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The role of religion in the longer-range future, April 6, 7, and 8, 2006

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THE ROLE OF
RELIGION IN THE
LONGER-RANGE
FUTURE

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UNIVERSITY

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Frederick S. Pardee

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THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE LONGER-RANGE FUTURE

April 6, 7, 8, 2006

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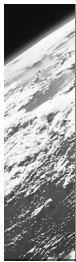
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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Peter Berger
A Tour d'Horizon

In a global overview of the situation of religion in the world, let me first say what I think is very important—that is, what the situation is not. Social scientists, historians, and many theologians are still of the opinion that we live in an age of secularity, that the big challenge to religion is secularism in one way or another. There are some reasons for this notion. I, myself, along with most sociologists dealing with religion, believed that this was in fact the case when I started out my career, but I think it is fair to say that this theory has been massively falsified. We do not live in a secularized age. We live in an age, in most of the world, which is passionately religious. The world is full of enormous explosions of religious fervor, and I think it is fair to say that there is not a single major religious tradition which has not had such explosions from within its community.

There are two most significant explosions of this sort, looking at it globally. One, of course, is very much in the news because some of its aspects are very disturbing. That is resurgent Islam. If you look at Islam worldwide, it would be a big mistake to think of it simply as a terroristic, violent, anti-Western movement. Most of the Islam resurgence is religious in character, doesn't have a political agenda. It has to do with huge numbers of people either continuing, or in many cases, quite dramatically returning to a way of life which is marked by Islam. That Islamic resurgence has an enormous geographical scope.

The other major explosion is somewhat less known, and this is Evangelical Protestantism, which is an enormously dynamic movement. Its most significant component is Pentecostalism. Our research institute at Boston University did original pioneering research on this phenomenon 20 years ago. We started out with Latin America, the principal investigator being a British sociologist, David Martin, who has written a number of books since then. He now estimates that there are at least 250 million Pentecostals in the world.

Now, the general statement I made is that the world today is not secularized, most of it; it is passionately religious. There are two big exceptions to this state-

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ment. One is geographical; the other is sociological. The geographical exception is Central and Western Europe. When you get to Eastern Europe, you have a different ballgame. What I say doesn't apply to say, Russia. But Western and Central Europe, what used to be the world of Latin Christianity, is highly secularized.

Like every phenomenon, when you look at it more carefully, it becomes more complicated. Europe is not quite as secular as it first seems, but certainly compared to most of the world and certainly compared to the United States, Europe is exceptional. The other exception is not geographical, but sociological. There is indeed a rather thin but very influential class of people internationally, broadly speaking, a sort of intelligentsia, which is indeed secularized. What has been called a culture war in the United States is a very clear expression of this. We now know from lots of polling data that the single most important factor of whether people vote Republican or Democrat in the United States is how religious they are. This goes across all religious groups, more important than class, race, sex, or age.

Similar fights between a secularizing intelligentsia, cultural elite, and religious populations occur elsewhere. Turkey is a very good example, India is a very good example, and Israel is a very good example. In each of these cases you have a state which was established by a very secular elite. In the case of Turkey, militantly so; in the case of India, less militant; Israel, less militant, but still very secular. Zionism used to be a secular nationalistic project, and increasingly this elite which set up the state is in conflict with a religious population which really has different visions of what the society should be like.

Let me make another very basic and important point. I made the point that modernity does not necessarily lead to secularization, to a decline of religion. It doesn't, and the United States is one of the chief examples of this. What I think modernity pretty much necessarily leads to is pluralism, which is a different story. What do we mean by pluralism? Well, very simply, it means that people live in social situations in which they have to rub elbows with lots of other people with different world views, values, belief systems, moralities, etc. That has an enormous effect. Modernity means massive migration of people, including travel, tourism, but also permanent migration of millions of people who then



suddenly find themselves in new situations with which they interact. Through most of human history, people lived in social contexts in which there was not total, but very strong consensus on basic questions of “What is the world like? How should we live? What is good and evil?” etc. And, “To what gods should we pray?” That kind of consensus is broken down by modernization. Instead, you have a competition between different religious, moral, lifestyle views.

Now, what are the consequences of pluralism? The institutional consequence is quite simply that a market of religious options appears. Churches and other religious institutions lose the monopoly status that they used to have. What it means on the personal level is in some ways even more interesting; you could say the market becomes internalized. Individuals, even those who are not particularly given to philosophical reflection, are forced to choose between the various religious options that are available to them in this market situation.

This can be very uncomfortable to many people, and uncomfortable to me. The reaction against this is militant reaffirmation of a particular alleged truth. That is essentially fundamentalism. It is a term I am not very happy with. It seems to me that we should call fundamentalism a reaction against relativization, which is a very different thing from tradition. When you have traditional religiosity, religion is taken for granted. This is very difficult now, and when you want to reaffirm a traditional truth, when you become neotraditionalist, the whole thing becomes a much more fragile and almost inevitably intolerant thing. The “Other,” who doesn’t agree with you in the traditional situation, is not a threat. It’s like if someone in this room said that the Earth was flat—we wouldn’t be threatened by this.

There are two forms of the fundamentalist project. Both are difficult under modern conditions. One is more ambitious, which is to transform the entire society in such a way that one can again be certain about basic truths. That, if you will, is a totalitarian project, and very hard to do under modern conditions.

The more modest fundamentalist project, which is a little more realizable, is, if you will, the sectarian version, where you let the society as a whole go to hell in a wheelbarrow, but you create a subculture, a sect, an enclave within the society, and in that enclave you create a taken-for-granted religious world.

I have to say some things about future prospects. I am nervous about predicting things that may happen next year. I sometimes wonder, had a sociologist equipped with all the paraphernalia of modern research been transported back in time to the early 16th century and hung around Germany and other parts of Europe, would this person have predicted the Reformation? I think not. It happened in ways that would have been very hard to find.

