

1 Buenos Aires Transcript
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3 Universidad del Cema
4 Buenos Aires, Argentina

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6 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Thank you for coming everyone. We are delighted to see you. I
7 am Mark Juergensmeyer and along with Giles Gunn we represent the Global &
8 International Studies program and center at the University of California at Santa Barbara.
9 We are especially pleased that you are willing to come on a Saturday. We know that
10 Saturday is sacred not only in a religious sense but in a family sense.

11 This conversation relates to a project of the Orfalea Center on the role of religion in
12 global civil society. By global civil society we mean that community of citizens who are
13 concerned about issues that are not related to government or profit organizations, often
14 social movements or international NGOs, non government organizations that are
15 involved in human rights or social service activities. The funding that we have for this
16 project expects that within four years we will come up with some materials that will be
17 useful in the classroom for those graduate programs in international affairs that are
18 training students who will become leaders in organizations in the United Nations, in
19 government, in international NGOs. The Luce Foundation wants to have materials that
20 will help people be sensitive to issues related to religion. This doesn't mean that they are
21 trying to encourage people to become religious. This does not mean that they are only
22 concerned about religious NGOs but rather they are aware that increasingly religion plays
23 a role in international politics, international affairs, and particularly if you are involved in
24 human rights or social service issues and if you go from one country to another the role
25 of culture in general is very important, and often the role of religion in particular can be
26 extremely important, for good or for ill. It can create problems but it can also create
27 opportunities.

28 What we are doing in these workshops is inviting people to join us in conversation to
29 help identify some of these issues. That's the idea. To bring academics together with
30 people who work with INGOs. It is an unusual discussion. Often academics don't talk
31 with themselves, but they certainly don't talk with non-academics. In these setting we
32 hope they will do both. People who are leaders within organizations often don't interact
33 with academics but in this context we have issues of common concern. Some of the

34 issues are general concerning the role of religion and public life in general and others of
35 the subjects are very particular. For example... the role of AIDS education. Religion can
36 be very helpful but it can also be very problematic. When the Pope goes to Africa and
37 makes a comment that is profoundly unusual regarding the role of condoms and AIDS
38 this can create great problems if you are trying to prevent the spread of this horrible
39 disease. These are very practical concerns that we will address as well.
40 There is some literature in front of you. You will find a tri-fold that tells about the
41 Orfalea Center and the various projects that the Orfalea Center is engaged in.

42

43 (More comments from **Mark Juergensmeyer** on the materials in the packets)

44

45 I'd like to ask each of us to introduce ourselves. Take a minute to say something about
46 our area of research, our area of intellectual interest or our area of practical work or
47 organization that we are associated with.

48 I have already explained that I am associated with the Orfalea Center for Global &
49 International Studies. My own background is both in political science, I have a PhD in
50 that, but also in religion, I have an MA in that. I have worked in the area of religion and
51 politics for most of my academic career. For the last fifteen years or so I have been
52 interested in the increasing rise of religious conflict and violence around the world. I
53 have a series of books on the rise of religious terrorism and religious conflict, primarily in
54 the Middle East but also South Asia where I have lived for many years and where I do
55 most of my research. I come at these issues with the concern of conflict and conflict
56 resolution and the role of religion as a problem in this area obviously, but also as part of
57 the solution.

58

59 **Sebastian Kobaru:** I studied political science. I am completing a second major in
60 international relations this year. I have worked at the only center for Judaic studies
61 established at the university level here in Argentina. The center here at this university,
62 headed by Jacob Rubel [indistinct] I have volunteered for these events, the previous
63 symposium which finished yesterday and this workshop. Something I would like to share
64 with you is when I sent my CV stating my experience at the center for Judaic Studies no

65 one understood my interest for international relations and the link existing to religious
66 organizations. I must explain why a center for Judaic studies is related or linked to the
67 field of International relations. How we can see religion from a more secular point of
68 view. These clear interactions which can be very evident to people who study the rise of
69 fundamentalism in other countries but can be very difficult for people in other fields to
70 feel and to understand this connection. This really touches me because I always believed
71 these relations this connection was very clear for most people but I was mistaken.

72

73 **Leonor Slavsky:** I am an anthropologist working with indigenous people in this country
74 for more or less twenty five years. My place, my job is on the National Institute of
75 Anthropology, that belongs to the National Culture Secretariat. My research program is
76 on the relationship between the state and the indigenous communities. It is focused on
77 the political relationship between the states, the Argentine state, the province states and
78 the indigenous communities. One of the differences here in Argentina in the relations
79 between the states, and the communities different from the United States is here in each
80 province the indigenous people of each province is in a provisional jurisdiction. So there
81 is a gap between the national jurisdiction and national legislation and the one from each
82 province. This brings some kind of facilities for indigenous people that are more closely
83 related to their own government but also has big difficulties on the real application of the
84 national laws. We have here in Argentina at this moment very good legislation for
85 indigenous people but it is on the national level. The national congress does not have
86 much problem signing laws and then they say we have here the law and now go to the
87 province and try that the government of the province applies the law. This brings many
88 difficulties not only on the state situation but also on the possibilities of local
89 organizations because indigenous people, the Mapuche for example, they live in
90 Patagonia they live in four different provinces have many difficulties to unite themselves
91 and to form a strong organization. In each province they are devoted to the local struggle
92 with the local government that is different. It was different, the relationship they have
93 with the catholic church in each one of these provinces because of the bishops they have
94 there. Two of the bishops in Patagonia were progressive bishops. In the Patagonia
95 provinces there are different bishops. I am working with these subjects and I coordinated

96 several different projects on different issues such as handicrafts for the American States
97 organizations and some projects for UNESCO and UN development program in ICT for
98 indigenous people. I worked also in the Constitutional Assembly in 1994. I worked for
99 the introduction of indigenous rights in the constitution. We worked for two years after
100 that....The national team of pastoral for indigenous people in this country that has a very
101 peculiar history because they are very progressive people and they have many troubles
102 with the catholic church here. We spent two years in big participatory meetings all over
103 the country with indigenous people to see how they want to introduce constitutional
104 norms into law. The important thing is that this change of the national constitution of
105 1994 was very important because since 1853 which was the constitution until this
106 time...the article that talked about indigenous people said that it is the mission of the
107 national congress to keep peaceful relationships on the borders and to convert indigenous
108 people to Catholicism. It was also difficult for other Christian denominations to enter for
109 some time because the constitution was very clear that it had to be the catholic church.

110

111 **Kurt Frieder:** This is supposed to be a federal country but the cash box is managed
112 from here (Buenos Aires). All the problems is that you have the best ideas here but you
113 can't really put them into the provinces into action. I am the executive director of
114 Fundacion Huesped. Fundacion Huesped is the main NGO working with HIV AIDS and
115 related issues in Argentina and probably in Latin America. We are doing many things
116 including how to change the culture, concerning this disease, that is not...it has to be
117 considered interdisciplinary. Religion has not been a big help to us in Argentina as it
118 isn't in most other countries...when Bush started with the ABC program, Abstention, Be
119 Faithful, and use Condoms...did big damage to prevention and to many many people
120 who were suffering. It had only one good result that was in Africa mainly, because more
121 people are infected with the disease. There they have put more money in the TEPFA
122 program. They channeled that program mainly through the religious organizations. That
123 was good because in some countries it was important to talk about being faithful and
124 about starting sexual relations early ...but you cant hold it in the longer term, you have to
125 talk also about condoms. You have to talk about condoms. Not only this pope has not
126 been understanding that condoms is the least of the problems concerning the disease. It is

127 not in the church dogma to use or not use condoms. My background is coming from
128 business administration but I mastered in public health in the university of Buenos Aires
129 15 or 20 years ago. I have been working in this area for 20 years since we decided to
130 found this organization. I was the first president for the first ten years and then we grew
131 so much we had a need to have more organization and I became the executive director.
132 Our president of the foundation is a medical doctor who is more involved in epidemics
133 here in Argentina and he was until last year the president of international aids society
134 main organization of scientists people working throughout the world on the epidemic.
135 This was important for us because it was the first time the president from the National
136 Society came from the south. The next will be an Argentinian living in Canada, Julio
137 Montena. The next will be an African. That is going to be very important. We have to
138 see what is going on in Africa. We are talking about an epidemic that has already killed
139 about 25 million people. That is affecting another 40 million people. Most of those big
140 numbers are in Africa. The explosion of the epidemic has not been seen yet in Asia,
141 where it could be, in India and China especially. Because of cultural hindrance they are
142 not taking the measures that have to be taken especially in India.

143

144 **Carlos Escude:** I am an academic. My field is International Relations. In the 1990's I
145 was special advisor to the foreign minister of Argentina, in regard to Argentina's
146 relations with the major powers of the west. In that role I advocated successfully for
147 Argentina's signature in the non-proliferation treaty. Which is not insignificant when
148 you realize that Argentina is an exporter of nuclear reactors to other countries like
149 Australia. I also advocated for peace with Chile during the 80s. Successfully also. I am
150 honored to say that I was decorated with Chiles highest order. I say this because I want
151 to make it clear I consider myself a man of peace. I am intrinsically, quite the opposite of
152 a hawk. I resigned from my position in the foreign ministry because I wanted to retain my
153 right to say that I do not believe the Falkland Islands belong to Argentina. I believe they
154 belong to their inhabitants. That said, I must also say ever since the 1992 and 1994
155 bombings in Buenos Aires, first the case of the Israeli embassy and then the case of the
156 AMIA which is Argentina's Jewish Community's most important organization. The
157 mutual aid organization, ever since then I have become very concerned with religion

158 inspired terrorism. That is the reason I am sitting at this table. I am concerned not only
159 as it relates to Argentina but as it relates to the world at large. Recently I was in Madrid
160 at a conference and the results of a European poll were presented in very very optimistic
161 terms. It was fascinating. This poll revealed that 65% of the Islamic population of
162 Europe is dead against any act of violence against western civilian targets. The Spanish
163 professor who presented this said, “Look! This goes to show Islam is not the problem.
164 These are wonderful results, we should feel safe.” I said to myself, my god that means 35
165 percent we have to fear. What is 65% of the non-Islamic population of Europe was dead
166 against using violence against Islamic civilian targets? Think of it! If there were
167 symmetry... I am often concerned that a focus on conflict resolution will sometimes lead
168 to a perception of weakness in the minds of those who appeal to religion linked terror. I
169 understand people whose focus is on conflict resolution because in my country I have
170 always advocated for conflict resolution. But on the other hand, the two bombings were
171 very very painful lessons for us. I don’t believe Americans understand that religion
172 inspired terrorism hit Argentina almost a decade before it hit the United States in a major
173 way. I don’t know if you fully understood it when you came here. I think you understood
174 it yesterday.

