Evangelical Review of Theology

GENERAL EDITOR: THOMAS SCHIRRMACHER

Volume 36 · Number 3 · July 2012

Articles and book reviews reflecting global evangelical theology for the purpose of discerning the obedience of faith

Published by

Paternoster: thinking faith

WEA World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission

for
WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE
Theological Commission

ERT (2012) 36:3, 266-279

Fundamentalisms and the Shalom of God: An Analysis of Contemporary Expressions of Fundamentalism in Christianity, Judaism and Islam

Clinton Stockwell

Keywords: *Protestantism, modernism, eschatology, Zionism, nationalism, Jerusalem, Palestine*

Each semester in Chicago, I introduce the students that I serve to a particular text of scripture, Jeremiah 29:7. The text reads as follows: 'But seek the welfare (shalom) of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare (shalom), you will find your welfare (shalom).'

The context for the verse is that ancient Israelites found themselves as captives and exiles in a foreign land. This people faced several choices. They could flee, and attempt to leave Babylon and try to make it back to the homeland, a fate that they managed to achieve 70 years later. They could rebel, and try to take over the political apparatus in the city, though they had little means to do so. Third, they could remain in the city as exiles, and do as Jeremiah suggested, live in and seek the peace and welfare of the city where they were exiled.

For Jeremiah, the pursuit of shalom was the goal for the ancient Israelite exiles. Though the Israelites of Jeremiah were exiled and captive in the ancient city of Babylon, they were encouraged, even mandated, to seek the peace of the city, for in its peace, they would find their peace. In short, it was in the collective interest of the ancient Israelites to seek the peace of the city where they resided, for their peace was interconnected with the peace of the whole. So, shalom implies interconnectedness, a certain interrelationship with a city (and society as a whole) and with other peoples who represent different histories and cultural traditions.

A shalom society means that peace

Clinton Stockwell is Executive Director of Chicago Semester, an off campus urban internship program sponsored by various colleges in the America Midwest. He holds doctoral degrees from the University of Illinois, New Orleans Baptist Seminary and Chicago Theological Seminary. *This article was reproduced by permission from* Journal of Latin American Theology: Christian Reflections from the Latino South*; 01:2008, 44070.*

is not only the norm, but it is the essence of social and political practice. It means that those less fortunate, including the 'widows and the orphans', the 'strangers and the aliens', and the 'poor and oppressed' (all biblical categories) are attended to. In short, rather than fleeing the city, Jeremiah implored the exiles to settle in the city, plant vineyards, build houses, raise families, celebrate marriages—to live in the city as 'resident aliens' or perhaps as 'situated exiles'.

There are several individual authors who have written rather extensively about shalom as a biblical ideal. These include, Jack L. Stotts, Roger S. Greenway, George W. Webber, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Bruce W. Winter, Cornelius Plantinga and Mark R. Gornik.[1] These writers, among others, recognize that shalom and the call to pursue the peace of the city and of society in general is a mandate. Plantinga argues that shalom captures the ultimate intention of a God-willed society. Shalom is 'the way it's supposed to be'.

> They [Old Testament Prophets] dreamed of a new age in which human crookedness would be straightened out, rough places made plain. The foolish would be made wise, and the wise, humble. They dreamed of a time when the deserts would flower, the mountains would run with wine, weeping would cease, and people would go to sleep without weapons on their laps. People would work in peace and work to fruitful effect. Lambs could lie down with lions. All nature would be fruitful, benign, and filled with wonder upon wonder, all humans would be knit together in brotherhood and sisterhood; and all nature and all humans would look to God, walk with God, lean toward God, and delight in God.[2]

Christian Fundamentalism in the United States.

In February of 2006, I had the fortune to attend a conference on: 'The Psychology of Fundamentalism', in Chicago. It was sponsored by the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. While recognizing the positive features of conservative religion, this conference nonetheless explored the impact of the extremes inherent in fundamentalism, particularly in the Muslim and Christian worlds. But even in the conference description, there was some latitude on the word's meaning:

> Religious fundamentalism is one of the most powerful forces in the world today. In some ways, funda-

1 Jack L. Stotts, *Shalom: The Search for a Peaceable City* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1973); Roger S. Greenway, *Apostles to the City: Biblical Strategies for Urban Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); George W. Webber, *Today's Church: A Community of Exiles and Pilgrims* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979); Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983). Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and as Citizens* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994); Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Mark R. Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

2 Cornelius Plantinga Jr. *Not the Way It's Sposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 9-10.

mentalism improves people's lives. For many individuals, their strict religious beliefs give them a sense of meaning and encourage them to be caring and benevolent. But for others, fundamentalism can have dire consequences for adherents, as well as for those deemed 'enemies' of the belief system.

