

Christian Fundamentalism, Postmodernism, Globalization and the Third World. An Attempt at Sociological Explication¹

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*"We are all of us, to some degree and
in some senses, fundamentalists."*

Lionel Caplan (1989)

The recent phenomenal growth of religious fundamentalism both in the West and in the developing countries is now widely interpreted by scholars of religion as one of the direct refutation of secularization thesis (Hadden, 1983; Crippen, 1988; Wuthnow, 1976). In spite of the onslaught of modernization on global scale religions have grown in tremendous number (Beyer, 1990; Luckman and Beckford, 1989). My purpose in writing this essay is to explain the resilience of Christian fundamentalism in the post-modern world. Hence I will discuss the dynamics of Christian fundamentalism from the perspective of decline of "grand narratives," the rise of information society, the current crisis in the social sciences, globalization process, and post-colonial struggles in developing countries. These characteristics are encompassed in the term "postmodernity". Postmodernism as the logic of late capitalism seems to rule out grand narratives like Christian fundamentalism and Marxism. Yet funda-

¹ I am very thankful to the participants to the National Theological Consultation, sponsored by The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, held in Tagaytay City, June 7-11, 2000, for their numerous comments and insights have been incorporated into this article.

mentalism endures in the post-modern world. I would like to analyze this dynamic contradiction in this essay by arguing that fundamentalism, as a reaction to modernism, is in itself a product of modernity. But insofar as we have entered the era of postmodernity, Christian fundamentalism has to be reexamined in the light of this new development. Definitely, postmodernity as a social condition is more auspicious to the development of fundamentalism compared to modernism. We can therefore expect a revival of fundamentalism in the postmodern world.

A. DEFINING FUNDAMENTALISM

1. *Christian Fundamentalism*²

Originally, Christian fundamentalism was a religious and cultural movement that took its name from the editor of a prominent Baptist paper in 1920 (Marsden, 1980, as cited in Caplan, 1989). Alarmed by the threat of rationalism and worldliness in mainline Protestant denominations, the Baptist paper employed the label fundamentalists to “those who ready to do battle royal for the Fundamentals of Protestantism.” Others trace it to the series of twelve-volume publication called *The Fundamentals* in 1910 (Roberts, 1995:370; Ammerman, 1998). In general, fundamentalism addressed not only the drift towards liberalism. It was also reaction to the tendency within the mainline Protestant churches in the early nineteenth century towards liberal interpretation of the Bible, the social Gospel movement, the demythologization of Biblical worldview to accommodate the modern scientific worldview, and sexual and moral permissiveness of the modern period (Bruce, 1987:179; Walker, 1987:206). Fundamentalism represented the resistance towards this modernist drift in Christian religion.

² Throughout this article I will use “fundamentalism” as a generic label (to cover all religious and quasi-organizations that exhibit the characteristics employed by Taylor), and I will employ “Christian fundamentalism” to refer to its Protestant varieties. Donald Taylor (1989:143-144) enumerates five defining characteristics of fundamentalism, namely, (1) the perception of a challenge to an accepted ultimate authority, (2) the decision that there can be no compromise with the perceived challenge, (3) reaffirmation of the ultimacy of the challenged authority, (4) the recognition of standing in opposition to those who challenge or those who are believed to have compromised, and (5) the use of political means in order to further their interests.

Following Nancy T. Ammerman (1995; 1998), Christian fundamentalism may be characterized as adhering to the following basic beliefs.³ First is *evangelism*. Evangelism means reaching out to both Christians and non-Christians in order to preach salvation through Jesus Christ (p. 420). Second is *inerrancy of the Bible*. Personal salvation in Jesus Christ is guaranteed in the absolute truth of the Bible's message. The Bible is the only sole guide to true morality, faith, science and history. The truth of the Bible is not in conflict with scientific truths. If conflicts arise they should be harmonized. However the belief that the Bible does not contain factual nor moral error must be affirmed (p. 420). Third is the doctrine of *premillennialism*. Fundamentalist Christians believe that the Bible contains the prophecy about the future of Mankind. This is premised on the belief about rapture. Before Jesus Christ's Second Coming the Great Tribulation will occur. But the faithful will be spared through rapture. Their souls will be snatched away by God. Only the unbelievers will remain on earth to be punished. Finally, there is the belief in *separatism*. The fundamentalist Christians adhere to strict rules and disciplines of their churches so as to avoid being infected by the evils of the "world." They would zealously distance themselves from other Christian groups who in their eyes have already given in to the mundane ways of the "enemies of the faith."⁴

During its inception Christian fundamentalism was marginalized sect owing to its obscurantist worldview. In the initial skirmishes between modernists and fundamentalists the latter lost decisive battles. The decisive blow was the famous "*Scopes Trial*" of 1925. While the fundamentalists won the Court Battle, as defended by Bryan, it backfired on the reputation Christian fundamentalism itself. As Ronald Clark (1984:309) puts it, "Tennessee [the place of trial] had been made to appear so ridiculous in the eyes of the nation that other states did not care to follow its lead." George Marsden (as quoted in Clark, 1984:309) provides a perceptive

³ These characteristics enumerated by Ammerman (1998) apply only to North American Protestant fundamentalism. I am taking the liberty here to generalize these characteristics to Protestant fundamentalism.

⁴ According to Bendroth (1996:76) the separatism of Fundamentalist Christians is not necessarily reactionary or simplistic. Fundamentalist Christians used radio and television to "navigate their constituents through uncharted and often threatening waters."

analysis of the real background of the rise of fundamentalism during the Scopes Trial:

The central theme [of the trial] was, inescapably, the clash of two worlds, the rural and the urban. In the popular imagination there were on the one side the small town, the backwoods, half-educated yokels, obscurantism, crackpot hawkers of religion, fundamentalism, the South, and the personification of the agrarian myth himself, William Jennings Bryan. Opposed to these were the city, the clique of New York-Chicago lawyers, intellectuals, journalists, wits, sophisticates, modernists, and the urban agnostic Clarence Darrow.

However the battle between the two worldviews did not stop here. The clash did not end with the Darwinism-versus-creationism debate. The New Christian Right had adopted a new strategy. Rather than opposing science, it now sees science as an ally in its interpretation of the Bible.⁵ This strategy makes it difficult for one to argue that Christian fundamentalism is anti-modernist. Today, defenders of creationism are Christians with impeccable scientific credentials. They do not oppose science per se but they are "against the compartmentalization of religion and the decline of religious influence" (Boyer, 1994:116). In short, fundamentalism is a defense of Protestants who felt their way of life was threatened (Bruce, 1987:182).

2. *The New Christian Right (NCR)*

Today Christian fundamentalism is regarded as an aggressive religious movement that seeks to combat, if not neutralize the liberal movements that are taking over the state, church, and the family (Caplan, 1987:1). It might be described as a form of "intransigent fundamentalism" (van der Veer, 1991). The NCR is a diverse coalition of different groups united in "common anger about what is happening to America which is grounded in their evangelical faith" (Hadden, 1983:120). Johnson (1986:126) refers to the NCR as "a loose alliance and at time uneasy alliance of religious political action groups, "media ministers," and their evangelical Christian following, which

⁵ Nancy T. Ammerman (1998) avers, "Fundamentalism's systematic, rational approach to finding and organizing the facts of Scripture reflects the nineteenth-century scientific world from which the movement emerged" (cf. Marsden, 1980).

has in recent years been the source of much conservative political action.” Hadden (1983:120) summarizes the creed of NCR in the following way:

American culture has moved significantly in directions that seriously affront their [fundamentalists] personal beliefs. Explicit sex in print and broadcast media are morally wrong, they feel, and there is a clear causal relationship between this development and the soaring divorce rate, living together out of wedlock, casual sex, etc. Abortion is taking of human life. Talk of the rights of women to determine whether to carry a pregnancy, is to use language to hide the truth that millions of unborn babies have been murdered.

The two groups are also separated with regard to political style. Hadden states that the “new ingredient” in this new Christian fundamentalism is “the belief that it is the responsibility, indeed the duty, of Christians to engage in the political process as a means of bringing America back to God.⁶ And like the liberals of the 1950 and 60s, they believe morality can be legislated. Hence, it is important to get the right people elected to office” (p. 120). In effect this means engaging in mass movements that seek to enlighten people. And the mass media, especially the television, is the best vehicle for this proselytization (Armstrong, 1979; Johnson, 1986).⁷

There are therefore big differences between the “old fundamentalist Christians” and the New Christian Right or the neofundamentalists (Roberts, 1996:371). For instance, Jerry Falwell, who describes himself as a fundamentalist, is described as liberal, heretic, and the most dangerous man in America by Bob Jones, an old fundamentalist. In the same manner, Billy Graham is criticized

⁶ This is consistent with the definition of fundamentalism sketched by Taylor (1989). See footnote no. 1 above.

⁷ Johnson asks: “What is the overall effect of this video ministry on the political attitudes and behavior of the audience?” Johnson himself provides the answer: “The viewers’ survey cited above showed that those who frequently watch or listen to religious programs are, as a group, ‘far more conservative than other groups on a wide array of issues.’ Audiences are self-selected, so it is unlikely that the broadcasts have created a conservative constituency by sheer force of persuasion. But these broadcasts may well reinforce and add political saliency to viewers’ existing sentiments and also serve to provide a religious interpretation for newly emerging political issues and personalities” (1986:129).

by archfundamentalist Carl McIntyre for compromising the true faith (Roberts, 1996:371).