175

176 **Giles Gunn:** I work with Mark Juergensmeyer and all of our other colleagues at the
177 University of California in Santa Barbara. I have been working for some time in
178 developing and maintain and extending a very exciting program that some of you have
179 heard too much about already in global & international studies. It is an exciting program
180 because what we are trying to do is to explore an interface between what most of us think
181 of as the state system by which the world is constructed internationally and all those
182 things that go on above and beneath that state system and go on in ways that complicate
183 and imprecate or interweave the relations among the political, the social, the economic,
184 the military, the gastronomic, the religious, and the rest. This has been for me, as I think
185 for all of us and for all of us joined in this process a very exciting experience because all
186 of us came from a different place. None of us were trained in doing exactly what we do
187 now. I got a PhD in religion many years ago. I have spent most of my life thinking about,
188 writing about and sometimes, mostly teaching about relations what might be called

189 religion but not so much in its more organized forms, rather in its more underground, not
190 exactly covert because this isn't a matter of secrecy, but hidden forms in cultural life and
191 cultural forms themselves. My interest in the relations between religion and culture circle
192 around, I suppose, a rather simple but rather large interest in what we might call ethical
193 issues. My sense of ethics is a very ancient one though nicely re expressed by the United
194 States philosopher John Dewey, who is one of my heroes. First expressed by Aristotle, of
195 course, which is simply ethics having to do with the question of what is the better life to
196 be led? In that interest I have often found as have many of us, I think, when we pose that
197 question, religion sometimes preventing the asking of the question, or creating the
198 problems that make the question have to be again asked as well as sometimes enabling
199 people formulating images and projects, for understanding the better life to be led. But as
200 in your case with comments that both the American president and the roman catholic
201 pope can make and Carlos about the ways in which indeed terrorisms of various kinds,
202 but lets not forget there are plenty of state terrorisms and particularly those which have
203 been conducted by my state which has in fact with great pride conducted campaigns of
204 terrorism certainly against the Israeli people. Our secretary of defense gave a name to the
205 kind of terrorism that we were trying to produce when we attacked Iraq in the first place,
206 the policies of Shock and Awe. But there are other forms of terrorisms as well. This
207 becomes a very complicated sort of thing. I do find that this is an extraordinarily exciting
208 undertaking, that is, to try to ask the questions if we ask them without prejudice and
209 looking at all the facts. The place and play of religion in the development of something
210 called global civil society. That too is something easily misunderstood and easily in fact
211 sometimes over emphasized. How religion works in ways and with forms of life that are
212 not defined by states and that move in all sorts of irregular ways across the expanse of
213 planetary experience. And it is very important for us to figure out how religion is
214 contributing in constructive ways to these processes and how it is contributing in fact in
215 non constructive processes.

216

217 **Jack Ucciferri:** I am the prodigal son of the MAGIS program. I was in the first year
218 cohort along with Dinah. It is a two year program. At the end of the first year you go on
219 an internship. For me that led to a job. I was working in socially responsible investment.

220 I was working at the nexus of finance and the non profit sector. Now working at the
221 Orfalea Center.

222

223 **Dinah Griego:** Project Coordinator

224

225 **Fernando Lopez Alves:** I was born next door in Uruguay. My parents were immigrants
226 from Spain. So my contact with religion was to hate it simply because my father was an
227 anarchist. He came to Uruguay to organize labor. I grew up playing dominoes, coughing
228 with the thick smoke in my house and my father telling me every single day, probably
229 every other day, “Do you see that building there across the street?” It was a church.
230 “These are our enemies. You shouldn’t go in there.” So of course because he said that I
231 wanted to go in there. Our local priest offered a free movie every Saturday if you
232 attended mass. So I attended mass, which I didn’t understand very much of it, especially
233 because those people dressed in black robes were alien to my imagination. So I attended
234 mass every Saturday. I did it so I could see the adventure so Zoro and Gary Cooper and
235 those old cowboy movies. Those were for free so heck religion was not that bad after all.
236 So I studied philosophy and of course I became a socialist at the age of 14. I started to
237 work in politics a little bit before, at the age of 12. I went with my father distributing a
238 newspaper that the anarchists have, called El Sol. It was distributed in Montevideo. I
239 went with my dad distributing the newspaper. Very soon Uruguay became something
240 different from what it used to be. The military dictatorship came in. Pretty soon we
241 needed to escape, I had not been there not very long. My parents still had ties with the
242 old world, but they could not go back there because Franco was in Spain. In fact the
243 conversation in my home was when was Franco was going to goddamn die so we could
244 go back and retake Spain for the right track. Franco didn’t die. He continued living very
245 healthy as a matter of fact until 1975. By that time we were in Venezuela. I finished my
246 studies in the university in Mont Bolivar. I became an academic. I met somebody who
247 was a professor from the United States who told me I should go there and get a degree in
248 something from the US. So I went to the US and did political science at UCLA. Because
249 I was at UCLA and because political science was going through this big number
250 crunching revolution and because you were told if you don’t do that number crunching

251 you will never get a job anywhere. So I became a number cruncher. And then I got my
252 first job in political science and immediately I betrayed my department because I stopped
253 being a number cruncher. I started doing comparative sociology and all those things that
254 I wanted to do. In that regard I learned more about religion. When I was a number
255 cruncher, my advisor, Ron Rogowski from UCLA who is still around in political science
256 there, he was a very religious guy. He was totally religious. When he invited me for
257 dinner at his home, we had to hold hands and pray before touching the food. This was
258 something very frustrating to me. In my home we just put the food there and everybody
259 helped themselves. So my contact with religion in the US was a little bit different. Here
260 is a number cruncher, an intellectual, someone who I respected quite a lot and he is still
261 religious. I couldn't understand that incredible dichotomy from someone who was
262 intelligent, rational and knew about a lot of things and who I admired. He was a religious
263 guy and I couldn't get that. I couldn't put it together. My relation with religion has not
264 been resolved to this day. My father, his memory on the one hand is telling me don't
265 listen to that, this is nothing but BS and on the other hand my experience tells me
266 different. There is a connection between religiousity and rationality. When I was at
267 UCSB I was director of a program in Washington DC. I directed that four years. I
268 worked for Al Gore when he lost that election. I found out that Al Gore, despite his
269 rationality was also deeply religious. He was working very intensively on 25 NGOs that
270 he leads participates in or is a member of the board. With his deep religious belief that
271 the universe is one and that we are destroying it. This is what interests me about religion.
272 This is what my academic work is about. It is about globalization, Latin America,
273 Europe. This is a good experience for me and my learning process. I am here with my
274 colleagues.

275

276 **Mercedes Carluccio:** I studied international relations at the Monderna University. Now I
277 am working at an NGO called Global Democracy. That is why I am here today. The
278 president of the NGO knows Fernando and I asked if I could be here. This is an NGO
279 that works in researching, studying, and improving international institutions, ones that
280 already exist to empower them more or to create new ones. That is why we work actively
281 in three programs. The South American Union, in the sense of the European union trying

282 to build new institutions over the national level and to help the South American space for
283 starting. The second program is the global parliament. There is a campaign called the
284 UMPA. The united nations parliament assembly. This is a global one, we are working
285 with them. They want to build a global parliament. This is going to take I don't know
286 how many years. The first step for that is to construct an assembly at that level. There
287 are a lot of institutions that do not work. You have to first build the institution and then
288 empower them. This is what happened with the International Criminal Court for
289 example. Just like the international criminal court. The third is the one we do with the
290 International Criminal Court. This is justice without borders. This is the general idea.
291 We have a very big role. We can touch the specific organizations in different points we
292 are an ecumenic organization but we are working researching the difficulties with
293 institutions with this work with religious work. Global warming, green peace they are all
294 different skills but we can touch them all. In all the cases we work with the institutions.
295 The key would be to know to empower and to create more institutions in order to make
296 them more democratic than they are now.

297

298 **Beatriz Gurevich**-I was born in a Jewish family. My grandfather came from Vienna.
299 He created and I was born more or less in an NGO because he was a founder of an NGO
300 in the province of Buenos Aires. A Jewish NGO. From the very beginning he told me,
301 "We are free thinkers. We are of Jewish origin, but God is necessary for immigrants and
302 for other people that have certain problems." My relation with religion was quite
303 difficult. When I had my children I tried to teach them why we didn't need to be neither
304 religious or to believe in God. If there is something descended to man, you may call it
305 God or not. Man is the partner of the creator. The result of this is that I have a very
306 orthodox militant [indistinct], a very orthodox militant daughter of the Habad movement.
307 I got to know that relations with religion is not so easy. I entered to the delegation of
308 Jewish organizations here in Argentina in 1989 when they made research about Jewish
309 people during the dictatorship. That was my first contact as a professional with an NGO.
310 I also worked with people of the World Jewish Congress. We had some special events in
311 Geneva. I was director of the diet social studies center for ten years. As Carlos said
312 yesterday, during that period, we had the terrorist attack. Really, my first [indistinct] was

313 human rights. I researched what they call missing people. We had a journal of social
314 sciences. After that in 1992 the Argentine president, Menem said he was going to open
315 the Nazi archives. Many people, when they arrived to Argentina, the press, they had a
316 great deception because they were nothing like the national archives. So at the Center we
317 decided to create a research project to collect documents about that period. For that we
318 created an academic committee. War criminals and collaborators. Carlos was on the
319 committee and other scholars were advisors. I learned a lot about intolerance. Difficult
320 to accept what they call the other. Religious violence was not only physical violence, but
321 mental and emotional violence. From that time on, I think that is working with human
322 rights also. I got quite interested in violence. What is violence? How violence is related
323 to cultures and religions. Not that religion stimulates violence but along the whole of
324 human history there is much evidence of how in the name of God, in the name of religion
325 or in the name of scripture there is violence, so I got interested in that topic. After the
326 bombing I became obsessed and I began researching. What happened first with the
327 families of the victims? What happened with the leadership of those NGOs? From two
328 approaches, physical and emotional, I saw affective retraction. Instead of being sensible
329 to –reacting like, taking an emotional distance from the problem. When you have an
330 emotional distance and that is clearly in the name of rationality. I began studying that
331 experience. What happened to the people who were secular and what happened to the
332 people who were religious? How are they related to violence? First in the jewish
333 community and then I had several interviews with new muslims after the 2001 2002
334 economic and financial and political crisis in Argentina. I learned how religion can help
335 recuperating values and hope.