Historically, 'fundamentalism' described a unique historical movement in US-based evangelical protestantism. Humphreys and Wise[3] describe how in the US, fundamentalism was a reaction to emerging cultural trends in the US culture. The leaders of fundamentalism in America included a variety of scholars, including Gresham Machen, James Orr, and B.B. Warfield. They were not dispensational premillennialists. Warfield and A.A. Hodge were actually postmillennial. Warfield believed that evangelical work in the present would usher in the coming Kingdom. They represented a variety of theological perspectives, though Warfield and Machen were influenced by 'Scottish Realism', or the 'common sense philosophy' that gave 19th century Protestants confidence that they could discuss and argue via reason for the truth of scripture and for the God-hypothesis. Others, such as R.A. Torrey and A.T. Pierson, were dedicated to evangelism and Protestant missionary activity.

Despite its diversity, as a late nineteenth century and early twentieth century movement, fundamentalism was a reaction to higher criticism, modernism, evolution and theological liberalism.[4] In its first use, 'fundamentalism' was not viewed in a pejorative manner. It would be like stating what was essential, fundamental or necessary to the faith. It was assumed that evangelical Christians would be in wide agreement. The fundamentals included the inspiration and authority of the scripture, the belief in mircles, the virgin birth of Christ, and the deity of Christ. For the first group of fundamentalists, it was enough to believe simply in the return of Christ.

The name fundamentalist was derived from a 12 volume collection of essays written from 1910-1915 by 64 British and US scholars and ministers, called *The Fundamentals*. By 1919, this group had founded the 'World's Christian Fundamentalists Assocation'. After World War One, the confidence that Protestant missions would lead to world conversion, or the belief that progress and the march of the gospel would bring on a millennial kingdom was on the wane. With the violence of the Great War, Protestants were sceptical that any social gospel would make a difference in the world. John Nelson Darby's dispensationalism and premillennialism began to take hold among those who called themselves fundamentalists. 'In the 1920s, simple belief in the Second Coming of Christ qualified as fundamental, but in the 1930s one might have to believe in Christ's pretribulational and premillennial Sec-

3 Fisher Humphreys and Philip D. Wise, *Fundamentalism* (Macon, Ga.: Smith and Helwys, 2004).

4 Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

ond Coming.'[5]

Premillennialists believed that the world was getting worse, and that the world systems would collapse into the battle of Armageddon, and the true believers would be raptured just before the Great Tribulation. Revivalists like Dwight L. Moody or Billy Sunday sought to save individuals for heaven, and were less concerned about making the world better for the here and now. Further, the Scopes Trial led to the 1920s 'fundamentalist controversy' where fundamentalists militated against evolution and therefore, presumably, against science.

Scholars in the post World War II era like Ernest Sandeen or Norman Furniss saw in fundamentalism a pervasive anti-intellectualism. Fundamentalists also seemed to adopt a social ethic that decried movies, Hollywood, public drinking, smoking, card playing, loose morality, sexual perversion, and anything that seemed to challenge a literal interpretation of the Bible. George S. Marsden argues that the central characteristic of fundamentalism historically was its vigorous anti-modernism.[6] In the 1970s, evangelical scholar Francis Schaeffer argued that 'secular humanism' was a grave threat to Protestant orthodoxy. Schaeffer went on to place the 'pro life' (anti abortion) issue centerstage for conservative evangelicals. Schaeffer was militantly against abortion, and argued that abortion stemmed from 'secular humanism'.[7]

