

Strong religions and challenges of globalization

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Abstract

The paper seeks a comprehensive philosophical understanding of "fundamentalism." Often discriminately associated with the Muslims vis-à-vis terrorism, the paper might eventually be of use to clarify the relationship between Muslims and Christians, as well as with other denominations. The author believes that the philosopher should be alarmed to what the media call the new level of "commodity fetishism" presents to the rest of the world toward (or against) a particular religion, and should rather maintain open roads to dialogue as well as an honest examination of one's own beliefs. The research covers cultural as well as social issues shaping religion and more importantly, favors ideas over ideology in its discussions.

Sadly enough, fundamentalism is itself a challenge, far more difficult to understand, nonetheless, the paper highlights fundamentalism in discussing and analyzing strong religions, the question of violence, and enclave culture. The methodology is based on analysis, observations, and insights entwined with the comparison of religions. This article does not just aim to limit itself to a particular dialogue between the Muslim and (or versus) Christianity, but would also attempt to include other beliefs of other parts of the world that would be as essential in comprehending larger issues about one's faith.

The paper places the bottom line over the higher ideals of fundamentalists empowering themselves by serving as an authority for a united front in bringing about a religious renaissance amidst the fast-changing realities of the 21st century. Only by overcoming distrust and discrimination, as well as maintaining inter-faith dialogues can an authentic path towards peace, moral and social recovery could be realized.

Keywords: faith, fundamentalist, globalization, radicalism, religion

I. Introduction: Global conflicts and fundamentalisms

The 19th-century religious writer and philosopher Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher proposed a religious awareness in terms of a feeling of dependence and of seeing finite things in and through the infinite. This awareness is like mystical awareness of a wider dimension, which throws new light on the ordinary world around us. He recommended that religion should not be a matter of dogma or logic but should be based on a direct experience of oneself as being small

and imperfect, against the background of the eternal. It was also a relationship of the self with the whole: a sense of belonging to the whole world.

The Catholic Church in the Philippines observed the *Year of Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Indigenous Peoples* in 2020. In this vein, this article is a response to the call for the promotion of cross-cultural dialogue recognizing identities and spiritualities as human life is confronted by the speed of major change as it faces the effects of globalization around the world. Technology has become a vital factor that poses effects upon political, social, ethical, and environmental that many thinkers recognized and discussed.

From the author's point of view, globalization encompasses real-world problems and conflicts, far more complex than either textbooks or political ideologies suggest. As a topic, globalization is a phenomenon that requires interdisciplinary treatment. In this line, strong religions and fundamentalism around the world enter the larger conversation of modernity.

II. Problem Statement

In studying the Torah, Quran, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sermon on the Mount, the precepts of the Buddha, and the aphorisms of Confucius, -- compassion, love, equality, and honesty are common threads embedded in the world's religions. Amidst globalization, interfaith unity of all religions becomes crucial.

The authors of *Strong Religion* (2003) analyzed various questions through various social structures, cultural contexts, and political environments in which fundamentalist movements have emerged around the world; for example, the Islamic Hamas and Hezbollah, the Catholic and Ulster Protestants, the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition of the United States, and the Sikh militancy and Hindu nationalists of India. Further, the authors portrayed the cultures that nourish such movements. The topic opened different modes of fundamentalism and examined the kind of historical events that can trigger them.

III. Research questions

Globalization yields new challenges. The sources and modalities of (i.e. Islamic) resistance to globalization are themselves diverse and complex. In many areas of bitter confrontation today, it is the fundamentalists who do most to intensify and prolong the conflicts.

Strong religion's success could probably be attributed in part to returning to a more dogmatic. It has appealed to those traditionalist and obscurantist elements who are only too pleased to escape from the philosophical problems which present-day thoughts pose:

1. *Does modern technology bring about the emergent reality of strong religions? If so, how?*
2. *What impact do these religions have? Is it constructive or destructive?*
3. *Given that God exists, how shall we explain the world in terms of God?*

IV. Purpose of the study

This work is necessary to find the authentic meaning of faith; promoting ecumenism. More importantly, the paper identified the aspects of globalization --the role of religions and their culture, amidst the impact of globalization, whose beliefs, though have many merits, are extremely inadequate, sometimes confusing, to the facts which they express.