336 I began looking to RSC and how NGOs can articulate with RSC. I recently had a very
337 interesting experience. When you speak about global civil society that is global but it
338 must be studied thinking globally and acting with knowledge about the local. That is
339 important to be successful from my point of view. I will my experience. I don't know if
340 any of you have gone to Bangladesh. Perhaps you have read the book by Yunus?
341 Muhammad Yunus. It is fascinating what he wrote, but if you really know the culture of
342 the place you can connect. If not it is impossible. You cannot apply the same rules or the
343 same criteria when you are applying it to different cultures. Part of his success, from my

344 point of view, is that he knew the problems of gender and the difference between the way
345 women and men act in Bangladesh. Now I'm going to jump to a very complicated
346 experience and I am very emotionally involved and intellectually involved also with this
347 kind of association and articulation between RSC and ONG because I am very proud of
348 my son. He decided to create something in Bangladesh and he wanted to create an ONG
349 with very little money. He knows very well the culture in Bangladesh. The great
350 problem, women, over ninety percent, are illiterate. They can't write. But they are very
351 responsible, from his point of view very smart, very creative. He decided to speak with
352 some people from different industries and to make an agreement. In Europe Carrefour
353 and other companies are part of global civil society and they are looking forward to a
354 better world, ecology and human rights, etc., so they are willing to invest, not large
355 quantities of money, but small quantities of money. He made an agreement that the
356 owners of those enterprises would allow their workers, instead of working for two hours
357 or three hours each week, to take classes and to learn how to write. Carrefour and other
358 companies would pay the wages as if they were at work and the ONG would also pay for
359 these workers to attend classes. Now they are working with the University of Barcelona
360 and for a very low cost, now there are 700 women who can read. Nokia is developing a
361 kind of a game to become literate with the cell phone. I think you can involve ONGs
362 with enterprises, with locals and develop programs. Of course it is important to organize.
363 Cooperation between enterprises and ONGs is very interesting. This is quite an
364 interesting model, especially in Asia.

365

366 **Victor Faessel-** Program Director of Orfalea Center. I oversee implementation of all of
367 the Orfalea Center's programs at UCSB. I have a research background in mythology,
368 pagan mythology at the heart of the Hebrew bible. I continue to be interested in myths as
369 they are alive today. I have done a small bit of work working for small NGO in Oakland,
370 California bringing art and education programs to East Oakland children.

371

372 **Rebeca Gonzalez Esteves-** I am a graduate student of political science here at UCEMA.
373 I am working as a volunteer in a catholic NGO supplying solar energy to rural
374 communities in Santiago [inaudible] a very impoverished province in the north of our

375 country. Although we are a catholic NGO we do not teach the bible or do any kind of
376 propagandist activities when we go to Santiago. Our goal is moved by the idea that it is
377 important for these people to feel part of the country before they can feel part of the
378 world. They are isolated and they are completely uncommunicated in a province that has
379 a very limited communication network. We think it is extremely important for them to
380 feel part first of the province, then of the country that actually cares about them. We
381 come from Buenos Aires a part of the country they have never know or never been to and
382 they see that they are not left out, which is a feeling that most of them have. They were
383 not willing to receive us when they thought that we came from the government. But
384 when they heard we were from an NGO and a catholic NGO then they accepted us.

385

386 **Kurt Frieder**-The church and the NGOs still have a good good reputation. Not the
387 government, the army and the police, not the politicians.

388

389 **Mark Juergensmeyer**: What I was getting at was if it was an international organization
390 they have not heard of they might be suspicious because they didn't know anything about
391 it, but the church they know of.

392

393 **Rebeca Gonzalez Esteves**: Exactly. This can be considered sad in a way because maybe
394 a Jewish organization might go and they might know nothing about a Jewish religion and
395 they might be skeptical about the intentions they have and their intentions are good.

396 Being mostly a catholic country in Argentina, people tend to relate mostly to the church.

397 I do not support. I am a catholic I come from a catholic family and I went to a catholic
398 school but I have my own opinions about some issues as Kurt said before, about AIDS.

399

400 **Kurt Frieder**-I am glad to be here because what every one else said has to do with the
401 objectives of the millennium goals, they will not be accomplished anyways. Six of the
402 eight objectives of the MDGs have to do with HIV AIDS. When we are talking about
403 culture and religion and NGO work around the world, we are talking about the same
404 thing more or less, we are talking the same thing, we are talking about it from our own
405 point of view, but we are talking about the same thing.

406

407

408

409 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** We have really only one formal presentation... but I appreciated
410 Giles's remarks at our previous workshop. I asked him to repeat some of these comments
411 as a way of helping to focus our discussion. Take a few minutes to do that and we'll
412 come back to some of the issues that you raise as well as some of the issues that have
413 been raised already in our conversation as we've gone around the table.

414

415 **Giles Gunn:** Thank you Mark and thank you all. Some of the things I will be saying
416 have already been mentioned. Part of what I will be doing is reorganizing some of the
417 thoughts we've had and raising some other issues. I'm not going to read this exactly, but
418 I'm one of these people who doesn't always remember what he wants to say unless he
419 has a text to look at... When I first accepted the assignment to think a little bit about
420 religion and global civil society, I wondered if I had anything to say at all. It wasn't
421 because I don't know something about religion, because I do. For forty years, I've been
422 thinking about it, working on it. But at the same time I asked myself "What do we all
423 know?" Even if I don't think I know very much in particular, as indeed some of you do.
424 And I would say that what most of us do know is that religion has been engaged in
425 contacts with ever widening, ever deepening public spheres for a very long time. That is,
426 public spheres that could be distinguished from, on the one hand, personal life or the
427 marketplace. On the other hand, it could be distinguished simply from institutions of
428 political governance. Religion, from the time it really became visible to us as itself, has
429 been involved in public life in one way or another. The second thing we all know is that
430 this process of religions going global by going public, going into worlds of civic life,
431 began to occur from the moment that religions started to create for its communicants
432 what we might call, and sometimes do refer to as, translocal social identities that
433 permitted and/or encouraged extensive mobilization - getting people in motion, if not
434 actually physically then certainly moving about in their heads. To put this more directly,
435 systems of belief and practice that we call religious for one of any number of reasons
436 began to penetrate public life because religions began to evolve centrifugally. They did
437 so because at crucial historical moments they began to reach out from their places of

438 origin and to embrace or to conquer other faiths and other cultures. The big picture story
439 is that this happened with the big eight, as they are sometimes referred to. Christianity
440 and Islam, for example, found the mobilizing power of faith very often linked with
441 military and cultural power. As in Confucianism, however, and in Hinduism and Jainism
442 and Sikhism, the mobilizing power of faith was linked rather more to its capacity to
443 absorb indigenous faiths - turn them into something new and special. In any case, thanks
444 to the creation of clerical hierarchies, which were allied to social as well as economic and
445 political elites, and also various kinds of theological innovations, particularly things like
446 universal schemes of salvation - how to get saved, how to get delivered, how to get
447 helped - this has made it available to more and more people. Religion spread to and
448 penetrated more and more of the spheres of ordinary life.

449

450 I won't go on with that story, but that's one of the things that we do know - that religion
451 from the beginning has always been going not just global in a certain sense, but it's been
452 going public just by virtue of what religions are.

453

454 But the second thing I think we know (this is just to comfort myself a little bit) is that we
455 all know we're living in a moment now when at least some in some quarters, in some
456 places on the globe, global civil society, as it has come to be called, is regarded not
457 merely with a kind of quasi-religious devotion. It's also regarded itself as a quasi-
458 religious object. Typical of the enthusiasm it engenders even before the subject of
459 religion is introduced, is the following comment which I randomly plucked off the web,
460 putting in "global civil society" and this is what came up: "Global civil society is a social
461 expression of the awakening of an authentic planetary culture grounded in the spiritual
462 values and social experience of hundreds of millions of people." Here global civil society
463 is already a religious formation since it not only springs from the spiritual values of
464 hundreds of millions of human souls, but has awakened, and brought into being, "an
465 authentic planetary culture." There is no admission that the spiritual values of its
466 representatives and devotees may occasionally be in conflict (some who are in this for
467 AIDS relief may have very different values than some other people who are in this for the
468 sake of something else), nor that the production of single culture that unifies the social

469 experience of millions of individuals may involve a political struggle with real winners
470 and losers, nor that the claims for a culture that is authentically planetary opens a thicket
471 of questions both about how the planetary can be recognized and what comprises its
472 authenticity, nor, for that matter, that religion, whether organized or unorganized, creedal
473 or aspirational, militant or pacific may have designs of its own.