Fundamentalists in the post World War II era embraced dispensational premillennialism, and this version achieved academic respectability at the Dallas Theological Seminary. Theologians who gravitated to Dallas placed dispensational premillennialism as the centerpiece of fundamentalist theology. Hal Lindsay, a graduate of Dallas, popularized dispensational premilllennialism in his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970). In 1980, the President of the Dallas Theological Seminary, John F. Walvoord, wrote a book, *Armageddon: Oil and the Middle East Crisis* (HarperCollins, 1980). In this book, Walvoord argued that Armageddon would occur in the Middle East, and this war would be the result of an international conflict over oil. Other professors at the Dallas Theological Seminary, like J. Dwight Pentecost, championed the writing of biblical prophecy. In the past ten years, the authors of *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days*, Timothy F. LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (Tyndale House, 1986) reintroduced 'bible prophecy' to a wide reading audience that has gone beyond the conservative evangelical reading public. Terms like 'rapture', 'millennium', 'antichrist', or 'second coming' are now part of popular religious lore. The 'Left Behind' series now has twelve volumes and is a huge best seller.

Today, many fundamentalists have been on the forefront of the so-called 'culture wars' in America, insisting that Christians should become in-

5 Timothy P. Weber, 'Fundamentalism' in *Dictionary of Christianity in America (DCA)* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990), 464.

6 George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,1980).

7 Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2005).

volved politically to save America as a Christian land. Hallmarks of religious fundamentalism include the pro-life movement, Christian home-schooling, a belief in American exceptionalism, and a foreign policy that is determined in no small part by the particular reading and interpretation of bible prophecy and the end times as advanced by Dallas Theological Seminary. While the bogeyman of American fundamentalists today is 'secular humanism', fundamentalist writers link several issues together

> By the 1970s they had identified new enemies and supported new causes. They organized to oppose secular humanism, the decline of traditional values, feminism, legalized abortion, homosexuality, and the elimination of prayer in public schools. They even revised the old anti evolution crusade by sponsoring legislation to provide equal time for what they called 'creation science'.[8]

Dogmatic believers sometime question the validity of science, demonize those who disagree with them, and some may adopt violence to advance their views or to react to threats. In the *American Heritage Dictionary*, there are two definitions of fundamentalism. Definition number one states that fundamentalism is a 'Protestant movement characterized by the literal truth of the Bible'. Definition two states that fundamentalism is 'a movement or point of view characterized by rigid adherence to fundamental or basic principles'. Fundamentalism often combines literalism with absolutely certainty, what Roy A. Clouser calls the 'encyclopedic assumption', the belief that scripture, and fundamentalist intepretations of it, reveal truth on every conceivable topic.

Michelle Goldberg, author of *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (2006), thinks that Evangelicals are perhaps 30% of the total US population, but that only 10-15% (half or less than half the total) are 'fundamentalists' in the way she uses the term. Still, she argues that this group has a disproportionate influence on the US government, and she is particularly concerned about what some have termed 'dominion theology', reconstructionism, theonomy, and apocalypticism that together comprise a movement she calls 'Christian Nationalism'. This group is adverse to any form of pluralism, and believes that the doctrine of the separation of church and state is a contrivance to keep 'fundamentalists' out of power. Note, what Goldberg is describing is not extreme sects such as the KKK or the various 'Christian identity' movements, but rather evangelicals with power who are impacting US domestic and foreign policy.

In another recent book, *American Theocracy*, Kevin Phillips notes how fundamentalist leaders have had a strong influence on George W. Bush's presidency, especially with respect to domestic policy (environment) and foreign policy (the invasion of Iraq and the single minded support of Israel).[9] For these writers, fundamentalism has

8 Weber, 'Fundamentalism', *DCA*, 465.

9 Kevin Philips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Viking, 2006).

had a disproportionate effect on US government, particularly with respect to US foreign policy.

Jewish Fundamentalism: Zionism and the Birth of a Jewish State in Israel

Fundamentalism is found in each of the great world religious that stem from the patriarch, Abraham. Judaism is divided into three main groups, Conservative, Orthodox and Reformed Judaism. However, none of these groups should be confused with Zionism. Zionism is the Jewish nationalist movement that focuses on the rebirth and renewal of the nation state of Israel in the land of Palestine. Modern Zionism emerged in the late 19th century in response to the persecution of the Jews in Eastern and Western Europe. According to the Anti-Defamation League, Zionism 'continues to be the guiding nationalist movement of the majority of Jews around the world'. Further, it is probably true that most US residents support the Jewish state. There are many who have strong connections to a successful state for economic and political reasons. Also, many evangelical Christians or Christian fundamentalists' support for Zionism derives from their view of bible prophecy and adherence to premillennial eschatology. These include 'Christian Zionists' who are convinced that the restoration of the Jewish state is the fulfillment of prophecy.

