THE IMPACT ON GLOBAL MISSION OF RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM AND 9/11 REALITIES

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"A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call"

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The context for the production of the
Lausanne Occasional Papers

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement committed to energising
"the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world."

With roots going back to the historical conferences in Edinburgh (1910) and Berlin (1966), the Lausanne Movement was born out of the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The landmark outcome of this Congress was the ***Lausanne Covenant*** supported by the 2,430 participants from 150 nations. The covenant proclaims the substance of the Christian faith as historically declared in the creeds and adds a clear missional dimension to our faith. Many activities have emerged from the Lausanne Congress and from the second congress held in Manila in 1989. The Covenant (in a number of languages), and details about the many regional events and specialised conferences which have been undertaken in the name of Lausanne, may be examined online at www.lausanne.org.

The Lausanne International Committee believed it was led by the Holy Spirit to hold another conference which would bring together Christian leaders from around the world. This time the Committee planned to have younger emerging leaders involved and sought funds to enable it to bring a significant contingent from those parts of the world where the church is rapidly growing today. It decided to call the conference a **Forum.** As a Forum its structure would allow people to come and participate if they had something to contribute to one of 31 issues (around which were formed Issue Groups). These issues were chosen through a global research programme seeking to identify the most significant issues in the world today which are of concern in our task to take the *good news* to the world.

This Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) is the report that has emerged from one of these Issue Groups. LOPs have been produced for each of the Issue Groups and information on these and other publications may be obtained online at www.lausanne.org.

The theme of the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 was **"A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call."** This Forum was held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 29 to October 5, 2004. 1,530 participants came from 130 countries to work in one of the 31 Issue Groups.

The Affirmations at the conclusion of the Forum stated:

"There has been a spirit of working together in serious dialogue and prayerful reflection. Representatives from a wide spectrum of cultures and virtually all parts of the world have come together to learn from one another and to seek new direction from the Holy Spirit for world evangelization. They committed themselves to joint action under divine guidance.

The dramatic change in the political and economic landscape in recent years has raised new challenges in evangelization for the church. The polarization between east and west makes it imperative that the church seek God's direction for the appropriate responses to the present challenges.

In the 31 Issue Groups these new realities were taken into consideration, including the HIV pandemic, terrorism, globalization, the global role of media, poverty, persecution of Christians, fragmented families, political and religious nationalism, post-modern mind set, oppression of children, urbanization, neglect of the disabled and others.

Great progress was made in these groups as they grappled for solutions to the key challenges of world evangelization. As these groups focused on making specific recommendations, larger strategic themes came to the forefront.

There was affirmation that major efforts of the church must be directed toward those who have no access to the gospel. The commitment to help establish self sustaining churches within 6,000 remaining unreached people groups remains a central priority.

Secondly, the words of our Lord call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this we have failed greatly. We renew our commitment to reach out in love and compassion to those who are marginalised because of disabilities or who have different lifestyles and spiritual perspectives. We commit to reach out to children and young people who constitute a majority of the world's population, many of whom are being abused, forced into slavery, armies and child labour.

A third stream of a strategic nature acknowledges that the growth of the church is now accelerating outside of the western world. Through the participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we recognise the dynamic nature and rapid growth of the church in the *South*. Church leaders from the *South* are increasingly providing exemplary leadership in world evangelization.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.

Fifthly, we call on the church to use media to effectively engage the culture in ways that draw non-believers toward spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways.

Finally, we affirm the priesthood of all believers and call on the church to equip, encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfil their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the world wide task of evangelization.

Transformation was a theme which emerged from the working groups. We acknowledge our own need to be continually transformed, to continue to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to the challenges of God's word and to grow in Christ together with fellow Christians in ways that result in social and economic transformation. We acknowledge that the scope of the gospel and building the Kingdom of God involves, body, mind, soul and spirit. Therefore we call for increasing integration of service to society and proclamation of the gospel.

We pray for those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith and for those who live in constant fear of their lives. We uphold our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We recognize that the reality of the persecuted church needs to be increasingly on the agenda of the whole Body of Christ. At the same time, we also acknowledge the importance of loving and doing good to our enemies while we fight for the right of freedom of conscience everywhere.

We are deeply moved by the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic – the greatest human emergency in history. The Lausanne movement calls all churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

"9/11," the war in Iraq, the war on terror and its reprisals compel us to state that we must not allow the gospel or the Christian faith to be captive to any one geo-political entity. We affirm that the Christian faith is above all political entities.

We are concerned and mourn the death and destruction caused by all conflicts, terrorism and war. We call for Christians to pray for peace, to be proactively involved in

reconciliation and avoid all attempts to turn any conflict into a religious war. Christian mission in this context lies in becoming peacemakers.

We pray for peace and reconciliation and God's guidance in how to bring about peace through our work of evangelization. We pray for God to work in the affairs of nations to open doors of opportunity for the gospel. We call on the church to mobilize every believer to focus specific consistent prayer for the evangelization of their communities and the world.

In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelism by maximising the gifts of all.

We also recognize the need for greater intentionality in developing future leaders. We call on the church to find creative ways to release emerging leaders to serve effectively."

Numerous practical recommendations for local churches to consider were offered. These will be available on the Lausanne website and in the Lausanne Occasional Papers. It is our prayer that these many case studies and action plans will be used of God to mobilise the church to share a clear and relevant message using a variety of methods to reach the most neglected or resistant groups so that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and be able to respond to this good news in faith.

