

Muslim and Christian Fundamentalism in the Philippines

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The word “fundamentalism” has different nuances for Christians and for Muslims. Christians normally associate fundamentalism with the Born-Again Christians and their literal interpretation of the Bible. Some Muslim leaders view the word fundamentalism as a misnomer because a Muslim is supposed to follow God’s word, and doing so makes one a fundamentalist. They claim that Western media baptized the word. But fundamentalism can have other synonyms. Some are called reformist, revivalist, militant or radical Islam. Perhaps, Muslims prefer the expression “revivalist Islam” because the movement also has a non-military arm. So whether the Muslims are called fundamentalists or not is just a matter of names. But the reality is there, something similar to that of the Christian fundamentalists.

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- (a) What are the characteristics of fundamentalism?
- (b) What are the forces behind them?
- (c) What is the common denominator between these two kinds of fundamentalism?

I. CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM

Before going to the Philippine scene, first a background on Christian fundamentalism in general.

A Background on Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism started as a movement within American Protestantism. Fundamentalism got its inspiration from Calvinism and Wesleyanism. Calvinism “emphasized a strong social ethic combined with a strong doctrinal orthodoxy” while Wesleyanism “emphasized more the experience of personal conversion and holiness.”¹

At the turn of the year 1900, the conservative Protestants found themselves troubled at the onslaught of progressive thought such as modernism, liberalism, modern biblical criticism, and Darwinism. The conservative Protestants, who stuck to the literal interpretation of the Bible, were worried that science was against the biblical account of creation, i.e., that God did not create the world in six days. Or did man evolve from the apes? These dangerous ideas permeated not only religion but also politics and other areas in life. Princeton Seminary did the basic research and came out with a twenty-volume work entitled *The Fundamentals*. Two rich oilmen from Los Angeles distributed free copies “to 300,000 Protestant leaders from 1909 to 1920.”² Soon they won converts from the other Protestant groups.

In 1925 a fundamentalist pastor sued John T. Scoop for teaching evolution in high school. It became known as the “Monkey Trial,” after the Darwin theory of evolution.³ This famous trial placed the fundamentalists in a bad light as an anti-science, anti-intellectual, and anti-progress movement. The Darwinian Law was upheld. From that time on, the fundamentalists laid low in American society.

They came back before the sixties. This time they used the radio and television with big-time money. It was also the heyday of Billy Graham and other big names of tele-evangelism. Although the evangelists shied away from politics in earlier days, they now wanted to influence American society with powerful lobbies. They are also called the New Right which supports right-wing politicians.

¹ Thomas J. Marti, “Fundamentalist Sects, Threat and Challenge,” *World Mission*, November, 1989, p. 10.

² Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, *Catholic Guidelines on Fundamentalism* (Manila: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1989).

³ Manuel P. Duetao, *History of Fundamental Doctrines and Founders* (Manila: n.p., 1995), pp. 194-195.

For example, Pat Robertson, who was connected with Oliver North for raising money for the Contras, ran as a presidential candidate. At the time before the downfall of the Berlin Wall which symbolized communism, the fundamentalists advocated the Armageddon theology in the sense that they saw the conflict between good and evil as the conflict between the American brand of democracy and Russian communism. They were able to get the imagination of American Christians, including some Catholics. For example, the PTL (Praise the Lord) movement is against communism.

Fundamentalist Theology

What are the theological underpinnings of fundamentalism?⁴ The fundamentalists believe that they monopolize salvation. The person who does follow their theology is doomed to Hell. These are their main tenets:

(1) *God is the only author of the Bible.* Hence it is free from all error in scientific and historical matters. For example, they claim that the world was created 6,000 years ago. They use the bible as a science book, a history book, a guide for politics, and for predicting future events;

(2) *Jesus is God.* While the fundamentalists accept that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, they deny Mary's perpetual virginity;

(3) "On the cross, Jesus received the punishment that humanity deserves for its sins – the *substitutionary atonement*."⁵ The experience of personal conversion and faith makes one absolutely sure of salvation;

(4) *Jesus was raised bodily from the dead;*

(5) *Jesus will return bodily in his second coming.*

By being "born again" the fundamentalist undergoes an intense religious experience: an emotional crisis wherein he is reminded that he is a sinner, that his sins are forgiven and the feeling that Christ accepts him. This assurance gives faith. The experience is unconditional: there is no middle ground between being born again

⁴ *Catholic Guidelines on Fundamentalism*, pp. 17-18.

