, so I am very interested in that issue. We are interested in conflict and we are very interested in education. We are very conscious of the huge amount of work that has been done in this area and would like to tap into it. Some that I know, and that many of you might have been associated with, is one of the early founders of the World Faith Development Dialogue, Kamala Chowdhry, and one of her keen interests was to understand better what she called "the movements". She did some research with Ford Foundation Fund on some of the particularly South Asian movements, which she saw as an understudied, under-understood, and under-appreciated phenomenon, something that touches very much on what you all are talking about. Swami Agnivesh has also been an important part of our thinking as has Rajmohan Gandhi, and some of the work of the initiatives of change. T P Radhakrishnan has been very much involved in both efforts to deal with HIV Aids and with corruption issues. Finally, I had the privilege of working quite a bit - because I am on the Niwano Peace Foundation, which is an award, and Ela Bhatt was awarded this year - and so we had quite a bit of exchange with Ela Bhatt, interestingly on these questions on what is peace, and where does religion figure in something that is a profoundly political movement.

[T. N. Madan] Well, thank you! I am T. N. Madan, student of Sociology and Cultural Anthropology. For the last 40 years I have been associated with the Institute of Economic Growth as a Professor

of Sociology. I also had intimate connections with the Center for the Study of Developing Societies, where they call me a Distinguished Fellow, although I do not know what that means. For about the last 20 years, I have been cultivating the field of Sociology of Religion, which in the original sociological tradition, which is European of course, means secularization. It means the end of religion in the Marxian reading of European History. It means *agonizing* or the end of religion in the Weberian reading of European History, and it means the last ditch hope of Durkheimian - something *will* take over the role of religion. The point is that in the Western sociological tradition, the term "Sociology of Religion" is really about secularization, as Jit mentioned a little while ago. Jit might remember I was taken to task, I have been for twenty years, for saying that secularism is a gift of Christianity. The Secularists in my country consider that an abusive statement. All the founders of the sociology tradition spoke about religion in the past tense; the role *played* by religion, of course, the role played by religion in pre-modern societies, where there is nothing but religion. Jit, you said something about societies, which don't have religion...that is a bit problematic, societies that don't have a state, yes. Anyway, today there is a paradigm shift in the Sociology of Religion, and people in the West, people in England, people in Western Europe, are talking about the "exceptionalism of Western Europe". The paradigm shift today is not to explain the presence of religion in societies around the world, but the absence of religion. That is a paradigm shift. Peter Berger, who trained to work for the church, and then later wrote those absolutely stunning pieces on secularization, now says the world is as furiously religious as it ever was. That's a kind of background to my work on secularization.

The second point I would like to make is - I was taking down some notes while you all were speaking - the second point I would like to make is, I think with the exception of Rowena Robinson, nobody used the expression "comparative religion". I think that is crucial; we don't understand any religious tradition if we study it by itself or if we study religious traditions piecemeal. I think the whole idea of understanding the role of religion is to study it comparatively, through the comparative method. I was very interested, as a sign of the times, in what our colleague from IIT Kanpur said when her friends found she was studying Islam as well as Hinduism - they thought it was an intellectually tight position. It is rather an opening, not a tightening, of the intellectual position on religions.

The next point I would briefly like to comment on, and I do not want to re-write your agenda, but "South Asian perspective"? Why are you stuck with institutions, why don't you broaden it? Of course, going back to the Rama Krishna mission, going back to Arya Samaj, going back to Christian missionary activities in India, yes, institutions have played a very significant role in the last hundred and more years. But I think the South Asian perspective might lie, *the riches* of the South Asian perspective may be discovered in the religious attitudes and values which are not institutionalized. Take, for instance, the Chipko movement, an environmental protection movement. I can give many examples. Of course, religious institutions take on new functions. Shrivatsa Goswami, Sri Chaityana Prema Samsthana in Vrindivan, had talked about Akbar, although I wished he had talked more about himself and what they do for the protection of the river Yamuna, the cleaning up of the river bed and river bank. Religious institutions are taking an enormous interest, but at the same time, talking about the religious values. The great contrast I find, with regards to the environment, is that all traditional religious traditions look upon nature as sacred. It's a modern tradition, whether in its original location or in its transplantation around the world, which looks upon the environment as a resource – the de-sanctification of nature.

One more point, Mark spoke about positive or negative, and this point has already been taken up, but, *it is* positive and negative, our colleague from Pakistan talked of use *and* abuse, it's not a question of this or that. I have always been struck by the interesting coincidence in 1979 you had the Iranian Revolution, as was pointed out, with its spirit of revenge; you had the solidarity movement in Poland, the Catholic Church in association with the solidarity movement bringing down the communist state; you had the Liberation Theology, as it was mentioned, all happening around 1970-1979. So, I have a feeling that it is both, it's this way *and* that way, not this way *or* that way, which takes me to the last point I want to make, on religious violence. We have to acknowledge that within religious traditions there is place for violence in the name of religion. What is *dharmayuddha* in the Hindu tradition and the Sikh tradition? In the Brahmanical tradition, the idea is the destruction of the evil-doer. *Vinashaya cha dushkritam*, those who do evil - its exactly the same idea in the Koran - God will punish the evil-doers, and God enjoins upon the believer to go to war. It will not do to say that within the Koran there is not such an idea, whether there is the greater *jihad*, of self-improvement. But there is religious obligation in all religious traditions. It may manifest itself through conversions. I would like to make a distinction between violence sanctioned by religion, which I guess is one kettle of fish, and political violence, which *invokes* the sanction of religion and other things. What al-Qaeda and Taliban is doing, for instance, or what, Hindu, Christians, and other groups are doing, is a different thing from the idea of removing the evil doers. I think we need to look at this more closely, I think there is a distinction. This reminds me of a distinction which the French anthropologist Louis Dumont once made. He said that religion was a means of self-understanding, "who I am", and religion was a means of distinguishing ones identity - "who I am not" and who the "other fellow" is. He said, when religion becomes a sign of distinction between political groups, it becomes a shadow of itself. I have this feeling that if we have to confront the idea of religious violence, we have to look at it in both respects, in both aspects, that they are within religious traditions. It will not do to say that all religions are peace loving. There are both elements in every religion. Somebody talked about what makes religions available for manipulation, that should also be looked into. A final footnote - Dharmmananda Kosambi was a Gandhian and he starved himself to death, because he said India has become free and I have nothing more to do. Gandhi tried to persuade him not to do so, but he successfully starved himself to death. Thank you.

[Mark Juergensmeyer] Let me just say one or two words before we take the break, because I didn't really introduce myself in terms of interest if this topic. It's true, I have written on religious violence and the rise of religious nationalism, and I am happy to talk about that today if you like, but, I would like to do so in context, because the focus of this project is somewhat different. The people who are involved in religious violence and who are leaders of movements of religious politics that we hear so much about in the contemporary time – just take a look at the headlines - but I want to look beyond the headlines to the timelines, to see what larger changes and transformations are occurring within society. There I think the story might be somewhat different.

Just a couple years ago there was this animated concern in the West over the rise of the BJP. We were convinced that India was going in the way of Ayatollahs and Iran, and now, of course, that the BJP has been voted out office, things look quite different. Now we're convinced that Pakistan is about to fall to an Islamic Revolution, and yet, in the last election the Islamic parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami, I think, received only about 4% of the vote. So, I do not want to fixate on

the headlines and miss the timelines. When we come back after the break, maybe we can focus on what is one of the first questions of our conversation: what is going on within the religious politics, the religious societies of the countries of South Asia? Are there some dramatic and substantial changes? Is there a kind of politicization of religion or is this simply a matter of headlines and not of the timelines?

[Hilal Elver] The first question we are starting with: What transformative role have religious institutions played in civil society?

[T. N. Madan] Very briefly, I thought that there's a long history in this country, by long I mean in the modern period, more than a hundred years, about religious based institutions having played a very significant role in modern education. Apart from the Christian missions there are movements which have become institutionalized like the Arya Samaj, but I want to draw particular attention to sectarian movements. There is for instance, a sectarian movement which has blossomed into a full-fledged religion in South India: Virasaivism, the community called the Lingayats. Now, what I want to point out is not specific, it must be a general problem, that whereas these are strictly faith-based institutions, the monasteries, the *maths* as we call them, of the Lingayats have definitive discriminatory policies with regard to accommodation of students, with regard to financial aid to students, and with regards to the recruitment of faculty. They favor their own community, but the interesting thing is, what is the kind of education they provide? The educational institutions that they run are medical colleges, providing modern medical education programs, providing modern education in technology, and engineering. The question that arises here to me seems worth considering, because a faith-based organization has certain preferences, certain patterns of preferential treatment of its own community in certain respects; how do you fit this into the larger picture, where the people that they turn out of this education institution are neurosurgeons or nuclear-scientists? What does it deliver? What is the puzzle? Is there any puzzle at all? Are we too trapped in a dichotomous way of thinking, that a faith-based organization cannot be modern? That's a question I am posing.

[Rounaq Jahan:] I have been debating about this question which talks about transformative role, but what is the meaning of *transformation*? Also then we talk about religious institutions, but what would fall under *institutions* here? Again, as I said, I have not really looked at or have done much research on religious institutions, so I feel that I am a little bit at a disadvantage. But just as somebody who is a general observer of social transformation, for instance in Bangladesh over the last thirty years or thirty-six years, certain things one does notice in terms of social change or social transformations and the role of women, for instance, would be one major indicator of transformation. I really cannot think of much of a role of religious institutions in terms of bringing about social transformation, in terms of women's empowerment in Bangladesh. Most of the work in the 1970's and 80's have been done by non-religious civil societies groups, and in fact, in certain periods, some of the mosques or *madrasahs* have been regarded as obstacles to women's empowerment. In recent years, of course - and they were not really playing that much of a role, the *madrasahs* and mosques have always been there in our country. But I don't know, I have not studied it. What positive role *have* they played over the years, even before the non-religious NGOs came, in terms of women's empowerment? The non-religious institutions did come and played a major role in terms of transformation of women's empowerment. Over the last ten to fifteen years, what is happening is that there has been a tremendous spread of *madrasah*

education, for instance, there has been funding that has come from the Middle East. Also, there have been all these remittances that are coming - well, I do not want to get too much into this debate - but there were the traditional *madrasahs*, the *aliyah madrasahs*, and there have been these *qawmi madrasahs*, the non-formal *madrasahs* which are not under any control. This role of the *madrasahs* has become very contested as well as some of the new set of philanthropic Islamic organizations that have propped up only over the last fifteen years or so with outside money. So, if we were to just talk about the transformative role in civil society, then there have been examples that I can cite over the last three or four decades, which are from non-religious groups, particularly from Bangladesh. I think that some of the religious organizations roles are looked upon and regarded as a suspicious thing.

[Lingam Raja] With regards to this role of the religious institutions in playing or serving civil society, I would say it is a big "Yes". I have just listed some of the religious institutions, only a few, but there are many, the list goes on and on. When the tsunami took place, at that time the Mata Amritanandamayi, a religious institution, had come forward and they had done wonderful work in tsunami affected areas, in Kanyakumari, in Nagapattinam, and wherever it was. This was the place where they had done wonderful service to the civil society. They brought money, they constructed houses for them, and gave them livelihoods - these are the things that they have done.

Number two, do you know the **Bajrang Dal**? It is a movement that goes on now in Tamil Nadu particularly, but it goes on all over the world in a major and massive way. They have established *maths and* prayer center in almost all the villages. And they come, they keep on coming, and even the government of India has provided a train for them to come to celebrate and to worship there in their place, that is near to Chennai, Chengalpattu. **Bajrang Dal** has established this institutions twenty years ago, they have been on the ground and they are doing wonderful service, like the Ramakrishna mission, who we all know have been rendering service right from the beginning to society. Then the Aurobindo Society and the All India Ayyappa Seva Sangam, they too are doing service to the society by establishing spiritual transformation. Also the Hare Krishna movement, as you know, and the Arya Samaj, as our friend has already pointed out. The Brahma Kumaris have also established institutions and centers in all parts of the world as well as the rural areas, and now they have started a people's movement. They have been changing the minds of the people, in regards to violent behavior and belief in God, in order to be in tune with nature. I think I will stop for now and later on I'll explain more, if there is anything to explain. Thank you very much for the time being.

[T. N. Madan]: Is Rounaq suggesting some kind of essentialist position? That by their very nature, faith-based organizations must be exclusive and conservative and whatever, and that they cannot be agents of social transformation? Is something essentialist being suggested there? I would point out, in my earlier point, I tried to make a distinction in the South Asian context between the narrowly focused institutions and broad movements, after all a tremendous social transformation occurred in medieval India, the inspiration of which was devotional religion. Do we turn our back on that? Regarding the intervention just made, I think we need to make a distinction between service and transformation. There are lots of religious organizations, which may be engaged in... like with the tsunami, they went and they helped. But the larger purpose of transforming society, is it intentional or unintentional? The medical colleges in Karnataka which are turning out Lingayat

neurosurgeons, is it intentional? I do not know.

[Rounaq Jahan] I was not suggesting an essentialist position, that by nature religious institutions cannot perform a transformative role. I also mentioned I am not a student of religion, but from my life experience of observing social transformation in Bangladesh, particularly in terms of women's empowerment, unfortunately I cannot think of an example where the religious institutions have played a positive role. I wish they did.

[I. A. Rehman] Thank you very much. In terms of the Pakistan experience, it is very difficult to define which are the religious institutions. First of all, the State itself is a religious institution, because Islam is the State Religion in Pakistan. As a result of that, it has introduced religious teachings in schools and colleges and universities, to the extent that if a student candidate for admission to a medical College secures 95% marks in medical related subjects, but fails in *islamiat*, he cannot get admission into medical college. So, the State as a religious institution has increased polarization in civil society also. The second religious institution is the Judiciary, which are the Sharia courts. Then we have the Sharia highest courts, the appellate court which declares land reform in Islamic, and there is a long twenty year old case pending because it banned all interest based laws, so insurance and banking are all under attack. This again has divided civil society. The third religious institutions are political parties, and now we have religion-based political parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. Now Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam is an offshoot of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, but Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan is entirely different, from Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam takes the credit for producing the Taliban, which occupied Afghanistan. They were trained in their *madrasahs*.