We express our gratitude to the Thai Church which has hosted us and to their welcoming presentation to the Forum. We are profoundly gratefully to God for the privilege of being able to gather here from the four corners of the earth. We have developed new partnerships, made new friends and encouraged one another in our various ministries. Not withstanding the resistance to the gospel in many places and the richness of an inherited religious and cultural tradition we here at the Forum have accepted afresh the renewed call to be obedient to the mandate of Christ. We commit ourselves to making His saving love known so that the whole world may have opportunity to accept God's gift of salvation through Christ."

These affirmations indicate the response of the participants to the Forum outcomes and their longing that the whole church may be motivated by the outcomes of the Forum to strengthen its determination to be obedient to God's calling.

May the case studies and the practical suggestions in this and the other LOPs be of great help to you and your church as you seek to find new ways and a renewed call to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ

David Claydon

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1. INTRODUCTION

History is the story of nations. History includes the stories of culture, language, politics and religion. Down through history, religion has played a major role in shaping nations and society. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity Islam and other religions have had great impact on their societies.

The combination of religion and national politics has always been a potent mixture. In the second half of the twentieth century religious nationalism, engulfed many nations who achieved freedom from colonial rule. In the decades of the 80's and the 90's there has been a prominent growth of religious nationalism in many parts of the world. Whereas, the western world has been focused on the secularization of society and removing religion from the public sphere.

At the dawn of the 21st century we are witness to the catastrophic effects of extremist religious nationalism in some parts of the world. Religious fundamentalism, fascism and communalism have become common words to describe geo-political realities in areas where most people of the world live.

Religious nationalism presents huge challenge for the communication of the gospel. If colonialism was the main obstacle to mission work in an earlier era then hostile religious nationalism is the challenge for missions today.   The world of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and tribalism is dominated by religious or cultural nationalism.

2. NATIONALISM

Nations are presumed to have certain objective characteristics such as language, race, religion, territory or history which either singly or in combination distinguishes them from other nations. Protection and promotion (above) of these, in competition and conflict with other nations then becomes nationalism.

Nations are considered as collectivities built on the subjective consciousness of identity of kind, commonality of interests and a will to be a nation. Here political assertion and actualization of such a consciousness or will becomes nationalism. Western nationalism is considered as political and eastern nationalism as cultural (Aloysius 1997:127). According to Jaffrelot political or territorial nationalism 'starts from an imposed entity and possesses no common and distinctive cultural identity to protect' (Jaffrelot 1993:13). Religious or ethnic nationalism start from 'a recognizable cultural unit', their primary concern being to 'to ensure the survival of the group's cultural identity' (Jaffrelot 1993:13).

Authors differ in their opinion as to the origin of nationalism. Khaddourie asserts that it is an invention of west. Normally the West understands nationalism as:

> The style of thought its terminology, its formulation including the historically specific form of the nation-state with all its formal paraphernalia as it was developed in the West.

On the other hand, others say that if we mean nationalism as the coming together of culture and power, a kind of social and societal change in which ascription is challenged and the social power balance in general is tilted towards the hitherto excluded masses within culture. It is also an aspiration of cultures for recognition and self-determination and in this case nationalism is not an invention of the West (Aloysius 1997:129).

Charles Weller identifies the development of 'nations' and its associated ideologies 'nationhood' and 'nationalism' with the Reformation era and it took shape down through the centuries as the international nation-state system (Weller 2001, XII). This gave a clear distinction between 'Church and State'. However, such western 'compartmentalized' ideals cannot be forced on the non-western world.

Weller identifies three primary stages or decisive 'revolutions' of Western ideology and praxis in the historical development of this relationship:

1. There was an initial and parallel rise of Protestantism with both secular ('liberal') humanist thought and the 'nations' of Western Europe in the 15-17th centuries as these 'nations' broke from and defined themselves in relation to the former declining 'Holy Roman Empire'. This established independent national sovereignty for non-Roman-Italian Christian peoples based especially in ethno-cultural-linguistic domains. There was no clear separation of Church and State nor of Ethnicity and state in this period.

2. In consequence of the often religiously fuelled political wars between these newly formed 'nations' and the devastation which they left on Europe during this period, there arose the clear break in the 18th to early 20th centuries between 'Church and State'. On the one hand was the 'secular-civic-public non-religious political state' and, on the other, 'private religion and religious freedom'. There was no real concern for separation of 'Ethnicity and State' during this period.

3. In consequence of European 'white supremacy'- based colonialism and German and Japanese ethnopolitical nationalism came the clear break

between 'Ethnicity and State'. This gave rise to emphatic concern for a 'secular-civic-legal multi-ethnic political state', forbidding all claims of unique or 'pre-eminent' right to political authority in the nation-state by any one, particular ethnic group. (Weller 2001, XII)

A healthy nationalism is both biblical and historical, however, today much of the thinking of the Western Church favours the international-global-universal over against the national (Weller 2001, XVI).

Lorenzo M. Tanada defines nationalism as:

> Nationalism is nothing more than this. It is nothing less. It is the primal virtue of the citizen; that virtue which prompts him to place the common good of his people above his own private and personal good, above the interests of his class or party; that virtue that makes him willing, nay glad, to sacrifice himself that the nation might live. Nationalism is a virtue; it is therefore primarily a habit of the will. But it is not only that; it is also a habit of the intellect; a mental attitude; a way of looking at things and judging them. A nationalist is not only one who is ready to die for his country. He is also one who is ready to think for his country. (www.leadership.ph/bookstore/pdf/pamana/pdf_Nationalism/national ism).