Let me make a few hesitant generalizations. The most important is that in all likelihood, the overall situation that I have described—that is, most of the world being very religious, a few places less religious—I don’t think this would be reversed. I see no signs, for example, that the United States is becoming less religious. I see no signs that Europe is becoming much more religious, and the same is true elsewhere. Sure, some things are unpredictable, but I don’t see a reason for thinking there will be very dramatic changes in the near future.

The demographic situation today gives us a pretty good idea of at least what it’s going to be like 30 years from now. We know very clearly that there is a big shift going on between the developed and developing world. In Europe, the shift is dramatic: declining birthrates coupled with longer life expectancy, and when you look at that trajectory down the road, it is very troubling. In the meantime, in the developing world, you have this enormous population explosion, which will be eventually reversed, but in the meantime the difference is going to be very big indeed. Philip Jenkins has written eloquently about this. Some of you will have read his book *The Next Christendom*. He makes the obvious case that the future of Christianity doesn’t lie in the north, it lies in the south, globally speaking. Increasingly, what is vital about Christianity is not coming out of the enlightened milieus of Europe and North America. If you take the Catholic case, the very things that Catholic intellectuals in Boston or in Amsterdam find troubling about the Pope, the present one or his predecessor, is what delights people in Africa or in Latin America or in the Philippines.

Recently, a very interesting article was published in *Foreign Policy* by Philip Longman. He says that the relative demography of religious and secular populations is also changing. American Judaism is a very interesting case of this. Secular Jews have low birthrates like secular Episcopalians or any other upper-



middle-class group. Orthodox Jews have a lot of kids. Some sociologists dealing with American Judaism have said that 50 years from now, the great majority of American Jews will be orthodox.

On the future of Islam, I suspect that outside, nonreligious factors are going to be very crucial as to what happens there. It will make an enormous difference whether what we would call moderate Islam gets stronger and has a foothold in a number of strategic countries, especially in the Middle East, which will encourage this development in other parts of the Muslim world. It is unfortunate to have to think in those terms, but I think it will be more decided by weapons in Iraq than by the work of philosophers at various universities.

The future of Evangelical Protestantism, the other big explosion that I have mentioned, certainly is going to continue in Latin America. It is unlikely to become much bigger, but it is huge already. Very much will depend on China: how is China going to go on policies vis-à-vis religion? If the government, as apparently it already has started to do, is more tolerant of Christianity, including Evangelical Christianity, chances are we may see an explosion of Christianity in China, not too dissimilar to what has happened in Latin America, which again will make a very big difference, given the almost inevitable future of China as a great power.

The most important thing that is happening in Europe, as far as religion is concerned, is the challenge of Islam. There are now maybe some 15-20 million Muslims within the European Union, many of them—I'm not talking just about the radicals—are unwilling to play by the old European rule, which means complete religious freedom, but keep it private. That is very hard for Muslims to take. How Europe will respond to this challenge is going to be extremely interesting. One possibility, as certainly the present Pope is counting on, is a revitalization of Christianity, and a thinking back again on the Christian roots of so-called European values. I don't know whether this is going to happen, but it is a possibility.

In the United States, as long as present demographic trends continue, the United States is going to be more religious, not less. While each one of these topics one could talk about for hours, let me make one fairly certain prediction. Religion will continue to be a centrally important factor on the world's scene.

SESSION ONE

Charles Harper

The Great Dilemma: Science, Religion, and the Human Future

I want to talk about something called the “dilemma of power.” So what is this dilemma of power? It starts with a bumper sticker. I would define it as follows. The dilemma of power is the fact that science and technology create new forms of power rapidly, whereas cultures and civilizations do not so easily create the parallel capacities of stewardship required to utilize newly created powers for benevolent use and to restrain them from being used to serve malevolent ends.

Let's go to the start of universities. Roger Bacon's most famous discovery as a scientist was the recipe by which “the sound of thunder may be artificially reproduced by natural causes.” He had been researching Arabic texts, and he came upon a recipe for exploding powder, which may have come from China. He said, “a little [of this powder], fitted to the quantity of a thumb, makes a horrible noise and wonderful lightening [here is the key], whereby any city and army may be destroyed.” So here is a scientist, an early university leader, in the very first century of the rise of the great universities in the West, and he makes this amazing discovery which had not been used for military purposes previously. Now, within a hundred years, cannons are used in fixed emplacements throughout Europe. A hundred years later, in 1449, in the Battle of Formigny in Normandy, I believe it is correct that gunpowder is used in mobile cannons for the first victory of the French against the English. Within four years of that time, this new technology transforms the politics of Europe.

Fritz Haber, a chemist, won the Nobel Prize in 1919. In 1909, he made this great discovery in Germany. This is his first experimental apparatus for the making of ammonia from air, basically from nitrogen in the atmosphere. Just within the space of a few years from this scientific discovery by a chemist, the world was transformed. The most spectacular use of this discovery from Fritz Haber was fertilizer: cheap, easy, manufacturable fertilizer. Today, about 50 percent of the food we eat is due to this discovery of Haber's.



Now, when ammonia was mass-produced in Germany, it had two uses. The fertilizer was very important, but it was used for war immediately. Dresden after World War II—all of that explosive power was due to this development of Haber’s method of manufacturing ammonium nitrate for explosives. He wrote, “The great technical accomplishments that the past 50 years have granted us, when controlled by primitive egoists, are like fire in the hands of small children.” This is an example in the life of one great scientist, like Einstein, of the dilemma of power.

The spirit of innovation cannot be stamped out, nor should it. But it can be directed and controlled by equally powerful human impulses of responsibility and love. Humanity cannot unlearn nuclear fission, for instance, but it can control the use of the world’s uranium. Nor is technology by itself usually the answer to humanity’s most vexing dilemmas.