The origins of Zionism may be traced to Moses Hess (1812-1875) and Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). Herzl is the more significant figure. Theodor Herzl moved to Vienna in 1878 and received the Doctor of Laws from the University of Vienna. He first encountered anti-semitism while studying at the University of Vienna, and this experience coloured his life. In the play, *The Ghetto* (1894), assimilation to the secular or Christian civilization was rejected as a solution. In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, was accused of treason. Herzl witnessed mobs crying, 'death to the Jews' in France. As a result of this experience, he began to argue that the only solution was for Jews to immigrate to a land that they could call their own. Herzl later published the book, *The Jewish State* (1896) to argue that the solution to the Jewish problem was not individual, but national and political. This was the birth of 'Political Zionism'.

The term 'Zionism' comes from the hill of Zion where the original temple of Jerusalem was situated. Zionists seek to establish a Jewish homeland with geographical boundaries. However, Zionism includes several orientations: 'spiritual and cultural; work ethical; Marxist; and Orthodox Jewish'. The central motif is the notion of founding a homeland for the Jewish diaspora, which has been exiled to Babylon, Europe and the world since the sixth Century BCE. Other motifs in Zionism include the expectation of Messiah, socialism (Kibbuttzim), nationalism, and Jewish religious identity. Zionists appealed to European powers to support a nation state in Israel. Early Zionism in Herzl's time was secular in nature, and looked for a nation like other nations.

Zionism in Palestine

While not all Zionists are fundamentalists or racists, it is clear that Zionism

reflects the convergence of two dangerous forces, fundamentalism and nationalism. Jewish historian and Zionist supporter Solomon Grayzel critiques the convergence of such forces in the Arab world, even as he minimizes it among Zionists. Grayzel critiques Islamic fundamentalism as follows:

> But nationalism's usual concomitants are racialism and religious uniformity. Consequently, the struggle for independence was everywhere accompanied by anti-Jewish words and acts, the excuse being that Jews were Zionists and therefore anti-Moslem. Ancient Jewish communities were broken up as a result, and obstacles were placed in the way of exiled Jews going to Israel.[10]

Grayzel argued that the state of Israel was necessary because of the resurgence of Arab nationalism. At the very same time that a Jewish state in Israel was being considered, Jewish people in Arab nations such as Iraq, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and other places were repressed due to Arab and African nationalism. Following the holocaust in Europe and liberation from colonialism in Africa and the Arab world, more persons were forced to migrate to Israel.

Not all Jews, of course, accept Zionism. and not all accept a Zionist interpretation of history such as one finds in Grayzel. In recent times authors like Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (1999, 2004); Ian S. Lustick, *For the Land and for the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (1988); and most recently Gershom Gorenberg, author of *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (2000), and *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977* (2006), have called into question the legitimacy and the impact of Zionism, especially Zionist fundamentalism.

For these authors, most Jews are not Zionists, and most Zionists are not fundamentalists. Zionism in this perspective is viewed as a skewed reinterpretation of Judaism and has been a chief force of destabilzation in the world. Shahak and Mezvinsky argue that Jewish fundamentalism in Israel is not as well known as Arab fundamentalism, which is virtually identified with terrorism; or Christian fundamentalism, which is influenced heavily by a literal interpretation of Bible prophecy and the end times.[11] Yet, Jewish fundamentalism is just as deadly and disturbing and is a major contributor to destabilization in the Middle East and the world at large. When Yitzak Rabin was assassinated by Yigael Amir in 1995 in Israel because the former 'wanted to give Israel to the Arabs', Rabin's death was applauded by a minority in Israel as necessary for the sake of 'true' Jewish religion. Such violence illustrates the danger in religious fundamentalism as a movement that focuses on preserving an ideal version of the past. 'The basic principles of Jewish fundamentalism are the same as those found in other

10 Solomon Grayzel, *A History of the Jews: From the Babylonian Exile to the Present* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), 818.