1.1. Nationalism is good but racism is evil

When we try to understand the 'past' and the 'present' and when we look at the Bible 'the Table and the Tower' and when we compare the understanding of 'Kingdom of God' and the world history, we are driven back to God and Scripture as an ultimate ground for understanding our human world, its history and dilemmas. So 'racism' is unacceptable as it forces horrendous acts of wickedness against other nations in the name of one's own nation. Nationalism and racism are not the same.

Globalization is a great threat in this context. Many indigenous people have become the human equivalent of endangered species. Now many people battle to save the things that define them; their way of life (culture), their language and their land.

Those calling themselves ambassadors of the Kingdom of God in world history, called to and engaged in bringing 'blessing' in the name of Jesus to the nations, should most certainly ask the same question. To put it another way, what do these things mean for us and our actions in light of the fact that God is concerned to bring wholeness and well-being (shalom) to the nations?

1.2. Weller identifies Five Main Paradigms of 'Nations'
(a) Postmodernist

The 'nation' as well as the 'ethnic groups' are nothing more than self-conceived and self-constructed social units, 'imagined communities' which man himself chooses as that which he deems best for his own benefit and welfare in contribution to his own existence (Weller 2001, XII, 14).

(b) Idealistic Modernist

The 'nation' of today is an entirely artificial 'construct' which is 'engineered' by the intentional design of modern man as a socio-economic and socio-political ideology. It is an 'imagined community' built by design for life in the modern, civilized world and completely unique to the modern era. This concept has no real connection with the past.

(c) Pragmatic Modernist-Perennialist:

The modern 'nation' is essentially a self-imagined and self-constructed community designed as a means of uniting individuals together in a social community

and providing their basic needs and rights for life in the uniquely modern world. However, some of the past elements are taken over and they are revived and revised and incorporated into the foundation of the new 'nation'. Both new and old exist together, therefore, in unique blend, having both continuity and discontinuity.

(d) Perennialist:
'Nations' are established upon ethnic foundations. They as well as the 'ethnic groups' comprising them or within them are perennial throughout history. They have existed in the past and, generally, continue on with socio-political variations unique to each historical context. That is, in essence, the 'nations' as well as 'ethnic groups' of both past and present and most likely will continue to have the same fundamental nature in spite of the varying political forms and structures or their social composition.

(e) Organicist-Creationist
The 'nation' is essentially synonymous with the 'ethnic group' and ethnic groups should be the fundamental core upon which the 'nation' is built. This type of 'nation' has existed in the past and, generally, continues on with variations unique to each historical context. In spite of varying political forms and structures the future will continue to have the same fundamental 'ethnic nature'. The attempts to establish 'modern multi-ethnic nations' which ignore these ethnic foundations are destined to create or exacerbate unnecessary conflict and turmoil in the human social order.

1.3. Biblical Theology of 'nations'
'Nationhood' is essentially good and positive and an integral part of the 'Kingdom plan of God'. (Weller 2001, XII, 22)

Nationhood consists of 'ethnic kinship group' with a 'homeland' and common national language or 'mother tongue'. The 'table and tower' account of Genesis affirms the 'nations' and it continues through the 'new covenant' era through:

> The intended application of 'nation' from Israel to the Church as spiritual-theological and metaphorical, not organic-historical.
> Luke's Table of Nations as a parallel to Genesis 10 and the proclamation of the Good news in the various 'national languages' at Pentecost.
> Paul's reference at Athens to 'The Table and The Tower' as the continuing foundation of the human social order established by God for witness "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 2;9-11; 17:26-27).
> The repeated connection between the call of both Israel and the Church to the same 'nations' in both the Old and New covenant eras (Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew. 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:4).

Weller having defined nations as Biblical then continues affirming that 'ethnic identity' and languages are both essential and important. Our mission involves in seeing that the 'ethnic identity' and languages are kept as intended by God from the account of 'tower and table' account.

1.4. The necessity to keep 'ethnic identity'
Ethnic identities and their corollary social groupings are as much a genuine and integral part of the human social order as the individual identities of both male and female as well as family. They should be acknowledged, accepted, and genuinely respected and appreciated through allowing these ethnic groups to foster and preserve their own ethnic identity, realizing that the very things which give their ethnic group existence and importance are the things which give other ethnic groups the exact same importance. Respect and love for one's own ethnic identity, therefore, immediately demands mutual love and respect for all others. (Weller 2001, XII, 63)

1.5. The importance of language

The most appropriate criterion for determining the identity of a people is language. Language is the primary identifier of an ethnic group. Language is absolutely important to cultural integrity and survival. Language has played a central role in ethno-national movements throughout history. (Weller 2001, XII, 73)

God affirms the linguistic basis of ethnic identity when, on the day of Pentecost, the numerous peoples heard the praises of God being declared in their own languages. Languages are national. The day of Pentecost reaffirms the experience of the Tower of Babel.

Today half the world's languages are faced with extinction. Does it matter? Those calling themselves ambassadors of the Kingdom of God in world history, called to and engaged in bringing blessing in the name of Jesus to the nations, should certainly ask this question. What do these things mean for us and our actions in light of the fact God is concerned to bring wholeness and well being to the nations?