⁵ *Loc. cit.*

or not. If one is born again, Christ has unconditionally forgiven him and thus he possesses eternal life. Nobody can take away that eternal life, not even future sins. Valenzuela thinks that the theological differences between fundamentalists and mainline Protestants is not so much in doctrine as in mentality. The fundamentalists take the extreme Protestant doctrine of "Scripture alone and faith alone" (*sola scriptura, sola fides*).

Fundamentalism in the Philippines

The fundamentalists did not limit their activities in the United States. They soon exported their doctrines to the Philippines.

We can distinguish three groups of non-Catholic Christian groups in the Philippines: (1) the mainline Protestants; (2) the quasi-Christian groups; and (3) the fundamentalists. Let us say a word about each group:

The *mainline Protestants* are the ten members of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). They total around seven million and are ecumenically-minded.

The *quasi-Christians* are groups like the Iglesia ni Cristo (which is the largest among them), the Jehovah's Witnesses or Seventh Day Adventists, the Mormons, the Unitarians, the Unification Church (popularly known as the Monies). The members of this second group usually have two traits: either they do not acknowledge the divinity of Christ or they have — in addition to Sacred Scriptures — a separate bible containing their doctrines. Hence if they have one or both of the traits, they are considered to be as quasi-Christians.

The *fundamentalists* do not consider themselves as Protestants, although they began as a movement within Protestant churches. When a member of this group is asked about his/her religious affiliation, the usual answer is: "I am neither Catholic or Protestant; I am a Born-Again Christian." Their leaders also affirm that they belong a category different from the two groups mentioned earlier.

As of December 1988, the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission registered 1,448 non-Catholic Christian groups.⁶ But the numerical increase came mostly after 1986. In 1980 only 13.7 percent were registered. In Metro Manila these groups came at the average of six entries per month from 1980 to 1986. But from 1987 to 1989 the entries rose to 16 percent per month!

The fundamentalists form a loose organization called the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC). Not all fundamentalist groups are members of PCEC except the more institutional ones. The counterpart of the fundamentalist group (PCEC) is the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP).

The fundamentalists in the country may further be clustered into two sub-groups: the US-affiliated ones and the home-grown.

The *American-affiliated* fundamentalists trace their links to the United States. American evangelists came over to begin their ministry. They also have Filipino converts. Their Filipino ministers are either trained in the United States and/or have US support. This sub-group has two characteristics. At the time before the fall of Russian communism, this sub-group was anti-communist and strongly anti-Catholic. They are pro-democracy in the flavor of American democracy. They are right-wing in their approach to politics and form the National Alliance for Democracy (NAD). The NAD is a counterpart of the National Democratic Front. The NAD is also an alliance groups like the right-wing evangelicals, the ring-wing para-military groups like the *Alsa Masa vigilantes*, and the right-wing military officers. At the time when Communism was strong, this sub-group had slogans like "Communism is Satanism." The Filipino soldiers liked this approach because it gave them religious motivation to fight communism. The NAD has pastors, generals, movie stars and other celebrities among their ranks.⁷

⁶ Bayani G. Valenzuela, "Non-Catholic Christian Religious Groups in the Philippines as Registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission," *AORD Reports* 7, No. 1 (May 1988), pp. 7-8.

⁷ In 1990 they had the Following Born Again Filipino generals: Maganto (the Luzon leader for nationalism and morality), Eslita, Galido, and Saavedra. Among the television and movie celebrities were Gary Valenciano, Ray-an Fuentes, Gabby Concepcion, Princess Punzalan, Caridad Sanchez.