These themes of political language – the intent to work within the established political order, the tolerance for pluralism, and emphasis on internal diversity and ad hoc commitments – point to a new interest-group strategy for the NCR. While the language of the fundamentalist insurgency implied a complete political scenario of struggle, mobilization, and redemption, the interest-group role proposed no such millenarian view. Rather, it suggests a more open-ended role as one of a number of forces within a diverse political order, and a strategy of pushing for relatively specific goals...” (Roberts, 1996:371).

Another difference is in their attitude towards the use of mass media especially the television. By 1950s the Christian fundamentalist rank had a split between the old-fashioned separatists and the more world-affirming neo-evangelicals led by Billy Graham (Bendroth, 1996:50). Billy Graham himself is a pioneer in televangelism. The issue is on the proper attitude towards the mass media.

3. The Fundamentalist Personality

Fundamentalists in general may be characterized as having closed-mind personality, and intolerant towards what they oppose.⁸

⁸ The distinction between the open mind and close mind is neatly delineated by Rokeach and Kemp (1960):

The more closed the system, the more will the world be seen as threatening, the greater will be the belief in absolute authority, the more will the persons be evaluated according to the authorities they line up with, and the more will peripheral beliefs be related to each other by virtue of their common origin in authority, rather than by virtue of intrinsic connections.

On the other hand, the world is seen to be a friendlier place by the relative open person and thus he should be more free and more impervious to irrelevant pressures. For him, the power of authority is till there, but depends upon the authority's cognitive correctness, accuracy and consistency with the information he has about the world.

Similarly, the more closed a person's belief system, the more he should evaluate others according to their agreement or disagreement with his own system; also the more difficult should it be to discriminate between and separately evaluate a belief and the person holding the belief. Conversely, the more open the belief system, the less should beliefs held in common be a criterion for evaluating others, and the more other should be positively valued, regardless of their beliefs.

According to Martin (1964), "a close mind is a prejudiced mind-set, in which, categories of "we" and "they" are divided by a vast expanse of social psychological distance which can never be bridged. "They" are inherently and fundamentally different from "us" (as cited in Anonuevo, 1997:17). This attitude is exhibited by anti-protean self (Lifton, 1993:160). That is, a self that constricts itself amidst chaos and uncertainty through reliance on sacred text and tradition. Such attitude leads to intolerance – as a social defense mechanism to ward off any perceived threat that tend to disrupt one's own belief system, and ultimately one's own self concept" (*ibid.*). Intolerance results from the growing pressure, threat, and danger from the outside (Taylor, 1989). Intolerance is an antidote to cognitive dissonance, that is, the existence of two contradictory beliefs in one cognitive system (Festinger, 1958). Intolerant personality or anti-protean self of a fundamentalist connotes insecurity, resentment, hostility, and cynicism (Harris, et. al., 1950).

Moreover the staunch defense of absolute truth of the Bible and identification with the Christian community are attempts "to defend the self against feelings of aloneness and isolation, self-hate and misanthropy" (pp. 21-22; Lifton, 1993:171). Closed belief systems "provide a systematic cognitive framework for rationalizing and justifying ego self-righteousness and the moral condemnation of others."⁹

B. FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

1. *Approaching Christian fundamentalism*

Sociologically, there two general theories proposed to explain the resurgence of Christian fundamentalism, particularly in the United States (from Tamney-Devey, 1986). The first explanation is called "status politics." It sees fundamentalism as defense of declining status of evangelicalism (Lipset and Raab, 1981; Bell, 1960; Hofstadter, 1955). The other theory explains fundamentalism as a consequence of the backlash of cultural alternatives proposed by the New Left and the Women's movement (Brienes, 1981). The other

⁹ This should not be taken as categorical condemnation of Christian fundamentalism. For this characterization is just an ideal type and may not necessarily apply to all Christian fundamentalists themselves. As I will argue later on, fundamentalism may also be present in liberal groups.

alternative is to situate fundamentalism in the advent of modernity and the resulting process of secularization. These theories are not mutually exclusive. Each one provides different entry points in studying Christian fundamentalism.

Most students of fundamentalism are in agreement that Christian fundamentalism is a reaction to modernist tide at the turn of the twentieth century (Brown, 1994). However there are several problems with this interpretation, as I will show later on.¹⁰ I will show that Christian fundamentalism should be seen not only as a reaction to modernism but also a product of modernism itself. Fundamentalism is implicated in modernism itself, and any simplistic separation of the two should be rejected.

But for the moment I will first trace the development of Christian fundamentalism to the rise of modernism in the West. But I would try to problematize the relationship between modernism and Christian fundamentalism below.

2. *Defining modernity and modernism*

Modernism must be distinguished from modernity. Modernism refers to the cultural and intellectual movement that accompanied and gave rise to modernity.¹¹ Its impetus came from the Enlightenment Movement in philosophy and the Scientific Revolution. On the other hand, modernity refers to the social condition of industrial society.¹² Modernity was made possible mainly through the Industrial Revolution.¹³

¹⁰ Of course I am not the first one to enunciate this relationship. Recently, the works of Robertson (1989), Lechner (1985), and Boyer (1989) have related fundamentalism to the process of globalization. My analysis below is heavily indebted to these contributions.

¹¹ Other scholars suggest that "modernism should be seen as the cultural precipitate of modernity" (Schulte-Sasse, as cited in Hollinger, 1994:40).

¹² The relationship between modernity and modernism may be likened to base-superstructure dialectics in historical materialism (minus its deterministic interpretation).

¹³ Some scholars lump together the characteristics of modernity with the characteristics of modern culture. For instance, Fred Dallmyr (1993:17) suggests that "by modernity or modern culture, I mean a culture or a way of life that is the product of the Western Enlightenment and that has undergone the Weberian

Modernism as the cultural logic of modernity may be characterized as profession of rationalism: that is, unsullied confidence in the power of reason. This can be traced to Kantian dictum of *aude sapere* ("dare to know"). Such dictum was asserted against the dogmatism of existing religious traditions and the intellectual bankruptcy of traditional authorities. Modernism is the maturity of reason. Reason was freed from tutelage of the non-rational. Reason became its own legislator. This maturity, in return, followed two paths: The Baconian-Newtonian path of scientific empiricism and the Cartesian rationalism. The branch of Cartesian rationalism championed the use of "methodic doubt" as the road to truth. Method was modeled according to mathematical logic. Truth is that which can be proven as consistent with logic and reason.

Consequently the Baconian-Newtonian path gained the upper hand (Merchant, 1987). Thus modernism may also be characterized as having optimistic belief in the promise of science and technology. Positivism became the dominant philosophy of science (Kolakowski, 1978; Bryant, 1987; Hallfeny, 1989). It was enlisted by the rising middle class (*bourgeoisie*) in its struggle against the church-supported conservatism of the old aristocratic classes (Gouldner, 1968). Positivism asserts that science would eventually erode, if not eradicate the vestiges of mystical elements of the traditional world-view. Positivism also adhered strictly to the separation of fact and value. It rejected all knowledge-claims that were not amenable to strict experimental control. With the triumph of Newtonian science modern period saw the disenchantment of the world (Berrman, 1989). Disenchantment simply means "the denial to nature of all subjectivity, all experience, all feeling" (Griffin, 1988:2). In effect, science came to be more and more obsessed with objectivism. Reason, as Adorno and Horkheimer put it, was reduced to its Instrumental function. That is, science, in its pursuit of providing the most efficient means for achieving perfect society, disregarded societal and ethical consideration (Fay, 1978; Habermas, 1958). Science can only establish what is empirically true, but cannot settle the question of objectivity of values.

process of rationalization in every domain, including intellectual secularization, disenchantment from nature, political reorganization in the direction of rational-administrative efficiency, and economic industrialization." In this paper I will distinguish modernity from modernism.

Modernism also resolutely defended its faith in progress. Comte and Spencer, two pioneers of sociology, instance, saw progress as inevitable in the fields of knowledge, humanity, and civilization. Progress was seen as the telos of modern societies. August Comte (Heilbron, 1997) provided the Grand Narrative of progress in his three stages of human development. The vulgar Marxists' faith in the inevitable triumph of socialism is also a perfect example of this modernist trend.

There is also the uncontested faith in humanism. Humanism asserts that humanity shares a common, universal trait. This is enshrined in the universal declaration of the rights of man. These inalienable rights are often phrased in individualistic philosophy of Hobbes and Locke. Individualism and liberalism combined together to give sovereign power to the individual to make fundamental moral decisions. Divine right theory was repudiated through the development of the contract theory. More and more, traditional authorities were questioned and repudiated. In short, modernism, or Huxley's "brave new world," may be said to be the overturning of the decrepit worldview of the premodern world.

Modernism also is a state of mind that is intolerant towards ambivalence. Zygmunt Bauman (1991) provides a detailed description of this modernist intolerance towards ambivalence:

Ambivalence, the possibility of assigning an object or an event to more than one category, is a language-specific disorder: a failure of the naming (segregating) function that language is meant to perform. The main symptom of disorder is the acute discomfort we feel when we are unable to read the situation properly and to choose between alternative actions.

...To classify, in other words, is to give the world a structure: to manipulate its probabilities; to make some events more likely than some others; to behave as if events were not random, or to limit or eliminate randomness of events.