In this sense, the paper explored and clarified how some religions of the world might lead to the danger of setting up a bizarre divine revelation, the unquestioned or not criticized in the light of secular knowledge as both a moment of and a reaction to, globalization.

V. Research Methods

The need for clarity in an age of ambiguity and confusion produces strictness. Strict behavior is made possible by the fact that so much traditional practice had been lost as a result of migration and other demographic dislocations. As a consequence, the imposition of a set rule is in part a new creation. In this vein, this study employed a more analytic approach to religion, using a descriptive approach.

In this paper, the framework of the research is not about religion *per se* but examines fundamentalism that has become the source of resistance and alternative to materialism that appeals to those without power and privilege. As an illustration of Islamic resurgence, commentators argued how fundamentalism might have replaced previous dominant ideologies of secular nationalisms and Muslims. Concerning this, this humble work utilized a historical approach considering interrelated disciplines. Secondary sources are also used as references.

VI. Findings

Fundamentalism attempts to dictate a semblance of order. This new order, in turn, is in a way quite out of sync with the myriad coexisting forms of the traditions, as it had once practiced. This is a modern set of rules, the strictness of which is understandable, given that is geared to fighting the prevailing tendency in the center community to compromise with modernity, that is, to bend some age-old rules.

The righteous character of fundamentalism is brought forth even more sharply. For instance, common Protestant terms of self-reference are "the saved", "the saints" and the "defenders of the faith" or "zealots." However, terms like "saved" do not imply in a Jewish or Islamic context. There are no exact equivalents of terms. Zealotry is a powerful metaphor for the Jews. The Muslim militants call themselves the righteous (*al-Rashidun*).

Specifically, Almond, et al., (2003), cited the origin and emergence of these strong religions:

1. *Revolutionary Shi'ism in Iran: The 1960s and 1970s*

The fundamentalist movement itself as opposed to its precursors in 19th and 20th century Iran emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the coalescing of two long-term trends. To respond to the challenges of secularization and economic development, the Islamic movement had to take on the state, to get into politics. The ideology that established a cosmological framework for this

endeavor was developed when the regime seemed successful and impregnable and gained wide currency when strains and failures accumulated in the 1970s.

In an oil-rich country, this movement would not have maintained momentum, despite the availability of a cadre of the clergy, without Khomeini's hands-on charismatic leadership as a developer of an innovative ideology, buttressed by the aura of his scholarly authority, as a master communicator of this ideology and its application to specific, tangible cases, combining an attractive homespun provincial style with adaptability to technological innovations.

2. Sunni radical movements in Egypt: Origins and emergence, the late 1960s

The Egyptian case is paradigmatic of Muslim Brotherhood evolution else in the Middle East and North Africa. Founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, the movement emerged in a world transformer mode through a network of Islam-inculcating schools, youth clubs, trade unions, and syndicates. It was radicalized into a world-conqueror mode by confrontations with secular Egyptian governments unsympathetic to its Islamization project.

The radicalization took definitive ideological form only well after his death and after the movement had suffered as a result of its forays into power politics. Qutb, influenced by a Pakistani thinker and Jama 'at-I-Islami founder Abul Ala Maududi, justified radicalization and world-conquering.

3. Ulster Protestants: (the Ian Paisley era)

In Ulster, the political and social context, determined by the entrenched ethnic conflict between Scot and English-derived Protestants and Irish Catholics, has dictated strikingly different patterns of mobilization and organization. In the case of Ulster, the movement adopts religious symbolism and discourse and strives for the dominance of an ethnic opponent who is also constructed in religious terms. (i.e. Ulster Protestants vs. Irish Catholic, pure Sikhs vs. false Sikhs and militant Hindus, Sinhala Buddhists versus Tamil Hindus, and Hindus nationalists versus upwardly mobile Indian Muslims).