On the other hand, the other sub-group, that is, the *home-grown fundamentalists* is apolitical as a whole, spiritualistic and soul-winning in the fundamentalistic tradition. Some of them are nationalistic. Their biggest group is the "Jesus is Lord Fellowship" which has around 300,000 members under Brother Eddie Villanueva. They have schools and an international network comparable to the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. To this sub-group belonged the late Ronald Remy, a television personality. Remy had the *Corpus Christi Fellowship*. Ramon Oroza has his *Oro Ministry*. Likewise Pastors Edilberto and Butch Conde have their regular programs.

Pastor Butch Conde claims he is a nationalist and even anti-American. Roger Arienda even attacks the *National Alliance for Democracy* as prostituting the word of God.

Fundamentalist Strategies

The fundamentalists are for sheep-stealing. Their converts are former Catholics and former Protestants. A cousin of mine who has converted into fundamentalism burned the statues of the saints in his house. Such cases are multiplied in the Born-Agains.

In the Philippines the fundamentalist preachers bravely mount inter-island ships and buses and preach to the captive audiences. One can easily meet fundamentalists at work in the busy street corners and the parks of Metro Manila. They work as a team. While the preacher is on the microphone, the other members (usually neatly dressed, even with neckties) go around with donation bags. Even if people do not listen to their preaching, the fundamentalists believe that evangelizing is God's work, that the Holy Spirit will effect the changing of hearts.

In the last decade of this millennium, the fundamentalists started a big conversion program called "DAWN 2000." The acronym stands for Discipling A Whole Nation. Although the NCCP has nothing to do with it, the PCEC includes the names of mainline Protestants as belonging to DAWN 2000. By the year 2000 they project that the 2,000 *baranggays* (the smallest political unit of the country) will have 2,000 local churches.

How sincere are the Born-Again conversions from sheep-stealing? If Christ's norm of the tree and its fruit (Mt. 7:15-20) is to

be applied, the fruits of these former lax Catholics and Protestants seem convincing.

The Born-Again or fundamentalists have in a short time overshadowed the mainline Protestant churches. What are the causes? Valenzuela assigns four reasons: (1) the use of religious experience, (2) faith-healing, (3) finance, (4) and their insistence to remain in small groups. Let us go over each factor.

First, *religious experience* is not intellectual. It is like the conversion in the *Cursillo Movement* of the 60's where there is a build-up to the high noon. As in the *Cursillo*, the participants have the intense experience of being relieved from sin.

Second, because conversion and physical healing normally go together, *faith healing* is possible in the fundamentalist prayer meetings. One person healed this way is worth around a hundred converts through his/her testimony. (All healings are not necessarily from faith healing. For instance, pranic healing is quite common now. Even some nuns, who learned the technique from Master Choa, are propagating it!)⁸

The fellowship meetings of the Born-Again sustain their conversion and renew their religious experience. A typical fundamentalist prayer service lasts three hours. They start with singing, then followed by testimonies, and loud wailing. After the crying session a testimony follows wherein the participants again go 'high' in their spirits. Sometimes the trances (or altered states of consciousness or *sinasapian* in Tagalog) occur. Trances during such prayer sessions have been a common phenomenon ever since pre-colonial times.

Valenzuela thinks that Filipinos are vulnerable to religious experience. Even intellectual giants, such as the students of the University of the Philippines, are dwarfed when they experience the supernatural. When they suddenly feel religion in their hearts, they start trembling and start losing their consciousness. They give up their intellectual security when confronted with the manifestation of the supernatural.

⁸ Choa Kok Sui, *The Ancient Science and Art of Pranic Healing*. (Quezon City: Quality Bookbinding and Printing, 1987).