Apart from political parties, the main vestige of religious institutions is in the education sector. Before independence we had religious institutions that established colleges and schools like **Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam** and **Jamaat-e-Islami** of Amritsar who gave us very prestigious colleges. But after independence, this education sector has been taken over by *madrasahs*. The *madrasahs* have a structure which is different from the pre-partition *madrasahs*. Under General Zia-ul-Haq the State stopped building universities, and only built religious seminaries. So now we have religious seminaries, which have more students than the universities. Now in this there is a strange fact, that the Deobandis, who are a minority sect, have more *madrasahs* than the Barelvis, who are the majority sect. So there is the problem. And these *madrasahs* do not teach modern subjects, some of them are trying to teach mathematics and science, but 95% teach only theological subjects. There is one religious institution, which our friend from IIT mentioned, and this is Tablighi Jamaat. It is a non-political, non-violent, non-militant organization which has influenced civil society, in terms of motivating them to do humanitarian work, social service, and coming to the aid of people in distress, but at the same time we have another version which is militant, which is the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, which also has a militant wing and they also do excellent relief work. In fact, they are ahead of government and other agencies when coming to the rescue of the people, but they have a political and military angle. I think that the whole cumulative effect of these religious-based institutions has been somewhat negative although there are some positive stands also.

[Anindita Chakrabarti]: I just want to make two or three interconnected points. The appeal is that we have to go beyond empirical cases and put all this data into some framework, and the framework necessarily has to be comparative, not only across religion, but to see the role of

religion across time and place. In the nineteenth century, when social reform, religious reform and political reform was being carried on by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the father of modern India, and Gandhiji, the father of the Nation, that would not have raised an eyebrow. But, later on the local standing of religion has been lost, whatever might be the reason, maybe we were sold out to the death of religion theory, we got overcommitted to it. We should look at it from a comparative perspective and also look at the relation of religion with the state, which in the last presentation you had brought out, that religion is not in a vacuum, it is in relationship, often as the pre-cursor of civil society movements. There is work on the dissenting sects in England who were against the church of England, and they said that we have *our own* interpretation of Christianity, of the Church, and they were eventually persecuted. It is in those movements that the plurality of conscience, that theory, was put forward, and it played a major role in civil society movements. We should not forget these interlinks and histories and get tangled in very specific cases. The question is therefore the transformative role of religion, as E. P. Thompson says, the transformative role of the Cross. But what transforms the Cross? I think this is a very interesting and relevant question, what is it that transforms the Cross itself? This clue we get when we open the can of religion, we see it as a box of religious movements and sects, and there is a lot of turmoil and churning that is taking place there. We need to take those seriously. The term sectarian itself is a negative term, because the sectarians are given that negative term by the Church. Whenever you protest against the Church, you are a sectarian, and therefore sectarian is bad and the contemporary media talks about sectarianism as a negative term. But in the sociology of religion we take it far more seriously and we really need to engage that.

[Manindra Thakur]: I think it would be helpful if we look at these religious movements in different categories. Broadly speaking there are three kinds of movements, the fundamentalist religious movements, of which RSS could be one kind of organization. Then you have new religious movements and you have radical religious movements. I'll just take the new religious movements at the moment, and I think there are five kinds of movements going on in India, and they have different kinds of roles to play. One is the philosophy based new religious movement; I see Rajneesh ashrams in this and also Krishnamurti Foundations in this, where the major intervention is at the level of philosophy. I have empirically found that Rajneesh's books are still best sellers in the small cities, the railway stations. A number of new ashrams are being built up...

[T.N. Madan]: Is it because of the freedom he views in the area of sex?

[Manindra Thakur]: I think that was the initial thing that resonated, but now they have really transcended that, and I can see in JNU not less than fifty students hearing him almost everyday and around 8GB of Rajneesh's lectures are being circulated on the computer. What he does, is actually to try and deliver a series of lectures on various kinds of Indian texts. I would become aware of many of the texts only through Rajneesh, like the *Ashtavakra Gita*, which is a fantastic text and philosophy, which most don't even know. Then I discovered that the *Ashtavakra Gita* is one of the best sellers in the railway stations in the heartland areas! So, possibly, this is one kind of movement. There are also a number of organizations coming up in the Punjab regions where I visited, where people are coming and staying in those organizations and hearing lectures on, and by, Rajneesh. Krishnamurti is, of course, among more sophisticated people, but Rajneesh is much more popular among the common masses it seems.

The second kind is a *bhakti* movement, the ISKCON kind of movement. I did some field work on this ISKCON temple here and I discovered that it has transformed into a transnational

management oriented religious organization. You have IIT graduates appointed there, you have IM graduates appointed there, and they are actually working on corporate socially responsibility funds. In fact, they are eating up a lot of corporate social responsibility funds. I do not know whether I should say “eating up” or not, but they are claiming that everyday they are feeding around three million children all over the world. To mobilize the money, they have appointed highly paid professionals for themselves. So this is another kind of movement.

The third is Yoga and the knowledge-based movements, such as Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Ramdev, where they are using the traditional knowledge system to help the people at large. But what is interesting is that if you look at the BBC website Mahesh Yogi, when he was alive, he threatened Britain that he would withdraw all his Transcendental Meditation centers from London. There was a big debate on BBC website, and he was requested by the Prime Minister that he should not do that!. Also there is our Shri Shri Ravi Shankar. Another interesting dimension on that is, both Ravi Shankar and Maheshi Yogi were students of quantum physics. There is some relationship between that, and there are organizations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi which suggest that it is basically a science-based movement. So this is a knowledge-based movement, and there was one candidate who was a scientist of quantum physics who filed a nomination for presidential candidature in the US who belongs to this organization.

The fourth kind of movement is the *interpersonal relational* movement, which is Asaram Bapu and Morari Bapu who talk about the crisis that Indian society is facing at the moment with relations between families and all. And the fifth kind of movement, which is a very interesting kind of movement though not widely known, is a "social relational" movement. I just mentioned Dera movement in Punjab as one kind, but one of the movements which I find very fascinating - and is which there is no news in the newspaper, because I met the guru of that movement and he said that they deliberately have avoided all kind of exposures in the media – and that is called the Shiv Guru movement. The Shiv Guru movement claims, and probably it is right because I have done some work with them, that everyday around three to four lakh people meet for two hours in different parts of the country. Every day. So, it is like Tablighi Jamaat, you have series of meetings and circles and all. So, these are different kinds of movements. If we look at them differently, the way they are trying to influence civil society, probably that would make more sense.

[Bidyut Mohanty] In regards to Dr. Ramdev, there may be some politics in that, but one good thing he has done is to bring women to a public place in terms of traditional knowledge. I remember when I tried to do yoga in the park before and I was banned. Everybody looked at me and said, “this lady, this woman, is trying to do yoga in the park!” But now nobody cares, they just go to a public place and do it. That much he has done. Secondly, these living traditions I have been talking about - I have talked about Lakshmi, and caste barriers. The other one is the selling of infants to Muslim gurus, when there is a threat that the infant won't live. I mean, that is really communal harmony, and they always sell the infant and buy him or her back. And generally the name for him is *fakir*, and you know *fakir* is the name of a Muslim guru. So these living traditions are still prevalent in rural India and we must capture those before they die. Thank you.

[Rowena Robinson] I just had a small point to make also about differentiating different kinds of movements, and possible relationships between religious structures or groups, and civil society and what is not civil society, that is, perhaps, the State. I was wondering if we could think about

movements and religious organizations or associations that are explicitly political and radical and want to engage directly with the State, or perhaps even take over some of the functions of the State. Some religious institutions or groups want to engage with civil society, in the sense that they don't see a divide between themselves and civil society. Perhaps the Tablighi is a little bit like that in that it seeks to spread religious values throughout society and create a way of life. A third distinction, a third type, would be religious institutions that do see a divide between themselves, or religion per-se, and civil society or anything outside of religion. They do take upon this attitude that religion is private, but they also have a transformative role to play in that they change individual lives, and maybe group lives, and that becomes a slow gradual process of social transformation. So, I was wondering if, when we think about these different categories, we then think both about religious ideas and modes of thought and the different social context within which these different religious ideas concretize themselves in these different modes that I have talked about. Thank you.

[Anindita Chakrabarti]: I have a very small point, because RSS was mentioned and also she elaborated on some of these distinctions that need to be made. When I interviewed RSS activists and leaders in Gujarat, this was in Kathiawar, they got very upset when I said it's a religious movement. They said: "Who told you so? You can be an Atheist and you can still be an RSS, you can be a Muslim. You have to believe in *Hindutva* and *Hindutva* is not Hinduism". So we should ask how the movement defines their agenda, what are the kind of charters of reform they have? So, RSS really doesn't believe that it has a kind of charter to mend things for Hindus, it has a mission to fix, something which is outside, you know, be it politics, be it Muslims or whatever they think needs to be fixed. So, I think it requires that kind of an understanding, how they themselves define, and how others are also defining them.

[Hilal Elver]: I wanted to take a little time to talk about this issue a little bit from the Muslim perspective. It is also important to look at the religious institutions as a diaspora religion, and also religions in the country. For instance, my country is very secular, and we do not have any kind of right given to religious institutions to work as a social provider. They can't do education, they can't do any kind of public work, these all belong to the State. But if you look at the religious institutions outside of the countries like Turkey, for instance, theirs is a very important institution. They are very active outside of Turkey and they are openly promoting education and they have established a kind of networking around the world. In Turkey, this institution is looked very suspiciously, because they think that this institution has a political interest. They can't work in Turkey, but they can work outside. The Gülen movement, that's a very problematic part of the transnational religious institution in that they do very strong social kind of work, in public work, but at the same time, in their own country, it is illegal. Another thing I totally agree with you is that religious institutions in Muslim countries are rather reluctant to give more voice to women. That's very definite. It is not essentialism, it's a true thing. But if you look at the United States, the role of the mosques are extremely interesting, because the role of the mosques are very positive in terms of women's rights, and women's empowerment. In a recent book by Yvonne Haddad, *Muslims of America*, she basically looked at gender issues in the United States. What she found is that gender identity, Muslim woman identity, in the United States was very much empowered by the mosques. In no other Muslim country can the mosque play this role. This is a very important kind of distinction, how diasporic institutions could play a different role outside of their own countries.

Maybe Hinduism has the same thing happen in the United States, in that they have a different role than in India.

[John Chathanatt]: My interest is to give a little theoretical clarity. When we say transformation, and it's been already pointed out, that means transformation of the individual, the self, and also transformation of the society. Usually, how does a social movement start or a religious institution start? Looking at the positive side of it, it is the foundational experience of individuals that creates a movement. You look at examples like Mother Teresa, who is one person that comes to mind immediately. There are the foundational experiences of the person, looking at, interacting with, the society, and this starts the movement. That means instead of looking at the social movement as the product, first we have to look at the transformation of the individual. This was the strength of Gandhi. I don't think Gandhi was understood in this regard, he is probably the most misunderstood person. There has to be a transformation of the self, and when we talk of transformation we have to look at the transformation at three different levels: The attitudinal transformation, the behavioral transformation and the cognitional transformation. That means in my understanding, how do I understand the other? How do I understand myself? For example, when we look at religion, I see the influence here. Religion answers foundational questions, and goes back to the foundations of reality, which even philosophy cannot answer. For example, why should I love someone? Who am I? Who is the other in relation to me? All these answers philosophy will not give us. Where do we go to get the foundational answers to the question such as, why should I be just? Why should I serve somebody? Why should I redeem somebody? Probably there is the strength of religion there, which the other sciences need not. So, it is here that the transformative element of the religion will come and work on the individual; the individual working in the society in interaction, experiencing this foundational deeper experience, and then they start a movement. Probably that is the same logic of the actions if we look at the Christian traditions, the religious congregations starting with the founders so on, you can see examples of that. The same thing we can see with the Arya Samaj, Vivekananda, and so on. It is somehow an individual having this different cognitional understanding that changes the attitude, and that changes the behavior, and then that is translated into the society, and then a movement starts around the person. Usually I think that is the way the dynamics change. And then, I think this kind of foundational questions need to be looked at before we look at the religious institutions, and to the transformative element of the institutions. Something comes before that.

[Lingam Raja:] I am very grateful to our friend from JNU who was able to categorize the religious movement into five categories. Our friend also stated the Mother Teresa Society and how they are doing wonderful service. When we look at religious institutions when they do service for society, they don't have a hidden agenda. Some of them they do, as he rightly pointed out, fundamental religious people often do. But nowadays religious institutions, like the Puttaparthi Sathya Sai Baba, talks about only religion. But the service that they do, the social aspect, the economic aspect, the educational aspect, the health aspect, in all aspects that they do there is dynamism. The social dynamism comes out of the service motive, it is not on the base of anything in their mind. The social transformation takes place. For example, the Bajrang Dal, a religious institution based on Hinduism, they brought women into the manifold, the women conduct the *pooja* and all. You'll see that 99% of the women go to his place. When I talk about Ayyappa religion, they are mostly for men, but *here* the womenfolk come and take part and there is a great deal of change in society from that aspect, socially, psychologically, not politically, but in that aspect.

[Richard Falk]: Two very brief and inter-related points, I think we observed in the experience of the last century or so, a very regressive political atmosphere with regards to human rights. Either if the State seeks to exclude religion, as was the case in the Soviet Union, or seeks to impose religion, as is the case of contemporary Iran. In either of those extreme circumstances, one finds the role of religion to be very suppressive toward the potential creativity of civil society. From that I derive the understanding that each society, each political community, needs to discover the creative tension between religion and political order. There needs to be a creative tension that gives space both to religious pluralism and to political pluralism, and only in that kind of atmosphere can the transformative role of religion perform constructively.

[Ravi Bhatia:] I just want to point out one aspect of religion, and that is the feeding of the poor, feeding the hungry people. Most religions in India, whether it is the Christian faith, or Islam, or Sikhism, or Hindu, they feed and alleviate hunger in the country. To a substantial extent, they feed not only the poor but anyone who goes there. But generally it is the poor who come, those who may not have access to regular two meals, they can come. I think this is a very positive role that religion is playing to alleviate hunger. Thank you.

[Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya] Just an observation from what I heard when we were talking about transformation. The agendas are definitely very important, like women's empowerment or feeding the hungry, but what even becomes more important is the kind of ideology that is being generated, what the institutions are come out of these kinds of transformative movements, and what the ideology is when they are feeding the hungry or empowering women. Do they see it as a social transformation? What is the new thing they are saying? I mean, is there something that is not there in the civil society? Or are these religious institutions trying to take up what is there in civil society and make it part of their own agenda? I think what you talked about, these mosques in America being more into women's empowerment than in the Middle East, that is because being in America they cannot actually overlook the whole factor about women's empowerment or the liberal society where they are operating. Of course, now the veil problem has come in, but they have to operate in and take up those agendas which are there in the civil society and put them in much more religious terms. I've also seen this in Buddhist institutions, you have this whole *engaged Buddhist* movements all over Asia, and they take up things like peace movements, war, anti-war, anti-nuclear, but this is also in the agenda which exists, even if you are religious or non-religious, you have these basic problems which is facing humanity. So, are they generating a kind of alternative ideology? Or are they just becoming important because they support the ideology that already exists in the civil society?

The other thing I would like to ask is in terms of the institutions that come. What are the alternatives? Most of the time if I am creating homes for the children, orphanages, or educational institutes or universities, they want to go for approval for the UGC, and become a deemed university, become a part of a bigger university curriculum. When I say university, I mean recognition, but this comes from the government. So, are they actually generating any form of alternate institutions, which we can actually say yes this is what a faith-based institution is, but is it very different from the secular institutions that we have? So, these are the two points actually, when we talk of transformation, faith-based transformation is something that we need to actually look at.

[J.P.S. Uberoi:] Instead of institutions, I am reading here, "movements", that is the point. I want to say in response to T. Loki Madan, and also to Anindita, that religion has its own definition of society, and it starts with the definition of a congregation. This concept is being developed in India, more by Buddhism and Islam, and not so much by Hinduism, that's my reading. But if you look at the religious reform movements of the last hundred and fifty or two hundred years in India, every one of these movements, whether it is Hindu or Muslim, they have the word "society" in their self-understanding. For example, the RSS, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, the term *sangh* is part of their name. And then, of course, the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj, and then in Sikhism the chief Khalsa Diwan, where *diwan* is also a notion of society in India. This has infected even the Theosophical Society, it calls itself Theosophical *Society*. I mean why is it such? They all have this. And of course, in Islam, *ja-ma'-a* is there in all these terms. *Jum'a* is for Friday for congregation, *jameh* for the mosque where you congregate, and then Tablighi Jamaat, all these, have this word "society" there. That tells us something, that it's not that they are contributing to society but they have their own idea of society. Now sometimes this idea is quite ridiculous, any idea can be made ridiculous, or pathological, depending on the circumstances. But the idea itself is there in all these movements, and it is to be taken seriously in my opinion. What they do is actually opposed to tradition. The largest Muslim reformist movement in India is not Tablighi Jamaat, of course, Anindita knows that, but it is rather in Uttar Pradesh, the Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat. *Sunnat* is tradition, and *jamaat* is society, so they call themselves the society of tradition, and they are opposing society and tradition. They actually are asking, which one is the real instrument of self-realization? Is it tradition, which is the orthodox position, or is it the congregation, which is the reform position? I look upon the Sufi movement like that. In Hinduism, there is a contrast, of course, between caste and sect. If we look not at church and sect, like European sociology has, but at caste versus sect, then you can see that caste upholds tradition, not society. It upholds birth, it upholds what is passed down, it upholds the authority of tradition, and it upholds also hierarchy, of course, and exclusiveness. But, in the same Hinduism, we have sects, and for all the sects birth is not important, what is important is *dikṣa*. What is important in this? Re-birth, to be born again. In America, there are also lots of Christian sects who call themselves born-again Christians. That is really what is important; *religion is not dependant by birth, but by rebirth*, and for re-birth, you are not determined by birth, you can have husband and wife with different sects, just like in India husbands and wives vote for different political parties, brothers and sisters can vote for different political parties and can have different gurus, and similarly, with two brothers or whatever it is. In the beginning, these sects promise individual self-realization. That is what you are calling knowledge and philosophy. There are various stages, and some of the classifications that you mentioned, actually makes a cycle.

[Acharya Shrivatsa Goswami]: I would just like to echo that the religious institutions, and the religious groups running different kinds of institutions, and what I mean by that is that religious institutions are doing business. Education is a big business, health care is a big business, and different **XXX**, like the ISCKON movement. They are in a huge business and people do not realize, they think it's a charity, it's not a charity! What they have smartly done, is that the government of India had a mid-day meal program and the district administration had totally collapsed in providing that. So they experimented, we take the money of the exchequer and we provide the service, and get a good cut of it. So this *Akshaya Patra* has become a billion rupees and more enterprise, and is a profit running organization. So it's a business, although you might

say that it is alleviating hunger and things like that, but it is essentially a business organization. But religious institutions, like exclusive seminaries, *madrasahs*, temples, *gurdwaras*, if we focus on them and then see what is the transformational role they are playing in society, then I think that, as many of us have already said, we have to look at the person which constitutes the society.

Afternoon Session

[Hilal Elver]: Good afternoon! We would like to start our afternoon session which will be a short one. But what we will do is put together two questions: *do religious institutions play a positive role in supporting humanitarian activities?* The other one is: *how does the changing political climate influence the work of faith-based organizations?* Speakers are free to take any of the two questions, or two of them together, which might be more effective in organizing our time.

[Rowena Robinson]: I think we can actually take the two questions together. At least I will do so through the example I want to talk about, which is the provision of welfare and human security in the aftermath of ethnic violence. This is something that a lot of people have been concerned with and the issue had been raised in the morning itself. In the aftermath, for instance, of the violence in Gujarat there was a great deal of interactions between Muslim non-state actors, religious actors, and the Indian State and non-governmental organizations, in the context of not only protecting property and lives, but also in increasing the sense of confidence and trust of Muslims in both civil society as well as in the State. But what we find under such conditions is that, one, there are also subcultures, for instance, of women or of individuals or groups who do not want to define themselves in religious terms, within the targeted community, for instance, among Muslims. When it comes to the question of the protection of their rights or their welfare, you have conflict, both between them and the community leaders, and those who are engaged in providing this welfare. You find that this conflict may also include conflict with non-governmental organizations and the State because the interests actually go against each other. This is affected also in a changing political climate. It is precisely because of the political climate in Gujarat and other parts of India, before and after the violence in 2002, that the Muslims had to depend, to a very large extent, on their own Muslims organizations to provide relief and humanitarian aid. The provision of this aid from secular, so to speak, organizations within civil society was more limited, and the State interventions were also far more limited and were not trusted - more importantly, this intervention was not trusted by members of the Muslim community. So I think that rather than putting the question in terms of whether Muslim organizations play only a positive role or only a negative role, we should try to engage the issue like that - we should try to understand that a changing political climate as well as the fact that we have different sub-groups that are involved under such conditions. There will always be complicated outcomes of such interventions.

[Katherine Marshall]: I have simply two questions. The first question - it's quite striking in reading about the response to the floods in Pakistan that the narrative in the European and the US press is that the speed of response of Muslim organizations presents a danger. Of course, it reflects in part the complete failure of the State, but it is Muslims organizations that are seen as having affiliations with terrorists, etc. I would love to have a richer sense of what the story is and how far it is particularly *politically* motivated groups that are responding or if it is a Muslim charity. And, is it seen as that when you are sitting closer as a more nuanced situation? The second question is something I don't think we've mentioned very much, but it is the importance and

significance of inter-faith responses, in other words, groups actually working together for common purposes. The reason I'm asking the question is that in our workshop on Southeast Asia one of the themes that came out was what was seen as one of the remarkable successes of inter-faith in Aceh following the tsunami. It's a nuanced story, we're actually trying to write a little case study about it. It's a nuanced story because it's not necessarily the effectiveness of groups from outside working with the local religious leaders as much as the very diverse groups who managed somehow to find common ground, whether is Muhammadiyah, Salvation army, Catholic Relief Services, etc. - groups that were very different. Part of it seems to have been that it started in an atmosphere of crisis, where you had the issue of the orphans and their was the evangelical group that actually took a group of orphans to raise them as good little Christians, and that raised a storm of protest. So, my understanding is that the groups came up with a code of conduct that goes beyond some of the standard United Nations codes of conduct. I would be interested if there is a parallel in South Asia, whether in Sri Lanka or India, whether the tsunami or other catastrophes like this brought new kind of groups working new kinds of partnerships.

[Anindita Chakrabarti]: Some of the points that I will be talking about will be taking over from Dr. Robinson's earlier points. One is that when I looked at Tablighi Jamaat in Gujarat, I had found evidence that it was the local networks that were available through the Tablighi Jamaat that worked for restraining violence. This is a report I am getting not only from them, but also from independent journalists such as Aisha Khan who works with the Indian Express and who otherwise has very little sympathy with these kind of conservative movements. But they said this was the only network, that was available. They went out, they got the young people who would charge to retaliate, to bring them back into the mosque, and a lot of the narratives are about being in the masjid asking for *duaa*, in all those troubled days. I have seen this in other contexts as well, like in the earthquake which took place a year ago. The first people who could provide support there were also the Swaminarayans, which also has a very good network. So, it is the kind of work that is being done by religion during peacetime that makes it possible for them to reach out first. There are different kinds of situations at the local level. What is most interesting that emerged from the Tablighi Jamaat's work, which she has described, and the Gujarat Sarvajanic Relief Committee's work, which was one of the groups I have been to and was the face of the Tablighi Jamaat network - which was to provide support, to provide all kinds of things for those who were worst affected - was how they were hunted out, their office was ransacked, and how those people have suffered because of doing something for Muslims in that particular context. What was very interesting, was that in interviews after interviews they said how they take meticulous care that their project does not become political. "There are a lot of political things happening, but we take care. We don't go to Jama Masjid to hold a meeting because Wahhabi politics *ki baat hoti hai*" (Hindi translates to "they talk about Wahhabi politics"). So even a local level activist Tablighi Jamaati knows about it, is aware about it. But their work at the time of the Gujarat riots, the rehabilitation work, overnight changed them in to a political actor. So the point is how the State, how the others are looking at you defines whether you are political or not. This complexity we should take heed of, and a better kind of nuanced view will come out, I am sure.

[Rounaq Jahan]: I wanted to raise first two questions and then briefly talk a little bit about Bangladesh. I feel that since it says the whole meeting is focused on South Asia, and I am from Bangladesh, I have to also give some information. But the two questions first: I. A. Rehman and I, were in an earlier meeting on Human Rights and there one of the points that was made by an

Indian participant was that after the Gujarat riots somehow the fate of the Muslims were left to this Islamic group, somehow space was created for them to operate; whereas some of the other non-religious, but nevertheless Muslim, women were prominent in those organizations, yet somehow there was not a space for them. The second related question is about these interfaith dialogues that are going on now all over the world post 9/11. Professor Amartya Sen, in his book on secularism and violence, makes this point and this is something that many of us also feel - that somehow suddenly the whole world woke up to these various religious groups and there was now a need for inter-faith dialogue. This question of who represents the community becomes important. Is it these religious or Islamic groups that should speak as a Muslim voice? Or should it be other non-secular organizations, who have been also functioning in civil society and have been very active, who should speak on their behalf and represent Muslims. I am Muslim and I have been also operating in civil society. Do I have to belong to some kind of religious group to represent these interests? I can not be as eloquent as Professor Sen, but he elaborates this point in his book how suddenly again legitimacy and space is suddenly given to some groups to represent while others that have been active are not. So this is quite contested.

Now speaking about my own country, Bangladesh - yes there are positive examples of religious groups in humanitarian activities, such as some of the larger organizations like Ahsania Mission, in terms of providing health services or other services. But one interesting point I want to make is that we have in Bangladesh, for many years, a lot of floods for instance. As soon as floods have taken place, it is the students from universities, local schools, and colleges, who are mobilized often by their cultural groups to go and prepare food and to work in flood or disease affected areas. There are *madrasahs* and other religious organizations, but unlike in other countries where the religious based organizations, the *madrasahs* or these Islamic organizations have moved forward first, in Bangladesh they really have not been active. They are organized for certain kinds of protests, for instance, but they are not in the forefront of these types of humanitarian activities, community based activities. Taking the second question, how the changing political climate influenced the work of faith-based organizations, one point I want to make is that traditionally these organizations that are in the community depend on local sources of funding. They are relatively small and their base was in the community. But now after they saw the rise of the big NGOs, international donor agencies and government funding, many of these faith-based organizations also want to get funding from the government and from international sources. They are sort of late comers to this. This is one new thing that I have noticed.

[I. A. Rehman]: Thank you very much. First of all I would like to make it clear that in Pakistan 90% of the public charity or philanthropy, or whatever you want to call it, goes to faith-based institutions, mosques, organizations and parties. Some years ago Aga Khan Press Centre calculated that this amount comes to about 8 to 10 billion rupees a year. That is a huge amount. It is being given for two purposes: A. for education and B. for humanitarian work. There is no doubt that whenever we had a crisis, like the national disaster in 2005 when we had a big earthquake, these religious based organizations were the first to come to the aid of the stricken community because class-wise they mixed with the ordinary people more easily than government functionaries and elite organizations. The government functionaries were waiting for Jeeps to come and take them to the mountains, whereas these *mullahs* were prepared, they just tuck up their *shalwars* and climbed the mountains. It so happened that some of the most active organizations were also the most militant. Again this is happening in the wake of the recent floods.

As Professor Marshall pointed out, there is a great deal of concern, that the same religious-based militant organizations, I don't have to name them since they are well known all over the world, are stealing amounts of money from governmental and other non-governmental organizations. I will not concede that the religious-based organizations are the only parties in the field. A large number of non-government organizations are also active. Now, it is the policy of the donor countries, in relation to Pakistan, that every percent of the relief is being channeled through non-government organizations. So there is a concern not only outside Pakistan, but in Pakistan also, that under this garb of humanitarian work, in which they do excel compared to the other sections of society, they will strengthen the militants hold on Pakistan society.