474
475 No one here, of course, would take such an effusive expression seriously, but we do need
476 to remind ourselves that, just as global civil society can be misleadingly viewed in
477 universal, univocal terms, so too can religion (and often inaccurately - it isn't a single
478 thing.) Most societies are made up of many religions - some recognized, some not; some
479 indigenous, some vernacular; and others more obviously institutionalized and seemingly
480 official. We have all heard the kind of talk that implies that global civil society is
481 essentially unified in its aims (the reduction of human suffering and the spread or
482 improvement of human governance) and speaks, or should speak, with one voice on the
483 global stage (the voice of speaking truth to power). In addition, we are all familiar with a
484 different tendency in some quarters to suggest that global civil society's location, at least
485 with regard to the state, if not with regard to the market, can be spatially fixed and
486 morally justified (it operates below the nation state for the most part and adopts or
487 represents a politics premised on human dignity, equality, and justice, or it operates
488 above the state where it's trying to organize transnational modes of coordination and
489 policy reformation). But unless there exists already, as well there could be in some
490 minds, a religion of global civil society, just as there is, for example, a religion of
491 American civil society (and there is one, and it's a big time deal), which we usually refer
492 to as American civil religion, each one of the key terms in the title of this discussion –
493 “global,” “civil,” “society,” and “religion” – are in different ways problematic and
494 unstable and we would do well, if we are not to avoid a good deal of confusion and
495 inaccuracy, to try to remember this as we have been already.

496
497 What I want to do is make a couple of observations about the problematics of these three
498 or four terms. As far as “society” is concerned, the question would be whether global
499 civil society is and can be treated, as it sometimes seems to be, as a trans-local mega-state

500 with purposes of its own and power sufficient to influence states and sometimes to resist
501 their alliances and coordinations or whether it's something more disparate, more
502 haphazard perhaps, more chaotic in some of its relations, and sometimes more self-
503 contradictory as it is at least in the US. That is to say, many of the institutions of global
504 civil society do not speak with one voice. There are real tensions among them. That's part
505 of the problem of why they can't get more support from more people. That's obvious to
506 everybody and especially to those of you who work in them.

507

508 The second issue is what we mean by the word "civil" when we connect it with the word
509 "society." In the American socio-political context, which is only one of many and
510 possesses its own peculiarities, the borders between the civil and the political, as well as
511 between the civil and the economic or commercial, are in fact very porous - we'd like to
512 think they're distinct, but they're certainly not. They often merely define another space
513 where power, frequently in the form of symbolic capital, is constantly being negotiated
514 and renegotiated in ways that are sometimes decidedly uncivil – and all the more so as
515 this space becomes as virtual as it is real, a site where the terms of discourse, far from
516 being reduced to mere images, have become instead, as only predictable in an age of
517 simulation, mere images of other images - how to get your message out, how to define
518 and differentiate yours from somebody else's, what sorts of appeals do you make on
519 behalf of your own causes, don't you have to rely on not just the cultural vocabulary and
520 images in your own place but indeed those which are calculated to evoke certain
521 responses, whether the relationship between the image and the response is always the
522 right one?

523

524 The third term worth conjuring for a moment is the highly contested notion of the word
525 "global" whose many meanings are far too numerous to rehearse here. But does the
526 "global" in civil society describe a social formation that is merely multinational and
527 transnational in its reach or one that is simply potentially beyond the national altogether?
528 Is this a difference in degree or in kind? What difference does it make to the operations
529 and scope of civil society if the term "global" is a difference in kind or a difference in
530 degree?

531

532 Which brings us to the term “religion.” The question being why religion, or the religious,
533 has become involved with global civil society *now* in this late modern or postmodernist
534 moment. The usual answer – I’m thinking of political theorists like William Connolly,
535 Stephen White, Roland Bleiker, and others – is what is referred to as the uncertainty
536 produced by globalization. It destabilizes, not reinforces. This uncertainty has produced
537 new problems of identity across the globe (as well as security, as well as authority),
538 which has generated the search for new, more stable foundations. And the search for
539 new, more stable foundations generally takes one of two forms:

540

541 1) The desire to legitimate global civil society ideologically – hence the quest for some
542 new form of cosmopolitanism (universal justice without borders, international criminal
543 structures) that embodies a recognition of people’s equal moral worth, their active
544 agency, and what is required for their autonomy and development. To many non-
545 Westerners, however, this seems to be a decidedly European adventure or perspective
546 that not only places a premium on liberal commitments to reason and tolerance but that
547 runs the risk of involving what Kant called “radical evil,” by which he meant the
548 process whereby we turn the objects of our enlightened interest, first, into the objects
549 of our pity, then into the objects of our wisdom, and finally into the objects of our
550 coercion.

551 2) The desire to intervene in the practices of global civil society and inform or reform its
552 agenda ethically – hence the search for fundamental, sharable values that don’t need
553 the support of absolutist or orthodox corollaries: avoidance of serious harm,
554 amelioration of urgent need, seeing from the other’s point of view, redefining the
555 notion of the neighbor.

556

557 But this raises the question of where religion ends and the foundational or the normative
558 begin and the possibility of ever finding the kind of substantive, universally applicable
559 principles of justice that we all yearn for.

560

561 In conclusion, I want to refer to the terminologies of one of the great philosophers of
562 Western liberalism, sorry to say he's Western, namely John Rawls, who tried to define
563 the universal standard of justice but became skeptical of his own project in later years
564 precisely because he came to recognize more deeply "the pluralism of comprehensive
565 religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines." For another great liberal philosopher, the
566 late Isaiah Berlin, pluralism meant that basic values were essentially incompatible,
567 incommensurable. For Rawls, on the other hand, pluralism meant that there could be
568 "reasonable agreement" about values. The challenge was to find what "reasonable"
569 meant, and in this case Rawls was seeking for what he called "overlapping consensus"
570 among different value systems, different people, different projects in a world of
571 increasing interdependence and connectivity. My own view would be that's probably our
572 best hope. That is to say, we're not going to get universal agreement across any cultural
573 divides - whether they be nationalistic, religious, gendered, sexual, whatever they may be
574 - but that are completely shared. We may find that we can define with care, as we look at
575 the projects we're undertaking and see what ends they are seeking to serve, places where
576 there is an overlap in the things that we are all working on.

577

578 In this quest I personally believe that we are going to have to exercise the "wariest of
579 wary reasonings" (Clifford Geertz) to get it right, or at least not to get it wrong. Indeed, I
580 would say that in attempting to assess the effects, for good or ill or something in between,
581 of religion on global civil society, we are going to need to learn how to think and feel a
582 little less like a philosopher, to paraphrase the modern US poet Wallace Stevens, who
583 "probes the spheres of perception and moves about therein like someone intent on
584 making sure of every foot of the way" and instead think a little more like a poet intent on
585 what she "sees and hears, and the sense of the certainty of the presences about her is as
586 nothing to the presences themselves." Logic may not help us as much as intuition,
587 imagination.

588

589 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Very good. Thank you, Giles. This reminds me about what I
590 liked about your comments in May and what I like about them now. I'd like to open the
591 conversation in general. I'll try to move it in a direct way and suggest the relevance of a

592 couple of things you were saying to, say the problem of AIDS research in Argentina and
593 AIDS education. Particularly when you talk about the ambiguity of religion, what
594 religion is (or religions), and the possibility of shared common values, I'm wondering
595 aloud whether we make too much of religious opposition and too much of what the Pope
596 says, for example. There was a study done in Italy a mile from the Vatican on the effect
597 of the Church's dogmas on people's thinking. Ninety percent of the Catholics (and they
598 were all Catholics) within a mile of the Vatican use condoms and have no use for the
599 Church's teachings on birth control. They believed that divorce was often a good thing.
600 They had no problems with homosexuality. All of these issues, literally within the
601 shadow of the Vatican, they cheerfully ignore them. It seem to me that when people are
602 propelled, not just by church teaching, but also by a sense of common values, a sense of
603 decency towards people, and self-interest (what is going to be useful in saving their own
604 skin and useful for their own lives) this can trump or at least ameliorate the teachings of
605 the Church. So, first of all, the question for Kurt...

606

607 **Carlos Escude:** But I think... I'm sorry... but I think some very deep some very deep
608 concepts have been put on the table. Before we go to the nitty gritty specifics, we should
609 discuss the more general concepts.

610

611 Giles presentation is very interesting, conceptually a very profound presentation. I have
612 some problems with it. And if we jump directly to the NGOs, then we're going to be
613 bypassing the major problems. I think this has to come first. I promise to be brief. I will
614 be quoting myself from an article I published in May 2002 in LTLS, and in so doing I
615 will be posing two mutually incompatible propositions.

616

617 1. If all men and women have the same essential human rights, then all cultures are not
618 ethically equivalent. Because those cultures that have discovered that all men and
619 women are created equal so to speak are ethically superior to those that have not.

620

621 2. If all historically rooted cultures are ethically equivalent, then all men and women are
622 not endowed with the same essential human rights because some cultures award some
623 men more rights than they award other men and women.

624

625 These two propositions are mutually incompatible; they are mutually exclusive. You
626 cannot take them both. You have to take one or the other. Global civil society can only be
627 considered under the premise that all men and women have the same essential human
628 rights, or created equal if we want to use the terms of the American “Declaration of
629 Independence.” This is something that I have to grapple with. I for one, as Habermas
630 before me, think that cultural relativism, which is what all this leads to, in its most
631 extreme form is incompatible with the West’s discovery, so to speak, of human rights.

632

633 Global civil society is what I yearn for but I can only accept a concept of global civil
634 society which is anchored on the idea that all men and women are created equal.

635

636 **Giles Gunn:** I agree with everything you are saying. Now, where am I missing it?

637

638 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** I don’t agree with everything you say because here is the subtext
639 of what you are saying and this is the assumption that you gloss over: that there are
640 civilizational or cultural structures that provide a template of a certain kind of mode of
641 behavior that then provides the opportunity for greater ethical behavior in some
642 societies...than in others. It is the assumption that I find problematic. That is that there are
643 impermeably and in an absolutistic sense such organizations.