Through its naming/classifying function, language posits itself between a solidly founded, orderly world fit for human habitation, and a contingent world of randomness, in which human survival weapons – memory, the capacity for learning – would be useless, if not downright suicidal. Language strives to sustain the order and to deny or suppress randomness and contingency. An

orderly world is a world in which one knows how to go on (or what amounts to the same, one knows how to find out – and find out for sure – how to go on), in which one knows how to calculate the probability of an event and how to increase or decrease that probability; a world in which links between certain situations and the effectivity of certain actions remain by and large constant, so that one can rely on past successes as guides for future ones. Because of our learning/memorizing ability, we have vested interests in maintaining the orderliness of the world. For the same reason, we experience ambivalence as a discomfort and threat. Ambivalence confounds calculation of events and confuses the relevance of memorized action patterns.

The modernist weapon against the threat of ambivalence is rational calculation through scientific control. And modernism is an incessant drive towards mastering chaos, of imposing order in the fragmented world. Modernism is a production of order. Following Peter L. Berger (1968), one might say that religion is the most ancient way of conquering ambivalence through the process of nomization (meaning-system building). Its appeal lies in its attempt to proffer transcendental justification for the present cosmological order. However, secularization thesis asserts that with the advance of modernism religion gradually loses its transcendental appeal. Yet recent discussions on this subject (as I will show below) seem to point out to the resilience and persistence of the religious plausibility structure in conquering ambivalence (Weigert, 1983).

3. The Social Condition of Modernity

According to Hollinger (1994:21) “Modernity began at about the time of Francis Bacon in the late 16th century... It is characterized as the period of the quarrel between the “ancients and the moderns” that manifested the struggle of science and the political philosophy of individualism against the wisdom of the ancients.”¹⁴ On the other hand, modernity as the social condition that made modernism possible may be defined as the process of differentiation and rationalization (i.e., the separation of different spheres of society), enormous secularization, the growth of instrumental reason

¹⁴ There are a number of different accounts of the precise origin of modernity. See Calinescu, 1987.

and industrialization, and the intensification of reflexivity in relation to risk.¹⁵

Differentiation in modern society entails the pluralization of meaning systems or *nomoi* (Berger, 1968).¹⁶ Modernity is a social condition under which religion, arts and humanities, politics, and economy are separated from each other. This process of differentiation resulted to autonomization of each sphere (Lash, 1990:8). It means, "each sphere becomes self-legislating." The philosophical foundations of this autonomization, as shown by Habermas (1986), can be found in Immanuel Kant's philosophical discourse on modernity. In the process of differentiation science came to dominate the field of knowledge-production (Holub, 1987; Seidman, 1989). As a result, it led to the rejection of value-rationality (science as subordinated to ultimate values) in favor of instrumental-rationality (science became the end itself). Science and technology were divorced from ethical considerations. This process led to marginalization of theistic system as an alternative meaning system. However while traditional theistic systems are declining new religious movements and occults are also spreading (Glock and Wuthnow, 1979:55). This means that religious consciousness is not dying out.

Among these traits of modernity, secularization played a decisive role in instigating fundamentalist reaction.¹⁷ Following Karel Dobbelaere's (1981) excellent examination of the concept, secularization may be analyzed as a multi-dimensional concept. For Dobbelaere (1981:11) the first dimension of secularization is "laicization." It "refers to a differentiation process: institutions are developed that perform different functions and are structurally different. Religion becomes one institution alongside other institu-

¹⁵ These traits are summarized from Giddens, 1986; Mouzelis, 1998.

¹⁶ Wuthnow (1976) postulates four types of competing meaning systems in modern society, namely, theistic system, individualism, social scientific explanation, and mysticism. Wuthnow's study notes that theism and individualism are declining in modern society. On the other hand, the social scientific explanation and mysticism are becoming widely accepted (Wuthnow, 1979:33).

¹⁷ There is a plethora of materials on secularization (Porter, 1972; Glassman, 1978). But recent literature tends to dismiss the very optimistic side of secularization thesis proposed by Wilson (1986), that is, the assertion that religions are declining, if not dying. For or recent criticisms of secularization thesis see Hadden (1987) and Crippen (1989).

tions and loses its overarching claim. It also entails desacralization of the world. That is, "mastering the world is now based on technology and calculation, where previously man had recourse to magic" (p. 11). The second dimension of secularization is religious involvement. It refers to the degree of accord between the doctrines, beliefs, rituals, and morals of religious institutions and their members. In other words, it means the degree of adherence of members to the official teachings of their churches. Finally, there is religious change. This simply means the adjustment that religious bodies are undergoing in the process of declining religious influence.

Doubtless Christian fundamentalism is particularly inimical to secularization. For secularization undermines the centrality of traditional religious faith (Porter, 1972). It pushes religion more and more into the periphery of the public sphere. Religion drastically shrinks and is forcibly privatized (Kurtz, 1995; Porter, 1972). Scientific culture replaces the authority of religious explanation of the world. As status differentiation occurs among believers, as a result of specialization (Durkheim, 1956), individuals find themselves bedraggled in a situation arising from conflicting demands from different non-religious sociations. The believer must uphold the inerrancy of the Bible but she must also send her children to schools where evolutionary theory is being taught. Under pressure from secularizing currents, some churches begin to "give in to the world," instead of converting the world. Under these circumstances, Fundamentalist Christians feel their faith threatened. Christianity had made a pact with the world, with Satan. Therefore the "true faith" must be affirmed and guarded against heretical contamination.¹⁸

4. The Dialectics of Fundamentalism and Modernism

In this light fundamentalism may be said to be antithetical to the spirit of modernism. In fact, scholars of Christian fundamentalism regard it as a reaction against modernism. It is anti-modernist (Marty, 1981). Fundamentalism is a rejection of the modernist spirit

¹⁸ In its rejecting attitude towards the world, Christian fundamentalism has a sect-like character. It is therefore hostile to church-like attitudes and denomination-like posture towards the world. In this sense, Ethridge's (1979) sociological definition of fundamentalism as form of boundary-maintenance is very apropos.

defined above. Frank J. Lechner (1985:245), for instance, suggests that "fundamentalism constitutes an effort at particularization, exclusion, de-differentiation, and a closing off of possibilities of further revision; as such, it is a form of rejection of the pattern of modernity." On the other hand, Martin Marty (1981) connects fundamentalism with modernity by arguing that:

Modernity, they [fundamentalist Christians] know, separates church from state, ethnicity and region from religion, fact from value. It cruelly sunders and rarely supports. People in its wake experience hunger for wholeness. On this scene the Ayatollah is almost a pure demodernizer.

In this interpretation Christian fundamentalism is seen as the stark opposite of modernism. While this observation obviously contains some grains of truth, nevertheless it does not reflect accurately the complex relationship between fundamentalism and modernism. For while it is true that fundamentalism is a reaction to modernism, it is also a product and part of modernity.

a. Christian fundamentalism as a reaction to modernism.
As I have reiterated earlier Christian fundamentalism is an attempt of some Christian Churches to resist the modernizing tendencies in majority of Christian Churches in the 1950s. Against denominational propensity towards ecumenism – commitment is the core of religion and not doctrines – fundamentalist Christians insist on the uncompromising belief in the "idea that a given faith is to be upheld firmly in its full and literal form, free of compromise, softening, re-interpretation or diminution. It presupposes that the core of religion is doctrine, rather than ritual, and also that this doctrine can be fixed with precision and finality..." (Gellner, 1992:2). Christian fundamentalism is the rejection of relativizing tendencies within liberal evangelical theologies – "relativization of God's and Bible's authority, of the divinity of Christ, etc." (Lechner, 1985: 250).

Nevertheless Christian fundamentalism provided answers to the spiritual needs of some Christians who are in the throes of modern societies. First, Christian fundamentalism gave absolute assurance to Christians in the face of risk and ambivalence in the modern world. Modernity replaced *Fortuna* with risk. It "represents an alteration in the perception of determination and contingency,

such that human moral imperatives, natural causes, and chance reign in place of religious cosmologies" (Giddens, 1990:34). In the "environments of risk" individuals look for security. For Giddens "Risk is not just a matter of individual action. There are 'environments of risk' that collectively affect large masses of individuals – in some instances, potentially everyone on the face of the earth, as in the case of the risk of ecological disaster or nuclear war. We may define 'security' as a situation in which a specific set of dangers is counteracted or minimized.... In both its factual and its experiential sense, security may refer to a large aggregates or collectivities of people – up to and including – or to individuals" (pp. 35-36).

Now, while science and technology through "expert system" can give assurance for eliminating uncertainty via systematic control of events, nonetheless the risk remained as evidenced by numerous failures in the system. More and more, people begin to realize the limitations of science in reducing social risks. Nuclear accidents, ozone depletion, and other ecological problems attest to this. In the face of this immanent incalculability of risks, Christian fundamentalism offered a strong sense of spiritual security. Andrew Weigert asks the following pertinent question: "How can individuals who believe that worldwide nuclear war literally predicted by God is immanent also feel certain, as they buy insurance and plan vacations, that they will be spared from the Armageddon? What answers absorb ambivalence and transform it into security in the face of anticipated catastrophe" (1983:84)? The answer lies in the fundamentalist Christian doctrine of rapture. Here is Weigert's account:

Traveling with fundamentalist Christians in the holy land, Grace Hallsell heard Clyde explained his beliefs in Ezekiel's prophecy of the Earth's destruction in the Battle of Armageddon. "Ezekiel could scarcely have been referring to anything other than an exchange of tactical nuclear weapons." He concluded that "all history has in a sense been predetermined by God.... So in the great final battle God again will take charge of human history" (1986:25-27).