In regards to the second question - the political climate has to be divided into two. One is the national political climate and the other is the international political climate. When we had a military dictatorship, whether it was General Zia-ul-Haq or General Musharraf, they had a natural alliance with feudals and extreme religious militants, because all three are opposed to democracy. The military, the mullahs, and the feudals, all three are opposed to democracy and they had a common cause. All three opposed women's education, all three opposed gender equality. That political climate gave a lot of space to the faith-based organizations. In spite of the efforts made by many organizations to have interfaith dialogue - and we have had excellent examples of interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians in particular, and they became active and there were the communal riots in Punjab and – so in spite of their efforts, we had the interesting experience that the internal political climate of authoritarianism gave a direction to these faith-based organizations, which is not in the interests of the people. But when these military dictatorships recede, or as they seem to have receded or are presumed to have receded, in the case of Pakistan, they feel constrained. The second question is in regards to the international political climate. Ever since Pakistan moved out of South Asia and aligned itself with the Middle East, we have had an influx of petrol dollars, so that most of the Muslim village seminaries which have students exceeding six thousand, eight thousand, are financed by money from outside. And since Pakistan is the battlefield between the traditional Saudi philosophy and the Iranian philosophy, there is a lot of money coming in to these seminaries. At the same time, this war against terror and the mistake made by some politicians to describe it as a “clash of religions” and a “clash of civilizations”, has also affected the faith-based organizations and made them more militant and less tolerant of other peoples point of view.

[Acharya Shrivatsa Goswami]: I think in the mere existence of religious institutions, the political process makes a tremendous impact, a *tremendous* impact. For example, any religious sectarian institution in India, if you read their memorandum, it will say "without regard to caste and creed, without differentiation of any faith". This is how every single institutions document begins. So it is a political necessity because the political process then determines the tax process. The obligations of income tax, and other things, makes them declare something which they may not even believe. But they have to do that, that is the farcical thing.

I am very happy that Marshall is here and my journey with the WFDD started in 95 in Awashima Island with a couple of meetings in Lambeth Palace and sitting with Jim in his penthouse in Washington DC. That ended around 2000 or so and then Marshall joined. An interesting thing: in the last meeting when WFDD (World Faiths Development Dialogue) was being formalized, 16 countries were identified whose usage of the money funded by the World Bank was very low. So

how to raise that, how to improve? 16 countries were identified, and I did not follow it up, but I hope what happened was that when these funds were monitored by some religious NGOs, faith-based organizations, it shot up. Marshall will say more about that, I cannot say much more about that.

But locally I have a small story to share, which comes from the Western part of Orissa, which is probably the richest part, but only in minerals. I myself could purchase one girl and a boy for just 70 rupees. 70 rupees! In 2005. That is the kind of poverty I am talking about. There, one religious leader went to inaugurate a temple. When he saw the situation, he could not come back, he just stayed on. He saw the people and their lifestyle. The men are drunk or gambling and they are having a nice time. The women are working and are underpaid, obviously. When they bring the money, the men snatch the money, and gamble, eat and drink. And what do they feed? *Isko kahate hai, maar khaa, bacho ko maar khao* - they beat the kids, a completely catastrophic situation. So he stayed on and he started gathering people around his *kirtan* and his chanting and his prayers and preaching and all, and he started initiating them. When they took initiation from this charismatic man, they said, "What do we have to do"? He said, now I have engaged you with Narsinghnath, which is the presiding deity of the Western Orissa, like Jagganath in the Eastern part. What do we have to do? He said, "Whatever you do, share it with your deity". So they came back to him and said, "Shall we drink"? He said, "If your Lord drinks, you drink." "Shall we gamble"? "If he gambles, you gamble", and so on and so forth. His *guru dakshina* was, whatever you earn with your own hands and whatever you grow in your own land, I will accept only that. And with that process, in fifteen years, nearly ten thousand families are now economically, socially, and emotionally on a very raised platform. What a role religion can play! But this man has singularly taken care not to let even God know about this work. And that is probably one of the successes of this whole enterprise.

On the other question, how politics can determine the role of religious institutions, a glaring example is the Ramakrishna Mission. My old mentor and elder friend, Swami Ranganathan, finally petitioned in the Calcutta high court asking that we are not Hindu and that we should be granted a non-Hindu status, legally. His petition was rejected.

[Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya]: I think minority status...

[Acharya Shrivatsa Goswami]: Sorry, minority status, yes. He told them, "We are not Hindus, we are a minority. We are Ramakrishnites, we are not part of the majority Hindu group". The court rejected it. He moved to the Supreme Court and jokingly the bench said, "If we declare you non-Hindu, then your founder Vivekananda will turn in his grave!" So you see the necessity - because of the political-economical climate and the rules of the game, even the followers of Vivekananda, who became like the flag bearers of Hindu whatever, his followers are consciously making an effort. He again made a revised petition in the Supreme Court, which was again defeated. They were so helpless that they could not get the minority status. They thought that if you are on the minority side you can get benefits and so on and so forth. And if my friend Gurinder Singh Maan is correct in his research and his studies, which he does very thoroughly, then even Guru Nanak said, "If my people are *ahli kitab*, if they are followers of the book, they will be exempted from the tax. So let me start a movement, a religion, a faith, which is centered around a book." He has very solid arguments and that is how the sect tradition came about. It was an economic-political situation, which prompted Guru Nanak. I am not denying his spiritual and other dimensions, but that is how it happened. Mixing the two, I believe that it is all due to the religious leadership, it was

the leadership of the Ramakrishna mission. It was not the common members of the Ramakrishna Mission who wanted that, rather, they were all laughing at their leader. So that is one side. Again, if you see what Marshall was saying that the WFDD is now a little bit different, why? Because of the leadership. We had our bishop, we had Jim, and it was a different flavor altogether. Now the leadership is changing, the institutions are the same, but the leadership is different, so the activity is different. It was in Vrindavan, which in fact was a gift of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in 1515 when, without the colonial meanings, Chaitanya did his Colombian act of re-identifying that little arid piece of land to be Vrindavan. But Vrindavan did not come about till there was a dialogue with the political powers that be. So in 1598 the Goswami's had to wait for Vrindavan to come in to existence. But when that dalliance and that dialogue, of which I am talking about, became successful, became fruitful, it was a powerful dialogue because both sides people were powerful people, people hungry for power, whether it was religious power or political power; Akbar for political power and the Goswami's for religious power. When this happened, then you see that this whole area between Delhi and Agra becomes a hub for development. Not just economic development, but development of art, architecture, paintings, music, dance, you name it. And that is what a total development is all about. Thank you very much.

[Pralay Kanungo]: I will have a slightly different take. My name is Pralay Kanungo, and I teach at JNU. I have done some work on the RSS, and my interest is also in religion, conflict, communalism and so on. When we talk of the religious institutions, we in a way admit that there is a sectarian angle to the whole question. Because when we are talking of humanitarian activities taken up by the religious institutions, I think they are becoming increasingly sectarian as well as political. I don't think that after the Gujarat riots, Swaminarayan did something which would be called religious. They didn't really come out in the beginning. They didn't really open up the doors for the refugees. They had a huge network and there is debate about how much they could do. So they played a very different role. Like the Gandhi Ashram, which shut its doors to the helpless Muslims after the Gujarat riots, Swaminarayan really did not come forward with the kind of presence they have in Gujarat. I have seen also, very surprisingly, after the Kandhamal riots that different religious sects also behaved in a similar fashion. In fact, the Church also distributed relief material according to denominations. This is one of the things I also encountered. Whether Hindu or Muslim or Christian, cutting across religions you find the priority to be a kind of sectarian humanitarianism; it is not actual humanitarianism in the concept we usually understand associated with religion. The second part is, and Shrivatsaji said it very clearly, there is a kind of alliance with state power and these Goswami's. So, it is all brought out. It has always been there, a connection, a linkage, between the state power and the religious leaders, but increasingly it is taking a very devious turn. I think it is no longer confined to the tax concession, it is much more. It is to get land for the university, it is to get land for the huge Ashram, 500 *crore* acres of land in Delhi. So, there are a lot of stakes involved. Who is using whom, in fact? Earlier perhaps the political leaders thought that they were using religious sects, going there, praying, *namaste* and so on, so that they could garner votes. But today, the situation has been reversed. All these religious sect leaders know very well that they have a strong presence, that the state power has to negotiate with them and that there is a much larger stake involved.

In my idea of religion, of being a Hindu, I understand that there is the concept of *nishkam seva*. But the *seva* is no more a *seva*, and *seva* has nothing to do with the *nishkam*. *Nishkam* means selfless. So when there is a drought or famine or flood or earthquake you immediately jump in,

you don't really see who is the victim. I think no religion in India today, barring a few like the Ramakrishna Mission, are doing this; I have seen, surprisingly, very small sects and very localized sects, who do not have a huge presence - *they* who are showing a non-sectarian approach. For instance, after the super cyclone in Orissa, it was the *Ananda Margis*, a group who are always seen as kind of deviant, or in the periphery, who came out very openly and actually did all the cremations activities. No religious leaders or others came out, they were scared because how would they touch the dead bodies? The *Ananda Margis* actually proved to be a different kind of sect, whether you call it religious, or some kind of cult or whatever, but they came out. I think that in this climate there is a collapse of the religious and the public, political or state sphere; you find that increasingly, particularly in the Indian context, this is happening. I am not talking about other institutions who are using *seva*, like you have one organization called Seva International, who has raised 3 million GBP. This money is being used for communal activities and other things in India and other places. So forget those organizations, they are not religious organizations, or faith - based organizations. But, in all these faith based-organizations, I see that they have a clear cut political motive or some other kind of motive. For example, you can take Asaram Bapu, it's a kind of huge industry; they want land for the industry. Every big religious sect now wants to set up an Ayurvedic hospital, or an Ayurvedic industry, which has so much market both in India and abroad. So, increasingly, these humanitarian activities are getting collapsed with this political sphere. Thank you.

[Manindra Thakur]: I think I would mostly agree with what Pralay has just said. I would like to, however, take up this argument from Professor Oberoi, about the cycle. It seems that it is not either humanitarian work or political work, but rather a cycle of these interconnected things. I'm trying to think, what does it mean when we talk about the *positive* role of religion? One can also take this idea of a *positive* role in terms of a social transformation, which would be quite radical. What is the political climate? Is the climate of globalization and international capital entering into the Indian area and trying to control different resources? Are these religious organizations playing any role in the favor of the people as far as losing out on the natural resources? I think they are not. They may be cyclically emerging as organizations, which will play a very important role politically. I can see in the 19th century when religious organizations emerged to bring religious reform movements, which finally led to political movements. So, maybe this kind of thing will be exposed and we will have the whole history of Liberation Theology, but these kind of things have happened. The tax element, I think is something interesting to be seen. There are works in Haridwar which suggests that during the period of globalization huge funds have been transferred from Delhi to Haridwar. These have almost become five star hotels now. Or Ramdev having particular sums of money, I don't know from where it is coming, or Ravi Shankar is having a lot of money, I don't know from where it is coming. All of them are also working in the Naxal belt, the Naxal areas. Probably the state is allowing them to enter there, perhaps the state has no problem with them. Somewhere there is some problem which I am unable to figure out at the moment, but there is a relation between political economy, these organizations, the contemporary state and the global capital. That interconnection has to be worked out.

[Manoranjan Mohanty]: I think the political economy of religion came pretty late in the discussion today, even though we raised some very basic issues right in the beginning. In the universities, we had paid so much attention to political economy of religion, particularly those Marxists who had this dismissive view of religion. They then put religion in the political economy of feudalism, and

then in capitalism as part of the legitimization process. They did not take religion both as a part of the base and super-structure, and as something beyond the base/super-structure dichotomy. In the 90's and 2000's, we are finally beginning to see a balancing of the study of religion.

My first point is that, once again, lets not go to one extreme or the other. In other words, *look* at the linkage between state, capital and religion - organized religion, as well as religion as a phenomenon, as a social process, as a symbolic system, and why they are amenable to manipulation by state and capital. Look at this Ramdev phenomenon we had in the 70s and 80s, this Satya Sai Baba phenomenon. Ramdev has gone in one direction, taking yoga in a big way. The Art of Living is a truly global intervention in the art of living, turning it into almost a science of living. Now they have a big outlet in California and in Europe and so on. In other words, when there is a socio-political and, I would say, spiritual crisis of humanity, I think some of the response to this crisis is directed to this global capital formation like religious trends. "Capital formation-like religious trends" - I think the Art Of Living, Ramdev, and these are of that kind. But again, there is a danger of looking at it only as a form of capital, with power, with manipulation, with huge resources, with the ability to mobilize resources to such an extent that they can defeat any challenger. And they did, like Ramdev, who was accused by a communist group in India of using bones in their Ayurvedic medicine. The CPM, the most powerful Parliamentary group among the communists, lost out. Finally, Ramdev won the battle in the media, as well as in the public consciousness, and those who had accused Ramdev had to bite the dust. Now this is one phenomenon.

But I accuse those friends of mine and myself, to a very large extent, of ignoring the symbolic power that religion has and its social basis, the social basis of that symbolic power. This discussion is trying to make up for that, but in trying to make up for that, lets not go from one extreme to another. We are so much in to the symbolic construction of religion, and the political imagination represented in religion, that we forget the political economy. Or, we are so preoccupied with the political economy of religion that we forget the political imagination of religion and its positive and negative dimensions.

