June 28, 2012

Dear Colleague,

The Woodrow Wilson Center’s Latin American Program and American University’s Center for Latin American and Latino Studies (CLALS) are pleased to invite you to the seminar:

“Religion and Violence in Central America”

Wednesday, July 11, 2012
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Fifth Floor Conference Room

Violent crime in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala has reached unprecedented levels. While scholars and policy makers struggle to understand and address issues of violence, impunity, transnational crime, and youth gangs, it is frequently religious organizations that are on the front lines of efforts to reduce gang violence and get young people out of gangs.

We will be joined by anthropologist Jon Wolseth of Luther College (author of Jesus and the Gang: Youth Violence and Christianity in Urban Honduras, University of Arizona) and sociologist Robert Brenneman of St. Michael’s College (author of Homies and Hermanos: God and Gangs in Central America, Oxford, 2011) who have conducted extensive research in Central America. Their work provides insights into the role of religion in the lives of current and former gang members and those who seek to survive in a context of escalating violence. While tough military and police enforcement measures are frequently popular with policy makers and the public in the region, Brenneman and Wolstheth present another side of the story—one which points toward more personal interventions and choices as a path toward surviving and potentially breaking individual and local cycles of violence. Alexander Wilde, Latin American Program senior scholar and director of CLALS’s project on religion and violence, and Timothy J. Steigenga, professor of political science at Florida Atlantic University’s Wilkes Honors College, will provide comments.

Please click here to RSVP, or email acceptances only to lap@wilsoncenter.org. We hope you will be able to join us for this critically important discussion.

Sincerely,

Cynthia J. Arnson
Director, Latin American Program
Woodrow Wilson Center

Eric Hershberg
Director, Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, American University