Is Clyde frightened of the prediction of nuclear war? Does he want the world to end? Yes and no. He will be saved because he believes, but many loved ones and innocents will be lost because they do not believe. Clyde's ambivalence is resolved by applying of faith construct coined in the early nineteenth century, "rapture." As Hall Lindsey (1977:126) explains,

Rapture is a worldly "impossibility" that "will happen! Jesus Christ... is coming to meet all true believers in the air. Without benefits of science, space suits, or interplanetary rockets, there will be those who will be transported into a glorious place more beautiful, more awesome, than we can possibly comprehend.... The ultimate trip." Clyde reflects this thinking with urgency, "I'm driving with my friend who is not saved, and the Rapture occurs, which, again, I expect any day, and I'm lifted up in the air out of the car. The car runs amok. And my friend is killed in the crush.... I rejoice in the idea of meeting my Savior." Once saved, believers' concern over loved ones, another source of ambivalence, ends. Clyde adds, "the agony of friends and loved ones in Hell will be entirely deleted from the mind of the survivors in heaven" (Hallsell, 1983:37). Dire events are transformed into single-minded joy of eternal salvation (p. 84).

In this way, the doctrines of rapture and premillennialism of Christian fundamentalism became integrated in the modernist project of making the impact of rapid modernization palatable. They act as the cushions against extreme metaphysical insecurity resulting from intensification of reflexivity about technological risks. Salvation in Jesus Christ served as a transcendental trust that allayed uncertainty, while simultaneously challenging secular sources of metaphysical trust.¹⁹ Christian fundamentalism purports to eliminate the anxiety resulting from modernist ambivalence. It is an escape from making and processing too much information. Of course the trust in science and "expert system" is there. But they are subordinated to the all-encompassing trust in God.²⁰ As Reinhold Niebuhr pointed out: "Frantic orthodoxy is never rooted in faith but in doubt. It is when we are not sure that we are doubly sure. Fundamentalism is, therefore, inevitable in an age which has

¹⁹ Giddens (1990:34) defines trusts "as confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles (technical knowledge)." Giddens does not acknowledge the role of religion in providing this trust.

²⁰ However it must also be pointed out that the anti-protean self of the fundamentalists is also laden with ambivalence: "The self is paradoxical: embracing a sense of safe haven under the protection of ultimate power, yet maintaining a highly suspicious vigilance in the face of ever threatening evil and danger" (Lifton, 1993:168).

destroyed so many certainties by which faith once expressed itself and upon which it relied" (cited in Lechner, 1985:251). In addition, this metaphysical ambivalence might exacerbate intolerance towards competing meaning-systems. For intolerance allays fear and insecurity arising from cognitive dissonance.²¹

Christian fundamentalism provided clear-cut solutions to moral and personal, and social problems. In this light, one can understand the Manichean character of Christian fundamentalism. It divides the world neatly into two categories, good and evil, the believers and the heathens (Marti, 1989). By reducing complex issues into neat categories, to two opposing camps, Christian fundamentalism offers alternative pairs to the modernist constructed binary oppositions. Furthermore what makes it "out-modern" the modernists is, it cannot, like modernism, tolerate religious ambivalence and cognitive pluralism. One cannot serve God and the idols of the world at the same time. The world must be mastered by interpreting it within the soteriological narrative of salvation history rather than relying on the grand narrative of scientific progress. Christian fundamentalism replaces secular grand narratives with its own version of equally grandiose narrative: premillennial narrative. It offers an alternative narrative that unites the self, humanity, and history under the saving act of God.

It also provides a sense of community, a haven for Christians who pine for the traditional values of the family and community (Wuthnow, 1996). Like worldly religions, Christian fundamentalism may be said to vouchsafe a way of dealing with the breakdown of sacred cognitive system arising from modernization (see Woodrum, 1985:19). It assuaged the problems associated with the transition from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*. Christian fundamentalism furnished its adherents the much-needed support-groups to nourish their traditional metaphysical plausibility structures (Wuthnow, 1994). In short, Christian fundamentalism provided the Christians a meaning-system that the secular institutions could not otherwise provide. More to the point, the NCR stresses the essential role of the

²¹ Interestingly enough, studies on audience's perception of religious television shows suggest that people with strong religious background are more likely to watch and seek such shows. Thus, the success of televangelism may be explained in terms of the viewers' penchant for maintaining their belief system (see McFarland, 1996).

family in building Christian communities. The family is the source of right morality and legitimate religious faith. As Boyer (1994: 125) points out, "In Weberian sense, New Christian Right leaders decry the supplanting of traditional authority with [family and religion] with legal-rational authority [state] and value-rational with instrumental action." The fundamentalist Christian churches became extensions, and even surrogates to, of the family.

Third, Christian fundamentalism can be viewed as a resistance against the rising instrumental rationalization of cultural life (Tiryakian, 1967; Truzzi, 1970). Like the millenarian movements, Christian fundamentalism acts as a form of revitalization movement. First it functions to revitalize declining Christian faith in the Modern Age. Faced with bureaucratization of society, the loss of absolute moral standards, Christian fundamentalism furnished the disgruntled youths a chance to challenge the "heartless" world of their parents (Simmonds, Richardson, and Harder, 1976). Second, it also seeks to revitalize American nation by making it great again (Boyer, 1994:126). Making America Great requires moral regeneration and economic recapitalization (Tomakovsky-Devey, 1986). To defend American values is tantamount to declaring all-out war against communism, atheism, and humanism. These "isms" are scattered around the globe. Evil is anything that threatens the American values.

As a resistance to modernism, Christian fundamentalism challenged the quasi-religious character of modernism. In the name of faith and armed with the absolute truth derived from Jesus Christ, fundamentalist Christians relativized the false claims of reason to be absolute. In short, Christian fundamentalism unmasked the pretentious character of modernism as pluralistic by showing how secular humanism has appropriated and displaced the absolute character of Christian faith by its own scientism and humanism. Put differently, fundamentalist Christians pointed out that modernism, while claiming to be inimical to dogmatism and religion, has in fact, created its own "new religion of humanity."

b. Christian fundamentalism as modern. Christian fundamentalism is a symptom of modernity. It is specifically a product of modernism itself. It does not totally reject all that is modern. In fact, it upholds civil liberty (Lechner, 1985:251). Its modernizing

tendencies however are quite selective. Its selective modernization strategies include the use of science itself to explain the absolute veracity of the Biblical account of creation (Williams, 1983). In effect, it means that creationist account "is intended to be validated not on religious but on scientific grounds; on the grounds, that is, of the dominant explanatory paradigm that in the most 'modernized' in Western society" (Caplan, 1987:12).

By insisting on the universality of its faith, it could not avoid its insertion in a particular local community. Fundamentalist Christians has to contend with rival and competing meaning-systems in the religious supermarket. Its strongest competitors are the New Age religious cults. Arguing against modernists, fundamentalist Christians already expose themselves to the main currents of modernity: pluralism and diversity of worldviews. This relativization, like privatization, is not something peculiar to religion, but equally applies to political ideologies and other secular forms of faiths (Beyer, 1994:76). And the Christian fundamentalists' resistance to this relativizing tendency of modernity parallels the responses of quasi-religions (Smith, 1989). Modernization equalizes all meaning-systems through relativization. In effect, Christian fundamentalism, while consciously separating itself from modernity, became an indistinguishable regular part of modernity itself. As Lechner (1985:254) rightly argues, "Dedifferentiation requires differentiation first. Fundamentalism, as such a quite recent phenomenon, is itself a differentiation product, and this in itself makes fundamentalism also modern."²²

Fundamentalist Christians must also reckon with the political structure and processes of society where they find themselves. As Johnson (1986:142) puts it well: "Fundamentalist insurgencies by definition cannot bargain and compromise; and if they cannot do that, they can accomplish little in Congress or in the bureaucracy."

²² That Christian fundamentalism is starkly anti-modernist may apply to some extent to the 1950s style of Christian fundamentalism. But as Johnson (1986: 138) rightly points out, the members of NCR of the '80s "are simply insisting on their rights within the system – asking that their status and values be given the same respect accorded to others." In short, the members of NCR do not see themselves as taking over America. Rather, they are merely exercising their democratic rights afforded by modern society.

Hence the NCR has to forge alliance with other political parties and interest groups. In doing that, they expose themselves to political pluralism and modern political strategies. Or, in the words of Bruce (1987:191), "In order to resist the incursions of the modern rational world, fundamentalists must act and think like members of that world."

Moreover what sustains persistence of Christian fundamentalism in modern society is the liberal ethos and pluralistic character of modern society itself (Lechner, 1985:256). Its very possibility and existence is guaranteed by modernity. And while it may oppose modernist principles it cannot help but abide by the rules of modern society. Hence Johnson (1986:139) argues that "While the NCR still sees a threat from pornographers, abortionists, and humanists, they seem more likely now to express at least a tolerance for the fact that America is diverse nation."²³ Consequently, it also allows pluralism within its own rank. As the Moral Majority, Inc., admits, "Members of the Moral Majority, Inc., have no common theological premise" (quoted in Johnson, 1986:140). For instance, fundamentalist Christians cannot simply appeal to arguments based on authority of the Bible. They must develop sophisticated argumentation and master rhetorical skills in persuading non-believers.²⁴ In this way, they also harness the resources of modern societies – educational, material, and even its symbols. Christian fundamentalism itself "cannot survive purely in its own terms." It must also blend with some basic principles of modernism inspite of itself (Lechner, 1985:256).