[Raja Lingam]: It's quite interesting to know that we should have a difference of opinion, nothing wrong in it. The reception is always the difference. Acharya Vinoba Bhave once said that, just to take us back to the history of this, the era science and technology started, the era of politics and religion would wither away. Sri Acharya Vinoba Bhave, many of you know him well, he did not belong to any political party, rather he belonged to religious institutions. He was a common man and he was fighting for rights. He was a person who walked around to collect lands for the landless people. There is the history of how land was still not distributed to the landless people, particularly the *harijan* and *dalit* community and all, but that is another history. But with regards to the religious institutions, they do have hidden agenda now in order to exist, because the competition is going on. Just as multinational companies have competition, so too religious institutions also have competition. In terms of money, in terms of people, in terms of activity, they have to show the world that, "Yes! I have this many people, I have covered this many people, I have a community with this much money." So the dynamism that is growing and evergrowing is there, you and me, we, cannot stop it. That fire has already started. But at the same time, how should we look at this in terms of the issues? When there is an issue, a crisis, how are these institutions reacting to that? That is more important. Can you stop Ravi Shankar, when there are

political people that approach him, will he say no? He will never say no! He cannot survive if he says no. That is the condition which they have in order to survive. In order to increase and spread their wings, they need to have political affinity or affiliations, and conversely the politicians need to have the religious institutions help. That is ok, that is understood, we cannot avoid it and we cannot stop it. But how these religious institutions are taking part when there is a crisis, that is more important. As long as science and spirituality takes care of it, the politics and religions will go on, dominate, and try to establish their own roots.

[Anindita Chakrabarti]: I would just like to add that a dialogue such as this should let us look into our own hearts. When a disaster, something which is so terrifying as the Gujarat riots of 2002 happened, instead of saying that the religious groups didn't do much, Swaminarayan and all that, it is also the secular civil society organizations that did not do much, which could not reach out. It is not a blame game, but I would like to emphasize that at that time Tablighi Jamaat did not want to take up the space. It was something that was imposed, that was thrown up, they had to rise to the occasion, and use the local level networks that I have talked about earlier. It was so difficult for a researcher, for me, to write about them, because everybody you write about you make vulnerable. You have to use pseudonyms. I know people whose sons are still in prison. How the people have suffered! We should think through whether its politics of space and who is not giving each other space and who could reach out at that point of time. It is according to denomination, but somebody had gone there risking their own lives. I think we should be more humble.

[Manoranjan Mohanty]: I think it would be fair to recognize the work that civil liberty groups did in Gujarat. I think India can still raise its head high, both within its own society and globally. Despite the massacres in Gujarat, there is still faith in India's intercommunity coexistence, India's secularism, and that a democratic civil society *can* work in India. There is faith that the perpetrators of the Gujarat massacre are still subjected to the judicial process, and some cases have been reopened and so on. I think the elaborate documentation based on field visits, several of us were in that area in the few days...

[Anindita Chakrabarti]: No, no I completely agree. I was just talking about that moment of tension...

[Manoranjan Mohanty]: What I am saying is that I think Indian civil society *did* respond, I think you have to add that. Nobody arrived there to save the situation immediately, you are right. People took some days to reach there, there were still curfews when we arrived there. I think Gujarat was one case, as well as Punjab or the Delhi riots, I think certain Indian civil society groups, who were singularly responsible to start a process of re-building the trust. Sometimes the judiciary had intervened, sometimes not. Even today in Kashmir, I think there are voices all over the country who have a whole spectrum of voices, but that it is not an exclusivist voice on either side. So I think the Indian civil society, democratic dialogues, despite many extremist forces in operation on all sides, have created a space of intervention, which has had some *healing effects* to use your term.

[Ravi Bhatia]: Some of the people here have been decrying the role of religious institutions in terms of acquiring huge amounts of land, in acquiring other resources, in being able to save money by saving on income taxes, etc. I am not denying that, it is being done by several religious institutions. But I would like to ask a question: as an ordinary citizen, whom does one approach? There is the state with its various institutions, the judiciary, the executive, etc.... **[recording cuts**

off]

[Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya]: There's a lot of talk here about the Gujarat incident, which is was very important. It was quite a shaking event for an independent and progressive country like India. But I think we should take our interfaith traditions seriously. That is something that merits academic consideration and also consideration from civil society in general. I will just give you a small incident: it was in the end of June and we were in Ladakh. We had a Buddhist-Muslim dialogue, which was very interesting because we usually only talk about Hindu-Muslims, Hindu-Christians, Hindu-whatever, so here we wanted to take up two different communities. We did it in a place like Ladakh, which traditionally has this interaction between Buddhist and Muslim communities to the extent that, until the 1980's you wouldn't even find a typically Muslim names among most Ladhakis. They would have names like Namgyal or Dorje, which are also Buddhist names. Both sides would take up names which were quite similar, you couldn't actually identify whether they were Muslims or Buddhists. Since the 80's, some of them have started taking typical Muslim names. What was interesting is why this interfaith happened, how it actually drew attention to those issues today. Just a month after the dialogue, there was this huge natural calamity in Ladakh. There was this cloudburst, and Ladakh, environmentally, is one of the worst places to live in the world. It is a high mountainous range and desert that never had rain, but because of climate change, now it is having showers. These showers becomes floods and they have mudslides and the people are not accustomed to it. What is important here is that because we had this conference just a month before – and I am not saying we were the only reason - but a large amount of relief material actually went through a lot of these Muslim groups, some who were from outside India, and who typically would not have cared much for Ladakh had this kind of interfaith activity not taken place at that time.

Also this whole question of political economy that you drew up - we must also see how most of these groups are not only operating within India, they are also operating globally. So we should look at how the major operators are getting linked with the global economy. Most of these groups are all transnational, like the Swaminarayans - they are *all* transnational. They are successful business people outside India, which makes them very strong within India. These links with the global economy and with global faith-based organizations is something we should look at, which comes very much to the fore during these moments of humanitarian aid.

[Richard Falk]: I wanted to make a point that I think follows, and is complimentary to, Professor Mohanty's emphasis on political economy. That is the relevance of the ideological dimension of the political climate. It seems to me that when faith-based organizations were used as instruments of geo-politics, during the latter stages of the Cold War, it was in an atmosphere in which any social force that was viewed as anti-Marxist or anti-Communist was seen as a benevolent recipient of Western aid. It also led to an atmosphere, I think, where the huge financing of *madrasahs* in the region by *salafi* and *wahhabi* elements of Islam, particularly based in Saudi Arabia, were viewed with a kind of favor because of the sense that anti-Communism was more important than anything else. This played into the way in which the deterioration of Afghanistan into a horrible civil war took place. I mean, the use of the Mujahideen as resistance forces against the Soviet presence there, the legacy of that kind of ideologically driven use of religion as a political force, seems to me, to have greatly strengthened extremist elements in religion throughout the region. Less in India, because it's a much more resilient and stronger

society, but in countries like Malaysia, to some extent I think Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan this seems to be the case. That whole freedom given to the Saudi role in the region, which I think would not be given today, is a new atmosphere. I think it is an important part of the political climate that's often overlooked.

[J.P.S. Uberoi]: Well, it's not actually covered by these two questions, so it is probably out of order, but I think we should not forget the role of everyday life. There is a political economy of everyday life. I would like to see religious institutions challenged, not only to provide help when it is required in that kind of humanitarian thing but, for instance, why can't religious institutions participate more in development by making investments? We haven't had an audit in Tirupati Temple for a long time, maybe for a thousand or two thousand years, whatever it is. Isn't it a shame that in a country which is so poor, there is a whole treasure which is not in the economy. According to our estimate, Tirupati Temple could buy and sell the government of India, and they could buy and sell Microsoft as well. Well, why don't they? As far as the Sikh *gurudwaras* that I see, as a member of my community, they have a lot of smuggled gold and I think it is a disgrace that gold sells in India at a higher price than it does in the United States or in Sweden. Why does India have an insatiable demand for bullion selling at a price and at a quality...I mean you can't sell 22 carat gold in the United States and here you can! If we have time we can also discuss questions of Islamic banking and what is an Islamic economy. This is the kind of thing that they have been talking about. Why is banking not part of civil society? What is the problem? Is there some problem with Islam? We can come back to that after tea, because I don't think it's really covered by what you imagine humanitarian activities to be in a crisis. But I think, *where* people invest their money, and *where* these institutions invest their money is important. Or is it that they are guardians of something, which is not wealth at all but treasure? It is withdrawn from the economy and deposited in some manner that we don't know anything about. We cannot compare mosques and other things, but the Aga Khan Development Network, which was mentioned earlier, they do actually invest their money. But the majority of Muslims, the Sunni and the Shia, they do not. It is time that they were asked, what is wrong with it? If you are the leaders of this country, if you really are the true representatives, then why don't you take more responsibility for the economy?

[Hilal Elver]: I just want to remind you about this recent economic crisis in Europe - Greece was responsible and the Greek Orthodox Church very much played an important role. Their wealth and their mismanagement, together with the American investment banking, played a very important role.

[Manindra Thakur]: One line of clarification: I think I have a problem thinking of a religious community as a faith-based community only. So, I come back to my first point, that I would like to exist as Hindu and as an epistemic community. I have a problem with institutions and organizations, because maybe one can talk of this larger theory of organizations and institutions - what do they do in society and how it develops its own interests, and then it goes against the interests of the people at large - so, therefore when I say that there's a problem with the political economy, I am not undermining the importance of religion. I think that's extremely important, and religion in everyday life is extremely important. But I have serious problems with religious organizations, of all kinds, including the church.

Fourth Session

[Katherine Marshall]: Ok, we are in the final session now and I have been asked to "pinch hit", as we say in the United States, in trying to moderate the session. The topic is, how is the work of faith based organizations influencing the political climate? But I think, as is traditional and wise in all sessions, a hope for a final round of discussions is to think a bit about what comes next, what are the unanswered questions, what are the research topics, what are the action proposals and who can and should do something about them? It is in a sense trying to flip the question of the previous discussion about politics and religion and turning it the other way. In other words, what influence, what influence could, what influence should, at the various institutions of thinking that are associated with religion, do they have on politics?

[Mark Juergensmeyer]: What they can and should *and shouldn't* do, because we could argue that religion is already way too political than it should or need be. And this last session is also an opportunity for us to think about what we didn't talk about. That is, what issues we may have missed, how we may have not fully conceived the topic in a way that is useful. Actually the discussion of political economy was very useful in the last session. I am looking forward to the conversation.

[Manoranjan Mohanty]: I have a feeling that in the sub-continent, the Sufi and other syncretic traditions are quite strong, at the grass-roots level as well, in practice, in day to day life. But somehow their visibility at the regional and even state or national level is very limited. Do you notice this throughout the South Asian sub-continent? If so, why?

[I. A. Rehman]: Thank you Professor. I may be wrong, but in my review the communalization of politics in South Asia has played havoc with us. We have been basing political issues on religion, or belief, or perception of religion, for the last seventy years, and we are still in the communalized politics frame of work. As I mentioned to you, Pakistanis do not look on the Indians as Indian citizens of a neighboring country, they look upon the Indians as Hindus, whom they have had long fights with throughout the 1920's, 30's and 40's. Similarly, since we have a strong anti-West feeling in Pakistan, the Christian minorities are always considered to be Western agents. So, the whole concept of the togetherness, and the syncretic tradition, which used to be the hallmark of the sub-continent in the 16th, 17th, and the beginning of the 18th centuries, was destroyed by the communalization of politics. I am afraid the colonial power also played a definite role in this. The affect of this is, at the moment, that syncretic initiatives are not drawing as much attention as before. In Pakistan, an attempt was made for the last eighteen months or so, to bring the two Punjabs together, I will give you a concrete example. A large number of people from Indian-Punjab visited the Pakistani-Punjab, and a large number of people from Pakistani-Punjab visited Indian-Punjab. Then there were exchanges of writers, there were exchanges of singers, poets, artists, theatre companies, and of course, Sufis and *bhaktis*. But then, it so frightened the government, that they put a stop to it. The governments moved in very very ruthlessly, and movements of people across the borders, became more and more difficult. I find that today, India and Pakistan have more restrictions on visas than they had two or three years ago. This is due to the problem that, in my opinion, both governments are afraid of their own people. They do not want to give them the opportunities of discovering what they had many, many years ago. Sardar Swaran Singh, at one time external affairs minister of India in the difficult sixties and fifties, visited

Pakistan in 1989 and he asked me, "What do you think of the younger generation? What do you think of Persian-Indians?" I was much younger in those days and I said, "You know, *sardar sahib* these young people have no memory of bitterness, these young people have no anger from what happened in 47, or 46!" But the old *sardar* said, "But then, my dear, they do not even have any memories of living together". So, it is this lack of opportunities. We feel, that instead of going back to that syncretic age, because no age can revive what was happening in a previous age, our best hope lies in allowing the students from South Asia to study together, allowing the youth to have more exchanges, allowing particularly women more exchanges, because they are going to be the harbingers of progress in the future. On this point world governments seem to agree, that women should not be allowed their quota in life. So, I think instead of looking backwards, as to what kind of traditions we have, we may try to look forward as to what the modern world can offer us.

[Mark Juergensmeyer]: I'd like to put a question on the table, it's not directly towards the issue of faith-based organizations in politics, but it is in the larger issue of the role of what we think of as *religion* is in what we think of as *society*. In his opening remarks, Professor Oberoi raised the problem that we think we know what religion is and we think we know what society is, and I am not all that convinced that we do. In fact, I think the kind of sense of certainty that there is such a thing as a secular society which by its very definition creates the illusion that there is a whole separate world of religion, is indeed part of the problem. Because a notion of secularism, or aggressive secularism as some people in the room have described it, can then create its opposite. I don't think that it's coincidence that the phenomenon of fundamentalist religion, of a virulent strident, politicized, religion is a relatively new thing, a creation of post-modernity that didn't exist in an earlier period of time, and certainly didn't exist in most parts of the world where people didn't bother to think about whether they were doing things because they were religious, or because they were secular - they simply did them. There was a moral, cultural, and spiritual stratum of society and that was fine, and some people took it more seriously than others, but that was also fine. It provided a certain kind of intellectual, ideological, and cultural, support to the institutions of society, but there was no sense that these institutions had to be purged of those elements. That's all, really, a fairly recent phenomenon. I am sorry to say it's primarily a European and American phenomena since the Enlightenment of wanting to somehow, understandably, be free of the control and excesses of religious authority, particularly, during the time of the wars on religion and after in Europe. But I think as a result, it's created something of a monster. But how can we go back? Is there a possibility of imagining a kind of secularism that is not so secular, that would be hospitable to a religion that is not quite so religious, not quite so virulently, stridently, polarizing in the way in which these two opposite entities have become at this particular moment in history? Or is it too late to put the genie back in the bottle? Is secularism now so fixed in our imagination that the only kind of religion we can imagine is something that's alien from secular, that has no role in public life, that has no role to play other than to be content with so religious activities being separate from the public sphere. Obviously many people who regard themselves as religious are not content with this. Are we stuck, or is there a way out?