11 Weber, 'Fundamentalism', *DCA*; Paul S. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More. Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (New York: Belknap Harvard University Press, 1992).

religions: restoration and survival of the "pure" religious community that presumably existed in the past.'[12]

Shahak and Mezvinsky go on to describe characteristics of Jewish fundamentalism. These include a messianic tendency, opposition to human freedoms, especially freedom of expression in Israel, support of occupation of Arab lands, support of discriminating policies against Palestinians, the repression of and opposition to democratic values, and the condemnation of homosexuality and lesbianism. Further, Jewish fundamentalism has adopted an extreme form of biblical literalism, arguing that the destiny of Israel requires Israeli control of all lands from the Suez Canal to lands west and south of the river Euphrates, including the Sinai Peninsula, Jordan, Lebanon, most of Syria, much of Iraq and Kuwait. Christian fundamentalists (Christian Zionists) share the views of Jewish fundamentalists. They believe that it is Israel's destiny to control these lands as natural frontiers, and that the repression of Arabs and 'sexual deviants' is consistent with a theocratic state. Not only do Jewish fundamentalists strive for religious purity and for geographic expansion, but they also believe in religious, moral and racial superiority. Beliefs in superiority feed policies that discriminate against Muslims, alternative sexualities, and non-Jewish people.

Perhaps the most radical of fundamentalist groups in Israel in the post 1967 era is the *Gush Emunim*. The Gush Emunim (Block of the Faithful) is a right-wing ultra-nationalist, religio-political movement. It was formed in March 1974 in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. A major focus of the Gush Emunim was to support and establish Jewish settlements on the West Bank of the Jordan River. From 1977-1984, the Likud Party (of Menachem Begin) gave Gush Emunim resources to develop settlements on the West Bank. This group believes that the West Bank is part of biblical Judea, and, along with Samaria, constitute the lands of ancient Israel. Because Gush Emunim believes in 'the literal truth of the Bible and total commitment to the precepts of modern secular Zionism, it may be called Zionist fundamentalism'.[13] Zionism was historically a secular movement, but the Gush Emunim succeeded in combining the idea of a nation-state with religious fundamentalism.

Adherents to Gush Emunim ideology are opposed to democracy and to the rule of civil law. Like fundamentalists in Christianity and in Islam, this group appeals to a 'higher' religious ideology. They believe that their interpretation of the Torah transcends democracy and the laws of a secular state (secular humanism again). Officially, democracy is acceptable as long as it can be practised in the context of Zionism, but if the two polities collide, Zionism takes precedence. Zionists are willing to tolerate a civil society in the interim, but in the end, like other fundamentalist movements, they look to a theocratic

12 www.geocities.com/alabasters_archive/jewish_fundamentalism.html?200631.

13 Ehud Sprinzak, *Gush Enumim : The Politics of Zionist Fundamentalism in Israel* (American Jewish Commtittee: Institute of Human Relations, 1986), 4.

state ruled by a strict interpretation of the Torah.

Today the political and spiritual principles of the Gush Emunim are prevalent in Israel. For Sprinzak, 'it would not be erroneous to speak today of the invisible kingdom of the Gush Emunim, which is acquiring the character of a state within a state'.[14] In 1978, Amana, Gush Emunim's official settlement organization, was established. Amana was able to gain political support from Menachem Begin, and Ariel Sharon worked with Amana while aggressively pursuing a 'creeping annexation' of 'biblical' lands. However, Gush Emunim was never completely happy with Likud, because it perceived Begin and Sharon as too secular, lacking Gush's religious perspective.

Lustick believes that Jewish fundamentalism is wider than the Gush Emunim. However, he concedes that the Gush Emunim captures the basic force and ideology of Jewish extremism in Israel. He writes that for all practical purposes, contemporary Jewish fundamentalist ideology in Israel is 'the ideology of Gush Emunim'.[15] Jewish fundamentalism is grounded in several basic beliefs, including the sanctity of the land of Israel, its low view of Muslims, Israel's isolation rationalized as proof of its chosenness, and divine providence.