644

645 **Carlos Escude:** We are talking about historically rooted cultures. If the Saudis ever come
646 to the idea that mutilating a woman’s clitoris is bad, then they will have evolved towards
647 our conception that all men and women are created equal, but as long as they have not
648 their ethos is inferior ethically to ours.

649

650 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** That is a good example because the number of people within that
651 culture accept female circumcision is, in fact, in the minority.

652

653 **Carlos Escude:** Wonderful, but it is the law of the land in several African countries. It is
654 Sharia that would be imposed by many fundamentalist Muslims.

655

656 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** It is like saying that because there are still niches occasionally in
657 American society and there is a pervasive institutional racism in American society (that is
658 something that's debated in American society) but ...

659

660 **Carlos:** I am not talking about marginal races in the United States or anywhere else.

661

662 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** But the point is that, and this is where Giles's comments were
663 helpful to try to deconstruct the notion that there are these absolutistic...

664

665 **Carlos Escude:** Let me try to reconstruct it. I think this logical exercise is wonderful for
666 reconstructing - for deconstructing the deconstruction.

667

668 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** This is why I am turning to the practical instance. This is exactly
669 the example of the Pope saying you should not use birth control. Within a mile of the
670 Vatican, ninety percent...

671

672 **Carlos Escude:** My dear Mark, I was born under Catholicism, and I ceased to be a
673 Catholic precisely because I disagreed. If you are going to be consistent with yourself and
674 you are within a mile of the Vatican and you disagree with the Vatican, then you should
675 not be a Catholic. This is why I underwent circumcision in September last.

676

677 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** I understand what you have done. But even if you delve deeply
678 into a religion with a structured community you are not going to find all of the resources
679 you might need, nor will you agree with all of its tenets. You are always going to be
680 burdened with that contradiction, I think. Now we're turning back to Kurt... this is an
681 academic discussion but it has the practical consequences on how you think about what
682 you are doing.

683

684 **Kurt Frieder:** What Giles presented is theoretical, useful thinking that has much to do
685 with his background and much to do with being from the Occidental civilization. And on
686 the other side, what Carlos is bringing is the real fact that what is going on in some parts
687 of the world goes against that way of presenting it. If I look at it from the point of view of
688 what I am doing, the Pope and the condom example is irrelevant. It is something else that
689 has been like that for many, many years already, and nobody really feels even one mile
690 from the Vatican that they shouldn't be using condoms. As I said before, condoms are
691 not in the dogma of the church. There were no condoms 2,000 years ago and nobody
692 thought about condoms then. What is really in the dogma of the church and is much more
693 important, going back to Argentina, is that we have 500,000 women that undergo
694 abortions every year, and they have to do it in a clandestine way because the church is
695 against abortion. Probably most of the people here in the room would be against abortion
696 when we look at it from a theoretical point of view. But when we go to the practical
697 things that civil society has to deal with on a daily basis... and global civil society is
698 something that evolves all the time. It changes, and the way of thinking the whole time is
699 not the same with religion. What we see is, from those 500,000 women who undergo
700 abortion, about 50,000 die per year. I am talking about Argentina. I am not talking about
701 the world. 50,000 die each year because it is clandestine. If they would undergo those
702 abortions in the hospital or the health system, they wouldn't die. There is where you see
703 that even from an ethical and a quality of life point of view, religion is clashing with
704 reality. That is what worries me. When Carlos was talking about the stoning of women
705 in other parts of the world, here we don't stone them (women), we tell them they are
706 going to die having an abortion. That has to do with the church, and that has to do with
707 religion and not only with the Catholic religion. All religions have their fundamental
708 part. They can't part from it because it has to do with the origins. They don't become
709 more modern.

710

711 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** But it also has to do with who owns religion - that is, in whose
712 interest the proclamations are given. Who is it that is speaking for and on behalf of

713 religious institutions? If you poll the Catholic population of Argentina would most people
714 be in favor of the legalization of abortion?

715

716 **Kurt Frieder:** I don't know. Most people, more than religion, have their own cultural
717 background that they have learned from their mothers and so on. It is not only the
718 hierarchy of the church.

719

720 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** They want to try to control their own faithful by
721 institutionalizing this through the law, through institutionalizing the state. It is not just a
722 matter of trying to pressure the state. It is trying to get the state in order to support the
723 church to strengthen their own leverage with their own constituents.

724

725 **Giles Gunn:** How do you combat this in Argentina? What appeals do you use to try to
726 change people's minds about this in order to change their practices?

727

728 **Kurt Frieder:** You have big discussion about those things in many countries in Europe
729 and even in the United States. You have to try to work culturally. You have to try to
730 change their culture really. The church, the NGOs, those are the groups in society that
731 are being seen as valid references and that are looking out for people. You have to get
732 them to work towards those things that change the quality of life.

733

734 **Giles Gunn:** But one of those things you did that shocked all of us hearing it for the first
735 time was that you made the appeal to human life when you said that 500,000 women
736 have to go outside the system to get abortions in the first place and that condemns 50,000
737 to die. What you were doing in effect was playing off one system of values, all of the
738 socialization, institutionalization, "relig-ification" of norms which the Catholic Church
739 can be said to be responsible for, that has said this is an evil against something else that
740 we have come over the years (despite the Catholic Church sometimes) to feel is sacred,
741 namely, life itself - namely the prospect of the kind of suffering that is associated with the
742 loss of 50,000 young and older women and what that does to families and what that does

743 to everybody. By using even that fact you have already entered a new discourse that is a
744 very powerful discourse.

745

746 **Kurt Frieder:** When you are talking about countries like this one where the church has
747 such a big impact in the government. In those countries, you have to have the church on
748 your side if you want to save the lives of those 50,000.

749

750

751 **Mark Juergensmeyer** ... or people within the church. What Giles is saying is, you are in
752 fact taking the church's argument and using it against it. In other words, if you are
753 arguing against legal abortions for reasons of morality and the dignity of life, morality
754 and dignity of life is a better argument for the legalization of abortion than against it
755 because of the loss of so many lives, because 50,000 women's lives are lost every year.

756

757 You can take this argument to people within the church, and this gets back to who owns
758 the church. Yes, there will be authorities and hierarchy within the church who will never
759 bend, because this helps prop up their own positions. But there are certainly large
760 numbers within the Catholic community that will immediately see the logic of this and
761 will be able to embrace this position, not going against the values of the church, but
762 shifting the values of the church in order to support it. This is exactly what is happening
763 in European countries that have been able to successfully have votes in favor of, there are
764 people within the church, not necessarily the hierarchy, but lay communities within the
765 church who argue (Catholics for Just Society, or whatever) that come and support the
766 legalization of abortion for moral and spiritual reasons because it promotes the dignity
767 and sanctity of life.

768

769 **Kurt Frieder:** But, Mark, here in Argentina, like in most countries in Latin America,
770 access to the health system is Darwinian. Only those that are in a better position, who are
771 culturally in a better position, who are more aware, those [people] access the system. It
772 has to do with poverty, with the level of knowledge. It happens with the aborigine
773 population and it happens with the poor population. There is a huge problem of poverty

774 in Latin America. When you talk about this specific thing, you see that those women who
775 are in a better position, they go through safe abortions. The problem is for poor women.
776 The 50,000 that are dying are poor women. They can't access because they have no
777 money, no knowledge. That is not exactly the same as what is happening in Europe. In
778 Europe you have big parts of the local Catholic population who are going against the
779 hierarchy and are changing it. You can't do this in Latin America. That worries me
780

781 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** But why? Because there are larger...

782

783 **Kurt Frieder:** Because I'm looking at public health. I'm looking at quality of life. It's
784 more than AIDS.

785

786 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** What about the native population? They are becoming catholic.
787 Are they embracing all the doctrinal positions.

788

789 **Leonor Slavsky:** It's complex. It's a complex landscape. Further, I want to say that I
790 agree with what Kurt said because the key is to think about how Argentina is going
791 global.

792

793 We have in this country and all of Latin America... It's not only a matter of cultural
794 pluralism, it's a matter of inequality. There are big parts of society that are out of the
795 judicial system. So how do we think about them when they live in poverty and they don't
796 have access to the health system. They don't have access to the communication system.
797 They don't have cell phones. How can we speak of them as becoming global? In all of
798 Latin America, and many other countries in Africa and in Asia, this is the situation. One
799 part of society, and we could discuss how, but it is going global, but it's a big part of the
800 country that's out of the markets, out of the health system, out of the educational system,
801 and out of the communication system. So it's very difficult to think globally in these
802 countries which are very different, even in relation with religion. Latin America,
803 especially Argentina, is very different from the US in that relationship with religion. In

804 the US it is difficult to think of a political candidate that does not address religion. In
805 Argentina if a political candidate speaks about religion, we think he is a little bit crazy.

806

807 **Carlos Escude:** Think of the dollar bill, Mark. “In God We Trust.” We’re not trusting
808 any God nowadays. [laughter]

809

810 **Beatriz Gurevich-**The name of the book is one nation under God. You can’t say that for
811 Argentina - “one nation under God.” This is a Catholic country because there is a legal
812 link between the Catholic Church and the state. Here we have a state religion. You can’t
813 think here about a political candidate speaking about religion. It is not politically correct.

814

815 **Giles Gunn:** That is part of the symbolic repertoire of terms that you use in order to do
816 something quite specific that does not necessarily have to do with religion. You are
817 saying I am a worthy human being, or you’re saying I’m somebody you can trust. You’re
818 saying, I am somebody who is sufficiently humble who consults with higher powers or I
819 serve a higher power. Whatever you’re saying, it is all coded language.

820

821 **Leonor Slavsky:** It is important, that coded language. The symbolic level is very
822 different.