What makes the quality of a great leader like Lincoln, who sought to inculcate in American history and consciousness the golden rule and sought to take the abolitionist movement across the Atlantic, even though it was at great massive cost of countrywide warfare? The assertion that I’d like to put before you is an unpopular assertion, that you typically won’t hear in the universities, that there is a thing that you could call spiritual progress. It can be in a culture; it can be in history; it can be in the life and soul of an individual. Associated with the transformation of the outside can be a transformation of the inside and of culture, of the development of the so-called bourgeois virtues of hard work, or discipline, of future-mindedness, and so forth.

The continued success and advance of science and of technology will continue to drop into the laps of humanity vast and unbelievable expanding powers. The question is: What will be done with those powers? What is the quality of stewardship that will be developed? Again, the three points: it is a big deal, this dilemma of power; it comes out of the heart of what the modern world is; looking at it makes us think about human transformation on the other side, apart from science and technology; and the generic neglect of issues like spiritual progress in the culture of the universities is tragic, as is the reflexive warfare-like dialectic, which many people believe is intrinsic between science and religion.

SESSION TWO*Where Is Religion Going?*

Presider: Walter Connor

What are the implications of demographic changes that are projected to take place in the next 50-100 years? For example, if Catholicism continues to shrink in Europe and expand in Africa and Latin America, what consequences might result? And if evangelical or Pentecostal faiths continue to outpace all other Christian denominations, what follows? What about demographic trends and their consequences within non-Christian religions: within Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and others? What will be the effect of Islamic and other diasporas upon religions, beliefs, and actions? In 2100 will the main world religions be different from those we have today? Or will they be the same religions, but changed in content or in form? Or will they change in fervor? Might the election of Pope Benedict, for example, as Jane Kramer reported from Rome at the time, lead to a Catholicism “smaller but purer”?

The church—whichever church it might be—often has been viewed, as in the France of 1789, as a reactionary force. But in North America, in the 1930s Reinhold Niebuhr showed its possibilities for progressive thought; and in South America several decades later “Liberation Theology” espoused radicalism and reached out to the underclass. In discussing politics, is it useful to distinguish between a religion and its church?

Phillips Talbot

South Asia Hindus and Buddhists

At the request of Ralph Bultjens, who recognizes that Buddhism originated in India, I am starting with South Asia in order to get our history straight. Asia *is* different from those lands peopled mainly by the children of Abraham. As pervading religions have no monotheistic overlay, they don’t have an international structure to speak of, they don’t have particular sacred books, like the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament or the Koran. They have instead a body of works in Hinduism that have shaped history from a time in the early Brahmanism into the modern period. From those works, people get their philosophic and their cultural foundation for their religious life.

Some 2,500 years ago, Buddhism evolved in India from protests against the rigidities of Brahmanism, and it grew to produce some extraordinary dynasties and empires, particularly the Maurya Empire with that great emperor Ashoka, and it spread. It spread first in India, then beyond India, south and east through Sri Lanka, Burma, and Southeast Asia, in its so-called “lesser vessel form,” Theravada. Theravada Buddhism has characterized that part of Asia in the succeeding centuries, and has also spread north and east through central Asia and into China and Korea and Japan in its Mahayana, “greater vessel form.” In India,



it was suppressed and disappeared under a revival of Hinduism many centuries ago. Today, one can find in India a few clusters of Buddhists in the Himalayan hill states.

Since the partition of India and the end of British rule in 1947, when the Muslim majority areas of the country went to Pakistan and what later became Bangladesh, India has been peopled about 80 percent by Hindus. As in our society, public life is penetrated by Muslims and Christians and Sikhs. India now has a Muslim president, a Sikh prime minister, and an infrastructure that is essentially Hindu. If you ask an Indian what is his faith base, he would no doubt say Hindu. But in fact, in his life, the more central identities are more likely to be based on various other categories: region, to start with, where he comes from, and the languages, linguistic areas. Many Hindus would say that everyone born in India is a Hindu on the grounds that 90 percent of those who call themselves Muslims or Christians are the products of converts, whether forceful or otherwise, from Hinduism and should be drawn back into the Hindu fold.

Through history, India has had a very strongly stable social structure. In recent generations, the changes have come increasingly fast and furious with modernization, with urbanization, and in the past 50 years, particularly with democratization. Democracy has produced a political system of organizing voters based largely upon these particular social groups. The national party that led India to independence, the Congress Party, has found that it can no longer command a majority in the country. The Hindutva opposition has found that it cannot command a majority in the country, and so India has become a country of coalitions. Governments nowadays in India are likely to have more than 20 parties in them, and the resulting efforts to balance interests have been extraordinary. One particular feature of democratization has been the rise of the lower castes and the Dalits in political life, and therefore in public life because they are more numerous.

Where is all this going? It is hard to predict the future anywhere, and in India it is particularly hard because India is in the throes of the most rapid social transformation it has seen in our time. India also has about a third of its population under age 25. It is clear that Hindutva, the idea of “Hinduness,” will

continue to be a significant element. It is also clear that these more limiting social groupings will continue to have their power. Temples being built in cities in this country and in Europe are drawing those from outside the Indian tradition into the Hindu tradition. I think that the projection of religious life can safely be predicted for years ahead.

Ralph Buultjens

East Asia Hindus and Buddhists

The title of our panel is “Where Is Religion Going?” As we look forward, we also look backward. The bare bones of my presentation are these: first, a form of South Asian religion, Mahayana Buddhism, spread to East Asia. Second, it spread to East Asia because it adapted, evolved, and intertwined with local faiths. Third, in this process, it acquired an influence in society, but also acquired a certain caution in dealing with local authorities and power centers. Fourth, the emergence of a new East Asia in recent times has provided an opportunity for Mahayana Buddhism to become more assertive and to seek greater influence in social and political affairs, so that finally in the future we can expect a more assertive role for this form of religion.