Almond et al (2003: 155) stated that in the early 19th century the politicization of the Irish and Catholic Church led to each religions' prohibitions on intermarriage, economic cooperation, and other alliances that would transgress strong boundaries and weaken ethno religious bounds.

Despite secular trends of the twentieth century, Paisley considered religion a vital part of the Scottish and Anglo-Irish heritages, and he appropriated conservative Protestant ideologies and symbols to make sense of their beleaguered position in the north of Ireland and to give purpose to their political agenda that is dominated by a desire to remain part of the United Kingdom. Protestants enjoyed considerable material and cultural advantages over Catholics, but many were uneasy when Catholics were allowed their institutions.

4. U.S. Protestant Christians: Emergence and growth

The belief that Jesus would come only after Bible-believing Christians had prepared the way by inaugurating the era of righteousness on earth was triggered by the case of the 1960s moral and social crisis. Two aspects of this version of the Christian evangelical world-conquering fundamentalism must be noted. First, the activists of the Christian Right prefer the language of restoration over the language of revolution or transformation. Second, the theological precision

of a separatist has given way to an internal theological pluralism tied by historical theological and religious distinctions. In the world-conquering phase of fundamentalism, ideology and political considerations tend to muffle potentially divisive religious and theological elements.

The dominant strand in American fundamentalism is premillennial and dispensationalist, a tradition imported from Ireland in the mid-19th century and coming to prominence in the second decade of the 20th century. Its message of messianic redemption following an imminent worldwide catastrophe reflected and responded to the downbeat, beleaguered mood in the independent Baptist churches. The post millennialist tradition still believes that Redemption is about to dawn, culminating in the Second coming, and called not just to wait for the messianic breakthrough to happen but to help in bringing it about. It is relevant to note that the *Haredi* Jew, detects no sign of imminent redemption.

5. Sikh militants and Sri Lankan Buddhist extremism

This religion originated in the late 15th century under the leadership of the Guru Nanak, a member of the Kshatriya (warrior) caste. All the ten *gurus* came from this caste. The sixth *guru*, Hargobind, affirmed the inseparability of state and religion and legitimized reliance on the sword in the defense of Sikh interests.

Sri Lanka came into global consciousness in a deadly *tsunami*. Amidst tremendous devastation and loss, Buddhist extremism here is attributed to the breakdown of the traditional village and the rise of modern trading towns and mass society urban areas. A case in point was Sri Lankan violence that also resulted in a lack of organization and discipline throughout the whole of Sri Lankan government – central and local—the party system and individual political parties, as well as the Sri Lankan clergy (Almond et al., 2003: 63).

Buddhist religious organization is similarly fragmented. As an illustration, individual monasteries move in their directions and individual monks have considerable autonomy to engage in whatever religious and political activities they prefer. In a culture like this, social and political action deteriorates into reactive movements – demonstrations, mobs, and riots.

The high incidence of mob violence is caused by Buddhist extremism. Each major party when in position challenges the governing party for failing to go far enough in asserting Buddhist predominance. Thus, the anomalous case in which political choices and decisions have been frustrated and distorted by anomic violence rather than calculated by strong charismatic/authoritarian leadership describe Sri Lankan politics' vicious cycle of violence feeding on violence.

In sum, the fundamentalists have these common characteristics that cause conflict, awe, fear, and danger that can indeed, express concern:

- The past has its counterpart in the future.
- History is "purposefully" governed by omniscient Providence.
- The intersection of past and future grants the believer to comprehend from when one comes and is headed.

- As discussed, the major use of texts (whether the Bible, Talmud, or Quran) in everyday life is central. Random selection of a page to deduce instructions or omens are interpreted by an authority (whether literal or allegorical) and applied to rapidly changing realities of our time.
- Depending upon the charismatic authority is a tricky proposition. This shows that a leader may die with no successor or might rival the current authority.