1.6. *True Nationalism is Biblical and it should be promoted by Missiology*

The history of God's dealing with his people informs us that it was God who created Kingship and nationhood. In the valedictory poem called "the Song of Moses" (Deuteronomy 32: 1-43), we read that the universal sovereign God "apportioned the nations, …divided humankind, …and fixed boundaries of the peoples" (32.8). This affirmation of the universal sovereignty of God as the origin of nations and nationhood finds its resonance in the Areopagus speech of Paul (Acts 17:16-34). As an expression of God's universal sovereignty and care, Paul declared that from one ancestor God "*made every nation of humankind to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live…*(Acts 17:26). The existence of different nationalities can therefore be justified as God's will and as part of God's good gift (Pachuau 2003, 6).

Pachuau traces three positions among NT scholars when they study Jesus' attitude towards nationalism. First is the *identification* with the nation-state, *critical distancing* from the rulers for the cause of loyalty to God, and *resistance* to the exploitation of the power of the state for the ungodly selfish cause. These three positions are to be held together by Christians. Each position can be dangerous in itself. Identification can easily lead to compromise of faith, distancing can create hypocritical "better than thou" attitude, and resistance can isolate us from the world denying us the opportunity to serve. Our call to serve the nations includes resisting any movement that hinders the universality of God's good news. Be it the demoralizing politicization of nation-state and nationalism or the potentially exclusionary and ethnocentric nationalists movements, Christians should take courage in confronting any power that obstruct the realization of God's good news. No nation should be denied God's good news meant for all the nations (Pachuau 2003, 6).

3. RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

The rise of political nationalism in the west coupled with the rise of renaissance and reformation led many Western nations like Spain, Portugal, France (all Roman Catholic countries), as well as Great Britain, The Netherlands and Denmark (all Protestant countries) to discover new land and this led to the colonization of many Asian, African and Latin American countries. Except the Latin American countries, most of the Asian and African countries were under the influence of Islam, Hindu, Buddhist or tribal religion.

In these areas religious or cultural nationalism became the main form of opposition to colonial rule and the religion of the colonizers.

2.1. *Why is this issue critical?*

(a) The concept of nation and nationalism is seen both as biblical and historical. These two concepts are the major focus of the Kingdom of God. The 'Table of nations and The Tower of Babel' are two major Biblical events from which these two concepts emerge. Abraham was called to be a blessing to the nations. The great commission reminds us of the nations. The eschatological picture in Revelation 13 talks about every nation and tribe worshipping God.

(b) Nationalism tends to use advantage of one group of people over the other. The powerful, influential and majority community use it as a weapon over others. One group enjoys the power and privileges and others are discriminated and alienated.

(c) Nationalists use God as an instrument for their own advantage. God created all of us in His image. Nationalists use God as their source of authority. They tend to give an impression that things are done for God and by God. God's sanction is invoked for their activities.

(d) Nationalism is a double edged sword (constructively and destructively). Constructively it gives a true pride of a nation, authorizes a true identity of an individual within a nation, gives importance to one's own language, homeland and culture. Destructively, it suppresses people's identity, their aspirations to be a nation of their own (e.g. the Kurds in Iraq), destroys the language and culture.

(e) There is a perception general perception that some countries do have Christian religious nationalism. This needs to be identified and eliminated. We need to respond both theologically and missiologically. While the Bible affirms the nation, nationalism and nationhood, Christian nationalism is both unfound and alien. Christianity is a boundary-less religion.

(f) Positive nationalism and plurality should be maintained. Many countries around the world have people speaking different languages, practicing different religions and cultures and have diverse habits. To maintain the integrity and unity of a nation, such pluralistic fabric should be upheld (e.g. Malaysia, Singapore and USA). Devotion for one's own country is very positive and that should be maintained.

(g) We need to find the balance between the globalization and nationalism. Globalization affects the areas of politics, economics, technology, communication and life style. It seems that we are living in a global village. However, people are people and they are plural due to language, culture, identity and backgrounds. The components of nationalism should not be allowed to be eroded by globalism.

(h) When the majority/rulers of a country decide to impose their idea of nationalism on the rest, it is dangerous for the minority. Such nationalism could be very narrow and restrictive. Minority community has to live under constant fear and

threat. They will not have their space. Eventually the minorities would be eliminated and will become non-existent.

(i)   It is a challenge to ones theology, commitment, mission and identity. God loves everyone and the command to his children is to love everyone. All people in this world are created in the image of God. All have the right to know and respond to God. The mission of Jesus Christ is universal in its scope. The commandment to us is to preach to all nations. Religious nationalism will interfere with all these components and it is a challenge the Church had to face.

(j)   Some missionaries promoted internationalism whilst they were on location, but when they returned home, they promoted their own nationalism. This pattern did not help non-western Christians to establish their identity in their own context.

(k)   We need to maintain our identity as the members of the body of Christ and as nationalists, because we are in a pilgrimage (1Peter 2:9-17). We have dual identity. We are in this world, yet we are part of the Kingdom of God. We have dual citizenship.

4.   ISLAMIC NATIONALISM

Islam generally aims at establishing pan–Islamic states under the guidance of the prophet and the Quran.   Any who opposed such philosophy were considered as enemies and infidels.   When Babar invaded India in 1527 and in the subsequent years, he and his successors attempted to Islamize India. Force and violence was used by the conquerors and this resulted in stiff opposition.