Lastly, fundamentalist Christians also utilized and availed of the technological tools of modern mass communication. God can now be preached via the television. However the fundamentalist Christians did alter the secular view of the television. They view

²³ Johnson (1986:139) quotes a statement from Moral Majority, Inc.: "We do not believe that individuals or organizations which disagree with Moral Majority, Inc., belong to an immoral minority. However we do feel that our position represents a consensus of the majority of Americans. This belief in no way reflects on the morality of those who disagree with us."

²⁴ However, one should not lose sight of the fact that modern Protestant fundamentalism is not solely based on propositional body of beliefs or apologetics, but "is essentially a religion of emotionalism, experientialism, and supernaturalism" (Walker, 1987:198).

the television not as a form of entertainment but to edify the soul (Bendroth, 1996:82). The mass media is seen as a tool to be manipulated in order for believers to confront temptations and not to run away from it. The point is not to ignore modernism but to combat it in its own terms.

In short, it is only half of the truth to say that fundamentalism is anti-modern. The other half of the truth must also be acknowledged: that fundamentalism has also changed the tone of modernity (Wuthnow, 1996; Caplan, 1987:5), and that it is also selectively modern (Lechner, 1985; Opie, 1976).

C. FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE POST-MODERN WORLD

1. *The Postmodern Turn*

Fundamentalism de-divinized the absolutists' claim of modern Reason. Like postmodernism, it is an attempt at de-differentiation (Turner, 1994: 77). And therefore fundamentalism is a precursor of postmodernism. Now it would be utterly inadequate to locate Christian fundamentalism only within the context of modernity. For we have now moved to another stage called postmodernity. If postmodernity is a new social condition, both locally and globally, then, the study Christian fundamentalism has to be reformulated in the light of this new development. The reason being, that Christian fundamentalism does not only adapt to its environment, it also changes its environment (Wuthnow, 1996).

Francois Lyotard (1987) is the first scholar to enunciate the nature of postmodernity. He defines postmodernism as "incredulity towards grand narratives." Postmodernism, like fundamentalism is a response to the exhaustion of modernity. Postmodernism is the cultural logic of late capitalism (Jameson, 1996). But unlike fundamentalism that fought the threat of modernity during its inception, postmodernism comes after the end of modernism. Postmodernists have witnessed the horrors of modernity. It is an immanent critique of the Enlightenment because it does not stand outside Western Reason and its tradition. Postmodernism looks at Enlightenment and Modernism as examples of Grand Narratives par excellence. Grand Narratives or meta-narratives are stories that purport to explain everything that happens in the world according to a grand scheme or universal plot (Weedon, 1994).

Postmodernism as an assault against Modernist Grand Narratives may be said to embody the epistemological positions of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of Western metaphysics and Michel Foucault's genealogical critique of modern reason (see Hollinger, 1994; Featherstone, 1995). According to deconstruction Western philosophy has always been logocentric. Logocentrism is the search for essences or absolute truths about the world. Derrida argues that there are no essences or truths to be discovered. Everything is textual; nothing exists outside the text. Everything is just an interpretation (Norris, 1987; Culler, 1982). Deconstruction shows the arbitrary character of Western-constructed binary oppositions (like Reason/Unreason, Male/Female, Writing/Speech, etc.). Foucault's genealogy, on the other hand, undermines the claim of Western philosophy that knowledge and power can be separated. Knowledge is grounded in the discursive formation of society. Discourse regulates the production of truth. Truth, in return, forms a regime that legitimizes existing power relations (Simons, 1995). Postmodernism, in short, is the thorough relativization of truth.²⁵

2. *The Condition of Postmodernity*

Postmodernity, on the other hand, is *post-industrial society* (Bell, 1978) or the *Third Wave Society* (Toffler, 1989). Postmodernity is the Information Age. It is a society based on mobilization of vast network of electronic-based knowledge. It is a society of network flow (Castells, 1989). It heralds the post-Fordist capitalist world order (Harvey, 1989). As a new social condition, it is characterized by the reversals of conditions prevailing under modern societies. It is first of all characterized by de-differentiation. This process of de-differentiation may be called technically as "McDonaldization" (Ritzer, 1989) or "Disneyization" (Brymann, 1998). It simply means that in postmodern society, what once were held to be separated in modern society are now conjoined again. Scot Lash (1990:11) enumerates three processes of dedifferentiation. First, the aesthetic realm begins to colonize the theoretical and moral discourses of society. Second, there is the break down of the barrier between high

²⁵ Of course postmodernist writers like Richard Rorty (1989) does not admit relativism as the inevitable consequence of postmodernism. Others of course embrace relativism with some qualifications.

art and popular art. And third, the collapse of the distinction between consumers and producers, authors and readers.

Another character of postmodernity is the celebration of consumption, and the valorization of consumption over and above production (Bocock, 1989). Or, in the words of Bocock (1993:4),

Consumption has been seen as epitomizing this move into post-modernity for it implies a move away from productive roles being central to people's lives, to see their sense of identity of who they are. In place of work roles, it is roles in various kinds of family formations, in sexual partnerships of various kinds, in leisure-time pursuits, in consumption in general, which have come to be seen as being more and more significant to people.

Jean Baudrillard (1987) even rejects the idea that people in post-modern societies consume commodities because of preexisting needs. Far from that, people consume symbolic items in order to construct their own personal identities. In short, postmodern society celebrates the "shopping experience" as an activity good in its own right. The shift from production society to consuming society is made possible by the logic of post-Fordist capitalist accumulation worldwide (Harvey, 1989).

Third is the conversion of society of representation to society of signs (Harris, 1989). Again, following Baudrillard (1987), post-modern society heralds the birth of third order of representation – the order of simulacrum. Symbols now dominate social interactions and sociations. Amidst the proliferation of simulacra there are no original copies. This condition is brought about by the "time-space compression" or the annihilation of space by time. Time-space compression is made possible by the rapid advancement in communication technology via cyberspace. Societies are integrated globally more and more by absence (in time) rather than presence (in space) (Giddens, 1989).

Finally postmodernity heralds the re-enchantment of nature through postmodern cosmologies and post-Newtonian science (Griffen, 1994). Deep ecologists and some ecofeminists have challenged the mechanistic cosmology of Newtonian physics (Merchant, 1989). They are now calling for a holistic, system-based cosmology

(Capra, 1984). Such postmodern science does not separate the knower from the known, values from research. Moreover postmodernists treat science as just one among the many cultural traditions in society (Rorty, 1989; Feyerabend, 1989). As such it does not hold a privileged position. It cannot claim to be closer to the truth (Putnam, 1989). Postmodern science searches for holism. It turns to Eastern Wisdom for guidance (Zukav, 1989).

3. Fundamentalism Confronts Postmodernism

What will be the future of Christian fundamentalism in the postmodern world? Traditional religious worldviews and new religious movements offer new alternatives in an age when old "isms" are declining, secular faiths are crumbling, and science and analytic philosophy could no longer provide normative guidance (Evans, 1973; Greeley, 1978; Bell, 1989).

A trend in the globalization in relation to worldwide resurgence of religion is the de-differentiation (re-union) between politics and religion (Robertson, 1989). While modernism heralded the differentiation between state and religion, in recent time there is the experience of religionization of politics and the politicization of religion. Religious bodies are involved in political affairs of the state, while the state is taking care of issues that are once dominated by religious bodies (Robertson, 1989; Haynes, 1994). The politicization of religion as exemplified in liberation theology and the NCR may also be viewed as a reaction to the privatization of religion (Beyer, 1990). It is an attempt to reclaim the public performance of religion within the differentiated modern social system.

Like its relation with modernism and modernity, Christian fundamentalism also has a complex relationship with postmodernism. Postmodernism is a celebration of differences, neo-tribalism, and relativism. Christian fundamentalism will always find a niche within postmodern society (Gellner, 1989). But postmodernists would not accept the claim of fundamentalists about the absolute character of their belief. However fundamentalists can always argue, using the language of postmodernism, that if everything is relativized including postmodernism itself, then, nothing would prevent fundamentalist Christians from claiming

the Gospel as the foundation of absolute truth.²⁶ In this connection, Christian fundamentalism can use the available resources of postmodernism to criticize the limitations of technocratic society, scientism, and irrationalities of modern reason. Deconstruction can be an effective tool in this process. But fundamentalism does not even have to borrow the critique of logocentrism from deconstruction. It can always declare: "Plague on both of your houses."

With its general skepticism towards secular faiths, postmodernism also provides space for Christian fundamentalism to re-assert itself. For fundamentalist Christians, postmodernist assault on Western Reason only confirms their earlier ranting against the secular faiths of modern societies (Bell, 1977). These "quasi-religions" (Smith, 1989) cannot provide the solid moral foundation for Western civilization.

However postmodernists will also oppose and resist fundamentalism, in the same manner that fundamentalists will oppose postmodernists. On the one hand, for postmodernists, fundamentalists are dyed-in-the wool Platonists who have survived the onslaught of modernism. On the other hand, for fundamentalists, postmodernists appear like protean liberals who do not even care about fundamentalism, much less about moral regeneration. Nevertheless, unlike its quarrel with modernists, fundamentalists will naturally oppose the extreme relativism of the postmodernists. In lieu of postmodern relativization of knowledge, fundamentalists offer a foundationalist epistemology based on inerrancy of Biblical text. Fundamentalism therefore denies the validity of competing perspectives. In this sense fundamentalism is very modern because of its foundationalist epistemology and its essentialist claim to know the absolute truth, universal morality, and unchanging human nature (Caplan, 1987:20). In this sense fundamentalism may also be seen as a selective defense of some modernist themes against postmodernist deconstructionism (Turner, 1995).