My mandate has to do with East Asia, and that is actually to deal with Buddhism, because there is very little Hinduism in the areas east of Indonesia and Central Asia. Buddhism is a missionary religion, somewhat like Islam and Christianity, somewhat unlike traditional Hinduism and Judaism. Between about 200 BC and 600 AD, it spread to East Asia over the central Asian highlands and along the Silk Route. So Buddhism came to East Asia as an outside religion, seeking to penetrate society, which already had some native belief systems well developed—Confucianism with its ethical and spiritual structures, Shintoism, certain folk faiths, animistic spirit worship, ancestor reverence—that existed in a fairly organized form in these lands that Buddhism was coming into. The local faiths were also strongly supported by the state in China, in Japan, in Korea, and by the tribal chiefs and shamans of Central Asia. In these environments, the Buddhism of India traveling into these areas lost many of the features of the original Buddhism. The rather austere, doctrinally strict, monastically organ-



ized, clerically celibate religion of original Theravada Buddhism was unlikely to be accepted by the political power holders and the ordinary people in these new countries.

And so another type of Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, evolved in East Asia, less strictly monastic, less demanding of its clergy, more demotic in its message and language, and somewhat more colorful and showy in its practice. It provided a large view of the universe, of the human place in the cosmos, and it offered a way of individual redemption by good works and improvement of the community as a whole. It did not tie individual destiny to the family, to the ancestors, or to the shamans. Mahayana Buddhism, in order to advance, also became extremely cautious politically, generally supporting the local establishment. There is quite a contrast with the often confrontational role that Hinduism and Buddhism have played in South Asia.

Their cues of adaptation and survival, whatever one's view of their docile character, have enabled Mahayana Buddhism to endure. They have enabled it to face the two great challenges of modernization that religions in developing countries have had to contend with: organization and technology. In recent years, Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism of South Asia, Christianity, and Islam in Asia have been very disturbed and often become very fearful at modernization. Their resentments lead to anger, violence, disruption, and so on. But Mahayana Buddhism, seeping into East Asia, has managed to accommodate modernization and regain its influence in societies such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and even Hong Kong.

Now, after 50 years, another new Asia is emerging. China goes capitalist; Hong Kong goes to China; Japan is losing its place as number one; South Korea has democratized; Taiwan has democratized. And there are some signals that Mahayana Buddhism may also be changing its approach, may be in the process of becoming less quiescent and finding a political and social role with greater assertiveness. In the next decade or so, as China grapples with the problems of globalization and fraying authoritarianism, Mahayana Buddhism could provide an ideology of change for a society that is in a rather fragile state.

In addition, the East Asian population is going through a big transformation. It is an aging population mix. Population growth in East Asia is now one-half of one percent a year, and declining. The number of young people below 15 years of age is one of the lowest in the world, equal to Europe and America, far less than any other developing region. This may see all the people looking to traditional religions to offset the social deracination in society.

Jane Kramer

Catholics: The New Papacy

Is this new papacy going to opt for a purer, smaller church, or is it simply, as it always has been, in the business of competing for truths in a world of preferences, as Peter Berger said? The church is a business and, like all businesses, prefers to be bigger and if possible purer rather than smaller and purer.

The question of who Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger is really is quite important. It raises several questions. The first has to do with understanding his role for nearly a quarter of a century as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, or to most of us, Grand Inquisitor. The Church had spectacularly shut its doors to reform during Ratzinger's years as prefect, and during the 10 years of John Paul's very long illness, Ratzinger was in fact the most powerful man in the Vatican, and in some ways the ultimate authority in the Vatican.

The Jesuits lost their independence, their Vicar General Designate was removed, their order was placed under strict Vatican control, their schools and seminaries and missions were left to founder, a decline more or less officially attributed to no takers, but in fact a direct result of the lack of Vatican imprimatur and Vatican cash. The Vatican's new preferred order became Opus Dei. A third of the money in private trust in Spain is deeded to Opus Dei, and figures are similar in a great deal of South America. It was given virtual control of the finances of the Vatican Bank. In a sense, it bailed out the Vatican Bank after the banking scandals in Italy. The liberation theologians like Gutierrez and Boff were called to Rome and silenced as Marxists, although having worked with some of them I would say you could more accurately call them Christian communitarian evangelists. I could go on and on, but you could call Ratzinger's first 10



years as Inquisitor an old-fashioned purge of the church's troops. I would say that the next 10 years will probably be devoted to purging its teachings of ambiguity and even of interpretive challenge. Benedict XVI spoke about the "waves battering at the ship of true faith." Here are some of the waves I counted: globalism, feminism (that lost me), individualism, desire, homosexuality, demands for the ordination of women, mysticism, sects, Turkish Muslims in Christian Europe, etc.

The second question raised by Benedict's papacy, just entering his second year, is whether his particular kind of Catholic leadership will stay the course against all the other fundamentalisms assailing it. He may have to settle for a smaller, purer church, but keeping in mind the spread of Islam, he may be looking at, if not banking on, a larger, purer one. In this country, he has thrown his support behind not just Opus Dei, but other orthodox Catholic lay orders and their priests. The Legionaries of Christ are a good example. They are recruiting successfully, and not just among the Latino and Asian immigrants who had been slipping away to the Protestant sects, but also in the private schools and colleges of our big cities. This, I think, is one of the things we should be talking about today when we talk about the church.

Christopher Marsh *Orthodox Christianity*

To follow up a paper on the papacy, we look at the other side: Constantinople and the Orthodox world as it is today and in the future. Will we still see an Orthodox Church in the world 50 to 100 to 300 years in the future?

The Orthodox Church traces its roots back to the earliest churches established by the apostles, and it remained a part of the United Church until the Great Schism of 1054, at which point Christendom broke down into the eastern and western halves. The concept of ecclesiastical economy is central to orthodoxy, and though the church is very hierarchical, it was originally centered around the great churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem: Moscow later achieving patriarchal status in 1589 and hence becoming the third Rome.

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Today, the Orthodox Church is spread across the globe, from the Balkans in Eastern Europe, throughout Eurasia, and in Ethiopia, with pockets elsewhere. Two hundred fifteen million Orthodox Christians live in approximately 133 countries. The largest populations of Orthodox Christians reside in Russia, with 80 million; Ukraine, with 27 million; Ethiopia, with 22 million; Romania, with 19 million; and Greece, with 15 million. The US is home to somewhere between 2 million and 5 million Orthodox, so while the Orthodox Church in America is not a huge player, it is still a significant force.