[Rounaq Jahan]: In all the South Asian countries, whether one calls oneself secular as India, or as in Bangladesh, where we started by saying that we are secular and then we removed it from the constitution, in terms of State policies, it is not really secular in the very strict sense of what France or other Western definitions - that State will have nothing to do with religion, that there would not be any support from the State for religious institutions. In South Asia, secular was really

more or less understood as tolerance of all religions, that all religions would have space in any State function. For instance, in Bangladesh, we'll have these citations from all major religions. It is South Asian tradition, in terms of secular not meaning that very strict separation between the so-called State and Church; all along the State policies has been that you tolerate and you support everybody in India. I think, even a recent contestations is about whether the State will support even Hajj! I was coming from Bangladesh, where we don't support Hajj; the State facilitates travel but I always understood only the rich are supposed to go for Hajj, and the State doesn't have to do that. I think that how we understand secular is that you would not use religion to fan strife, riots, conflicts, hatred, and war between one religion or another. I think this is really what the State policies, and popular perception, is. I think very few South Asians, or at least the State policies certainly have not been in that way of thinking of secular as completely divorcing State from Church. So, to that extent, I think the very definition of the way this has been looked at, as tolerance, plurality, accommodation, will be very much in tune with a democratic society, with various kinds of religious groups. You tolerate everybody, give equal voice, you do not stifle anybody or kill somebody and I think that's the way everybody looks at it. The State policies here, as I said, have certainly not been in the way that Turkish policies have been, which has taken secularism much more seriously, and controlling, and not giving any support to religious-based institutions. This has not been the policy in any of the South Asian countries as far as I know.

[I. A. Rehman]: We had the great Islamic scholar and poet, Muhammad Iqbal, and he said, "Islam, in its highest form, is secular." Before independence in India, all the great Islamic scholars were nationalists, like Abu'l Kalam, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Hasrat Mohani, Mehmud Hasan - nobody can doubt that they were scholars of the highest order. In fact, this Muslim separatist movement had no religious scholars to back it, even Maududi, who is now considered as author of all kinds of secessionist movements, did not support it - he was a nationalist. They all opposed the movements of Pakistan. The point is that we had in that kind of culture - Motilal Nehru, father of Jawaharlal Nehru, could declare at a public meeting, that "I am a Kashmiri *pandit*, a Hindu, but a **Kachari** Muslim". So the point is that we have a tendency to counter-pose secularism with all religions. We can have a religious experience and we can all be secular in politics. And that is what the problem with Muslims has been. If you study Allama Iqbal's *madrasah* lectures, *Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, it says that so long as a religious thought remains moribund, and it's not adjusted to the religions of the world, it will create divisions. But if you reconstruct it, reinterpret it, or can have a reformation in religion, then you can move forward.

[Katherine Marshall]: I think we have a very interesting juxtaposition here, because we have Mark's comment which I think is a deep worry in much of the world, that the ideals of separation of Church and State have created a whole new set of problems. What you two are saying is at least at the level of ideal, there is something that "everyone agrees", in other words, it is widely accepted.

[Rounaq Jahan]: Yes, it is not everyone. But, very few are in *that way* secular, as in *completely* divorced...maybe Jawaharlal Nehru was.

[Katherine Marshall:] I think it partly comes to the question of the difference between the ideal and the actual. In other words, the ideal has never shifted to post-modern concepts of secularism. I think that's a very interesting re-statement or reflection on the problem, if I've understood it correctly.

[Mark Juergensmeyer]: But it is partly also the nature of South Asian secularism, which is quite different from European secularism. It has been supportive of religion and treats all religious traditions equally. Yet there's the image of Western culture as being anti-religious, that is, that there is an image of strident, aggressive, atheist secularism and that it is a threat. And it is usually presented in Western clothes in part, I suppose, because of the videos and the internet, and the cultural presentation of western society that appears at least to some people to be anti-religious. Maybe there then becomes a need to have a strident religiosity to protect or defend or re-shape. How else do you explain the kind of politicized religion within the South Asian context, if there is a form of religious-appreciating secularism that presumably would have no need for strong religious expressions to counteract it?

[Katherine Marshall]: There is a difference between the way religion is discussed and perceived in the United States and Europe and here, at least to a degree. One of the problems is a grotesque ignorance about religion, that people are so unaware of other traditions. Where as here, as people say, it's in the curry, it's in the daily life. I don't think that necessarily means that all people have a deep understanding of Islam, and Sikhism and so forth, but at least you can't quite get away from the diversity. They have done surveys in the United States asking how many people know what's Noah's flood and so on is, and it's a remarkably low percentages. Not to speak of the difference between what a Sunni and a Shia is. And *nobody* even asks what a Sufi is...

[J.P.S. Uberoi]: You should ask them what do they think about Christianity! I mean that's the point, some people have got the idea that one land, one language, one faith, and one state is the best way to be strong, this is the way forward, and anything less than that is a sort of weakness. But against that - and it is not about South Asia, it's not about the United States or the new Europe or whatever - but against that, as a student of mankind, we are proposing something quite different. We are proposing that human beings, by nature, are bicultural and bilingual, and I do not know if we are bi-religious, but there may be something like that. Civil society is that locus of pluralism, it doesn't have to be more than that. But, it is opposed to those who think that the principles of civil society, and the state, and Religion, are all one consistent and strong unit. So, the argument for pluralism, is not that it is good for something, but it is human nature. Against us is all the work that has been done, especially in European countries, on bilingual children in the inter-war period. They claim that it shows that bilingualism was a handicap and that the intelligence scores of bilingual children in the United States and Germany and lots of places were lower than the monolingual children. So that is the model. Now, if you want to overturn that, we can look at the same figures again and find that bilingual Jewish children at that time were actually scoring better than monolingual children and these were.

My other point is, that as far as Islam and civil society is concerned, I think that we have to ask whether there is any concept of civil society in Islam. As a student of Islam, I have been told by writers from different languages and in different persuasions and they all said the same thing – Sharia, or Islamic law, covers all fields. There are different fields and we can say there are three or four main fields - there is doctrine, worship and what you will call the rites, the cult proper, then there is the field of what we call now family and civil society, and then there is the State. If I say, well, these are the three fronts and Islamic law nowhere applies equally to all of them, even in Saudi Arabia it doesn't. Maybe it applied in all fields in the first thirty years of Islam, but that was

all right because there was hardly any State. We really find it difficult to find an example of the Islamic State. Pakistan promised that they are an Islamic State, as Rehman said, and that they would draft a Constitution for an Islamic State, but they have not been able to do so. Last time Iraq was drafting a Constitution in Afghanistan 2003-2004, and I tried to take part in the constitutional law, in the *Jirga*, in all the meetings, and they were not able to produce any Islamic constitution. All they could say was that no law would be passed, which is against the spirit of Islam, but they did not specify what *is* the spirit of Islam. I thought that this may be a defect in Afghanistan or Islam or whatever, but the European Union is having the same problem. Again, the question is of sovereignty, of territory, of pluralism, of distribution, of separation of power. And so if we look at those issues, then my colleagues admit that in different fields Islamic law applies in different degrees. It applies a hundred percent in ritual and cult and doctrine, nobody doubts that there is one God or that Mohammad is his prophet and so on. But then it doesn't apply to the State at all! All states are secular states and that is what the fundamentalist are unhappy about. They want to Islamize the State in Saudi Arabia. I mean, the nastiness they show to Jews and non-Muslims and Communists, that is secondary - the primary thing is to Islamize the state. This is one of the demands of Al-Qaeda, one of their four demands, that the nominally Islamic States should really become Islamic. Now that has proven to be very difficult. Now in between the two is commercial law and the law of family and inheritance. When my colleagues, who are better scholars than I am, agree they say, "Well, it doesn't prove that there is a notion of civil society in Islam, it only proves that there is a lack of unity of theory and practice in Islam". But then again I ask the question, why is there a unity of theory and practice in Islamic law in relation to ritual and worship, and why is there no unity in criminal law, in the law of constitution, and administrative law in the Mogul period or in the Ottoman Period or in the other periods, or even in Iran today? They are not able to write an Islamic constitution, which will cover constitutional questions, which will cover administrative questions and which will cover criminal law. They are not able to do that. This ridiculous application of the law to stone somebody to death is only applicable if you can produce four eye witnesses *en flagrante* which I have never heard of. I lived in a village in Afghanistan between 1959 and 1961, when this law was supposed to be applicable, and I never came across any such case, because If you accuse somebody, and you do not produce the 4 eye witnesses *en flagrante*, then the punishment applies to you! So it depends on how you read this thing.

Now how are we going to read it? I have now made a search, and I will just say what the result is: those who are writing on this question, or related questions, after 9/11 and after the first flush of the shock which people got from the 1967 war, between Israel and the two Islamic states which were its neighbors - I mean they were defeated - and that was the end of the combination of secularism, nationalism, and socialism, which India and Bangladesh espoused within a national framework. The only part that survived was the democracy part, but the socialism part, after the defeat of Nassar, and the national part, just disappeared. So the Islamic community withdrew into itself, which could have been predicted, after the fall of the caliphate in 1924. In India, that was considered to be a disaster. Anyway, we don't have to go back, if we come forward to post 9/11 there are now writers who say that *shariat*, when you read it the way that it was read by Muslims in the period before the impact of the Enlightenment, which persuaded people that one interpretation was always the best, one country and one religion and one language was always the best - they had got used to a kind of pluralism. For instance they were willing to give the Persian language almost the same status that they were willing to give to Arabic. They weren't willing to give that status to Urdu, but they were for Persian. Similarly in India, people were willing

to give Pali the same kind of status as they gave to Sanskrit. They would not for Punjabi or Kannada, but they would consider Pali. So there was a recognition that so far as people's lives relating to worship and to ritual and in their relationship with divinity is concerned, they are not tolerant. They are exclusive and the law applies 100% and they just will not tolerate if you put your hand like this or your thumb down wrong - I mean, it is very important to them and, well, let them go ahead with it. At the other extreme is the secular state, where they found it very difficult to produce a criminal law, constitutional law, and an administrative law, out of Islam. They didn't manage to do that ever, under any dispensation, East or West. In between, is the area of civil society and the characteristic of Islamic law in relation to civil society. Unlike Hegel and unlike the Gramsci and Habermas tradition, it doesn't distinguish between family and civil society, it puts family and civil society together. Unlike Hinduism and unlike Judaism, the family law in Islam is actually a contract law, it's not a sacred law. Marriage is not a sacrament, it is a just like other things that happen in civil society. So actually this fear of civil society in Islam, in *this* understanding, we are arguing is native to Islam. You have three: the exclusive and intolerant part is relating to worship; and the purely secular part, which has lost its ethics, is the state; but in between is civil society and the marker of civil society is congregation, conscience, and a law which is based on ethics. Therefore, it includes family and civil society, but this is a very Confucian kind of notion of civil society in which the important part is not the law but ethics. When we come to law it is reduced to just the fiat of the state and that is the least Islamic.

I'm now retired from the service of the University and I have time to think about how many people I have persuaded in my 40 years of service. Well, I didn't persuade anyone. And sometimes I think that I was hired for the wrong reasons! Let me conclude with a story about what my selection committee asked me. There were three sociologists, but there were not so many sociologists at that time in 1968. There was also one philosopher, A. R. Wadia, a Bombay Parsi philosopher. He asked me, "Why are you interested in Islam?" And I said, "Well I was born in Lahore and grew up there and I went to school there. Why does it need an explanation?" But he was not satisfied and so at the end of the interview, a half hour later or whatever, he came back and said, "What do you think of the impact of Islam on India?" I said, "Well that is something I thought about a lot when I lived in Afghanistan doing my fieldwork" - and I can tell you that I summarize it in my mind that this impact took place on three fronts. Firstly, it took place on the front of the State and there the impact was totally bad. Secondly, there is the front of the *mullahs*, of the clerics, of the so-called orthodox, and the people who run the madrasahs and the mosques. In my opinion, they had no impact at all, it was zero, because they have no interest in non-Muslim institutions or philosophy or history anything. You read their books and they just ignore non-Muslim events, whether they are in Europe or in India or in Central Asia, they just take no notice. So what is their job? Their job is to make good Muslims out of nominal Muslims. And thirdly the impact was on the Sufi front, we can call it whatever you like, heterodox. It is an interior Islam which puts the individual first and not the collectivity, and that front has been entirely positive. So I said, "Now, Professor Wadia, you are a philosopher, can I ask you how will you add up 100% negative, 0%, and 100% positive?" So, the net result would be that it had no impact on India! That is the sort of ridiculous conclusion we get to when we say it should all be added up. But, obviously, the impact on the state level, on the clerical level, and on the Sufi heterodox level, they cannot be added. I mean that is the whole point! And those are the three languages that we are saying are natural to human beings. There is the language where you put the individual first, there is the language where you put the collective first, and there is the language where you put good order and

neighborliness first. Humanity needs more than one language. If we had more time we could even try to prove that Indian dogs are also bi-lingual, but I don't have time to prove that.

[Anindita Chakrabarti]: First and foremost I would like to say that the title you have for this meeting *the Role of Religion in Global Civil Society*, I think is an achievement in itself, because I started doing my doctoral thesis before 9/11 before the interest became quite dominant and mainstream. People asked then why religion and civil society, and I am happy to see that they are together in this workshop. We would like to have one in JNU as well - lets see how it goes. The thing is that there is so little interest and academic space for religion in our academia that needs to be taken heed of. So I think this is a step forward in that direction. One person came to my mind when we were talking about civil society and religion, because you have spoken about the experience in the West with Europe and America, but their experiences are so different. Whenever I read Alexis de Toqueville I am kind of amazed. When he explains the rise of a secular democracy in America and that it was in the name of God that the civil body politic was created and how it had to be plural because these are the dissenting sects who had to flee. Because of this they put religious tolerance and pluralism first. So it is a large scale of events, and it is a tall order, but I think this is a very good direction for us.