823

824 [indistinct discussion]

825

826 **Beatriz Gurevich:** What I think about the possibility in Latin American culture is to
827 change the orientation of the church, and I think it is very, very difficult in my opinion.
828 What I think we can do to act globally in civil society, dealing with religion, is first to
829 think about shared values and substantive things. For example...if you read about
830 neurobiology and the possibility of creating human races - scientific human races - to act
831 on men and women to modify [indistinct] and eggs, to create special human races (Let’s
832 say I need people of one meter high and very strong to work the earth, and I can create
833 just such a species.) What does it [the church] imagine of a superior and inferior race
834 created by man? All churches share common values about these substantive topics. So I

835 would intend to create a dialogue about specific topics that would help bring together
836 thinking about these topics dealing with the future of man on the basis of techno-
837 scientific advances. I don't believe very much in these universal, huge projects of
838 changing the world and democracy. I think it is more an intellectual game. I think there
839 are very practical things and we should think about them. Things that looked years ago
840 like a fantasy and now there is a real probability that they will be part of our problems in
841 ten or fifteen years. Why not look to those topics, put them on the table and begin
842 speaking about what is legal and what is legitimate. If there is a legal framework to
843 control these advancements, global civil society might have the possibility of controlling
844 through public opinion in a certain way. As Carlos once told me...

845

846 **Carlos Escude:** Nothing invented is ever disinvented. [laughter]

847

848 **Mark Juergensmeyer:-** I think you are right. I think that's the project that Giles, in
849 quoting John Rawls, was after. I think you are absolutely right and yet very quickly you
850 run into values and ideas shaped by specific religion and also the power structure, the
851 benefit to elites of particular hierarchies of taking certain positions because it helps to
852 support their own roles.

853

854 It's still not quite clear to me what you were saying about religion's role in public life in
855 Argentina. Our simplistic impression from the US is that in most Latin American
856 societies the church plays a strong role behind the scenes. Leverage of power helps
857 support and select political leaders. I have a sense you are saying that is not the case in
858 Argentina.

859

860 **Leonor Slavsky:** If we are talking about the Catholic Church, it is not the same in every
861 Latin American country. We have a different Catholic Church in different Latin
862 American countries. Here in Argentina we have a Catholic Church that is very close to
863 the political and economic power, but it does not have such an influence in every day life.
864 The stories you have heard today are not exceptions in South America, particularly in
865 Argentina. In Argentina, it's quite a secular society, and that is why the church can say

866 no to abortion and no to divorce and people will do it anyhow. There is a difference
867 between the intervention of the church in the political level and the church in everyday
868 life. Here in Argentina it is not like in the US where most of the people belong to a
869 religious community. [In Argentina] most of the people do not belong to any religious
870 community. Even if they say “I am Catholic. I am a Jew. It is the story of my family. It
871 is my personal identity.”

872

873 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** What about the indigenous community who have now become
874 Catholic? Are they more subject to the church?

875

876 **Leonor Slavsky:** There are very different situations in Argentina. The northwest of
877 Argentina was conquered and dominated by the Spanish people at the very beginning of
878 colonization, but there are two parts, Chaco in the northeast and Patagonia in the south
879 that were conquered: Patagonia in the last decades of the nineteenth century and Chaco in
880 the first decades of the twentieth century not by the Spaniards but by the Argentinians.
881 The northwest is mostly Catholic, but they sustain variations of the Andean religion -
882 Mother Earth, Pachama, there is a whole cycle of ceremony throughout the year related to
883 these initial religions. So you have syncretism in some ways between the Andean
884 religions and Catholics.

885

886 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** On these particular issues, for example, abortion or use of birth
887 control, are they more susceptible to following the dictates of the Church or less?

888

889 **Leonor Slavsky:** Much less susceptible. In the family structure, it's stronger in the
890 ancient culture. They have different systems of marriage and of bringing up children. In
891 the Northwest, it's a very different situation. People in the northwest are mainly
892 agricultural cultures and in the northeast they are hunter-gatherers, and they were
893 evangelized mostly by non-Catholic Christian denominations mainly from the US-
894 Anglicans, Menonites - and a big part of that society has a religion of their own. It is the
895 only indigenous religion that is recognized by Argentinian government. There is a
896 mixture of the Christian religion and the ancient religion, and the main part of the

897 ceremony - it's a healing ceremony - is linked with the old shamans. There are different
898 branches of this church. And now they are discussing whether they are going to allow
899 other people into that church.

900

901 In Patagonia you have a very different situation because you have Catholics, non-
902 Catholic Christians, and a very strong movement to recover the ancient religions. This is
903 happening all over the country. Even here, they are even inventing ceremonies.

904

905 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Will this make Kurt's job easier when he goes to the indigenous
906 community in the North this week?

907

908 **Kurt Frieder:** The problem is not the people, the problem is that the laws don't go with
909 the people.

910

911 **Leonor Slavsky:** If you are a middle class woman, you go to your gynecologist and say
912 "I need an abortion." They probably will do it. You won't have any problem. You can go
913 back to your house and everything would be all right. But if you are of lower class, you
914 have to go to the hospital, and most of the physicians will not do it. They say, "We have
915 to ask the judge if they'll allow us to do it." So they don't go to the hospital. They go to
916 the midwife and many of these women die because of complications.

917

918 **Kurt Frieder:** I want to add that there are also a lot of superstitions going around in the
919 general population.

920

921 [Multiple people talking, in English and Spanish]

922

923 **Kurt Frieder:** That is usual for all Latin America. Besides that, in Central American
924 countries, the church is much more important than here. In all those countries, what the
925 church says is what has been done, and that's a problem.

926

927 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** But these folk customs, folk attitudes, do they help your work or
928 make it more difficult? How does that factor in?

929

930 **Kurt Frieder:** It depends. I can't say, really. It's difficult to deal with all those things
931 when you have a standard health system, like Leonor mentioned before, where they have
932 to follow their rules. And the rules are according to the local law. It's complicated. If we
933 go back to AIDS and we look at the US and remember a doctor of medicine who was the
934 head of the CDC a few years ago, but before that she was in a general hospital in San
935 Francisco at a time (sometimes even today) when in most of the US it was not allowed to
936 practice harm reduction - distribution of needles and things like that to drug users. But in
937 the hospital she distributed needles and syringes and things like that, and nothing
938 happened although it was not allowed by law. She took it on herself as a practitioner and
939 nothing happened. Here you wouldn't be able to do something like that if it is not
940 allowed because doctors are afraid, much more afraid. Later on, she became the head of
941 the CDC. That happens in the US. I remember something Ralph Thornbush, the Nobel
942 Prize winning economist, said when Argentina had a huge economic crisis in 2002, when
943 everything was burning. Somebody interviewed him because he came here to see the
944 problems. Somebody asked him why Argentina was different than other countries. He
945 said, most countries have a system of flexible laws that are applied rigidly, but Argentina
946 has a system of rigid laws that are applied flexibly. [laughter, chatter]

947

948 **Beatriz Gurevich:** I was saying that when I was doing research as part of a committee on
949 pro-Nazi, pro-fascist activities, I had to go to Sweden and to Italy, and I discovered a
950 very important document from 1938 prohibiting the entrance of Jews to Argentina. Jews
951 entered Argentina constantly. That resolution was negated by the [Argentinian] president
952 in 2005. That's what happens in Argentina. You have very stupid laws. You can talk
953 about global civil society, but you have to get to know the cultures, the values, the codes
954 of the countries in which you want to act. It is impossible to create global civil society or
955 create global interaction if lots of groups speak absolutely different languages of values
956 and customs.

957

958 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Mercedes, you haven't said anything yet, but this is a good point
959 to ask you something. Is the concern with global democracy done differently in
960 Argentina? Do you speak differently in Argentina than you would someplace else? Is
961 your message or way of operating culturally different in Argentina?

962
963 **Mercedes Carluccio:** Yes, I think that it is different. Before that, I have the impression
964 that the link between religion and people here in Argentina is closer in the poor people
965 than in the middle and upper classes. When you go to the church, for example, you see
966 many rich people or higher class people in the church. But then when you see poor
967 people, when you are in touch with them, when you see what the people from the
968 churches are doing, it has a big impact in the shanty towns.

969
970 **Leonor Slavsky:** Argentina is a country that has a population that has been cut in the
971 middle by the big emigration at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the
972 twentieth century. This pocket of immigrants forms the middle class. Italians, Spanish,
973 Japanese, people from all over the world that came to this country with some
974 peculiarities. They came from places where they were hunted politically in Europe. They
975 were running away from hunger and persecution, even the Jewish population. The Jewish
976 population came here and they were not religious people because the conditions in
977 Argentina were not ones that led to a religious life. People who were religious went to
978 the US. We (in Argentina) have a very secular Jewish community. That began to change
979 in the sixties when the conservative movement came here.

980
981 The Creole population was cut in the middle as well. We have Creole population in the
982 upper classes and we have Creole population in the lower classes. Before, they were more
983 linked with the church because the church is linked with the upper end of society and the
984 political and economic power in this country. Probably the most dogmatic Catholicism
985 that you can find in Argentina is in the upper classes. The lower class has another kind of
986 Catholicism that is like the one Kurt was talking about. There is a popular Catholicism
987 that has to and does not have to be aligned with the Catholic Church. It has the form of
988 the Catholic Church. It has popular saints - people who die young in violent forms. They

989 become pure spirits who you can ask for help. There is a lot of that - different saints, a
990 saint for the job, the saint for health, and other saints that can help you if you're in
991 danger. In the shanty towns there is another Catholic movement. Such as, the progressive
992 priest that works in the shanty towns to help the people, to help to organize people. So it
993 is a very heterogenous situation. So, you can't talk about the Catholic Church as the same
994 in the upper class, middle class, and lower class. There are different scenarios in the
995 different classes.

996

997 **Sebastian Kobaru:** I come from a very conservative Catholic family. It's very clear that
998 the Catholic Church in Argentina doesn't have a common enemy to fight against, and that
999 makes the institution a very complex one. And it accommodates different discourses to
1000 different parts of society. Bishops send the more conservative priests to the more affluent
1001 neighborhoods, and they send the more progressive priests to the poorest areas to make
1002 them with this side of society to improve households and education and various
1003 conditions. Contrary to the Brazilian case, where the Catholic Church is united against
1004 its new enemy financed by the Bush administration - the Christian evangelical
1005 denominations. In Argentina, evangelicals are very strong but not incorporated into the
1006 mainstream discourse. It is very strong on the streets, but is avoided by media and it has
1007 not been taken into account by the church as an enemy to fight against.