Among the core beliefs for Jewish fundamentalism is the acceptance of the 'abnormality of the Jewish people'. Lustick notes that Leo Pinsker and Theodor Herzl argued that the Jews should become like other nations, a nation within other nations. This was essentially a secular solution to a global political problem. The solution for Herzl was not to assimilate but rather to establish a homeland. Jewish fundamentalists go beyond Herzl by arguing that Jews should not seek a process of normalization as a national culture. Jews should embrace their own abnormality, and their own peculiarity. Key to this understanding is the notion of chosenness and exceptionalism. For Zionists, Jews are unique; they are not normal, and they are endowed with a unique destiny, distinct from every nation that has ever existed. For Jewish fundamentalists, their religious values cannot be found in civil society or even in reason, but in a 'theonomous scale rooted in the will of the Divine architect of the universe and its moral order…'[16]

Jewish fundamentalists eschew the vain search for normalcy. Rather, they see themselves as unique, special carriers of the divine purpose of redemption for themselves and for the earth as a whole. Their ideology supports not only national defence but military aggression if it means that their destiny is to be fulfilled. 'It is this intimate connection between what is felt as transcendentally imperative and what is perceived as one's personal, political duty, that is the distinguishing mark of a fundamentalist political vision.'[17]

The danger of the fundamentalist

14 Sprinzak, *Gush Enumim*, 19.

15 Ian S Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988), ch IV (www.sas.upenn.edu/penncip/lustick/index.html).

16 Cited by Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord*, IV, 2.

17 Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord*, 11.

mind is its conviction that reality is bound to follow ideology and not vice versa. Facts can therefore simply be disregarded. For Jewish fundamentalists, the Palestinians do not exist, the Arab countries do not count, world public opinion is rubbish, and the US government is merely a nuisance. The only reality that counts is Jewish redemption, which is imminent—to be realized by a massive *aliyah*, the negation of the Diaspora, and the building of the Third Temple. Throughout Jewish history there have been true believers like Gush Emunim who were convinced that the Messiah was at the door. Fortunately these messianic believers were in most cases few and isolated. Their messianic vision was not translated into operative political programs. However, this may not be the case with Gush Emunim.[18]

Muslim Fundamentalism in Modern Palestine

Most Muslims are not fundamentalists, and even fewer are committed to a terrorist program. Neither is Islam a homogenous religion. For, not only are there Sunni, Shia and Sufi groups in Islam, but there are many others. Also, Islam has historically evolved in very different ways, responding to the divergent national contexts where Islam is found. So, Islam in Turkey is very different from Islam in Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Syria or Egypt. Each of these countries has experienced a very different historical evolution of Islam.

Islam means to surrender to God, Allah in Arabic. It rejects polytheism. The word Islam is a derivative of the word, *salaam*, which means peace in its fullest sense. Salaam means freedom from all harm, so that the greeting, *assalumu aliakum* wishes the recipient peace, and specifically health or freedom from harm or danger. So, as in Christianity and Judaism, rightly understood, peace has an important meaning for Islam. Historically, there are numerous examples of Islamic tolerance regarding Christians and Jews as fellow 'peoples of the book'. The history of conflict between the world religions is not the only story of the relationship between them.

Like Christian and Jewish fundamentalists, Islamic fundamentalists believe that the problems of the world are the result of secularism. They believe that the path to peace and justice occurs only by returning to the original message of Islam. Islamic fundamentalists hold to a high view of moral purity, and are scandalized by western permissive attitudes toward dress, sex, food, and material consumption. Many are resentful of western presence and interference in the Middle East, particularly over oil reserves in Arab lands. Many also allege that the United States in particular sides exclusively with Israel, and has had a one-sided foreign policy against Arab interests. Fundamentalist Islam rejects the equality of men and women. It rejects secularism and rejects the doctrine of the separation of church and state. This is simlar to fundamentalism in Christianity and Zionism. Further, some Muslim groups reject the right of Muslims to leave their religion, including in particular the acceptance of Christianity or any other non-Muslim religion. In

18 Sprinzak, *Gush Enumim*,31.

some countries, it is against the law to proselytize or to even practise a non-Islamic religion.