Whereas before, fundamentalists resist the universalizing proclivity of modernism based on scientific reason, the fundamentalists must now reckon with the desire of postmodernists not only

²⁶ Curiously enough, it is not the fundamentalists themselves who are making this argument, but serious theologians like Milbank (1989).

to relativize political ideologies but also to relativize epistemological issues. In short, postmodernists would not take seriously the epistemological claims of fundamentalists. Modernists adopt an adversarial attitude towards fundamentalism. Postmodernists, on the contrary, adopt a nonchalant position. Hence between modernists and postmodernists, fundamentalists will seat very well with their postmodernist brethren. Fundamentalists may look at modernists as enemies, but with postmodernists they see a friendly stranger. As a stranger however a postmodernist will not subscribe to the beliefs of the fundamentalists. The postmodernists only treat the fundamentalist friend as a fellow traveler in the postmodern world.

Another possible intersection between postmodernism and Christian fundamentalism is in the area of neo-tribalism. Postmodernity heralds the proliferation of different support-groups that nourish the individual's sense of community (Giddens, 1989). With the collapse of social movements that are based on grand ideologies (e.g., Marxism), individuals find themselves being attracted to Christian fundamentalist sects and other quasi-religious movements like cults and New Age Groups (Anthony and Robbins, 1978). These groups provide sociations that can nourish the personal narratives of the members.

Therefore Christian fundamentalism will continue to flourish in the postmodern world. It will flourish because the social condition of postmodernity will encourage it. Beyond this it will also flourish because postmodernism has challenged the hegemony of modernist assumptions. With the collapse of modernist sensibilities, fundamentalism is a good rival of postmodernism and critical rationalism (Gellner, 1989).

Postmodernity is the age of consumption. Fundamentalist Christians would oppose the materialistic ethos of consumer society. Religion, in general, has always advocated ascetic attitude in relation to mundane and bodily pleasures. Following Max Weber, (1976), we can say that fundamentalist Christians belong to the world-rejecting religions (Weber, 1976).²⁷ This is exemplified in Jimmy Swaggart's world-negating theology (Roberts, 1996:375). Some fundamentalist Christians therefore will posit asceticism

²⁷ This is very true for Islamic fundamentalism.

against consumerist attitudes nourished in postmodern society. Robert Boccock (1995:117) even suggests that world religions are the only remaining ideologies that can challenge postmodern celebration of consumerism. And fundamentalist Christianity is a great threat to such secular attitude.

Nevertheless the opposite may also be true. For instance, Hadden and Shupe's (1988) study of fundamentalist televangelism shows that "Most televangelists end up at a common point: the gospel of Prosperity. God wants you to be financially prosperous and content.... God works on a principle of reciprocity. The more money you send to Him, the more God will return materially on your investment" (quoted in Roberts, 1996:374). In effect, television has changed the message of Christian fundamentalism. The unintended consequence of utilizing the electronic medium has been the commodification of Christ and his message. The irony in this is that while some fundamentalist preachers can castigate the people for over-consumptive lifestyle, nevertheless the medium for doing so also puts them in the same boat as that of the people they are castigate. Televangelists must also be able to "package" their programs to attract audience and sponsors. But the television provided the fundamentalist Christians the opportunity to reach diverse audiences faster. It created virtual religious communities (Berlet, 1998:267).²⁸

c. *Globalization and fundamentalism.* Roland Robertson (1989) suggests that to understand the global character of religion is to look at the interrelationship between the three processes of globalization: societalization (the constitution of nation-states), individuation (the modern constitution of the individual), internationalization (Westernization), and humanization (the constitution of humanity as a whole). Globalization, understood as a process of making the world more and more into a single village (Robertson, 1989), promotes universalization of particularism and the particularization of the universal (Robertson, 1990). Particularization promotes relativization of religious worldviews. A religious world-

²⁸ Lately fundamentalist Christians have engaged in videovangelism (Johnson, 1998). This includes CDs, VCDs, and VHS tapes that focus on Christian values. These marketing strategies usually appeal to the middle class audience. In short, Christian fundamentalism has gone postmodern.

view has to be a narrative that could also account for the existence of other competing worldviews (Robertson, 1989:19). Religious communities must proclaim the universal character of worldviews. Nevertheless they are also constrained by the ethnic and cultural background of their believers. This is the dialectic between universalization and particularization. This dialectic can also be found in Christian fundamentalism. The drive towards universalization is rooted in the universal character of Jesus Christ's teachings. But fundamentalist Christians must also wrestle with the problem of cultural diversity of their believers worldwide. The original Christian message is from a very specific local area. But its message is universal. Now the universal message has to be particularized in different localities. This religious universalization is carried through time-space compressing technologies of the Information Age. Yet there is no religious homogenization because the universal is also glocalized (Robertson, 1996).²⁹

D. THE FUTURE OF FUNDAMENTALISM

1. *Fundamentalism in the Post-Colonial Societies*

I have been discussing Christian fundamentalism mainly within the context of Postmodernization of Western societies. Now what I want to do is to give a brief discussion on the impact of Christian fundamentalism on post-colonial societies, particularly the Philippines. I will give some general comments.

First, what distinguishes evangelical Christianity, and Christian fundamentalism in particular, from other denominations is its concern with traditional values in the area of private morality and family issues rather than the public world of politics and economics (Harrison and Lazerwitz, 1982). Hence it will appeal to people who come from the lower class, people with low educational background, and communities who are experiencing very rapid phase of urba-

²⁹ Robertson (1995:28ff.) derived his use of glocalization from *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (1991 edition). Glocalization involves "the simultaneity and the interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local, or – in more abstract vein – the universal and the particular." Glocalization opposes the notion that globalization produces homogenization of cultures. Globalization involves both the localization of the global and the globalization of the local (see also Appadurai (1989).

nization and modernization (Roberts, 1996).³⁰ Therefore it will not come as a surprise that fundamentalist and Pentecostalist sects are gaining many converts in the Third World where family values are still relatively dominant.

Its success among the middle class will have different explanation. The antipathy of some sectors of the middle class towards bureaucratization and instrumentalization of work would make them prone to join Christian fundamentalist groups. Here is Martin (1978, as quoted in Dobbelaere, 1986:138):

In general the disorientations of industrial society in terms of conceptual geographical and social mobility, all militate against the roots and the sense of the familiar and familial which support Christian images of the world. But alongside this general mobility certain fundamental facts stand out: insofar a work takes place in a personal setting where people own their homes, or their farms, or their own individual skills and professional abilities, in context which are familiar and on a human scale they are more likely to practice Christianity and be sensitive to it. Insofar as they are submerged in a mass, dominated by various enterprises and large scale private or state undertakings, subjected to a soulless process based on mechanism, they are less likely to practice Christianity or to become aware of its meanings. The intelligentsia varies. If sensitized to forms of control inimical to its own expressionist sensitivities, it may revert to highly personalistic religiosity, in particular either of a free, unbound mysticism or aesthetic ritualism. But if the intelligentsia is deployed as the agent of technical exploitation carried out under the aegis of state power it succumbs to a materialistic ideology.

Second is the community spirit nurtured within fundamentalist Christian groups. The appeal of Christian fundamentalism among the people of Third World countries is very strong among migrants, people who have been geographically dislocated from their provinces and have moved to the cities. The economic struggles in the cities exacerbate the anomic condition of the migrants. Dislo-

³⁰ These variables have been associated with religious intolerance and closed-mindedness (see Martin, 1964).

cated from their communities and families, threatened everyday by economic difficulties, Christian fundamentalism offers the migrants a sense of spiritual security (Haynes, 1994:116; Poblete and O'Dea, 1978). It also promises these people good health, prosperity, and consolation for those who have been marginalized in the process of rapid modernization. Such communities nourish group solidarity and strengthen the individual's meaning system. Also, it provides compensation for the individual's inadequate self-definition and low self-esteem (see Simmonds, Richardson, and Harder, 1976). Outside these groups, its meaning system, individuals will find it very difficult, if not, utterly impossible to maintain mental and psychological equilibrium. Religion serves as a solution to the relative deprivations – economic, psychological, and social – of the working class and urban poor. This is confirmed in the recent study of Gay and Glass (1989) on religious devotion and life satisfaction. Christians who belong to conservative fundamentalist sects tend to have greater life satisfaction compared with their liberal counterparts.

Third are the marketing strategies of the fundamentalist Christians. By preaching "Gospel of Prosperity" message these sects attract a lot of people who are affected by severe economic crisis. Christian fundamentalism has successfully capitalized on the vulnerability of the people (Rose, 1996). Deprived economically, faced with exorbitant rates of medicine and hospitalization, lacking in other health professionals, and the absence of mental health professionals, Christian fundamentalism would indeed be very appealing to the men and women on the streets. But it would be unfair and unjust to conclude that fundamentalist Christians are just using this rhetoric to recruit unsuspecting spectators. Far from that, it may be argued that people who are converted to these sects are really "seekers" for the ultimate meaning of life (see Lofland, 1968; Paloutzian, 1986; Lanuza, 1999).