Since 1992, the number of Orthodox churches in Russia has more than doubled. Monasteries have been restored, new ones established, and even Orthodox colleges are becoming a popular facet of the Russian higher education landscape. Similar trends are under way in many other Orthodox countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, even in places like Macedonia and the Transdnistria region. However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian population has decreased from 149 million to 141 million, a decrease of 8 million people. It is projected that it might decrease all the way to about 132 million within the next 10-15 years if this decline continues along the same path. With such a population crisis, the Orthodox world is likely to remain as much of a marginal player in global Christianity in the next Christendom as it was in the previous millennium.

The Orthodox tradition has several challenges that it must face in order to come to terms with modernity and before it can compete effectively with other religions in the marketplace. In Russia, for example, the church is still using the Old Church Slavonic, into which the liturgy was translated more than a thousand years ago and is not understood by the average Russian. A priest in Moscow got into a lot of trouble a few years ago by translating parts of the liturgy into modern Russian. Also, Orthodoxy has not been personalized to the extent that most forms of Christianity have, which is a major market advantage of religion in today's world. In Orthodoxy, the point is to keep things as traditional as possible. Therefore, innovation is something that is stifled.

In today's Russia, Orthodoxy has become such a central facet of the culture once again, that to be Russian means to be Orthodox. To not be Orthodox while



being ethnically Russian makes one suspect. In fact, Deputy Prime Minister Ivanov is known to actually have members of his staff baptized by picking up the telephone and calling a priest so he can baptize a person before he appoints the person to any position. He will not work with anyone who is not a member of the church.

There is a remote possibility that Orthodoxy will not be able to compete effectively against the great proselytizing religions, but I think the chances of this are slim. In other words, will Orthodoxy go away and will Protestantism/Catholicism/Judaism/Islam take over the souls that Orthodoxy has served thus far? I think Orthodoxy is likely to be around for a long time. Despite the preferential treatment these states give to Orthodoxy, it is still something that is so deeply embedded in the culture, and the other religious traditions are seen as being alien to those cultures. Most of history is about slow evolution and rare episodes of dramatic change. This is one reason why we should bet on Orthodox Christianity being around long into the future. Another perhaps even more compelling reason is that despite the greatest efforts of popes, czars, and commissars, including the almost complete obliteration of the Orthodox Church in Russia during the Communist era when religion was listed in the party program as a vice alongside alcoholism, it has shown its ability to rejuvenate itself and, like mushrooms after a rain, to emerge from seeming invisibility.

Michael Smith *Niebuhr Protestantism*

What is Niebuhrian Protestantism, and what are its future prospects? Reinhold Niebuhr believed that human beings are creatures of God created in God's image, but they are also, and always, creatures capable of sinning, even in their highest achievements. There is always a measure of ambiguity in everything we do. "We are an organic unity," he says, "of creature and spirit, and all of our cultural and intellectual pursuits therefore become infected with the sin of pride."

Now note that this dual nature allows Niebuhr to argue that we are capable of engaging with the world, and indeed he regards it as the mission of the church

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to engage as a prophetic minority with the broader culture. "Indeed," he says, "it is our duty to do so." Because if we don't do it, we leave it to all these other influences, these secular influences, in particular, that don't understand in a sense the levels of good that we may achieve, but at the same time the inevitably tainted character of all our achievements. He says, "We must strive for justice, and paradoxically by realizing we can never fully achieve it, we come closer to doing so. We are most free when we recognize the limits of our freedom." Now, when one comes to collective life, this task is more difficult because states are, in effect, bundles of justified self-righteousness.

Our individual will to power and our pride, a constant danger for our individual salvation, are, in a sense, magnified in a collective setting. We become enthralled with the notion that we are part of a sort of nationally sanctified mission. He thought we Americans were particularly prone to this because we grew up in an illusion of innocence, and then we often swung to what he called "adolescent pride of power." He believed it was the task of what he called a "prophetic minority" not to join in the celebration, but rather to offer a corrective to the "national sin of self-righteousness...If we fall into this error, the natural resentments against our power on the part of the weaker nations would be compounded with resentments against our pretensions of superior virtue."

One of my favorite quotations from Niebuhr is this one he wrote in an essay on the eve of World War II on why the Christian faith is not pacifist. He said, "The Christian faith ought to persuade us that political controversies are always conflicts between sinners and not between righteous men and sinners. It ought to mitigate the self-righteousness which is an inevitable concomitant of all human conflict." So all along you get a balanced message from Niebuhr.

Considering the future, I would say that Niebuhr's strength never resulted from the fact that he was the spokesman of a mainstream Protestant church—he wasn't. Are the conditions ripe for any kind of Niebuhr renaissance, as some have been calling for? Well, we heard many times already today that the culture is enormously different. But perhaps there is still some reason to hope that this kind of nuanced, thoughtful, theologically rich message can still have some resonance. It is not true that he is ignored on college campuses. He is taught exten-



sively all over the place, and not only in religious studies courses, but also in international relations, ethics classes, and so on because of his applied character.

Ultimately, Niebuhr had a great deal of faith in the ultimate message of his version of Christianity. “The Christian faith,” he says, “in its profoundest insights, sees the whole of human history as involved in guilt and finds no release from guilt except in the grace of God. The Christian is freed by that grace to act in history, to give his devotion to the highest values he knows, to defend those citadels of civilization which necessity and historic destiny have made him the defender. And he is persuaded by that grace to remember the ambiguity of even his best actions. If the Providence of God does not enter the affairs of men to bring good out of evil, the evil in our good may easily destroy our most ambitious efforts and frustrate our highest hopes.” I will end by just citing that article of Niebuhrian faith.