1008

1009 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Your understanding is that the Bush administration has funded
1010 or, as a matter of political policy, supported evangelicals in Brazil? This is news to me.
1011 This is not something that is known in the US. I was curious were this perception comes
1012 from.

1013

1014 **Sebastian Kobaru:** It is the same case in South Korea, for example, were Christian
1015 Protestant churches receive funds from the establishment.

1016

1017 **Giles Gunn:** We could see the sympathy the Bush administration would have for
1018 evangelicals, but that it's actually supporting them and maintaining them would be...

1019

1020

1021 [Chatter from various voices, debating whether this idea is a rumor or conspiracy theory]

1022

1023 **Kurt Frieder:** Evangelical churches are very proactive and working very strongly in the
1024 lowest parts of society in Latin America. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church feels very
1025 strong, and it is not doing too much. In many sectors of the lowest portions of society, the
1026 evangelical movement is growing more and more.

1027

1028 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** One of the things in the US you'll discover is a lot of the
1029 evangelicals carry with them social activists and welfare programs. Is this also the case in
1030 Argentina? [agreement from various voices] So much of the NGO work comes from
1031 religious movements that have a religious agenda.

1032

1033 [chatter from various voices]

1034

1035 **Carlos Escude:** If I may add something here - I have had a fascinating experience
1036 because before I decided to convert to Judaism, I was declared agnostic, and as such I
1037 was invited to a television series which recorded 24 shows and was very popular
1038 throughout Spanish-speaking America. And this series had a panel of five religious men
1039 and an agnostic, yours truly. So I would sit in the middle of the panel and to my left I
1040 would have the evangelical pastor. And I befriended the evangelical pastor and went to
1041 his evangelical parish in a middle class neighborhood in Buenos Aires. And the amount
1042 of people flocking to this church (which was humongous) was very impressive. They
1043 would produce musicals in Mataderos which were marvelously performed. They were
1044 providing a social service that went way beyond religion, and I have the greatest
1045 admiration for what these pastors are doing, the ones I knew.

1046

1047 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** But they also do the work of NGOs.

1048

1049 **Carlos Escude:** For all practical purposes they could be considered NGOs, yes. But it is
1050 a great contribution to the larger society. For people who had no access to musical

1051 culture, here they are producing musicals themselves of a very decent nature. You're
1052 entertained. I admire what they're doing.

1053

1054 **Leonor Slavsky:** With indigenous people, they identify the Catholic Church with power,
1055 with the government. So they prefer to go to the Evangelical Church. And because they
1056 don't have the difference of status that exists in the Catholic Church, they can become
1057 pastors themselves. There is the idea that also exists in the native people in the United
1058 States that the gospels were rejected by the white people because, through their acts (the
1059 way that white people act) shows that they reject the gospels. So they think they are the
1060 real Christian people through these evangelical churches that are very small, and they feel
1061 that it is their own.

1062

1063 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** So the Evangelical movement is even stronger among the
1064 indigenous population?

1065

1066 **Leonor Slavsky:** Yes. Today, yes.

1067

1068 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** How strong is the evangelical movement? 50%? 75%? Do
1069 people retain both identities?

1070

1071 **Leonor Slavsky:** In the Northwest, probably 30%, but in the Northeast maybe 90%.

1072

1073 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** They have left the Catholic Church, or they go to both?

1074

1075 **Leonor Slavsky:** They have their own Evangelical Church. And in the South there is
1076 maybe 30% Catholic and maybe 30% Evangelical and the rest are rescuing their own
1077 ancient religion.

1078

1079 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** And do they have their own NGO work, that is in terms of
1080 welfare, development, education, social services, AIDS education? Probably not. The
1081 evangelical churches...

1082

1083 **Leonor Slavsky:** They have their own churches, but they are political and human rights
1084 organizations more than NGOs that collect money.

1085

1086 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Does this make Kurt's work easier or more difficult? I am
1087 concerned about you Kurt. [laughter]

1088

1089 **Kurt Frieder:** I think it makes it easier. Of course this makes my work easier. First of
1090 all, because evangelical churches do not have the same views as the Catholic Church has
1091 concerning sexual reproductive rights and AIDS and things like that. That makes it
1092 easier. There is something else. In the Catholic Church there has been a change where the
1093 gap is growing between the hierarchy and the priests that are working in the community.
1094 It is a growing gap here in Latin America. People don't believe in the hierarchy. But on
1095 the other hand, the priests that are working in the communities are finding solutions. The
1096 priests that are working in the communities are working with the Evangelicals and the
1097 Jewish community. You find this in social welfare specifically.

1098

1099 A few months ago there was a big problem in Argentina where a priest denounced the use
1100 of drugs in the youth. It became an issue. He was menaced by drug dealers. It appeared
1101 in the newspapers and so on. There was a big movement in support of this priest. The
1102 rabbis and the Evangelical pastors were with him and working together with him against
1103 the drug dealers. That was really great because the social movements that are working in
1104 the poorer parts of society were working together and the hierarchy had nothing to do
1105 with that.

1106

1107 **Giles Gunn:** Hasn't that been happening in other parts of Latin America - liberation
1108 theology, for example?

1109

1110 **Kurt Frieder:** In Brazil.

1111

1112 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Liberation theology never caught on in Argentina?

1113

1114 **Kurt Frieder:** No. It was opposed by the hierarchy in both places, but the Brazilian
1115 version was much stronger.

1116

1117 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** But there were theologians in the seminaries who favored it.

1118

1119 **Beatriz Gurevich:** You should take into consideration that in Brazil, in Uruguay, in
1120 Chile the Catholic Church is not linked to the state, and here it is. And that makes a
1121 strong difference.

1122

1123 [chatter]

1124

1125 There is a common interest between all religions to work against drug addiction. It is
1126 necessary to work on substantive things that have overlapping consensus. To be more or
1127 less successful, you must work on what already has overlapping consensus.

1128

1129 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** What should we learn about the role of religion in civil society
1130 in Latin America as a whole and Argentina in particular? Can we generalize in the case of
1131 Argentina to Latin America as a whole? If not, why not? What is it we “gringos” should
1132 know from you?

1133

1134 **Leonor Slavsky:** Argentina is a special case, even in Latin America. We can't
1135 generalize. If you compare Argentina with Brazil, the Church is a result of a historical
1136 process. Even when (from outside) it seems to be seen as a whole, each country in Latin
1137 America has a very different process from the aboriginal population that was here when
1138 the Spanish came that is different in Brazil or Peru or Argentina. And the way the upper
1139 class is constituted is very different in these different countries. So it is not possible to
1140 make a generalization.

1141

1142 It is necessary to work on different levels. The level of religion, the relationship between
1143 different religions in our countries, shapes opinion. It has to include other points of view.

1144 The Evangelical churches in Argentina are also very different, one from another. It
1145 depends on the region of the country. In the Northeast, you have to work with the
1146 Evangelical churches to get to the people, but not in other parts of the country. But each
1147 case is a different case

1148

1149 **Kurt Frieder:** I agree with Leonor. It is difficult to say. I don't have a conclusion. The
1150 problem we are having in Latin America is poverty. Religion is not the problem, and that
1151 goes beyond religion. Religion is not the issue. It does not appear in the news. Nobody
1152 cares about that. Nobody is too worried what religion will say about one thing or another.
1153 The problem is inequity. The problem is that in this part of the world we have the biggest
1154 gap between rich and poor people. Women are especially vulnerable. The youth are
1155 especially vulnerable. Those are the real issues, the social issues we have to tackle.
1156 Religious groups and leadership could have a large task to do if they would switch from a
1157 pragmatic point of view to one where quality of life would be on the top of the list.
1158 Unfortunately, religions usually come after the fact, not before - they don't lead. Only in
1159 the lowest communities you can find pastors, priests, and rabbis that really entertain the
1160 problem, but that also has to do with poverty. From the point of view of the health
1161 situation - and in AIDS specifically - religion is not helping really, but it is not hindering
1162 too much either. It is not the issue. It is not the problem.

1163

1164 **Carlos Escude:** Argentina is a country which has very secular middle classes which are
1165 probably the most important single factor in its political arrangements, notwithstanding
1166 the constitution is tied the church. That is a paradox.

1167

1168 The second thing is really unrelated to anything we've discussed here today but is linked
1169 to the issue generally. Traditionally, anti-Semitism has been politically correct with
1170 Argentina's upper classes, especially Argentina's traditional upper classes. This may
1171 have happened in the US before World War II. It certainly happened in Britain in World
1172 War II. The Americans learned from the holocaust and the experience of the war. So did
1173 the Brits. The Argentines were very far away from it. They did not learn. That continues
1174 to be the case here. But to some extent things are changing, or there is a lot of movement

1175 in opinion. For example, the day I met you all, I had makeup on my face. I was recording
1176 a television show by Argentina's most influential, right of center journalist. The man has
1177 been traditionally an anti-Semite in a very discreet way. He published opinion pieces
1178 decades ago talking about the Jewish problem. Now he decided to converse with me in a
1179 TV show cast called "Classes," like university classes, where he converses with an
1180 academic. And he converses with me about my conversion to Judaism. He has suddenly
1181 become the most affable, tolerant person, and he is showing this personality to the public.
1182 So, things are changing.

1183

1184 **Kurt Frieder:** I want to say one more thing. In Latin America, we don't have
1185 fundamentalism religions. That happens in other countries, but we don't have it.