[John Chathanatt]: Somebody defined politics as the art of the possible - whatever is possible and the art of that. If communalizing societies brings success to politics, why not communalize? If foul play is the winning card, why don't you use that? So, the art of the possible will do anything to get to the power. Gujarat could be an example, if communalization and even denial of life to a particular section of the people will bring them to power, why not use it? So the art of the possible is there. If the use of religion will bring them to power, they will use it, and that is also happening in our society. That means religious sanction is sought even by politicians and by the state. This, of course, means that religion has some power. Religion can bring power to them, there is a *power of religion*. Here is where we need to look at the phenomenon of religion itself. When we say that faith is beyond reason but not irrational, here is where your point of bringing in rationality and university academic critique of religion comes in, something which Indian society can probably do a little more. Religion and religious phenomenon needs good rational critical analysis in the Indian context. I can look back into the Christian background, 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, where Aquinas and then his followers brought philosophy and rationality into a fundamentalistic notion of Christianity, and it succeeded to a certain extent. That means philosophy was brought into spirituality and theology, which means a critical approach to religion, and that brought some control over this power of religion. And that is where we have to go one more step - bringing reason and a critical approach to religion and religious phenomenon is only an interim step, and then, of course, you have to understand what is happening in society and in the state and so on. But I think you have to go beyond this rationality, and should probably redefine *who* a human being is. That means in our own understanding of rationality we have to go beyond this reason even to redefine the human being. And here is where the living **tugadda**, that experience that Professor Rehman was mentioning, unless you live together, how will you know if you can live together? I will attempt to define it - a human being is a rational relational being with, not some irrational animal. It is a rational being and a relational being with the other. Nelson Mandela, when he was talking about the South African problem, once said, "We were living side by side, but we were not living with each other." This is a problem, we were living side by side, but we did not know the other, we were not living with each other. That means that a human being is a relational

being, it depends how we look at it. A person, a man becomes a father only when that man has a child, a boy or girl. It is that boy or that girl that makes that person a father. The same is true with a mother, or brother, or a sister. That means my identity is always relational. My language gives me an identity, my religion gives me an identity, my country gives me an identity; we are multiple identified or identifiable persons. That is why being *with* the other is in the very nature of the human being. That means we have to go beyond even this rationality into a relational experience of the other - the living-together-with. That is why the example of the youth coming together and experiencing each other, goes beyond the bodies, it is a process of living *with*.

And why does religion have this much power? This point came to soteriology, that somehow there is a memory of a future, which is controlling us, even unconsciously. I say it is a memory of a future, that is a soteriology, which we know that somehow we have an idea of what life after death is, and to a certain extent we try to imbibe that. So we bring that into our memory, the future becomes a memory for us, and that comes to us through religion not through politics. So, again, religion has power. That soteriology needs to be looked at rationally. That is why the universities and the elites should enter into a critical phenomenological analysis of religion; religion should not be separated. Religion should be brought under hard critical scrutiny, something that is happening at the University of Chicago. They have even have a center for that at the University of Chicago, the "Rational Approach to Religion." If University people can attempt to do that and then look at the human being in the relational aspect - so somehow looking at the future and also looking at that in a rational manner and looking at the very idea of the human in a relational manner and redefining the human being - I think probably there would be hope in the future. Which means more critical understanding and education is needed. Education into religion and education of the other's religion, and that means the comparative study of religion.

[Mark Juergensmeyer]: Precisely! But it does not exist in India, why is that the case? There is no program in comparative study of religion anywhere in the country, with the one exception I can think of at the Punjabi University of Patiala. Now in Dakha in Bangladesh, there is the new program in comparative religion but people like Professor Uberoi, who take seriously another tradition and try to get inside the skin of other people, are just extraordinarily rare. There is no intellectual or academic demand for it, there is no academic reward for doing so. As you said in an earlier comment, it is one thing to be with somebody and another to really know somebody; and simply because there are so many different people of so many different backgrounds running around in India, you think that you know them. But toleration is not understanding, and it seems to me that the study of religion in this part of the world, of all places, would be extremely important. But why doesn't it exist? Why has there been such an extraordinary resistance to the academic study of religion in this one part of the world that has been the fount of so many religious traditions.

[John Chathanatt]: It is probably because religion has been sidelined into a private act. It is my individual experience, my feeling, that it is not looked at as a collective entity. Even about the studying religion critically - only Punjabi university has that. It means it's not popularized, it has not entered into the common human consciousness, and it is not even enough to remain at an academic level. It has to enter much more into the general public realm, this understanding of rationality. You look at the popular spirituality of the people - why is it that the politicians are succeeding in using religion? Because they are appealing to what is called the emotional side of

the religion. Religion can be divided into four aspects:

1. the religion that is a cultic element
2. there is a creedal element
3. there is a normative element, and
4. there is a community element.

Now it depends where the community is attaching itself to. If the community is attaching to cult, then the cult is the most emotional entity in religion. The cult means your pattern of worship, the various ways it is symbolic structure of religion. That is very powerful, the symbols are very powerful. The cult is very powerful in the human being. How does fundamentalism comes up? When the community attaches itself only to the cult, fundamentalism comes. Every religion is fundamentalistic in that sense. What is controlling that cult is the creed and, all the more, the norm. That is why when we look at Gandhi's use of religion...I think once Dhvani made the statement, "Gandhiji used religion, why can't I use religion?" They are using two languages - Gandhi's use of religion was he was attaching the norm, the value system, to the community. He was not much worried about the cult, Gandhi was not even a temple goer. He even once denounced going to the temple. It was the value system of the religion Gandhi was highlighting. And what do the politicians highlight? Not the value system. They want even to remove the Indian Constitution, why? The norm should not be there. The cult is blind and the blind cult is controlled by the value system of the religion. So if norms are removed, that's where rationality has to enter. Rationality will bring the normative element and will control the cult and then creed will develop. When we look at every religious phenomenon, we can see it is fundamentalistic. You can look at any religion – Christianity was in the worst form, just look at the Crusades, we have the history. Because the cult was very paramount at that time, the norm was not there. the worst part of Christian history was from the 11th century to around the 18th century. If you look at their Natural Law approach, where a reason was not given, it was the rite, the cult... and that's why only one religion and one way of thinking will save the world. That will not happen. That means it is not only tolerance, but I would go beyond tolerance - to acceptance. Accepting the other as the other, including the variety of the other. The variety could be the religion, language, the state, the country whatever it is. This is one of the modern problems - how we can go beyond even tolerance to accept the other as the other, with the difference? It is not easy. The powers that be would want to see uniformity and this is where the latest phenomenon of globalization is very dangerous. What is globalization telling? One food, one culture, one religion - again it is a uniformity, not diversity. It is very dangerous. It is mass production, not production by the masses, the economic category – and this is very dangerous. That means we can see a nexus between globalization and religious fundamentalism, something to look at even in our Indian case.

[Lingam Raja]: We cannot now live in our independent way - as in religion, we are looking for pluralism. In the year 1968, under the leadership of Homer A. Jack, the famous American writer who wrote *Gandhi: the Reader*, and many Gandhian institutions established the WCRP, World Conference on Religion and Peace. They are really looking in terms of the religion in the world and how one can try to understand others and learn to live together. So this is one aspect, which we can learn from the religion and the religious institutions. Mahatma Gandhi was a great exponent and writer and revolutionary person, but when it comes to the question of institutions he was also not for the institutions. He established and destroyed. When he needs to do something he establishes and he also destroys. Creating an institution is not the ultimate aim, to establish any "isms" or any activities or any revolutions, that is not a point. Pluralism has to emerge and

has come through and we cannot avoid that. That is number one.

Number two, secularism is there all along and it is now casteism, more than religion, that is playing a very vital role. We have to look into that and try to understand and come together to live together. Even politics in Australia, they have now come to the coalition. We have to because no single politics or single majority would be able to succeed in these coming years. Apart from all this is, what is more important in this "religion, society and politics", is that you have to work towards some of the very important elements like the elimination of poverty and the elimination of corruption that is happening in a very very big way in politics, which has ruined and has even come to the local level and *panchayat* level. Any religious institution should think in terms of trying to make the people aware and fight against that. Illiteracy still prevails, that has to be properly looked into. As I said earlier, casteism, but there are three dangerous people that we have to keep in mind: the academics, the politicians and the religious leaders. These are the people that try to make the country more unique, yet at the same time they know how to destroy it very carefully also. So these people have to be properly made to understand what the life is, what the universe is, how to live for others and not for yourself alone. That we have to make very clear.

[Manindra Thakur]: Brief response to two-three things - one is in regards to why the universities don't have comparative religion. I am quite surprised and I have been writing for the last one year in a popular Hindi newspaper, which raises several questions to the university system itself. I think Indian university system is a product of the colonial regime and it is still suffering from that extremely positivist colonial epistemological framework. Therefore to talk of religion, and even of philosophy - forget about religion - Indian philosophy is not being taught anywhere in the universities in India, properly. Nowhere. So there is a big problem with that. despite the fact that I have argued that popular books on Indian philosophy are still bestsellers on bookstalls at railway stations. I don't think I would agree with Professor John Chathanatt on many of the issues but I'll not take that up at the moment, but this "cult" and "church" has a serious problem. I think church is a higher organization which is much more dangerous than the cult itself, but we'll talk about that some other time. The main point that I want to make is that, Professor Mark, I would like you to consider this point and that is I have a feeling that the language with which you are talking of secularism and religion is a language of either/or. And this is a language within which we can't understand this, and this is a peculiar problem of the English language. It's not a problem of the German language. Heidegger could always keep arguing that we talk of thinking as a process but the English language has this problem of talking of everything in either/or terms, and therefore it fails to capture that we are secular and religious simultaneously. Look at the Indian tradition, where I think there is a huge history of comparative religion and there is a huge history of secularism. For instance, Dara Shikoh was a greatest scholar of comparative religion and also of secularism. If we think of secularism as 3 different processes

1. a process of continuous growth of knowledge about the world, so the relation between reason and religion.
2. as intercommunity relationship
3. as religion versus state

In all three respects, there are interesting experiments that have taken place in India and if we look at these experiments in terms of either/or, we will probably miss out on the major charitable contributions that one can make.

[Rounaq Jahan]: I was just thinking about a question that Mark raised earlier, about if South Asian states, in terms of their policies, had been tolerant of various religions, then how come we are witnessing in recent years this rise of extremism? It is true, many of us also living in these countries are very worried in terms of what looks like a resurgence of religious extremism. We often talk about external influences and things of that sort, or crass manipulation by politicians of religion. But we still have to address this issue that how come, particularly taking Bangladesh as an example, in the 60's there were politicians who were trying to use religion but still there were other politicians who could stand up and say, "No, religion has another space, but in terms of politics we would not use this kinds of crass communalism", and then they would be in the forefront of the discourse. Unfortunately, I find more and more the mainstream political parties really are very reluctant to defend this kind of secular in the sense of non-communal or very crass use of religion for vote purposes, because people are so concerned they may lose votes and certain voting blocks. They just dissect the population by so many voting blocks and they are so afraid to take a particular stand for fear that you'd lose this block or that block. Whereas in the 60's –as I think in Bangladesh, it may not be applicable everywhere – the politicians were more involved in mobilizing populations across various divides, around certain ideologies, and certain issues, for instance, a certain set of purposes. Of course, after the collapse of the Soviet Union we were all fumbling, because there was no socialist ideology. Many of us were getting concerned that the only people, whether I like it or not, who believe in some ideology and some normative value, are the religion based parties because they believe in *something*. The rest of the political people, they are out there just to make money and they don't have any principles. This really is a very serious set of concerns for many of us, that now it had come to this - that they were the only defenders of certain religions, certain values. We thought that given the neoliberal economic policies that we are pursuing, there will be such great social divides and nobody, no secular politicians are going to do anything about it, so that only people talking about equality or doing some social justice, will be those Islamists. So I think this is something that concerns many of us as to what is happening today.

Again, just to give another example, which political party is not suffering from dynastic syndrome? In all of our countries it is only religion-based parties where the leadership is not passed on from father to daughter or husband to wife and things of that sort. So again this is quite interesting that when you think of some democracy, some ideology, they are the only ones who are left with this. I think that many of us who believe in non-communal and secular politics and other kinds of ideas, we have to really think in terms of what kinds of values we are projecting in politics and in our work. Even in Bangladesh, where civil society actors have played a very important role in the 70's and 80's, and it is now again regarded as a job and not, as in the early days when they went into the villages, as some kind of a service that they had certain ideology - they were organizing people around some consciousness. I have no answer but this is something that has been bothering me. I really do not want to see this spread of religious extremists, but on the other hand, I have to also recognize that they are doing certain things which others are not doing. And globally when we look at this, in terms of resisting certain kinds of hegemonies, who is really standing up? So people have to also recognize that they are playing a unique role, which others are not playing.

[Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya]: There's this whole issue of language which he raised which I think is quite important. I don't know whether it was intentional or unintentional that you had phrased

these question like this For instance, for "humanitarian services" you are using the word "religion", but when you're talking about political climate, or the influence of politics, the word "faith-based organization" is used. So if it is unintentional or whatever the intention is, these words are actually very important and that is where the whole issue of language also comes in. I'll just tell you an incident: we were at the Parliament of World Religions, when Katherine was there, and there was one whole session which was by some United Nation based groups that was planning to propose a decade of inter-religious dialogue from next year, from 2011 or 2012. They want to make it a decade of civilizational dialogue, but then it actually became a major area of controversy, because many of them were using the words "value based", "faith based", "spiritual based" or "spiritually inspired". So some of these people got up and said, "Why don't we make it *inter-religious dialogue*, straight and simple?", because they had the words "civilization", "dialogue", "culture" and all these words - anything other than the word "religion". But these words are actually important because they are not just simply words, they also make up our world view. When you say faith-based organization, many of them are actually NGOs and they are formally registered as non-governmental organizations. Like, the case study that he raised about the Ramkrishnan mission trying to get registered as a minority group. That's very important, how people actually try to negotiate themselves within the political set up which is now in India. The issue that I'm trying to raise is that the whole idea of secularism or the state-religion separation has actually created a space for faith-based organizations because faith-based organizations by law are not legally religions - they are actually NGOs or voluntary organizations or even schools and institutions run by religious groups. But how they are registered is not as religious groups but as whatever institutions. So you have a space that is being created because of this separation of state and religion because of this whole idea of secularism. That was very interesting how you framed the questions, because somewhere down when you are raising these issues there are certain presumptions already involved. If you had raised the question, "How is religion influencing political climate?", that would have been a very different connotation then saying how faith-based organizations influence the political climate. So that is a question that we need to ask ourselves about these questions that we raise.