Cosmic religions (or animistic religions) when faced or invaded by cosmo-theonderic religions (or soteriological religions) tend to yield and modify themselves. This is what happened to the European countries when Christianity came as a soteriological religion with high and complex religious and cultural elements. The same was witnessed in the South American continent. Cosmic religions pose very little threat to the invaders with soteriological religions. When Islam went to Indonesia and Christianity reached the Philippians, we witnessed a similar phenomena.   However, when Islam came to South and Eastern Asia, we did not witness the same situation.

The rise of religious nationalism in the Muslim world
The Muslim psyche was deeply troubled from the 19th century, when European colonization gave birth to new ideas of secularism, democracy and nationalism. Traditional Muslim intellectuals understood secularism to involve an illegitimate separation of the state from the divine realm. In their view democracy involves the rule of the majority based on human constitutions, in place of the revelation of God contained in the scriptures.   The Muslim intellectuals proposed an integrative political ideology: 'One Sovereign God – One Law'. This response has been called 'Islamism' (Singh 2000:6).

Mawdudi's proposed his political theory in the context of plurality and democracy.
(i) God alone is the real sovereign and there should be no independent legislation.
(ii) An Islamic State must in all respects be founded upon the law laid down by God through his prophet.
(iii) The government which runs such a state will be entitled to obedience in its capacity as the political agency set up to enforce the laws of God (Singh 2000:7).

According to Islamism of Mawdudi, Unity (tawhid), Prophethood (risla) and Vicegerency (Khilfa) are the principles on which the government should be built. God should have control over the people and people should not be sovereign as envisioned by secular democracy. He advocated for 'Theo democracy'.   This is universal because God is sovereign over all.   It does not recognize geographical, linguistic or colour differences.   Thus expansion of Theo democracy can take place through any vicegerents. Each vicegerent should make effort to see that every one in this world recognizes God and his prophet are obeyed.   So we see here that religion and nationalism is combined in his ideology.

Mawdudi proposed that when there is an Islamic state, it could be ruled only by pure vicegerents. Such vicegerents are male Muslim and should be a citizen of the state. Women, non-Muslim and migrated Muslims are not eligible. He was against secular and democratic nationalism. He opted for religious nationalism and his critic of democratic nationalism follows:

> These principles have blighted the sacred ideals for which the messengers of God have endeavoured since the earliest of times. These Satanic principles have stood as formidable obstacles and powerful adversaries against the moral and spiritual teaching embodied in the heavenly books, and against the law of God.

He felt that democratic nationalism divides the people based on the territory but

people should be brought together under spiritual framework in spite of language, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. He believed that all the changes that are taking place in this world is very temporary. He identified Islamic nationalism as the final dispensation through which God will establish his Kingdom. For this he took the model of how Prophet established Islamic kingdom in Arabia. He was of the strong opinion that the establishment of Islamic political rule in nation like Pakistan would enhance the effects of Islamic revolution. He did not see any plurality either in politics or religion. He did not give any concession for plurality in Islamic countries.

When we look at the history of Islam, the so-called 'Constitution of Mecca' is known to have been relatively more tolerant of the minorities. The later document 'al-shurut al-umariyya (the Stipulations of 'Umar or Charter of 'Umar') took a hard line approach to minorities. Medieval Islam took the charter as part of the Shariah and it has become the guiding principle.

In Islamic nationalism the establishment of an Islamic state wherever possible is a desirable goal and it is the guiding principle even today. A universal Islamic state is the ultimate goal. Islamic nationalism probably presents the biggest challenge to the contemporary mission world.

It is the lack of understanding of this within Christian circles as well as in Western democracy that has created monumental challenges for the communication of the gospel in the post 9/11 and post the Iraq invasion by the US and its allies. America is firmly identified with Christianity and the invasion is seen as being undertaken by *Christians*. There is widespread anger and revulsion with things associated with the West and this again poses new challenges to the mission task. It raises the issue of 'who is the best missionary to the Islamic world'?

Another problem that deserves careful attention is the inseparable bond between culture and religion and not just state and religion. How does the modern missionary movement position itself in this context of Islamic nationalism? Further a stated goal of Islamic nationalism is the spread of its ideology and base into the West. It is important to understand the critical attention that western home missions look very carefully at the Muslim diaspora in their midst. For one they are the easiest to reach with the gospel. Next when reached they could open up a door to their home states and cultures for the gospel.

5.   CRITICAL FACTORS IN RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM IN BUDDHIST COUNTRIES

Buddhism is the predominant religion in Asia, although in recent years many Westerners have subscribed to its faith. There are many Buddhists who live in countries which are, or have been, under communist regime. Similar to Christianity, Buddhism promotes its faith through missionary effort. Compared to Christianity with its belief in one supreme God, Buddhism is agnostic. The concept of God among Buddhists is very vague. However, many believe in spiritual beings.

A few countries in the world have built their nations on the teaching and tradition of Buddhism. Even though modernization has impacted these countries, daily forms of religious practices are present in community life. There are some critical factors of which Christians working among Buddhists should be aware:

