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Editorial

New Faces of Religious Fundamentalism and Violence

In principle, all religions stand for peace, harmony and love. However, in practice, religion has also led to a lot of violence and bloodshed. For all religions, God is love. But it is not rare that in the name of God who is love, hatred and violence are advocated. Perhaps no religion is an exception to this. Religious fundamentalism and intolerance and violence springing from fundamentalist approaches to religion are not new. But, the rise of religious fundamentalism today raises many interesting questions. On the one hand, we speak about a post-religious secularized world; on the other hand we find that religion has come again to the central stage even in the secularized world, but in the negative form of fundamentalism. The unholy relationship of religion with politics, money, power, etc. has made fundamentalism a difficult mixture. Though this combination is not new, the extensiveness and profundity of these relations have made religious fundamentalism today very complex and complicated. Moreover, the global connectedness facilitated by globalization and the use of the Internet and other new generation media have led to a globalization of religious fundamentalism and violence, threatening global peace, and the very existence of humanity.

The current issue of *Asian Horizons* contributes to the discussion on the new faces of religious fundamentalism and the factors behind its violent outbreak in all continents. Evidently, it is a complex phenomenon and hence an exhaustive analysis is beyond the scope of the limited number of papers presented here. However, the authors discuss the present situation of religious fundamentalism, its different faces in different parts of the world, measures to be taken to counteract violence, etc. Archbishop Thomas Menampampil is of

the opinion that the present violent outbreak of religious fundamentalism is a reaction to various exaggerations in the culture, and emphasizes the need of bridge-builders who will facilitate respectful conversations among different peoples. Francis Appiah-Kubi and Isaac Osei Karkari also agree that fundamentalism today can be understood more as reaction to the emerging trends and values inherent in the modern culture. While arguing that religion still forms an integral part of the modern society, they underline the need of creating a just society.

Stephen Chundamthadam critically evaluates the complex developments in Indian democracy due to the unholy nexus between religion and politics. Dermot M. Byrne discusses the genesis and development of the phenomenon of suicide attacks by radical Islamists. Byrne argues that such an understanding is necessary to combat this reprehensible practice. Peter Alawa and Onyinyechi P.C. Wariboko make a qualitative inquiry into the situation of religious terrorism around the world vis-à-vis in Nigeria, and propose various measure that could be taken to counter terrorism.

Christoph Stenschke, based on a case study of Acts 1-5, shows that inter-religious conflicts are often intra-religious, and that the violence that occurs is often due to non-religious factors. Based on this analysis, he draws some implications for understanding religious conflict today. Delfo C. Canceran, employing the theory of social representation, shows the limits of interreligious dialogue. He underscores that dialogue is always open to the unexpected wholly other that comes and surprises the self. Adopting a phenomenological approach to fundamentalism, Patrick Laude shows how fundamentalism is a moving away from the 'cumulative tradition' and the intellectual and spiritual culture of the religion.

The following three articles are on various themes. Mathew Thekkemuriyil Antony reviews the communist strategy in Kerala in light of the Polanyian tool of moral inversion. Wilhelmina Tunu Murma, reflects on poverty, a major threat to human life, from the perspective of the Catholic Social Teaching. Rajesh Kavalackal analyses the concept of hominization and the Kingdom of God in M.M. Thomas and its contemporary relevance.

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