Perhaps the most significant religious symbol of fundamentalist conflict among world religions is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Muslims believe that the Temple Mount is holy, as it was the place where Muhammed ascended. Christian fundamentalists believe it is holy, because, after the building of a new temple, Christ will return to the site. Jewish fundamentalists believe that the Temple Mount is holy, and that a new Third Temple must be built for the Messianic age to begin. Jerusalem is a place of Messianic dreams and expectations. Gershom Gorenberg writes that such millennialist expectation is a prescription for violence.

> For redemptive Zionists, physically possessing Hebron, Jericho, Shiloh, Old Jerusalem, and the Temple Mount proved that the final act was under way. Watched through a very different theological lens, the conquest had the same meaning for premillennialist Christians in front-row seats. Both literalism and the false hope of history's end fed the enthusiasm. Those two fallacies were joined with a third ancient error: That God could be owned by owning a place.[19]

To Islamic fundamentalists, Israel is an alien body in the heart of Arab and Muslim worlds and the vanguard of western hegemony in the Middle East. If the establishment of Israel in 1948 was the first major event in the recent Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the second event was the 1967 war and the defeat of a coalition of Arab nations by Israel. The occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank has led to the wholesale displacement of Palestinians. Muslims believe that this has happened because of the impact of secularism on Muslims, and the failure of Muslims to unite and embrace true Islam.

A third event was the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. This is perhaps the most significant event in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The revolution in Iran demonstrates a successful development of Islam as a viable alternative to western secularism. Iran has also provided the rest of the Muslim world with a model of what it means to be a Muslim-controlled state. In the 1970s, a fourth factor was the decline of the effectiveness of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (the PLO). The PLO failed to achieve an independent Palestinian state, and it failed also in uniting more moderate Muslims against Israeli settlements—what Goshem Gorenberg calls an 'accidental empire'.[20] Abu-Amr writes that the PLO's 'consequent evolution from ideological purity to political pragmatism created an ideological vacuum that was soon filled by [radical] Islam, the only available alternative'.[21]

A fifth critical historical event in Palestine was the emergence of the

19 Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 248.

20 Gershom Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements*, 1967-1977 (New York: Times Books, 2006).

21 Abu-Amr, Islamic Fundamentalism (http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/ht/d/ContentDetails/i/2971).

Palestinian popular uprising in 1987, called the intifada. The intifada, for Abu-Amr, has been the most important factor in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The intifada defined Islam as a nationalist, political movement of resistance against Israel. Its political objectives became organized in the charter of Hamas, and has been characterized often by violent resistance to Israeli settlements with the goal of liberating Palestine from Israeli control. Abu-Amr argues that Jerusalem and the Muslim religious sites (including the Temple Mount) are holy, and that Palestinians must control these sites. Writes Abu-Amr:

> Israel's declared insistence on considering a 'united Jerusalem' as the eternal capital of Israel is likely to complicate efforts at finding a common denominator between the Palestinians and the Israelis regarding an acceptable agreement on the city…. Jerusalem may continue to be an issue of severe contention between the two sides….. If control over Arab Jerusalem, and definitely over Muslim religious sites, is not granted to the Palestinians, the Arabs, or the Muslims, the city will remain a source and a symbol for Muslim resentment, indoctrination, mobilization and perhaps agitation and struggle.[22]

John L. Esposito calls Islamic fundamentalism 'Islamic Revivalism' and outlines its 'ideological worldview' as follows:

- Islam is a total and comprehensive way of life. Religion is to be integrated to politics, law and society.
- The failure of Muslim societies is due to its departure from the straight path of Islam and its acceptance of western values and secularism.
- Renewal of society requires a return to Islam, the Quran and the teachings of the prophet Muhammed.
- Western inspired civil codes must be replaced by Islamic law.
- Although Westernization is condemned, science is not, although science is to be subordinated to Islamic beliefs and values.
- The process of Islamization, requires a struggle against corruption and social injustice (jihad).[23]

Esposito notes that Islamic fundamentalism often goes beyond even these tenets to urge adherents to fight Zionism, the western crusader mentality, and to move toward establishing an Islamic system of government. As such, a jihad against unbelievers is warranted, even necessary, and Christians and Jews are generally regarded as 'infidels' because of their connections with western neo colonialism and Zionism. A major goal is to rid Muslim lands of these forces of colonization.[24]

Conclusion

Fundamentalisms of all faiths share some similar characteristics. They

22 Ziad Abu-Amr, 'The Significance of Jerusalem: A Muslim Perspective', *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 2:2 (1995); www.pij.org.