Fourth is the colonization of profane spaces in the process of evangelization. By this I mean the blurring of the boundaries between the sacred and profane places. This is very evident in the manner that these groups preach: in the busses, in the street corners, plaza, market places, and even in the malls. In this manner they have become postmodernist in their strategies. Their proselytizing activities are now diffused all throughout the profane spaces. Marketing strategies are now part of evangelization.

Other reasons can be adduced. The inability of Catholic Church to cater to the spiritual needs of her faithful. This results from the lack of sufficient number of Catholic priests to provide pastoral care (Valderez, 1989). As one observer notes, new religious groups burgeon in a society where traditional religions can no longer provide adequate religious goods for the people (Glock and Stark, 1987).

2. Religion and the Spirit of Resistance

What I have been arguing so far is that we should avoid outright condemnation of these groups – ideological or otherwise. Radical Christians are very prone to make this ideological judgment. Usually they dismiss these groups as nothing but pawns of US imperialism and promoters of liberal capitalist values. In short, it is an alienated form of religion. In this way, the term fundamentalism becomes an easy ploy for some sectors of society to label any religious groups that promote terrorism (e.g., Islamic fundamentalism) and conservatism (van der Veer, 1991). Yet recent analyses of religion and politics, of popular religiosity, have controverted the simplistic conclusion that religion is plain alienation (Camaroff, 1989; Iletto, 1987; Galilea, 1987; Lefever, 1977; E. P. Thompson, 1985; K. Thompson, 1985).

The Marxist analysis of Christian fundamentalism is often couched in the classic formula of Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people." In this light, the phenomenal growth of Christian fundamentalism is often explained in terms of the prevailing social and economic conditions in the Cold War Era. The decline of American capitalism is said to propel the New Christian Right to revitalize the political hegemony of Pax Americana worldwide. Its theological worldview supports the capitalistic ethics of American society (see Marti, 1989; Brock, 1989).

Radical Christians churches in Third World countries, confronted by the unusual upsurge of fundamentalism in the 1980s, diagnosed this phenomenal growth to the handy-work of US imperialism (Rose, 1996; Diamond, 1989). In this analysis, the US-CIA sponsored anti-insurgency strategy known as the Low Intensity Conflict (more popularly known as LIC) included the alliance with the New Religious Right and the promotion of its religious

ministries in Third World Countries (Marti, 1987; Valderey, 1985; Brock, 1988; Lang, 1987; Nicolas and De Leon, 1989). Under this analysis, Christian fundamentalism and Pentecostalism were seen more as tools of US imperialism to pacify the revolutionary upheavals in Third World countries.³¹ The "New Religious Movements" were seen as the solution to neutralize the growing political radicalism of Christian churches due largely to liberation theology and influence of Marxism (Haynes, 1994:116).

Others like Tomaskovic-Devey (1986:147) argues that fundamentalism "provided a diffuse ideological justification for the recapitalization of U.S. capitalism." By "recapitalization" Tomaskovic-Devey means the "attempt by economic elites and their allies to deal with the declining economic and political fortunes of the United States." It has three components, namely, to provide additional economic capital to US business through upward redistribution of wealth, reduction of government intervention in the economy, and reducing state intervention in matters of private morality. Its pro-family ideology "helped to provide a moral base for recapitalist activity." However, with the neo-liberal economics legitimizing recapitalization as the reigning ideology in the world today (enshrined in the GATT-WTO), the NCR may not be as politically effective as they had been. More important than this is the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist states. In the post-Cold War Period the main thrust of Christian fundamentalism concerns moral issues like abortion, contraception, and women's rights. The 1990s is time for them to regroup and emphasize once more the private and individualistic character of Christian truth (Wilcox, 1995).³² This

³¹ I think Haynes (1994:116) judgment is very appropriate here: "Although some right-wing Americans may see the growth of conservative evangelical Protestantism and Pentecostalism as de facto triumphs of American capitalism and family values, there is no clear evidence that supports the view that Latin American countries with large Pentecostals populations will be more actively pro-American than others." It must be insisted however that the ideological implications of these movements hinge on the unintended political consequences of the doctrine-derived actions of the members (see Martin-Baro, 1990).

³² This original message of Christian fundamentalism is an attempt to shield the family and its values from the consequences of "unfettered adventures of the market place." In this way Christians are assured of a glimpse of eternity in the family (Kintz, 1998).

is the conservative option arising from the failure of the movement in the late 1980s.³³ The conservative option emphasizes the functional aspect of religion more than religious performance.³⁴ Here is how Zwier and Smith (1985) summarize the normative position of the NCR regarding the family:

Concerning family issues, they fervently oppose abortion, seek a constitutional amendment to prohibit it and the recent Supreme Court decision that government has no obligation to pay for the abortions of women on welfare. They oppose homosexuality and contend that homosexual should not have the same vocational and housing opportunities that others have. They strongly oppose movements for women's and children's rights. For example, they oppose the Equal Rights Amendment, insisting that it would take mothers out of their homes; they oppose government child-care programs for similar reasons. Concerning education, they are adamant in the belief that parents rather than the government should be in control. They oppose government regulation of private schools, and they would prefer to have federal government get out of education entirely. They also believe that prayer and Bible reading should be restored in all schools, by law if necessary.

This normative position would be in conflict with life politics of postmodernism. Postmodernity spawns diverse alternative life styles (Giddens, 1989). And feminism and gay movements have been very influential in bringing forth such condition. Christian fundamentalism therefore will be less busy attacking communists and modernists than opposing feminists and gay and lesbian movements. The spiritual warfare now shifts from God versus atheistic ideology to Biblical teachings on the family versus new emerging forms of alternative families and identity politics. Yet in combating the various life politics in postmodern society, Christian fundamentalism is also reduced to a mere alternative among other various life styles (Wuthnow, 1998).

³³ For accounts and explanations of the failure of the NCR see Bruce (1995), Moen (1995), and Wuthnow (1998).

³⁴ According to Beyer (1990), following Niklas Luhmann, distinguishes between the function of religion and its performance. Function refers to the devotional aspects of religion, while performance refers to the relevance of religion to the profane realm of society.

A more social psychological treatment, but still within the Marxist analysis, is done by Ignacio Martin-Baro (1990). While recognizing the authenticity of spiritual needs of the born again converts, Martin-Baro emphasizes the ideological character of religious revival in El Salvador in the 1980s. For Martin-Baro the massive growth of new religious movements in El Salvador "has been a political instrument for powerful sectors of society, serving as a strategic elements in psychological warfare" p. 95). Furthermore Martin-Baro contends that conversion to Christian fundamentalism leads to political submission. The reason being that it leads people towards intense individualism rather than confronting their real social problems. In the process people place their fate in the hands of state leaders and blindly trust in Divine Providence (p. 99). For Martin-Baro Christian fundamentalism overemphasizes the vertical dimension of religion that results inevitably to alienation. Of course Martin-Baro also argues that conversion also provides "experience of new meaning that makes individual life more fulfilling." Yet it also may alienate individuals from social reality (p. 104).

It must be conceded that there are some grains of truth in the radical analysis of Christian fundamentalism. However it errs in its downright condemnation of Christian fundamentalism as a form of distorted ideology. Moreover, as Haynes (1994:119) rightly argues that "while Pentecostalism certainly acquires some additional social (and perhaps political) clout from its association with a very successful and powerful country, neither the political interest of the USA, not the more local interests of various governments explain why so many Guatemalans or Brazilians or Chileans or San Salvadorans or Nicaraguans actually become pentecostalists." Consequently in making such dismissive judgment we risk becoming fundamentalists ourselves. We become intolerant to the idea that it might also express some forms of resistance against capitalism, against modernist forms of irrationality.

A more promising and sober approach is to look at the ways fundamentalist Christians resist capitalism, and its latest phase, post-Fordist capitalism. To do this, we have to reject that facile inference that there is always a one-to-one correspondence between the religious doctrines of fundamentalism and its political implications. While Christian fundamentalism extols American values, and

Western institutions in general, this cannot be translated easily into simple adherence to American intervention in Third World countries' political affairs. Neither does it herald Westernization of religions. The opposite may also be true. Christian fundamentalism may be considered as a resistance against the alienating effects of modernization brought about by capitalism in Third World countries. Capitalism brings with it ruthless exploitation and brutal forces that threaten to destroy interpersonal relationships nourished within traditional communities. Set in this backdrop, fundamentalism can be seen a "status defense" of those people who have been marginalized in the process of rapid economic and social development (Bruce, 1987).³⁵ Lefever's (1977:230) radical interpretation of the religiosity of the poor may also be applied to Christian fundamentalism:

...religion is an adaptive mechanism that enables the poor and oppressed individuals and groups to find spiritual compensation for the material and social benefits they are denied daily. They may not have much wealth, status, or now, but they are redeemed in the eyes of their Lord and they forward to an eternity in heaven. In other words, religion provides an alternative orientation that offers a more favorable self-judgment than that accorded them by the larger society.