1186

1187 **Carlos Escude:** When we consider the Muslim population of Argentina, we have two
1188 different waves. We have the first wave, which was mainly made up of Sunnis who
1189 blended into society, who rapidly forgot Arabic and learned Spanish. Most of them were
1190 secularized. They mixed with Christians. They are a part of Argentina's general
1191 immigration as the Spaniards, the Italians, or the Christian Lebanese. In recent decades,
1192 there is a new phenomenon. People who migrated principally from Lebanon who were
1193 not Sunnis, but Shiites, have formed a very odd, new diaspora which, ever since the
1194 bombings and ever since the Argentine states' direct accusation of Iran as a major culprit
1195 in these events, is beginning to behave as a Tehran-centered diaspora. Some of these
1196 people are fundamentalists. Hezbollah is an important force among them. Hezbollah
1197 flags can be seen in popular rallies of picketing organizations, even here in Buenos Aires.
1198 This is an entirely new factor. It is a 21st century factor. It has only been recently that the
1199 Argentine judiciary went after the Iranian officials that our judicial system considers to
1200 be responsible for the attacks. The fact is, we have a new factor here. These people are
1201 fundamentalist.

1202

1203 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** I believe what Kurt was saying referred to the Christian
1204 community, but what about the Evangelicals? It depends on what you mean by
1205 fundamentalist, I suppose, but is there not a fundamentalist strain?

1206

1207 **Beatriz Gurevich:** Let's distinguish between the fundamentalists and extremists. From
1208 what I know, there are not Evangelical extremists. We saw, as Carlos said, the first
1209 perception of these political militants of Shiites after the judiciary implicated the Iranian
1210 diplomatic officials as co-responsible for the bombings with Hezbollah. But this
1211 movement began after the Islamic revolution in Iran. There was an old mosque, but in
1212 1980 there was a mosque that was a center of religious indoctrination. But if you look at
1213 their websites, they teach Islamic political science. They teach Islamic political science
1214 and other science related to politics in common with the Koran. What they are doing is
1215 trying to create a general consciousness about a new way of ruling the world through the
1216 movement that is essentially solidarity. In 2006, we organized a roundtable where we
1217 invited a Shiite leader because of what happened with the caricatures in Denmark.

1218

1219 **Carlos Escude:** This was a round table on the subject of caricatures of Muhammad,
1220 denials of the Holocaust, and painting of pornographic canvases of the Virgin, Mary. We
1221 lumped them all together, and we asked the question "Should freedom of expression be
1222 constrained?"

1223

1224 **Beatriz Gurevich:** This group was quite intolerant. It was surprising. When I asked
1225 about Hezbollah, they told me "Hezbollah is not a way of invasion into Argentina. It is a
1226 universal movement to solidarity. We are making a contribution to solidarity and new
1227 kinds of equality in politics in the country." It is very interesting how they are moving
1228 with the grassroots social movements and how they are moving among the poor in
1229 Argentina. In that sense, they are building part of global civil society from below in the
1230 region. It is not only the Muslim community.

1231

1232 **Carlos Escude:** They have great influence in picketing and organization. The Chavez-
1233 Iran link leads through the Chavez-Kirchner connection and leads to the importation of
1234 very strong Islamic influence. You can't underestimate it. They are activists.

1235

1236 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** What is the percentage of Muslims in Argentina?

1237

1238 **Beatriz Gurevich:** It is supposed that there are 700,000 Muslims in Argentina. Shiites
1239 are around 7-8%. That's a report to the State Department in 2006. [chatter] What you
1240 must understand is that here they are not working only as a religious movement,
1241 proselytizing and trying to make more Muslims. If you look at the website of Hezbollah,
1242 the Koran is mentioned, but there is no mention of the content of the Koran. But one
1243 thing that they said was that the main discourse of the Koran is about solidarity and
1244 equality. They don't mention any part of the text but the ethical conception. They are not
1245 only recruiting people to become Muslims but to become part of a transnational
1246 movement of solidarity based in the Koran's values.

1247

1248 **Carlos Escude:** Yes. And the same thing happens with Chavez in Venezuela, not just
1249 simply tolerating, but instigating the conversion of massive quantities of indigenous
1250 peoples. But, leaving that aside, there is another factor that must be considered. This new
1251 wave of Muslim people that arrived in recent decades was largely influenced by people
1252 who fled Lebanon when Israel invaded Southern Lebanon. My sympathies are with them.
1253 I'm in no way speaking against them. They are by nature enemies of Israel. They have to
1254 be, and it's natural that they be enemies of Israel. And by extension they consider
1255 themselves enemies of the Jews.

1256

1257 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** Mercedes, we didn't give you an opportunity to respond to the
1258 general issue.

1259

1260 **Mercedes Carluccio:** I really don't have much more to say after all these experts speak.
1261 But I agree with Leonor that Argentina is a different case. It is not that Latin America is
1262 heterogenous. Argentina is the complex one. When you see the map from Mexico to
1263 Argentina, as you go down, the link is less strong, the link between religion and society.

1264

1265 **Beatriz Gurevich:** I have a different perception. It is very difficult to think of Latin
1266 America, and even more so at this time. Yesterday, Carlos spoke about Bolivia and the
1267 indigenous cultures of Bolivia. Bolivia is absolutely different from all other Latin

1268 American countries. Argentina is different from Chile and Uruguay. Because Chile and
1269 Uruguay are two countries that in the decade of 1930 had a separation between church
1270 and state. And their development was much more liberal.

1271

1272 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** What difference does this constitutional connection make within
1273 Argentina?

1274

1275 **Beatriz Gurevich:** The church is still an important power, and political actors should
1276 take into consideration (if you read the newspapers today) political actors have to take
1277 into consideration what the church says. Because the church is also linked to economic
1278 power, and before the 70s the church was linked to economic and to military power.

1279

1280 **Carlos Escude:** The hierarchy of the Argentine church was an accomplice of the military
1281 dictatorship. The hierarchy of the Chilean church was the enemy of Pinochet.

1282

1283

1284 **Sebastian Kobaru:** For example, in Uruguay, the Catholic Church is a minority. It is not
1285 a majority. It is a very secular country. Even the numbers are very different to the
1286 Argentine case because you can differentiate in Argentina between the denominational
1287 Catholics and the mass-attending Catholics and everyday-practicing Catholics.

1288

1289 **Mercedes Carluccio:** The power that the Catholics have here, the link between the
1290 Catholic Church and the government, doesn't imply a connection between religion and
1291 society. There is something missing there. It is not always the case that the practices
1292 between the government and the other structures of power go down to the society. It
1293 doesn't mean anything - what we see in the newspaper. There is a division somewhere
1294 between power and society.

1295

1296 **Rebeca Gonzalez Esteves:** I also believe Argentina to be a very particular case among
1297 Latin American countries. I went to Mexico two years ago for an exchange program. I
1298 was shocked to see that everybody was Catholic, at least they seemed to be a practicing

1299 Catholic. Everyone went to mass, or so they said. Here, at this university, we have people
1300 from the Jewish community and from other communities because Argentina is a much
1301 more diverse country when it comes to diversity of religions. So I realized on that trip to
1302 Mexico that Argentina really is as different as some people say it is, and when seen from
1303 abroad I realized Argentina was not as Latin American as I thought it was.

1304

1305 **Kurt Frieder:** We feel Italian. [laughter]

1306

1307 **Carlos Escude:** I think I'll share something that all my Argentine colleagues share, and
1308 that is, Mark, you are really a wizard at generating brainstorm.

1309

1310 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** It's funny - we came here with a sense that Argentina was a little
1311 different but shared some of the same concerns. We go away feeling both things are more
1312 extreme. Argentina is a lot different but shares a lot of the same concerns. All of these
1313 global issues are very much alive and present in Argentina but very much in a special
1314 Argentine way. We will create a report that will reflect both the distinctiveness and the
1315 commonality of the issues that we have discovered here in Argentina. Giles, would you
1316 like to add a word before we close up?

1317

1318

1319 **Giles Gunn:** The only word I would say is the word that Kurt left us with which troubled
1320 me because I don't know how to fit it in. But he brought us back to the notion that the
1321 circumstance is poverty. Poverty both as it affects the global south and also particularly
1322 Latin America. That is something that both falls outside some of the parameters by which
1323 we define global civil society. Even though global civil society should be working on it,
1324 and in his case it is working on issues of poverty. The other side is that religion is not
1325 doing a whole lot about that. Religion, in fact, insofar as it is in support of the elites in
1326 this state, isn't doing anything about it - at least the most powerful agencies of religion.
1327 The ones who are doing something about it are the Evangelical Christians. Your
1328 Evangelical Christians may or may not be fundamentalists, but, in the US, a
1329 fundamentalist is not somebody who is a militant. It's rather somebody who is going

1330 back to the fundamentals of the faith, and, in fact, in their politics they tend to be
1331 separatists in the sense that they are not withdrawing from society as creating little
1332 substitutions and replicas of society in which they can live the way they want to live. The
1333 way they want to live, interestingly enough, is often intimately linked to American
1334 popular culture. That is, they use all the agencies of what globalization has brought from
1335 internet connections, to new kinds of schooling, to the integration of sports, family,
1336 schooling, marital counseling, etc. to live a life that seems to be segregated and special
1337 and unique, but that is in fact tied in kinds of ways to the world around it. But it is the
1338 poverty issue that is so striking. We haven't talked about what to do about it, or what
1339 religion could do about it, or how global civil society could mobilize to engage it. That's
1340 not the elephant in the room, but that's certainly one of the things we all know is one of
1341 the great challenges of civil society. Unless it addresses those problems, it won't matter.
1342 And it also connects to the creation of dissident, militant, transnational religions of
1343 minorities or sects which can feed off such things and are themselves the products of
1344 such things in other societies.

1345

1346 **Kurt Frieder:** The point where this extremism comes in is poverty. It's always around
1347 poverty.

1348

1349 **Mark Juergensmeyer:** This has to do with another project of ours at the Orfalea Center.
1350 We have a report on the workshop of Women, Culture, and Development in South Asia
1351 with an emphasis on women in poor and developing societies.

1352

1353 You've been very patient and very considerate in sharing your ideas and insights. Thank
1354 you again for coming.