23 John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 165.

24 Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 166.

reject modernism and with it, secularism. They seek to return to a former utopian era and to the root teachings of their faith. As a result, fundamentalists yearn for a previous era, even a state that returns to 'conventional, agrarian gender roles, putting women back in their veils and into the home'.[25] In more extreme forms, fundamentalism attempts to replace secularism with some form of theocratic state, be it Zionism in Israel, Sharia law in Islam or 'Christian nationalism' in the US. Moreover, fundamentalists seem to share a literalism and an encyclopedic breadth when it comes to the interpretation of a sacred scripture. They seek clarity and certainty when certainty is illusory. They tend to believe that only a particular 'chosen' group of people can interpret scripture in the right way. As Gorenberg points out, such literalism is not only dangerous, but could turn out violently, particularly for groups who are disappointed that a timeline for the end times has not materialized, and as a result they may believe that it is up to them to help the process along.

> We live in a time when extremism is confused with religious authenticity, and not just in Protestantism. Purveyors of 'literal' readings of sacred books claim to represent old-time religion, unadulterated by modernity. Yet literalism, apparently a mark of a conservative, is often the method of millennialists who look forward to an entirely new world. They place prophetic texts at the center of religion—and insist that the words must be read as factual, tactile accounts of the future.[26]

Fundamentalism is a widespread phenomena. While as a movement, it began in the United States with the 'fundamentalist controversy' of the early 19th century, fundamentalism as a religious ideology described here has been around since tribal and prehistoric times. While not all Jews, Muslims or Christians are fundamentalists, and not all fundamentalists are violent, fundamentalism is nonetheless a powerful and pervasive force in the world today.

In 1893, Chicago hosted the World's Parliament of Religions. It was perhaps the first time that Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and others met and discussed their distinctivnesses and similarities under one roof—peacefully and civilly. Among the attendees was one Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb of New York City. Granted, he was an American Muslim, but nonetheless he perhaps raised a standard for all of the world's religions and for all the world's peoples to emulate.

> We should only judge of the inherent tendencies of a religious system by observing carefully and without prejudice its general effects upon the character and habits of those who are intelligent enough to understand its basic principles, and who publicly profess to teach and follow it. If we find that their lives are clean and pure and full of love and charity, we may fairly say that their religion is good. If we find

25 Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 166.

26 Gorenberg, *The End of Days*, 245.

them given to hypocrisy, dishonesty, uncharitableness, and intolerance, we may safely infer that there is something wrong with the system they profess.[27]

The Shalom of God as described in the Old Testament strives for similar goals. Shalom in the Old Testament describes a peace that is interconnected with prosperity, and this prosperity ideally extends to all members of a society. Today, in response to the conflicts that exist between religions and other social groups, we desperately need a theology and a worldview that can somehow foster a respectful meeting of peoples across boundaries and ideologies with the charitableness that Imam Webb describes.

If shalom means peace, prosperity and well-being for each constituent member, including the immigrant (sojourner/alien) or the the poor (widow and orphan), then to what extent can any nation-state measure up to the standard of God's shalom? The Torah demands that the most vulnerable be protected, and this protection extends particularly to the most vulnerable of any society (usually widows and orphans, certainly women and children). The great text regarding the judgment of the nations found in Matthew chapter 25 in the New Testament is an expression of this standard. There, the question is whether or not a nation-state has provided for the thirsty, the homeless, the hungry, the sick and the imprisoned. Shalom is therefore the standard by which nations are judged.

A 'shalom' society is a society where even the visitor is protected, where even the 'alien' and the 'enemy' can prosper. Shalom means that all peoples can come to the table to dine and share gifts with one another. The Old Testament notion of shalom is not just a good idea, but it could be a norm and a standard for all nations, especially for those who represent the Abrahamic religions. For Cornelius Plantinga, Jr, shalom is therefore not merely a plausible norm for society. Rather, Shalom is 'the way it's supposed to be'.

27 Cited in J.W. Hanson, editor, *The World's Congress of Religions: Addresses and Papers* (Philadelphia W.W. Houston and Company, 1894), 524.