1. Buddhists view Christianity and Islam as aggressive and exclusive. They do not welcome forced conversion or aggressive evangelism.
2. Buddhism is a peaceful and tolerant religion. Buddhists hardly use violent means to solve conflict. When Buddhists see countries in the west using military force to solve conflict, they find it difficult to accept the Christian message of love and reconciliation.
3. In some parts of the world, there is a strong Buddhist nationalism. However, these countries oppose not only Christianity, but Islam and other ideologies as well.
4. Buddhism is capable of integrating with local culture. Therefore it is well-rooted in local communities. Hence Christianity is viewed as a foreign religion.
5. When Christians use several methods to evangelize Buddhists, they in turn will use similar methods to prevent their people from converting to Christianity.
6. Some religious terms that Christians use are a part of indigenous languages, Buddhists also claim that such terms belong to Buddhism. Christian efforts to contextualize faith may be viewed as trying to swallow Buddhism.
7. Buddhists accept that the teaching of every religion is generally good. They would not dispute or disagree with Christians. In the same manner, they expect Christians to respect Buddhism. When sharing the gospel with Buddhists Christians should be polite, gentle and respectful.
8. Charity work done by Christians may be viewed by Buddhists as a way to convert poor Buddhists. Christians think that by giving materials to Buddhists, they have shown God's love to the Buddhists. But Buddhists generally will consider it as Christians seeking only to gain merit. Many Buddhists willingly donate money to support Christian Charities and will even give to Christian Churches.

6.   HINDU NATIONALISM

In India, Islam was the first religion to promote itself and thus was deemed to be a great threat to India's cultural, linguistic and religious traditions. In fact the Islamic invasion resulted in the forceful conversion of many to the Islamic faith. Islamic rulers established many institutions (construction of Mosques, the class of Mullahs to be propagate their faith) to spread their religion. Urdu and Arabic are identified as Islamic languages and they were given prominence. Islamic designed buildings like the Taj Mahal in Agra, Bulandhaah in Fatepur Sikhri and Gol Gumbaz in Bijapur were erected as religious symbols and they gave a majestic outlook and appearance to the religion. Non-Muslims felt the threat of invasion and they were terrified of the presence of Islam.

Then India was confronted with western colonialism. As a general rule Europeans believed that their modernism was a solution to the 'so called backwardness' of the rest of the world. This modernism came along with political invasion resulting in the colonizing of many countries in the third world. In western colonialism, modernism accompanied religion.

Western colonialism was marked by three kinds of invaders as perceived by those who were colonized. While colonialists were interested in commerce, governance and civilization, the missionaries were interested in Christianization and the Orientalists (the scholars who made invaluable contribution by exposing the eastern spirituality, languages, scriptures and philosophy) were interested in the study of the history and culture of the east and exposing east to the west.

Eastern beliefs and customs were challenged by western colonialism. So in India, the practice of Sati (the burning of widows) and female infanticide was challenged and the administration abolished it by Law.

Cultural Hindus reacted and gave an unequivocal and unambiguous call to protect their traditions by going back to the past. D. S. Sharma, a renowned Hindu scholar writes that, colonialism woke up Hinduism from its slumber (<u>Hinduism Through the Ages</u>). In this sense, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, has been acclaimed as the founder of Hindu Nationalism.

Indians viewed themselves under the British Raj as being in slavery. Religious Hindus considered India as their motherland. One section of the freedom fighters under the leadership of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) rejected the Victorian ideas of liberalism and secularism. Instead he deliberately mixed religion, politics and nationalism.

At the turn of the 20th Century, the loyalists of Arya Samaj, created the Hindu Mahasaba (Hindu Association) when they felt that the British Raj is was very supportive of Muslims. The Hindu Sabha was the precursor to the formation of the RSS (Rastriyasuyam Sevak Sangha) and its political arm the BJP that today is the main entity that is determined to carry forward cultural or Hindu nationalism.

Veer Savarkar the founder of the Hindu Mahasabha defined Hindu Nationalism as thus:
1. Hindu culture is the history of the land beyond the Sindh river.
2. All those whose ancestors shared that history are Hindus.
3. Hindutva- Hindu Nationalism- has Hinduism at its core.
4. All those who claim Hindustan - undivided India - as their motherland are Hindus.
5. The Hindu religious nationalists claim that anyone born in India inherits one of the Indian religions and hence will be automatically a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Jain, or a Sikh.
6. Christians and Muslims should consider themselves to be Hindus also.

Christians and Muslims were second class citizens since they did not subscribe to Hindutva.

Savarkar's ideology had far reaching consequences. It is on his ideology that the present day Hindu fundamentalism thrives and has become a global force. It has to be pointed out that on the whole Hindu Nationalism strictly enforces the caste system and therefore the Dalits continue to be outside the system in their scheme of things.

5.1. Religious Nationalism should be opposed: A case study of Hindu Nationalism:

- Hindu nationalism is capable of initiating a program of cultural imperialism (let us make the whole world Aryan and this is very similar to Nazi imperialism).
- Hindu nationalism entertains a unitive vision. "One nation, one people, one religion, one language, one culture and one executive". This vision is absolutistic and totalitarian. Those who do not subscribe to this vision would be opposed and annihilated. This is clearly against Biblical nationalism.
- Hindu nationalism deifies the land.
- Hindu nationalism paints the non-Hindus as "uninvited guests, infiltrators, aggressors, traitors, enemies, internal threats, fifth columnists".
- Hindu nationalism promotes a religious fight against non-Hindus and the use of weapon is encouraged for this very purpose.
- Hindu nationalism does not promote any meaningful dialogue as there is very little value for Human rights issue, justice and reconciliation.

5.2. Critical factors with reference to Hindu nationalism

When we live and minister in a context of Hindu nationalism we need to engage or wrestle with a number of critical factors. A brief outline is given below:

(i) The Issue of Human Rights and Justice

Minority groups are denied or restricted in the exercise of freedom of conscience which is seminal and fundamental to all the freedoms of human beings. Freedom of religion (to profess, practice and propagate) is seriously curtailed or taken off. Once this happens, the minority groups are normally subjected to lot of abuses and that raises the question of justice.