Steven Simon *Muslims and Jews*

I’m going to start with Jews for no other reason than order of revelation. The future of the Jews is an interesting question because it raises a couple of other ones, one of which is, what are Jews? The other question it raises is, supposing (as is conceivable) that down the road there are no Jews, can you have Judaism without Jews? The demographics don’t look really terribly good for Jews, at least outside of Israel. I emphasize here that demography is not destiny. There are surprises. No one would have guessed in the 1930s that one third of the world’s Jewish population would be gone within a decade, in a kind of catastrophic encounter with violence. Nor would anyone have guessed that 37 percent of the world’s Jewish population would by the year 2000 be located in what was then Palestine. That just would have been inconceivable. Demographic shifts can take place even though we don’t anticipate them. What at this point is clear is that, at least outside of Israel, Jews are experiencing a zero population growth.

Peter Berger was, of course, right that Israel had a very self-consciously secular identity in its early years, which is not to say there weren’t a lot of Orthodox

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Jews living in Israel. The Orthodox dealt with this in two ways. You had some who simply rejected the authenticity or the relevance of this state, and you had those who believed in a kind of instrumentalization of this state; that is to say that the secular state was a phase in God’s plan, ultimately, to establish the kingdom of God. So one could cooperate with the state, serve in the army, pay taxes, and so forth because these institutions were just being used unwittingly by God in furtherance of a grand plan. That had real messianic and utopian potential that was unleashed in 1967 with the Israeli victory of that year and the conquest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. But that dream is now dead. With the emergence of an Olmert Coalition, I think we can safely say that that sort of utopianism is gone.

What does that mean for the future? Here I would simply speculate that the Orthodox will now channel their energies into pressing for a greater extension of Jewish law, or Halakha, into matters of state, in particular domestic policy.

Islam is a fast-growing religion and it’s fast-growing worldwide. It is also growing in the United States as well, interestingly. I teach at Georgetown and I see some of this there. I regularly take straw polls of my colleagues in other universities, and they report, probably as a feature of youthful rebellion, a great interest in and conversion to Islam. Especially interesting is the appeal of Islam to Hispanics in the United States.

The striking thing in Islam now with implications for the future is a globalization of Muslim identity. A Pew poll in 2003 asked, “Do you feel more in common with Muslims elsewhere?” This question was asked in nine Muslim-majority countries by the Pew pollsters, and in every country a majority responded by agreeing either strongly or very strongly with the statement: “I feel more in common with Muslims nowadays.” This has to do with, first of all, a sense of crisis, generally, in the Muslim world, and the interpenetration of modernity and tradition.

It is in Europe where the two civilizations are really facing one another. There are quite interesting developments in “cartoon-gate,” the Danish cartoons that interestingly caused no riots in Europe, but many in the Middle East and elsewhere, showing the umbilical connection that still remains between those



two areas. I'll close by saying in this regard that the polling done of European Muslim community leaders seems to suggest that they really want to play by what Peter Berger called "the rules of the road," that somehow they want to be part of a developing Islam that is compatible with the way in which broader European culture functions. The really interesting transformative developments in Islam are happening on the periphery of the Muslim world.

SESSION THREE*What Can Religion Offer to the Modern World?*

Presider: Joachim Maitre

How does the future of religion relate to the future of the economic order, the political order, the regional or global order? What can religion contribute to human, social, and economic development? Would this be in collaboration with science or in competition with it? How can religion deal with change? How can it deal with new knowledge, new norms, new information, and new and changing circumstances and conditions? With modernity itself?

On analysis, the clash of civilizations that Huntington famously forecast turns out to be clashes of religion. Will we indeed experience religious wars in the far future? Or will the causes divide between fighting religions and pacifist religions—or between liberal/moderate faiths and fundamentalist ones? Was Huntington wrong to predict "cultural"/religious wars rather than national or regional conflicts? And what about terrorism and/or revolutionary movements in the Southern Hemisphere?

Benjamin Friedman

Religion and the Economic Order

The core hypothesis that I would like to advance is that religious thinking influences economic thinking in important ways. At a certain level, this is a familiar enough idea. Nonetheless, I think it is fair to say that over recent decades, certainly the teaching and writing about economics has taken place in a largely secular sphere. What I have in mind is that there is an influence of religion and religious thinking on economic thinking, and that normally we leave this unstated. It is not just that we don't talk about it; I think most people aren't even aware of it.

The idea of a connection between economic progress and what we would think of as political, social, moral progress goes back to Adam Smith. I don't have in mind Smith of either *The Wealth of Nations* or *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This is Smith of the lectures on jurisprudence, in which Smith, incidentally contemporaneously with Turgot in France, developed the idea that economic progress went through four successive stages familiar to everyone today: 1) hunting and gathering, 2) pasturage, 3) settled agriculture and 4) commerce. The core of the Smith idea in this respect was that each of these successive advances in the economic mode of organization and production led necessarily to changes in social arrangements and governance. The thinkings of the important theologians were discussed in secular society in Smith's youth: the progression from Mead, Burnett, Baxter, was taking place from the early 17th century



right up into the early 18th century, and Smith wrote the theory that I have in mind sometime in the 1750s.

Let me now turn to the second of my examples. What are the prospects for economic well-being in the world and for advance among countries? Will today's poor countries always be poor? Maybe some subgroup of them will and another won't. If so, why? Or will the world economic order be characterized by what economists call "convergence"?

We now have lots of discussion in the economic development field of what I'll call "trap models," of countries getting stuck. The essential feature in each one of them is some kind of a circular, mutually enforcing interaction between economic performance broadly construed and either political performance or something else. The way economists would interpret all of these types of stories is that they are ones in which there is a determinative role of what economists call "initial conditions."

Churchill, giving his reaction to the fall of France, said, "It is inadmissible for the destiny of a great people to be decided by the temporary deficiencies of its technical apparatus." Economists are traditionally so reluctant to entertain views within which culture, specifically including religion, is an influence on economic outcomes in this kind of sense. Culture is the one thing you can't control. You can't go in and change the culture, therefore it is inadmissible to say that the outcome is being determined by the culture. At the same time, economists are very resistant to the line of thinking that has now become somewhat famous called "path dependence." In other words, you can't go back down the path from which you came.