Third is the *financial* angle. The role of the CIA in Latin America is worth noting. When Gerald Ford was the American president, he named a presidential commission to study the situation of Latin America in the light of U.S. interests. Vice president Nelson Rockefeller headed that commission. It reported that "the Catholic Church has ceased to be an ally in whom the United States can have confidence."⁹ The same commission recommended the promotion of "an extensive campaign with the aim of propagating Protestant Churches and conservative sects in Latin America."¹⁰ This policy goes back to 1970. The Rockefeller Commission was made in the wake of Vatican II and the Medellin Conference wherein liberation theology opted for the poor. The Catholic bishops of Guatemala released a pastoral letter in January 1989. They attacked the U.S. government for helping the evangelicals (the name for fundamentalists in Latin America).

Several fundamentalist groups working in Latin America are present in the Philippines. Among them are the *Campus Crusade for Christ*, *700 Club*, and *World Vision*.¹¹

During the heyday of communism, the fundamentalists also influenced the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the area of value formation which had a big dose of anti-communism. Among these rightist groups are the "Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, Life in the Spirit Seminars, The Word of Life International, Heaven's Magic, Christian Life Fellowship and *Ligaya ng Panginoon*."¹²

As we said earlier, the number of non-US affiliated fundamentalists is greater than the US-affiliated groups. Marti reports that the US-affiliated fundamentalists are related "to the promotion of counterinsurgency program" or the Low Intensity Conflict and that these groups are related to the "New Right" political organizations of the United States.¹³ Whereas the Guatemalan bishops

⁹ Thomas J. Marti, "U.S. Intervention in Philippines Culture," in *Culture: A Force for Change* (Manila: Socio-Pastoral Institute 1988), p. 35.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹¹ Loc. cit.

¹² Ibid., p. 37.

¹³ Noel T. Pangilinan, "Priest Links 'Born-Againists' to the US Bases," *Philippine Daily Globe*, April 20, 1990, p. 8.

attacked the United States in their pastoral letter, the Philippine bishops did not do so in their pastoral letter on fundamentalism which was issued on January 27, 1989. The reason for the silence, we think, is that the Philippine bishops did not see any clear evidence of a grand conspiracy.

Fourth is the importance of *small groups*. E. Schumacher mentions the importance of smallness in his famous book, *Small Is Beautiful*. The fundamentalists use this principle. Being small allows interpersonalism, a factor which big churches lack. A typical parish in the Philippines has an average of 50,000 parishioners. But when a fundamentalist congregation has reached 400 members, it splits to a daughter church together with its own pastor. The proliferation of numerous churches is the result of this small-is-beautiful principle. Furthermore, being small has the advantage of easy management.

But the Catholic Church with its parish system can still avail itself of the said principle. With the present stress of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC), each parish has to be subdivided into communities wherein the members personally know each other and where they form a worshipping and missionary community.

II. MUSLIM REVIVALISM

Other religions also have their share of fundamentalism. Judaism has its orthodox (or fundamentalists) on the right, the liberals on the left and the conservatives on the center. One finds the same spectrum from rightists to leftists in other religions. Islam has its traditions like the Shehites and Sunites. If Christianity has its folk Christians, Islam has its counterpart. For instance in the Philippines and Indonesia, one can find believers who combine Islam with primal religion. The differences in Islam lies in the interpretation of the law. Islam has different competing schools of thought which are considered orthodox. Thus how women should dress in public can range from the strict interpretation of the Qur'an (that is, being totally covered up except the hands) to a liberal interpretation.

We said earlier that the Muslims in our study prefer the word revivalist to fundamentalism. Why *revival*? This needs some back explanation both in the global and in the Philippine context.

Historical Background

The expansion of Islam in Asia came between 1300 and 1500. The fall of Baghdad in 1258 damaged much of Islam. Michel compares the destruction to a nuclear bomb blowing up the Vatican and killing the pope and important religious leaders. Those in the periphery suddenly became important. Now one of those in periphery were the Sufis. They are the Muslim mystics with their particular form of prayer, dress, etc. The Sufis drew also on pre-Islamic beliefs and practices.