[Pralay Kanungo]: I'll be very quick, I'll just summarize my understanding of the secular state in India. We have a secular state or nation of *religious* people, and we have actually perpetuated this myth of secularism and actually from this comes this religion-secular toleration and understanding. Secularism is very limited - it talks of tolerance. But religion gives you the understanding. I think this is very important. Ranjana very rightly pointed out that actually we deliberately created space. This neglect of studying religion as a subject at the university was deliberately part of this ideological understanding. Maybe we should have our constraints, maybe the study of religion related to kind of communal politics and non-communal politics, perhaps that is the Nehruvian fear which continues in this period. Second, I think at the same time, as you mentioned, there is also a private channel that was allowed to be carried out. Say, for instance, our former president Radhakrishnan who was writing about religion so profoundly. I mean there is research, there is the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan going on, for example. So in that sense it was all actually being carried out, and it was also left to the private domain and at the same time, the state wasn't getting engaged. It was a very kind of deliberative policy.

There were two or three things that Mark raised which is very important. Over the years, over the decades actually, there are two very alarming things that is happening. I'm not defending that

system or this system, but I see that there is a decline of what you call *assertive* or *aggressive* secularism. There has been a steady decline. I can give you many examples, for instance, the Communists. Though they were actually the flag bearers of aggressive secularism, today you find there is a kind of dilution. I can give the example of Naxalite politics, right? You find they are partners today, you will find also many interesting phenomenon, both working with popular religion and also with missionaries and other constituencies and other radical forces who have some kind of religious understanding. Also, another thing is that there is a serious decline of atheism. You find the atheist community, for instance, giving 400 crores of money to renovation of temples in Tamil Nadu, in fact beating the record of Jayalalitha who has spent about 300 crores. So if you look at the Dravidian kind of atheism, or rationality and all that, they has also given in because of various kinds of politics, because of various kinds of political compulsion, maybe their understanding is changing. These are a couple of things that are happening.

Professor Mohanty raised a very important question regarding Sufism. Again, as Professor Uberoi has mentioned, Orissa, where I have investigated Islam partly, was predominately a Sufi culture, yet today you do not find. And now their is the rise of the Deobandis, and Professor Rehman is not here now, but actually the Deobandis once were nationalist. However, if you look at the Deobandi culture today, you find that there is a shift from nationalism to a kind of aggressive Islam. So in Orissa particularly, you find a decline of Barelvis who are actually very close to Sufism, and you find the decline of Sufi culture in a big way. I don't know, however, about other parts of the country. There is also the rise of new religious movements and sects and so on. So we actually see that this question that you are raising, is something we have also been raising. People are working on religion. I think whether it is under the discipline of political science, or philosophy, people are doing their individual work. But I think that the time is coming where now the government or the state has to give in, because there is also a kind of resurgence of research interest in this area.

CLOSING STATEMENTS

[Mark Juergensmeyer]: Well we, Professor Mohanty and myself as organizers, thought that we would take a couple minutes at the end to make some sort of summary comments.

[Manoranjan Mohanty]: Okay, well I wouldn't attempt to summarize, but I'll make some reflective comments. I think the case for understanding the complexity of religion is very strong, and that came out again and again, and that really makes the case for having a discipline of religious studies. You are right Pralay, I think the Nehruvian fear had many generations of fear reinforcing itself- the fear that if you studied religion, than you become sectarian and religious, a religious sectarian. I think that persists even now, but the reality has indeed pushed us to understanding religion in all the disciplines of social sciences and humanities now more directly. Rherefore the days are not too far when we will have departments of religious studies. Same with secularism, I think that came up again and again. In South Asia, all the big religions are present, and they all had roots independent of colonialism. Therefore, in a multi-religious situation, the kind of methodological issues which were raised by the whole group, the plurality, the traditions of understanding - not only tolerance – but the traditions of understanding which got ruptured in different moments: first by colonialism in modern history, and then by the kind of secular practice which was tinged with fear on the one hand, and the incapacitating experience after partition on

the other. This then led to mutually generating a sort of triggered process of communal polarizations of the other, leading to the BJP's rise and the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the Ayodhya episode, and now various forms of terrorism. That is the context, which really gives us a lot of resources. I think global civil society should inherit the resources of South Asia in terms of how these various syncretic traditions were present, and yet got diluted. I think the reference to all the great Islamic scholars who didn't want the partitioning of India was fantastic. There have been similar periods from Akbar, and even before from Ashoka times downwards. So, in the South Asian region we have had rich resources of religious understanding and epistemological communication, not across fixed religious communities.

I think that the discussions on religion and religious community, religious organizations and religious institutions, religious network, and religion identified with those four forms of creed, norm, cult etc., I think that was a fantastic discussion. So, my first point is that the resources which South Asia provides, not only now but throughout history, for studying religion and secularism and various forms, are rich. I have no time to say more, but just last week Richard Falk, Hilal Elver, Bidyut and I were in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, attending Santhigiri's International Conference on Sustainable Development and Secular Spirituality! And Santhigiri is set up by Karunakara Guru who died in '72 or '79, and his guru was a Sufi saint, Khureshia Fakir. On the 12th of September, when the monument to the guru was inaugurated at a big Bahai temple-like structure, it was inaugurated by the President, and then later by the Defense Minister who happened to be in that area. I saw Muslim men and women, Christians of Kerala, and of course many Hindus and many atheists, like me, all thronging to that place. So, it was a kind of "secular spirituality" and we had this fantastic one day devoted just to understanding "secular spirituality". There were saffron-robed people, there were pure philosophers, atheists, social scientists and so on understanding that. So it is possible, and it is possible globally!

My second point is the need for interconnection. I'm glad Raja raised the caste question finally, though very late. I'm glad political economy came in, again late in the day. You know we have a strong view in India that OBC mobilization and Dalit politics have actually cracked the sectarianism of religious groups. It has cut into that and has built inter-religious communities, political communities, and social solidarities. So I would urge that when we use the term global civil society and the interconnections on various religion, race, caste, class, language, region, sex, sexual preference – the *intersectionality* should inform the study of religion and religious communities as well as religious traditions. I'm afraid that didn't come up as much as it should have. Again, had we paid adequate attention to syncretic traditions it would have come up.

My third and last point is about the global dimension of this discourse. I think religious studies has developed very much, first in Europe, although not in England so much, then in the US, and now also in England. But there are very few religious studies departments in the third world. I think colonialism had something to do with this fear complex. And now cultural confidence is visible in the third world, civilizational confidence. I mean the Christians of India, who were derided as sort of linked to colonialism at the time, are today very very proud and independent missionaries as well as ordinary citizens. Like Gujarat, the Orissa episode of anti-Christian riots proved and vindicated, some of the propositions that we are suggesting - that it's a society which *has* institutionalized certain tolerance and a politics of human rights; and what connects the local, regional, national with global *is* human rights. I think the entry point to religious studies has to be

the people's rights studies. The right to faith! And that's where the dichotomy between, or the kind of discomfort Ranjana was noticing in the two things. We can take care of that if we have the right to faith, and right to faith goes with other human rights, which makes it mutual, tolerant, a mutual respect - the *Ubuntu!* "I am, because you are" that mutual dependence, mutual development concept of South Africa spoken by Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. So, I think global civil society, once it is grounded in a Human Rights agenda - we have been saying in India "People's Rights" agenda because human rights has been so much identified with the liberal agenda and the globalization agenda of the World Bank and capitalist forces. We are using "People's Rights" as a term to emphasize the rights from below, the People's Movement agenda. And that's why the social movements perspective on religious studies and religion and global civil society will give us some clues to handling some of the problems which arose in this very rich and very fruitful discussion today.

[Mark Juergensmeyer]: The study of religion in American universities has taken a very interesting historical turn, and its not without its political context. Of course, universities in America were originally founded for the training of clergy at Harvard and Yale. But then with the secular revolution and America's independence, and the strong emphasis on separation of religion from the state, it was as much to protect the state from religion, as religion from the state. Seminaries were driven out of the institutions that they themselves had created. So you have a separate Divinity School outside of Harvard, and Yale has a separate Divinity School. The University of Chicago also has a Divinity School at the edge of the university, although Chicago is more integrated within it than others. State Universities did not have any kind theological presence, but they would often cluster at the edge of the Universities. It wasn't really until the advent of the Cold War and the political project for a need to understand the third world, to understand the non-Christian world, that religious studies, as the study of comparative religion, received massive support and encouragement and developed in a remarkable way. So it really has very little to do with theology. It didn't come out of religion, it came out of more of a political project, although the people in the field were really unaware of that and had no idea that there was an agenda behind the creation of their field. So, scholars in the study of religion are not particularly religious. In fact, the Pew Foundation did a survey of the religiosity of faculty within universities in terms of belief and church attendance, and so forth, and what they discovered was that by far the most religious of any faculty were in the sciences - Engineering and the Sciences. If you want to find religious people, you go there. Within the Social Sciences and Humanities there was considerably less and by far the least religious of any departments was Religious Studies. It is an interesting study but it says something about the field.

[Question from unknown person:] This included Divinity Schools as well?

Mark: No, the Divinity Schools were not included in this survey because they are outside of the university. Religious studies was set up to be the study of comparative religion and religious traditions, and we were lamenting the absence of that. Yet, increasingly, what's taught in religious studies is not so much the different religious traditions. In fact, "World Religions", which used to be the staple of religious studies courses, has been abolished in some universities – University of Chicago has abolished it, our Religious Studies Department at University of California, Santa Barbara has abolished it. Why? Because it reinforces the idea that religion is a group of competing organizations, kind of like corporations that compete with one another. Rather, the increasing interest is the trans-religiosity within all societies, the way in which religious traditions interpenetrate each other, the way in which there is a kind of mutuality of spiritual and moral

concern within all people that are expressed in varying ways and not easily always within these compact notions of religion. It seems to me that *this* is the kind of study of religion that is particularly appropriate to India. I say that because having lived in India for several years, in the Punjab, where there is a great deal of religious diversity and yet a great deal of religious interaction and mutual respect. Of course, I came to the Punjab long after Partition, so there were virtually no Muslims on the Indian side of the Punjab. But I found a couple of locations, one in Hoshiarpur for example, where there were Muslims *pirs* who had been protected during the Partition by their Hindu and Sikh followers. Now they live there by themselves, but with all of their followers and they have continued their teachings. Now, what was this? A Muslim thing? Was it Hindu? What was it? Obviously he was a Muslim, he was preaching out of a largely Sufi tradition. When I went to the Pakistani-Punjab, and I went to the birthplace of Guru Nanak, there were, of course, no Sikhs at the shrine, except for one or two helping in the role of caretakers, but it was crowded with Muslim pilgrims who had come to do *namaz* at the shrine of a saint. From their point of view he was a holy person and he deserved respect and there was some spiritual quality to this.

So it seems to me that the religious dimensions of society in India has *always* been a complicated thing. It has been the way in which the world is increasingly going, and against a lot of the fundamentalism, which is a very self conscious reaction because of the fear that there is such a kind of amalgam of religious sentiments that is developing within global culture and global civil society. So that brings us back to the assignment of this day, which I thought was particularly fruitful and interesting and I'm very much looking forward to hearing all of the comment when I go back through all the video tapes. It seems to me that what has been expressed, in many different ways, has been a real understanding of the complexity of the social and religious fabric of South Asian society, and how any kind of simple characterization of it simply won't do. It was something that I discovered when I first came to the Punjab as a graduate student in 1971. I came as a good social scientist armed with questionnaires. I was doing a study of schedule caste religious and social movements, which became my first book and which I'm pleased to say was recently re-issued in India this last year, under the title *Religious Rebels in the Punjab* – that is a kind of immodest promotion of that book, in case your wondering. It was a long questionnaire and I was going to find out all of the things that I wanted to know about the way in which religion functioned within the Punjab villages. There were sixty questions, and I had two graduate assistants who were going to help me with this. I immediately had trouble with the first question, and then the survey stopped dead in its tracks with the second question and I couldn't proceed any further. The first question was "What is your name?" You would think that would be simple and straightforward, but we're talking about scheduled caste people who would sometimes have different names for different purposes! Sometimes they adopt their village names, sometimes their employment names, sometimes they would have a religious name - but what religious name depended on who you were. They were trying to figure out what I wanted to know so they could give the right answer. Including this very simple, and it seemed to me, obvious question, "What is your name?", the second question was the one where we totally floundered. I wanted to know "What is your religion?" "What do you mean?" they responded. My graduate students said, "What do you mean, what word do you want us to use?" I said, "Religion!" They said, "*Sahib*, there is no one word for religion in Punjabi or Hindi or any Indian language. Are you talking about *dharma*, a kind of religious law or religious ethics? Are you talking about Islam, a particular belief? Are you talking about *quaam*, a great religious nation of identity? Are you talking about *panth*, a particular

religious association or community? What are you talking about?" I realized that what I thought of as religion did not exist in any simple way within the Indian religious context. It seems to me that is increasingly a global problem. It's not simply a characteristic of India. It means that what we learn about the role of religion and society, what we learn about the way in which strata and religiosity - whatever we call the various faith communities and traditions with which we are associated - interact and intertwine within the Indian and South Asian context, are increasingly a part of the pattern of global religiosity and global society as well. So I have learned a lot today. I appreciate it enormously, you all taking the time and energy to come together for what I think is going to be a really exciting and useful report. When you see the thing you will be amazed at how brilliant you all sound and how relevant all your comments seem to each other! Even though I know it seemed to you as something disparate, just sitting around and talking, but that is exactly the way good ideas emerge. I thank you for your tolerance and being a part of this experience of today. Thanks for coming!