

Religion, to national  
unification. apart from  
religion, there



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Religion, no doubt, was and is a great cementing force, but now writers are little inclined to lay stress on religion as a contemporary factor. "Sameness of religion" says Burgess, "was once a most potent factor in national development, but the modern principle of religious freedom has greatly modified its influence." If Burgess should have combined with the modern principle of religious freedom the modern decline in the religious faith, his explanation would have been more apt. In developed countries religion has since long been separated from politics and the cases are at least as numerous in which deep-rooted religious differences have formed no obstacle to national unification.

Apart from religion, there are other factors which are a strong incentive to cohesion. The rise of fundamentalism during recent years is, however, alarming. Garner appropriately sums up the importance of religion as a factor in the development of nationality. He says, "While community of religion has in some cases been a powerful factor in the development of nationality and in the strengthening of the bonds of national unity, and while in other cases the absence of it has contributed to the disruption of the State, it is no longer, thanks to the modern spirit of toleration, an essential or important element of determining nationality." Freedom of religious belief and the spirit of toleration at least take away the sting of fanaticism and create a sense of amity and neighborly relations in societies containing diverse religious groups.