(ii) The Issue of Identity and Patriotism

National identity is determined by one's religious affiliation. Religious identity determines one's commitment to one's nation. "Hindus are Indians; Indians are Hindus". The minority groups are portrayed as enemies, traitors and anti-nationals. These have grave implications for minorities. Hate campaigns, carefully cultivated communal hatred, re-written history and communalized curriculum producing generations that hate and oppose minorities, communalized police force, committed judiciary, partisan legislature and an executive that goes by the principle of majoritarinism – these forbade ill for the minority groups.

(iii) The Issue of Authority in Religion

The question of authority is a major issue for Christians living in a setting of Hindu nationalism. There is for example the advice and directive of the RSS to reinterpret the Bible and make it more palatable to the majority. This is a clearly designed attempt to remove the Bible as the source of authority. Once the foundation is tampered with or destroyed, much of the demolition work is done.

(iv) The Issue of Theology

Compulsion to revise or modify, if not to totally give up, one's theology and thus one's understanding of God is not acceptable to Christians. Christians want to present

Christ as revealed in the Bible and not a Hindu shaped Christ. Biblical Christology will remain a major critical factor in the context of religious nationalism.

(v) The Issue of Mission (evangelism, conversion and Christian humanitarian service)

There are anti-conversion laws with stringent provisions to punish the offenders. As Christian mission is seen to be an anti-national subversive act (converting the nationals into 'foreigners' and thus threatening the integrity of the nation) there is stiff opposition to evangelism, social service and conversion. Even Christian service to the society is viewed as unethical action and as a bait for catching poor gullible people.

For Christians there is a denial of their constitutional right to propagate. At the same time the Dalits and other oppressed people are denied their freedom of conscience and the freedom to use conversion as a means of changing their dehumanized condition for human dignity, respect and social mobility. As Christians we need to give special attention to our language and methods used in mission. We need to be culturally sensitive, respectful of others and transparent in our motives. We also should seek to contextualise the gospel in each situation

(vi) The Issue of Reconciliation and Nation-building

We can exercise the role of peace-makers seeking to bridge the communal gap for promoting harmony and be active in contributing to nation-building process.

(vii) The Issue of Apologetics

Sensitivity towards the other calls for a commitment to careful apologetics. Remove potential misunderstandings and misgivings; offer realistic and truthful explanations — be open about our identity, our commitment to the nation, our theology and our mission.

(viii) The Issue of being a 'Minority' and of Martyrdom

The Christian community needs to have a sound theological understanding of what it means to be a 'minority' and the issues of martyrdom.

7. CRITICAL ISSUES IN CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

The church faced religious nationalism at a very early stage in its history. As the ruler of the Roman Empire was seen to be endowed with both political and religious authority not only loyalty was demanded of its citizens but worship. The early Christian believers had to face persecution. They were not ready to "give to Caesar…what is God's." When Emperor Constantine in the beginning of the fourth Century made Christianity the official religion of the empire, things changed in a way that it came to have dramatic consequences for the church and the world. Empire and church, nation state and church came to co-inside to such an extent – politically and theologically – that the difference between the two was blurred. Eventually the two concepts of people (German: "Volk") and church (German: "Kirche") fused into one term (German: "Volkskirche." Danish/Norwegian: "Folkekirke") which came to be a common designation of main line churches in central and Northern Europe down to the present.

The first critical issue in Christian nationalism then, is for the churchless to come to terms with her (their) own historical legacy. This is a struggle with several aspects. First there is the basic theological distinction between church and state. There is still work to be done on the relationship between church and nation, church and people, church state and state so that this relationship can be clarified with all its ramifications. This is imperative if we are to understand the role of a missionary church in the West today.

The second issue is that nations and churches in the West need to work on the development of official national values. For years Western nations have supported the view that there is to be freedom of religion for citizens. In the US where separation between church and state has always been the guiding principle, the issue of basic national values has engendered the concept of and debate around "civil religion." Vague and ambiguous as this concept is, the question to be seriously considered is to what extent does "civil religion" today determine the religious nationalism of the country. In many European countries where there is an established national church, there is now a movement towards disestablishing the church. As a result the debate over necessary, basic national values has become high on the political agenda. Since the church is no longer the official sponsor of national values the nation needs to identify its national values and justify the choice?

Part of this historical legacy of an established church has had particular consequences and repercussions for the non-Western world. As the symbiosis of state and church was a central element of Western colonialism and as some sort of "Christian Empire" manifested itself in the colonies, churches in the non-Western world have had to struggle with the consequences in multiple ways. This historical fact in the life of the church over the centuries has had detrimental effects on world evangelization in as much as it has blurred the gospel message for many people. This must be humbly recognized and acknowledged by the Western church. Of special importance in this context is the theology of election which in some nations fostered a strong sense of being a chosen people. Such theology has led some ethnic groups and/or nations to view themselves in theocratic perspective with a divinely given destiny in history, the most obvious and sad example being the white apartheid theology and ideology in South Africa. There may still be a need to counter such tendencies in some parts of Western churches and nations today.

Lastly, with a view to evangelization today, the history of Christian nationalism makes it imperative to carry on the discussion on Matthew 28:19 "*…make disciples of all nations.*" What does this mean? If "discipling a whole nation" is taken to mean that

nations as such are eventually to be discipled through our witnesses, one may arrive at a theological and missiological approach where church and nation are seen completely to overlap. No matter how large a number of people turn to Christ in a nation, the principle distinction between church and nation, church and people, church and state is to be maintained. A complete coalescence of the two is to be visioned only as a result of the return of Christ who will make all things new.