Another fruitful approach is to follow Johnson's (1986:128) suggestion that we distinguish two levels in analyzing Christian fundamentalism. One can look at it as an elite organization and study its organizational structure. Or, alternatively, we can also study it as a mass movement, "as a very large born-again Christian constituency." These two levels of analyses should not be conflated. For some criticisms raised against Christian fundamentalism may only be valid to its organizational structure but not necessarily to the mass followers, and vice versa. Hence while on the institutional level we can show the reactionary political ideology of these groups, nevertheless, in analyzing the mass movement itself we can see

³⁵ Bruce (1987) rejects the interpretation of Gusfield (1963) that Christian fundamentalism is more of a defense of Christian status rather than of their culture. Gusfield understands status as the discrepancy between educational attainment and employment achievement.

traces of resistance to prevailing political hegemony and various articulation of protest against capitalist alienation.³⁶

Beyond this we should avoid reducing the social significance of Christian fundamentalism to the logic of post-Fordist capitalism. It must also be seen, following Caplan (1987:174), as "a form of resistance to the dominant minority and the dominant theology within the church and community."

The resurgence of Christian fundamentalism in the Third World countries is basically a challenge to Catholic religious hegemony. Unlike its counter-part in post-industrial societies, the presence of Christian fundamentalism in developing nations is not a resistance against modernization and secularization, albeit these processes are also present in varying magnitude. Rather, it is a form of insurrection against the prevailing "regime of truth" in the Catholic-dominated supermarket of religions (Haynes, 1996; Brusco, 1998).

It offers a grand narrative that helps individuals to re-invent their biographies. It allows converts to connect their quest for spiritual enlightenment with their on-going life narrative (Lifton, 1993). Such re-invention follows from their deep sense of spiritual and moral conversion (Athens, 1995). Such newly formed narrative expressed through testimonies empowers the individual to take control of the present, to see the overwhelming forces external to them as something they can control (Lifton, 1993). It cures them of their spiritual ambivalence. It provides peace of mind. And no other counter-narrative (enumerated by Wuthnow, 1968) can be equally effective. Such spiritual empowerment "offers people a chance of enhanced self-esteem which continued adherence to Catholicism does not necessarily do" (Haynes, 1994:119).

Among the middle class converts it is a resistance against bureaucratization and rationalization of life world. By extolling emotionalism and expressivism, it revitalizes social structures. Or, as Wallace (1958) argues, such religious revitalization offers a new "maze-way" that is more satisfying than the old religious maze-ways.

³⁶ I am very much influenced here by the anthropological analysis of Jean Camaroff's (1986) and Reynaldo Ileto's (1987) historical analysis of religion and resistance against colonialism.

E. SOME CONCLUDING NOTES

We cannot dismiss Christian fundamentalism as mere epiphenomenon of capitalist ideology or pawn of US imperialism. Neither are we justified in equating it with general conservatism. Or, a form of outmoded traditional worldview that has no place in (post-) modernizing society. As I have argued above Christian fundamentalism contains some elements of resistance against capitalism and modernity. Its members need not necessarily hold conservative views in matters of politics and the economy. Rather, Christian fundamentalism must be located within the continuum of conservatism and liberalism. There is therefore a need to study empirically the political and social implications of fundamentalist Christians' beliefs. But one thing remains certain. That is, Christian fundamentalists seem to uncritically support the existing state and its economic and social policies. What we can do now is to rely on the speculation and plethora of empirical studies done in North American, Latin American, and African setting.

I do think that the immediate problem confronting Christians in Third World countries, with regard to the existence of fundamentalist Christians, is the issue of family and private morality. It is here that fundamentalist Christians have been very active in our country. They have voiced their assertive opposition to divorce, abortion, pornographic materials, contraception, sexuality, and gay and lesbian issues. Unlike their politicized counterparts in the United States, local fundamentalist Christians focus more on the politics of identity. As a result, they ignore larger social issues, seemingly, legitimizing state policies in matters of economy. It is only on the issue of communist threat that these groups have been involved nationally especially after the EDSA Revolution (Rose, 1996). But as I have argued above, with the collapse of Cold War ideology following the demise of worldwide communism, fundamentalist Christians will now have to retreat from direct political confrontation. The knob of evangelization is now shifted to moral regeneration of the public sphere. Hence sociologists' main concern should be the direct clash between growing feminist and gay-lesbian movements in the Philippines and the conservative fundamentalist Christian responses to these movements. Of course we should not lose sight of the subtle ideological nature of these religious movements. For instance, Elizabeth Brusco's (1997) ethnographic study

of conversion patterns among Colombian husbands to Christian fundamentalism suggests that such conversion process enhances family relationship in a machismo society.³⁷ In terms of political tolerance, the study by Anonuevo (1998) shows that Christian fundamentalists, in the context of Filipino culture, are not as closed-minded as their North American counterparts.³⁸

Liberal Protestant denominations may be declining because of the very logic of liberal ideology (Kelly, 1978). Without common theological statement, without imposing strict sanctions on their constituents and socializing their children to liberal ethos, liberal Protestants encourage pluralism. As a result, they lose a lot of members (see Wallis and Bruce, 1984:24). On the other hand, conservative fundamentalist Christians are growing precisely because of their solid doctrines and rigid structures. I think that the strength of liberal Protestantism is also its weakness. But its weakness is also its strength. Its logic allows individuals to choose rationally for the best meaningful system. But such choice contains the element of danger of falling from the liberal tradition, and opting for fundamentalist solution. A more thorough study must be conducted analyzing the differences in family socialization of liberal and conservative evangelicals.

Lastly, Christian fundamentalism will always be with us. And as Caplan rightly points out, Christians of all denominations will

³⁷ Brusco (1997:16) criticizes the vulgar Marxist analysis of conversion: "While the economic well-being of women and children is enhanced when the husband converts, identifying the attraction of evangelicalism for a woman as simply a way to get hold of more of her husband's paycheck is economic reductionism that does a great disservice to the religious experience of Colombian evangelicals. Such a conclusion also continues the tradition of treating Latin American evangelism as an ideology which serves to disguise reality rather than elucidate it. In that view, whether evangelicalism is mystifying the forces of imperialism in order to make the male convert into a disciplined and compliant worker, or provides the means by which his wife can divert more of his income into the household, the evangelical is a victim of false consciousness and inevitably not acting on his own self-interest." Rather, conversion must be seen "as stemming in part from a linked set of processes which renegotiate gender and family relationships and personal identity in a climate of crisis." A similar conclusion is reached in the study by Eisland (1997).

³⁸ Anonuevo (1998) contends that Filipino values on group affiliation attenuate political intolerance that arises from fundamentalist worldviews.

always have the tendency to be fundamentalist with regard to their beliefs. Now, the spirit of tolerance I am advocating here should not lead us to indifference and any-thing-goes-attitude. Extreme postmodernists of course are predisposed to this attitude. We must also meticulously study the conservative attitudes and doctrines of these groups when they militantly engage with issues of gender and family values. We must equally be vigorous in our denunciation of these groups when they support the politics of Right and the status quo.³⁹ Liberal Christians should insist that Christian hope enables them to criticize any final identification of the Kingdom of God with existing order, either locally or globally. My plea is for "militant tolerance". We tolerate denominational differences, while at the same time, engaging our competitors in lively and democratic debate in the public sphere. We cannot just let them dictate to us how Christian message should be interpreted. We also have to voice out our own denominational position. In that case, we have to change our missionary tactics. We have to face them in their own terms. And we should do this in the spirit of Christian dialogue and ecumenism and not out of hatred or resentment.

Finally I want to say that there are only three alternatives for Christians in a "world comes of age."⁴⁰ First, is separatism. Christians can contest the world and retreat into their own world filled with hope that they can insulate their fellow believers from the turmoils of the world. This is the "old" conservative fundamentalist option. Alternatively, Christians can have critical presence in the world. They can dialogue with and immerse in the world. This is the liberal position and the politics of NCR. Or, thirdly, they can categorically embrace the world. This is the secular religious option. What distinguishes the liberal from the NCR's political strategy is on their use of ideological tool for social analysis. The liberal option borrows as much as it could from radical social analysis. It respects the relative autonomy of the secular world, while subjecting it to critical theological interpretation. The theo-

³⁹ Sara Diamond (1989), towards the end of her critical research on fundamentalist Christian groups, enumerates several political counter-strategies that we can do to neutralize the political campaigns of these movements.

⁴⁰ I took this from Giddens' (1995) discussion of how traditions transform themselves in the face of de-traditionalization.

logical underpinning of this approach – which I find myself sympathetic to – is well delineated by Wolfhart Pannenberg (1989:56-57):

Christian theology in the secular world must not give up central elements in God's transcendence of the world and in his salvation or allow them to fade into the background for the sake of assimilation to the secular understanding of reality. On the other hand, Christianity may not be content with just securing the existence of the dogmatic content of the tradition [as in the case of Christian fundamentalism]. That would be merely to oppose a counter-world of faith to the secular world, not to bear witness to God as the creator and reconciler of this world of ours. ...A church and theology which rely on a readiness to escape into the irrational on the part of those who are homeless in the secular world could very soon prove to be the loser. Rather, the opportunity of Christianity and its theology is to integrate the reduced understanding of reality on the part of the secular culture and its picture of human nature into a greater whole, to offer the reduced rationality of secular culture a greater breadth of reason, which would also include horizon of the bond between humankind and God.

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Abstract: Christian fundamentalism has always been defined in opposition to modernism. However contemporary scholars of fundamentalism are now acknowledging the modernist character of fundamentalism. Furthermore the relationship between modernism and fundamentalism will now have to be reconsidered in the light of new global condition of postmodernity and its accompanying culture of postmodernism. I will also attempt to connect this global condition with the resurgence of Christian fundamentalism in postcolonial societies especially the Philippines. And finally I will discuss alternative ideological analyses of this movement in the light of Post-Cold War era.