The Sufis with great missionary zeal brought them around Asia. One of them was the Philippines. The Sufis brought an Islam which was not dogmatic, but rather of pantheistic tone. They taught that there is only one God and the rest are just manifestation of his divinity. The Filipino animosities accepted it because it was compatible with their religion. Eating no pork or drinking no alcohol was not a terrible burden. Unlike the Spanish missionaries who “destroyed” the local culture of the people, the Sufi missionaries adapted Islam to the local cultures which they encountered.

Besides the Sufis were other Muslim traveling merchants. These merchants got the protection of the local Filipino rulers. The latter in turn supported the merchants and developed their political power. Intermarriage with prominent families was a way of promoting conversion to Islam. Thus there was no violent confrontation between the locals and the visitors.

That is why there were the so-called folk Muslims in the Philippines.¹⁴ It is the result of the encounter between Islam and the local Philippine culture, particularly of Mindanao and Sulu. The *datus* in pre-colonial Philippines merged with the sultanate of Islam. But the various sultanates developed into a greater loyalty of the *ummah* rather than the local leadership. Islamic influences also filtered to the political structure. Islam also influenced language, epic poetry, written literature, the arts, economics.

The Spaniards never succeeded in colonizing Muslim Mindanao. That is why the latter have retained their independence. They were a class different from the *infieles*, the natives who did not submit to

¹⁴ Samuel K. Tan, *Decolonization and Filipino Muslim Identity* (Quezon City: U.P. Department of History, 1988), pp.2-12.

Spanish rule and went to the mountains. On the other hand, the lowland Filipinos were colonized, Christianized, and assumed Western structures and values.

With the coming of the Americans, democracy was enforced. The Muslim leaders of the South also got into politics. While they were wary of the Spanish encroachment, the Muslims embraced public education.

The Global Scene of Muslim Revivalism

Muslim revivalism began in the nineteenth century with Islamic thinkers like Hasan al-Banna and Jalal al-Din al-Afghani.¹⁵ During the height of British colonialism, these Arab thinkers equated Western colonial exploitation with Christianity. They advocated Muslim liberation from the colonial powers.

Why are militant Muslims against modern technology? Here one must make a distinction. The Muslim reformers use modern technology such as mass media and the facilities of modern travel. But they are against the values of modernism. According to Michel:

What they object to, rather, are modern values, a post-religious ideology that seeks to supplant a God-centered, community-based understanding of society. They see modernity as a human-centered individualistic approach to life that relativizes religion, exalts the individual and divides the world into winners and losers, advanced and under-developed. Ethics is reduced to market expediency, while family values and moral choices are left to the private decision of each individual. The natural world is simply raw material to be economically exploited.¹⁶

The Muslim reformists think that the West is using liberal values as a tool to destroy Islam in the political, economic, cultural and religious areas. In politics the West is allegedly creating and supporting liberal Muslim elites. In the area of economics, the West

¹⁵ Crisostomo Gaerlan, "Philippine Muslim Revivalism," *Ugnay-Diwa*, no. 17, (January-June 1997), p. 3.

¹⁶ Thomas Michel, "Encountering Muslim in Asia," paper given at FEISA, Pattaya, Thailand on 15 July 1994.

tries to integrate the Islamic world into the global market economy. In the social area, the West tries to introduce Western modernization such as dress (jeans), entertainment, human relations such as relaxed relation between the sexes and creating needs such as alcoholic drinks (taboo in Islam), cosmetics. In the cultural field, the West allegedly tries to promote its models and expertise to further Western goals. In the religious sphere, the West allegedly tries to criticize, relativize and privatize religion.

The result is a conflict of values. Islamic values are God-centered and express themselves in a more ethical, just, spiritual and communitarian alternative for society. But Western values, which are anthropocentric in nature, are for the Muslims godless, promiscuous, materialist, individualist, inhumane. As a result the fundamentalist Muslims try to combat liberal Muslim establishments. For example, the Shah of Iran tried to modernize Iran when he brought with it Western technology. Now Western technology also has its accompanying mentality. So the people became less faithful to the Shariah, the Islamic judicial system which includes both the moral and the political. The Ayatollah Khomeini's revitalization against the Shah of Iran called for a stricter interpretation of the Qur'an, that meant, moving away from modernization. Secondly, the fundamentalists are inimical to Western powers that promote a global liberalism. Among such are the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization, Planned Parenthood, international media, such as CNN, AP, UP, etc.