My point is that economists are very resistant to any notion that you can't get to a good outcome because of where you are now, because this flies in the face of the possibility of salvation. For reasons that are religious rather than secular, even in the secular matters, I think there is an underlying religious foundation. The conclusion I offer is that yes, religious thinking is going to be important in determining actions that people take that will affect the economic order, and this may take place in more visible, ordinary ways as well, but I think the really interesting way in which it is going to take place and is now taking

place is at a level that is much deeper, more fundamental, and, alas, largely invisible.

David Fromkin

Religion and the Political Order

The relationship between religion and politics is an absolutely enormous subject. This will cover only a few points. First point: it is a field where it seems to me especially important to keep clear the definitions of the terms that we use. When we talk about religion, we sometimes mean an organization; we sometimes mean an institution; we sometimes mean a priesthood; we sometimes mean a doctrine. Even in dealing with the doctrines of religion, one always has to keep in mind that what people say they believe is not necessarily what they actually believe, even if they themselves believe that they believe it.

Second point: the intimate relationship between religion and politics goes back as far as we can see. The first civilization, the cities of the Sumerian plain, developed various forms of political civilization, but amongst them, cities that were dedicated to the gods—and not the whole pantheon—each to its own god. That is as far back as we can go because it is as far back as we can read. Six thousand years ago, there was a strong relationship between church and state. I am going to use the term "state," as I just have, as a kind of stand-in for "politics" and "political."

We can see—and I'll just give a few examples—the many forms in which religion and the state have intertwined over the years. Sometimes they have been rivals, and sometimes partners. Sometimes religion has been on the side of the poor and the dispossessed, but more often it has been on the side of the rich and powerful, which is where the pay is better. Religion has used the state as when Constantine and his successors, having converted to Christianity, used the state to make, eventually, Christianity the state religion. But then it was the opposite, upside-down with Alexander the Great and the great kings of Asia and the pharaohs of Egypt. Those who used religion by proclaiming themselves gods used religion in the service of politics.



Looking ahead, there has been much mention of Samuel Huntington's theory that the wars of the future will not be so much wars amongst nation-states; they will instead be wars among civilizations. One of the things that many of us saw when the article first appeared in *Foreign Affairs* magazine was if you looked at Samuel Huntington's civilizations, they were religions. His real prediction, therefore, was going to be that there were going to be wars among religions, which the events since 9/11 seemed to many people to confirm. Without other objections or qualifications to Professor Huntington's theory, even if there are wars among religions, there is something there, something deeper, something below that that explains the conflict.

The problem that I see arising is that science and religion have a different notion about belief. In religion, one has faith. But in science, truth is a different kind of thing. To begin with, truth is provisional in science. Scientists believe something until an experiment disproves it. It remains, therefore, very important that we always get the balance right between our inquiry for one kind of truth and our inquiry for the other. A balance is needed there.

SESSION FOUR*Must We Choose Between Religion and Science? The Question Revisited*

Presider: Ray L. Hart

Can religion and science be reconciled? If so, on what basis? Is science a kind of religion? If scientific accounts of creation and of natural processes and of the nature of the universe and of the nature of life and death are factual, then how can we categorize religious accounts of these same matters? How should we hold both in our heads at the same time? Can society afford to teach that creationism and evolution are of equal validity? If we accept the methodology of science, then we agree that all truth is provisional, whereas religions by and large preach that their teachings and principles are absolutely true and eternal: which is it to be? Can religion do for the modern world what science cannot—or visa versa?

Kirk Wegter-McNelly, Panelist

If human cultures are to realize their potential to activate the most life-sustaining of the possibilities present in their scientific and religious quests, then an important shift needs to take place. The shift is from a mythical understanding of the relation between science and religion in terms of conflict, to a mythical understanding of the relation between the two in terms of cooperation and mutual benefit. Briefly, the Conflict Myth: to claim that there exists a mythological understanding of the relation between science and religion in terms of conflict, is not to make the patently false claim that there has never been any conflict between science and religion—of course there has. What I mean by the Conflict Myth is that the notion of conflict has, in many parts of Western culture at least, been elevated to the status of a metaphysical principle. Whether it is the materialistic atheist or the religious fundamentalist, both share, participate in, advance, and sustain this Conflict Myth.

I would like to offer six different strategies for overcoming the Conflict Myth. 1) *Expose the complexities of the historical relations between science and religion.* It is not simply the case that science came out of the cultural womb armed for combat with religion, or that religion's immediate response to the advent of modern science was to adopt a defensive posture. The number of devout fellows of the Royal Society in its early years gives the lie to this view, for example, rather quickly.

2) *Document the various ways in which science and religion have been related in the past and the present.* Most famous in this regard is a fourfold



typology developed by Ian Barber, a typology which has played an important role in locating conflict as one of a number of different options for thinking about the ways of relating science and religion. There are many different typologies. There are critiques of Barber's typology, but the typological exercise has been a kind of important first step in the guild of which I am a member. Barber's four-fold typology, for those of you who don't know it, is conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration, suggesting that conflict is one of several, but certainly not the only option.

3) *Register the complexities and limitations of the scientific method from a philosophical perspective.* When I do this in class, I often experience or sense some hostility from students who have had significant scientific training in their background. It takes me a little while to convince them that what I'm trying to do is not to denigrate science, but to honor it, to honor the magnitude of its achievements in light of the actual lived difficulty, the messiness, if you will, of what it means to do science as a scientist.

4) *Embrace the temporal and hypothetical character of theology.* This is both a concession that theologies of the past have wrongly portrayed themselves, in rather apodictic terms, and at the same time an affirmation that theology can still play a vital role when done in a more hypothetical mode. This is not to eliminate differences between science and religion, but to say that theology has something to learn from science's willingness to live with uncertainty.

