

Some these are
monotheist faiths
since they



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Some Christian, Jewish, and Muslim fundamentalists are using their views to control people in their community and worldwide and have similarities of being a cult. Fundamentalism, whether it is Christian, Jewish or Muslim, seems to be on the rise. Fundamentalists think they are defending the “true” faith, but are they? Why are these movements spreading and what is their nature? Christians, Jews, and Muslims are religions based on the Abrahamic doctrines and are characterized by opposition to those who fail to follow their beliefs and teachings. These are monotheist faiths since they worship a supreme deity referred by different names. They are ignorant of ‘others’ faiths and oppose their standpoint, therefore denying them mutual understanding and respect essential for people to coexist harmoniously (Ruthven 4). These religions have an “us and them” syndrome where they observe themselves as victims, and therefore marginalize themselves from the main society where they have continued to thrive. In addition, religious fundamentalism forms the foundation of unrest since nineteen eighties, when Berlin Wall collapsed and marked the end of the Soviet Union, hence end of cold war hacking left its scars on Asia Latin America and Africa.

Modern religious wars have led to great number of people being killed having religion as the grounds for inspiration and identity (Ruthven 5). Religion is therefore the opium of the masses as asserted by Karl Marx.

Fundamentalism is a pejorative concept used in a sacred context, which can be defined as firm adherence to certain theological beliefs due to a literal understanding of the scriptures and opposes the popular beliefs (Bruce 9).

Fundamentalism is a concept that can be traced in the early twentieth century and is used in today’s world to refer to religious beliefs supported by

individuals who see a need to identify themselves with original ideologies, which is essential in retaining their social and religious distinctiveness. Fundamentalists could also be described as religious extremism or religious fanaticism, a notion similar to that of a cult. A cult is a pejorative term that describes a group of individuals, which has its own beliefs system and usually follows directives of particular leader who established it, and whom they worship. Some point out that a cult is manipulative and usually imprisons the minds of its followers through ritual practices where members devote themselves.

Cults are usually characterized by having controlling charismatic heads who brainwashes and indoctrinates its followers by ensuring their dependency on the organization is achieved by instilling terror, disgrace and guilt, which enable the leaders to exploit the followers. The directives are usually unquestioned and emphasizes that salvations is the way to survive apocalypse. They segregate themselves from the main society and usually punish those who abandon it (Willis 155). Islam, Christians and Jews are main religions whose sectarian practices are similar to those of a cult, since they describe each one of themselves as the true religion. They restrict their followers from abandoning the beliefs and most importantly, they segregate defiant members who are bound to face the leader's wrath when they do so. For instance, some religions like Islam advocates for apostasy where one faces a death penalty on defying Islamic teachings.

In such a case, these unorthodox practices are disregarded by public opinion that refers to those who practice them as fundamentalists (Bruce 10). In addition, religious leaders in these religions demand total loyalty and

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submission from their followers (Hedges 91). Some, such as televangelists utilize their religious position to financially exploit through deception to the followers to ass wealth for themselves (Hedges 174). As a result, there is dependence on the members where they are assured that their generous contributions will lead to abundance blessings, not only in this life but also in the one to come. Moreover, these leaders apply tactics to ensure that the followers cannot question, or have an independent way of thinking thus there is overreliance on the leader for direction (Hedges 26). Therefore, in such a case, the followers become united in a single brotherhood and a communal feeling is achieved in serving their one and only leader (Hedges 80). The communal feeling however triggers the religious leaders to develop ways to ensure that their control is maintained by instructing its members to stop intermingling with the other members of the society.

This promotes exclusion where followers refer to themselves as ' us' and the outsiders as ' them'. The members acquire a sense of worthiness where they observe themselves as having an opportunity to have salvation, which is a precious gift they need to safeguard. This thinking is exploited by the religious leaders who assures the followers that indeed, they are unique, privileged and chosen to have a chance of exercising the will of God, hence they will be rewarded (Hedges 88). For instance, according to the article written be the Network for Church Monitoring, there has been a notion that Christian, Jewish & Muslim fundamentalists unanimously hold that disastrous natural phenomenon's are ways of God vengeance on the sins that have filled the world. Although the religions are different in their formations and teachings, they all agree that the catastrophic occurrences emanate from

God. On the same note, the Shiite prayer and an American Christian, John Hagee concur that Iran earthquakes are as a result of women whose dressing is revealing, and are immoral.

In a different occasion, an ultra-orthodox head, Ismail Haniyeh asserts that the natural fire annihilating Carmel Forest in Israel originates from God who is wrathful, a notion that is agreed upon by Chief Rabbi, Ovadia Yosef who blames the fire on laxity in observing the Sabbath in Israel. Muslims, represented by Haniyeh, the Palestinian Prime Minister elect points out that the fires “ are plagues from God...Allah is punishing them [the Israelis] from a place they did not expect it” (Cohen pr. 10). These are mere, theological justifications whose relevance cannot be ascertained. Therefore, these religions identify themselves as saved or not. This creates “ us and them” notion, which is fueled by comradeship and disregards the “ unsaved” people. As a result, Abrahamic faiths are characterized by violence where its members are recruited and incited to engage in violent acts, which is ideologically justified by their scriptural references. Their beliefs are intolerable by others who have opposing views, who regard these practices and self- deceiving dogma as absurd and inaccurate.

Nonetheless, these religions publicly declare their standpoints in indoctrinating others, including innocent children who should grow open-mindedly without being cocooned in some absurd teachings. Muslims for instance regard others who do not believe as they do their enemies by dehumanizing and killing them. In comparison, Jewish fanatics are very strict in clarifying the rabbinic understanding of the Bible, which may be the cause of the violence that typifies their country Israel. This makes a liberal believer

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to view the said God as being mischievous and one who delights in violence. To be incorporated in the religious groups therefore requires that its members conform to the practices and teachings directed by leaders and remain submissive to reap God's blessings (Hedge 174). The member's subjugation is exploited by religious leaders, which may impair personal relationships and families. Leaders could sexually abuse the followers as a way to demonstrate love, which God commands (Renard 157). This psychologically bonds the followers to their leader who now controls the members' lives entirely.

In some instances, the members neglect their families, where those who are impoverished or emotionally weak prefer to be a part of the group and remain submissive in exchange for their needs being met. These followers cannot question the scriptures' requirements (Merkur 172). In conclusion, fundamentalism incorporates various aspects such as power, ignorance and control. Fundamentalist's teachings are destructive to the followers and the non-believers.

A communal feel is necessary for the followers of Christian, Jewish and Islamic teachings, since there is a need to defend their practices as a large group to justify its existence and to ensure its continuity. Today, jihad propagandas spread by Islam fundamentalists are based on violence, which is justified by the Koran. Fundamentalism is a notion that contrasts scientific and technological advancements in today's globalized world. Often, it leads to a clash of ideologies since technology and science has enabled man to resist such a naturalistic thought and instead, determine his fate other than relying of divinity in his interpretations. Therefore, religious fundamentalists

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should not only be flexible and open minded in interpreting scripture phenomenon and in leadership, but should avoid overreliance on the static historical scriptural writings, whose accuracy is questionable (Bruce 25).

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