In this world-wide confusion, the Muslims believe that only Islam provides the desired blueprint for the state and society.

How is this reform to be carried out? One way is the political which includes the military and the other is non-political.

The political and military: Before the Europeans arrived, the Muslim world experienced a world-wide brotherhood. But the Europeans made their land into colonies and divided them into nations. That began the division of Islam. So militant Muslims want to restore that legacy. The political way has Islamic socialism (such as Ghaddafi's Libya), Islamizing movements within functioning democracies (such as Malaysia), traditionalist Islamic rule (such as Saudi Arabia), revolutionary Islamic states (such as Iran and HAMAS in Palestine).

The non-political way is through *Tabligh* (or *Tableegh*), the return to piety, the renewal of traditional Islam. This movement began in Pakistan. Its followers, who aim at preparing themselves for the life hereafter, are nonpolitical. Its foremost objective is to preach its brand of Islam. *Tabligh* does not emphasize the accumulation of wealth. One is encouraged to spend much time in the mosque.

The Philippine Scene¹⁷

In addition to the global reasons mentioned above, there are other sources of conflict.¹⁸ First is the concept of territorial jurisdiction. While the Philippine government divides the country into regions, provinces, municipalities and barangays, traditional Muslim authority divides their territory into *ponampongs* or sultanates which trace their origin to the prophet Muhammad. Second is the nature of authority. While the state governs all citizens through the constitutional laws, the Muslims furthermore govern their own indigenous peoples through customary laws and Islamic laws. Third is the concept of private property. While the state grants private property of land, the Muslims have communal property which is inalienable.

Why do Muslims in the Philippines say that they are not Filipinos? They feel closer to the Muslim countries, to the universal community of Muslims (*ummah*). Muslims in the Philippines distrust the central government which is composed of Christians. The very structure of the westernized government destroys the Islamic spirit of the "*ummah*" which does not distinguish the profane and the sacred, state and church.

Thus, the Filipino Muslim struggle is rooted on the question of their ethnic identity, their religious identity, and their national identity.¹⁹ In addition to the weakness of the Muslims in the face of the Christian government, the Muslims themselves are divided into various ethnic allegiances. And so the Maranaos, Tausogs, Maguindanaos, Yakans, etc., do not trust each other.

¹⁷ From an Overview, see the Study of Sebastiano D'Ambra, "Muslim-Christian Relations in the Philippines," *Islamochristiana* 20 (1994) 179-206.

¹⁸ Leonardo N. Mercado, *Legal Philosophy: Western, Eastern, and Filipino* (Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications, 1984), 135-137.

¹⁹ Tan, *Decolonization...*, pp. 73-78.

If Muslim revivalism has two prongs of action, the military-political means and the peaceful means, we also find their counterparts in the Philippines.

(1) *The Militant and Political Means*

The factors mentioned above have their realization in the Philippines.²⁰ To combat the Islamic decadence in the Philippines, contacts were made in the 1950s between Islamic communities in the country and abroad, especially the Middle East. Young Filipino leaders and students went to Saudi Arabia and Egypt to imbibe the original Islamic spirit. Janyalani, a Muslim leader, was trained in Libya. Nur Misuari for twenty five years waged an international campaign for the recognition of a break-away Muslim country from the Philippines.

So we have the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front). It is the counterpart of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization). Its leadership is from non-religious Muslims. They want a place not based on religion but on their being the children of Mindanao. So the MNLF is secular. On the other hand, the MILF (Mindanao Islamic Liberation Front) is by nature religious, political and military. "Ustadz Hashim Salamat, the MILF chairman, considers the ideology of MILF as basically the declaration of Islamic faith itself, that is, there is only one God and Muhammad is the only prophet."²¹

The Abu Sayyaf is an extremist and terroristic group. It is a movement of committed persons (between 200 and 300) who think that Christians basically are the enemy of domination in Muslim Mindanao. So the solution is to eliminate the Christians. They use terrorism, like kidnapping of Christians, to attain their end. The recent killing of Bishop Benjamin de Jesus on Feb. 4, 1997 was attributed to members of Abu Sayyaf. They even victimize their fellow-Muslims. That is why even the MNLF and MILF condemn the Abu Sayyaf.