5) *Rebuild the relation between religion and science.* This can happen in two different ways. There are those who are interested in this relationship, who are interested in constructing new theories about how the two fields relate to one another, both within academic circles, and then how they relate more broadly in culture. This is in a sense the epistemological task. But there is also the interesting and challenging task of relating specific religious traditions and religious ideas, commitments, doctrines, to use language that has been introduced today, to specific scientific developments. This is the substantive, the concrete dimension of the reconstructive effort.

6) *Promote scientific and religious literacy in our primary and secondary educational systems.* This means teaching science in ways that don't simply set

science up as an endeavor in which you attempt to get the answer that you know is already right. And the flip side of that, of course: to teach religion in ways that transcend the ways that it has been taught in the past, to a kind of education that acknowledges and values the multiplicity of religious traditions that make up our post-Christendom, if not entirely secular, world.

Hans Kornberg, Panelist

E. coli are single-celled organisms which do everything, more or less, that you and I do, except go to symposia and talk about it. They don't have a nervous system; they are not multi-cellular; as I said, they are single-celled. They can not only be single-celled, but they can grow on one single type of carbon compound. Give them glucose, a little bit of nitrogen, a touch of phosphate, and off they go. They manifest their ambition, which is for one *E. coli* to become two *E. coli*, and do it very quickly. They have a whole range of tastes, so they can grow on almost anything. Thus, it is possible then to take the organisms and to follow the path that any food material, single-carbon compound it uses to give rise to everything that makes one *E. coli* become two *E. coli*: the proteins, the nucleic acids, and so on.

Here, of course, I use the word "model system" because we know from chemical and biochemical studies that, as Jacques Monod once put it memorably, "What happens in *E. coli* also probably happens in E-lefant." There is a basic unity to life processes which allows me, at least in the most simple so-called housekeeping metabolism of the cell, to extrapolate from my *E. coli* to the elephant, and to you and me as well, and I don't have animal rights activists complaining if I kill a few of them.

The argument that science and religion are in that sense antithetical is somewhat specious. Of course, people who do not themselves understand this rigid search for evidence that we can cling to and that we can attempt to refute, sometimes advance fanciful explanations of things that they don't understand, forgetting that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. There is always a way in which one can try and test any explanation.



The name of the conference is “The Role of Religion in the Longer-Range Future.” Clearly, this is not something which is of absolute priority as far as my *E. coli* is concerned. This has colored all our presentations so far with a distinctly anthropocentric tinge. I maintain that it is the essence of science *not* to be subject to this. The big difference between science and the philosophies that are not science is that almost always science is directed outwards, whereas arts and humanities are directed inwards to see how the world affects us. The kind of conclusions that we draw, what we regard as the structure on which now the application of science is based, the technology that Charles Harper was talking about this morning, is based on the recognition that there are patterns that are reproducible—that are there in nature outside of our being there or not; that the tree will make a noise in the forest whether we are there to hear it or not. And it is this pattern that exists quite apart from us, which enables us then not only to conclude to a very large extent what is happening and what has happened, but also to predict what is likely to happen, which gives the impetus to the developments that we this morning saw chartered.

My conclusion is that although it is true that scientific truth is provisional, that doesn’t mean that it is relativistic. It means that it is the nearest approximation that we have to constructing a picture of the world in which we live that is self-consistent and that enables us to predict what might happen with a fair degree of confidence, and, what is more, to welcome any attempt to alter that through evidence. Somebody once wrote that there is nothing more terrible than a beautiful idea slain by an ugly fact. I would put that the other way around. I would say that there is nothing more beautiful than to see a theory or hypothesis falsified by a fact which can be repeated and which can be established. It is only when the dust settles, as one of my teachers put it, that you know whether you have been riding a horse or an ass.

Owen Gingerich, Panelist

“Can society afford to teach that creationism and evolution are of equal validity?” The whole business of evolution has been very controversial in America during the entire 20th century and carrying on now. After the Scopes

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trial, evolution essentially disappeared from the textbooks. It wasn’t until the Sputnik era that biologists realized that there were great things missing from these textbooks, and a great revision was attempted with a national program to get funding to revise the biology textbooks. The most interesting consequence of this was that Congress voted to cut off funding for any national education programs in the sciences because this was seen as too controversial.

When creationism as a subject to be taught in the schools was squashed by the famous Little Rock trial, there was a kind of a regrouping. Nowadays we find a great controversy over what is called Intelligent Design. Many scientists feel that in fact Intelligent Design is simply creationism in disguise, and I suspect that many people who are hoping that their school boards will put Intelligent Design into biology classrooms may feel that is the case. The reality is that the Intelligent Design theorists almost universally accept a very long age of the Earth. Most of them accept quite a bit of the evolutionary picture, but they feel that there is an intelligent input into this process. I suspect that there is a considerable knee-jerk reaction on the part of both scientists and many people who are trying to get Intelligent Design into the schools not really understanding what’s going on there.

Can society afford to teach that creationism and evolution are of equal validity? Obviously not creationism; I would substitute here Intelligent Design, and they are not equal because they are in different categories. I think somehow we are going to have to in the future begin to appreciate this fact considerably more for our society to cope with this. Many scientists, I suppose, would feel that they are totally uninterested in metaphysics. Remember, “meta” means beyond; it is “beyond physics,” and these are basic ideas one has in which one frames the science or a great deal of one’s attitudes about things.

George Whitesides, who is a university professor at Harvard and had been chairman of the chemistry department, wrote a very interesting preface for a book which is being published now by Cambridge University Press. He says in that introduction that the great mystery of mysteries of science is in fact the origin of life. He says he cannot imagine how it happened. There is no clue about it, but as a scientist, he is absolutely sure that eventually science will come to terms



with this and figure out how it was done. I cannot help but think what an interesting leap of faith and what an interesting metaphysical position to have adopted in this respect. I think all scientists have a metaphysical view of the world, whether they are prepared to be explicit about it or not.