Take the case of the state of affairs in post-Saddam Iraq. In the wake of its invasion by the United States, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have taken refuge in neighboring Jordan. Like Iraq's other Arab neighbor, Jordan is a nation of Sunnis, the Muslim mainstream. Also, those who are taking refuge are Sunni supporters of Saddam, who know they have no future in Iraq.

Sunnis and Shiite Muslims both revere the Koran, but they disagree over who should have been the rightful successor to the prophet Muhammad. Iraq's Arab neighbors were comfortable with the rule of Saddam Hussein, who enabled Iraq's 20% Sunni minority to dominate its 60% Shiite population. Sunni Iraqis and some secular Shiites fear a Shiite takeover leading to a reign of *ayatollahs(mujtahid)* in Iraq. Along the same lines, Iraq's Shiite religious establishment does not adopt the philosophy of its counterparts in Iran and rejects the Iranian idea introduced by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini.

Until recently, many Iraqis, particularly the most educated, did not identify themselves by religion, although this is changing. Due to the Iraq war, Sunni Arab fear of Shiites threatens to destabilize Iraq. For this reason, the Iraqis-in-exile boycotted the Iraqi election, despite the Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's effort for them to abandon the boycott (Rubin, 2003).

Questions over the legitimacy of whether the United States takeover of Iraq would be heavily debated. Another development is the end of the hunt for biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons in Iraq after nearly two years when President George Bush ordered the United States troops to disarm Saddam Hussein. Bush has expressed disappointment that no weapons or weapons programs were found (Linzer, 2005).

The presence of the United States in Iraq had lots of misgivings; those who were antagonized by U.S. presence in Iraq widely consider that it was just a ploy to get into oil-rich Iraq. This is no idle speculation; many of the United States military personnel and civilians in energy would transform nature into commodities, which are exchange to realize surplus. The control of oil is directly linked to the reproduction and expansion of capital on a global scale (Gills, 2001).

Exacerbated by the worldwide increase in demand for oil, the present global oil crisis had changed people's existence worldwide. As a matter of fact, in the Philippines, an oil-importing country, this means belt-tightening. A concerned labor group warned that unless the Philippine government takes immediate action on the oil crisis, the price of crude oil could skyrocket to a record high of \$70 per barrel causing financial markets to weaken. Without a doubt, sustaining growth becomes difficult mostly for countries importing oil (Almond et al., 2003)

VII. Conclusion: The concept of Go(o)d

Due to the discussions of this paper, the readers are likely to reflect, for instance, on this query: *Is religion the cause of fundamentalism or is religion related to the search for power?* Once, Friedrich Nietzsche argued that our beliefs when valued for themselves, instead of for the reasons that support them, become prisons for the intellect. Faith seemed to have "hijacked" reason. For him, beliefs should function as means rather than ends. They should fashion and direct our passions in the pursuit of values. The person of faith reverses this relationship by allowing passions to determine one's beliefs (Pojman, 2017). Consequently, the person was estranged from one's reason; enslaved by one's thinking that is no longer within one's rational control. The person of faith has destroyed within one's self the spirit of impartiality (Smith, 2016). When we have come to see the other great religious traditions as different but equally valid human resources to the ultimate reality that is the ground and source of everything and the condition of our highest good, we have no grounds to confine ourselves to the spiritual resources of our tradition.

In an allusion to Sioux's Earth prayers:

*Grandfather Great Spirit;
All over the world faces of living ones are like.
With tenderness, they have come up out of the ground.
. . . Give us the strength to understand
and the eyes to see.*

Teach us to talk about the soft Earth as relatives of all that live.

In conclusion, because of their sense of the dramatic and the historical, artists and poets may better understand religions, than philosophers, scientists, and even theologians who seek to reduce all of life to rational coherence. Even so, as gleaned upon the discussions, religious influence is no abstract speculative affair but impinges on the situations of real life.

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