²⁰ See the Paper of Eliseo R. Mercado, Jr., "Revivalism in the Philippines Islamic Ummah," given at Asian Journey '95, Malasag, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, Feb. 16-21, 1995.

²¹ Gaerlan, "Philippines Muslim Revivalism," pp. 3-4.

(2) The Peaceful Means

The Tabligh forces came in the late 1970s and 1980s. They established a foothold in Cotabato and in Sulu. Tabligh is the call to clean the degeneration and stagnancy of the Muslim ummah. They insist on Arabic clothes like the wearing of the black veil and women covered all over. While this kind of clothing suits the desert culture, one wonders why even Arabic and Pakistan culture should also be exported to the Philippines. As a conservative movement, Tabligh wants to be an operative force in modern times.

CONCLUSION

So far we have seen Christian fundamentalism and its Muslim counterpart. What is the common denominator? Both are rightists or conservative. They want to return to the pristine religion. If the word is taken to mean a literal or conservative interpretation of the Bible or Qur'an, then fundamentalism in this sense can be said to apply to both Muslims and Christians.

A second common element is their attitude towards other religions. Christian fundamentalists, who only accept their interpretation of the Bible, do not accept other Christian denominations. If they are not ecumenical, so much more are they against non-Christians. Muslim revivalists are also against interfaith dialogue.

The following incident may illustrate how the Christian fundamentalists look at ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue. Msgr. Bayani Valenzuela, the director of the Manila Archdiocesan Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs, narrates his experience. After conversing with the late Ronald Remy for three hours, the fundamentalist said: "Brother, forgive me because I cannot call you 'father.' We have only one Father in heaven. You now, brother Bayani, I can see that you have very good intentions to establish ecumenical relations. But we cannot just do it because you cannot mix healthy individuals with sick individuals. Otherwise the healthy ones will get sick. And that is proven in the Bible: 'Do not mix with those in error, otherwise you will be infected with error'. So if we have ecumenism, you will infect our members."

The fundamentalists hold that only the Bible is the sole authority of revelation. That is why fundamentalists reject the Catholic

Church which hold that revelation is also based on tradition. They consider the Catholics as preaching the word of the devil. They want to convert Catholics and save them from Satan.²²

If the fundamentalists are against ecumenism, all the more are they against interfaith dialogue. But the Catholic Church since Vatican II encourages ecumenism. So does the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). The ten Protestant members of NCCP prohibit sheep-stealing or proselytism from each other. If somebody wants to convert to another Christian church, his sincerity is his burden of proof. That is why the NCCP does not accept the fundamentalists as members because the latter do not accept ecumenism.

The Dalai Lama said that “today and in the near future, there are two alternatives: fundamentalism or interreligious dialogue.”²³

The Pope and the Bishops’ Conferences are for inter-religious dialogue. But if one reads carefully the encyclical “Redemptoris Missio,” the Pope does not fully reconcile proclamation and dialogue. One gets the impression that the different theologians consulted and who drafted the initial drafts do not think in the same way. There is also a controversy between a high Christology and low Christology with regards interfaith dialogue. So if both positions are in the official documents, we also expect a variety of positions within the Catholic church.

But if missiologists seriously take interfaith dialogue as a form of evangelization, we have to face the intransigence of the Christian and Muslim hardliners. What are the ways of cooperating with them for the sake of the of the Kingdom? Obviously not through dialogue, but rather by means of cooperation in common projects. □

²² Marti, “Fundamentalist Sect...,” pp. 10-11.

²³ As Quoted by James W. Heisig, “Christianity Today,” *Interreligio*, no. 30 (Winter 1996), p. 74.