

Response to Rev. Dr. William Gardiner- The Politics of Globalization:  
Winners and Losers in the Global Economy Greenfield Group November,  
2007

Respondent Rev. Dr. Susan Suchocki Brown

Bill thank you for your paper and all the reading and distilling of information that you did in order to bring the huge topic of the economics and politics of globalization into focus. Your paper truly demonstrated Roland Robertson's, definition of "Globalization as the compression of the world".<sup>1</sup> Your paper was thought provoking and it left me wanting more, which I suppose is what a paper on the massive topic of globalization should do. I wanted to hear more specifically the moral implications of globalization. I wanted to hear more value language, maybe even some theological/ religious language. I was hoping you would wrestle with the many intriguing thoughts from Yersu Kim's article, 'Philosophy and the Prospects for a Universal Ethics'. What did you think about the thoughts raised from Sissela Bok, as stated in Kim's article, that "Survival and prospering are interests common to all human beings and ethical values and principles can be deduced from these interests... reciprocity,... prohibition of violence and deceit, ... agreement on what constitutes justice... [those these] do not constitute a full-blooded ethics in themselves but merely a baseline consensus from which to undertake and facilitate further debate."<sup>2</sup>

I was on Grand Bahama Island in mid October, in fact on the day we were leaving your paper arrived so I brought the readings and it with me. Ron

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Robertson, Globalization and the Future of "Traditional Religion", p53.

<sup>2</sup> Yersu Kim, Philosophy and the Prospects for a Universal Ethics p93

and I had many interesting discussions about the economics, politics and moral implications of globalization as prep work for my response. I suppose this why I wanted more. So thank you for your paper and the timing of its arrival. It gave me the opportunity to see globalization in action through your eyes and an opportunity to see globalization in another country through my experiences. Three of them I would like to share.

One of the was of finding a grocery market. Ron and I are not fond of eating out and being vegetarian is a challenge so we went looking for and found the one and only market on the island. It is used by both tourists and natives. A gallon of milk was \$6.92, a loaf of white bread was \$3.00, a pint of berries was \$7.00 and cheese was over \$9.00/lb. The public bus driver, Rudy, told us that the market was formerly owed by Winn- Dixie and is now owned by IGA and that the inhabitants did what they had to do to get food on their table. Most residents, he told us, go to Florida once a month to buy groceries and bring back a cooler full of meat for \$150 on a transport boat. Rudy told us that a refrigerator bin is rented only one per family but residents share the costs by lying about who is a family member. A note on public transportation, the resort areas have fleets of taxis readily available, it is the most expensive way to get around. A public bus system is less expensive but a tourist has to go out of the way to find the stops and has to be willing to ride with the island dwellers, which was a fascinating way to learn the real politics and economics of the island. This became our primary means of transportation. One trip was to the International Bazaar, suggested as a place to visit for a global experience. It seemed a thing to do and since we had already navigated some of the island this seemed to be a place to provide further learning about global

economics. It was once a thriving place to shop with stores divided into sections, India, China, Sweden, South America, Africa, France and the Straw Market. However the impact of hurricanes, Jean, Frances and Wilma had led to a decrease in tourism and the larger conglomerate anchor hotel had pulled out and financial ruin fell on the area. It was palpable as we walked through the Bazaar. The hotel stopped putting money into the area because of the environmental destruction and tourism dropped and the only shop owners still there were local women. I noticed that when Rudy dropped us off he dropped us right in front of these storefronts, right where you can't avoid them or their wares. The experience of getting to know Rudy, and talk with him about things we shared in common, gathering food, feeding our family, and using economic resources wisely connected us not just economically but personally. Global economy was being practiced and the opportunity to practice the ethic of reciprocity was being presented. The ethics of relationship became a value underlying a pending economic interaction as Rudy introduced us to Joyce, a stall owner. I bought some wares from Joyce because in a short minute she created an environment that fostered an openness to talking more than selling, in showing with pride the crafts that her mother and aunties had made, plus she invited me to sit in front of a fan and rest as she talked about the Bazaar and the island's economic dependence on outsiders. She told me some of the effects on the community since the big business- a Sheraton had pulled its economic support of the Bazaar. The women work, many leave home long before the children are off to school, many younger children are brought to work with their mothers, and the fathers attempt to find work in the tourist business or pick up day jobs. The

little ones spend most of their days in those 6x8 stalls without space to play, no shade from the hot sun, no easy access to bathrooms, and knowing that a potential customer is more important than their need for mother. The men, if able to find jobs at all in the declining tourist business, are depressed, feel guilty, experience a sense of failure and meaninglessness.

All the women who were operating the stalls were hard workers but it was from Joyce that I bought some indigenous crafts. I wonder why? The closest I could come to explaining it is summed up in a quote from Yersu Kim's article, "Everyone should be treated humanely, and that one should not do what one does not wish done to oneself."<sup>3</sup> Yes, the Golden Rule as known in most religions seemed to Ron and me to be the guiding moral principle as we explored the many economic and political realities of Grand Bahama Island.

The third experience had to do with how the Bahamians told the story of Christopher Columbus, whose arrival in the Bahamas led to the near extinction of the Lucaya Indians. The natives know this yet they speak of Columbus landing as if it were a good thing. The moral implications of this are huge- not being true to one's personal and communal history, denial of past oppression all leading to internalized oppression.

Economics and politics as we know are not separate from ethics and morals. Bill I would love to hear what key religious, moral, ethical values under grid your economic and political stances? What does a global ethic of justice really look like?

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<sup>3</sup> . Kim, p. 81