8. How do we respond to Nations and Nationalism?

Ethnic people groups and their nationalistic proponents are demanding a response. In dealing with 'nationalism', particularly ethno-nationalism, an ill-informed response could cost the Church its hope and aim to be genuinely embraced and established in a nation. We simply cannot afford to live in confusion about the various paradigms of 'nations and nationalism' in an age in which the strain between globalization and nationalism continues to rise. We must face this vital issue, discern it prayerfully and carefully and then calculate a precise response. The success or failure of our endeavour could well have a long term impact for the gospel in each nation.

It is imperative to recognize that since God can do nothing evil, His act of dividing and organizing mankind according to national ethnic identities must be viewed as a good thing with a good purpose, not an evil one. It may be a means of judgment, but God has ordered human society in this way. However, we should not confuse ethnic nationalism with ethnocentrism or with racism. A vital distinction must be made between authentic, God-ordained and wholesome Biblical nationalism and sinful ethnocentrism and racism. For there is most assuredly a distinction.

God himself established nationalism as an innate and integral expression of one's human identity. People cannot be condemned or blamed for being nationalistic. It is a part of the very fibre of their being and existence in society. They cannot escape or deny this and the fact that 4000+ years of human history has demonstrated this clearly. Indeed, it is a rejection of one's own God-given identity to attempt to deny or discard it.

National identity is as much a part of a person's or group's identity as his own sexual identity or his identity in and with his family. Satan has, of course, observed God's actions and methods which he has chosen to use in establishing the Babel order of humanity for the sake of his kingdom. Satan has sought to pervert God's will by using these God-given expressions of national identity as means for venting animosity, hatred and violence in the form of ethnocentrism and racism. The use of knives as instruments of murder does not make them intrinsically evil nor warrant their total banishment or annihilation. In the same way, the ungodly and even demonic expression of national ethnic identities in no way negates or nullifies the appropriateness acceptability of the natural, God-given tendencies of nationalistic expression.

If God has willed that the world to be divided by languages and national identities, the Church is in no way sinning or being racist if it upholds, honours and even promotes what their God himself established and ordained. The radical fact of Biblical truth confronts and stuns those of us who are profoundly influenced by our multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic experience in an ever-increasingly urbanized and global world. We are moved by the current outcry against ethnic strife, violence and racism as part of the preservation and even promotion of distinct national identities (i.e. nationalism). We recognise that God himself has established and even promoted nationalism for the sake of saving the nations.

The design of human social order which God established at Babel as the very fabric of society in this unbelieving earth for the accomplishing of His kingdom plan is not something which we can or should seek to change. It was put in place by God prior to His call of the Children of Israel (and later the Church) to "bless and disciple the nations." Thus, the people of God must do nothing which causes an erosion of or resists or alters this "Babel" will of God. Rather, we may conclude that it is the Church's duty, based on the Babel event, to uphold and walk in harmony with this God-ordained ordering of society. Surely the Church within its own borders and confines is freed from the curse in Christ; but this is only because they are in Christ.

9. IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION

Religious nationalism is born out of a complex set of factors. The fundamental factor is that in the Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist worlds and in the world of tribalism, religious culture and nationalism are inseparable. The secular West does not always understand this.

Without doubt there has been also a negative response to an external invader with a foreign religion and culture. The home religious culture and nationalism is seen to be under threat and there is a violent and extremist reaction which gives rise to an extreme form of religious nationalism. At the present time the forces of globalization and the accompanying cultural invasion compounds that threat.

Some of the major challenges for Christian mission therefore are:

1. Understanding the relation between religion, culture and nationality.
2. Resolving the issue of "Christians won't be proper defenders of our culture and nation since their religion is not local".
3. Contextualization for some may mean that there could be a need to consider if the terms 'Muslim Christian' or 'Hindu Christian' could be useful. What would this look like?
4. Religious nationalism has its own weaknesses because as a socio-political phenomenon it does not meet all the aspirations of its people especially in the socio-spiritual realm. How does the gospel meet these felt needs in societies dominated by religious nationalism?
5. All forms of religious nationalism give rise to some serious forms of oppression within their own societies. This oppression envelops millions of people, such as the low castes in India, the women within Islam, the bonded children around the world, etc. How does the gospel prophetically reach out to these oppressed people?
6. Some would argue that there is a form of religious nationalism which is followed even by some Christian nations. Church leadership has not always been proactive in the critical assessment of an extremist Christian nationalism. How do we raise a global Christian voice that is beyond any nationalism?

The challenges we face with regards to religious nationalism have to be handled at the following levels. What strategies can we adopt?

1. The Local Level:
   (a) How does the Church in the local situation become a part of mainstream society and not become marginalized?
   (b) How does the expatriate worker contextualize without compromising the basic tenets of the gospel.
2. The Global Level:
   (a) In a globalised world how does the Christian Church address issues such as the War on Iraq, Palestine, etc given the fact that Christians are not exempt from supporting the position of their nations.
   (b) What is the place for reconciliation in the midst of violent clashes between "Christian" and "non-Christian" communities within a nation or when it happens between nations?

Questions for further reflection:

1. Churches need to teach the theology of 'nations', the true 'nationalism' and the importance of culture, homeland and languages. Sin has touched every sphere or realm of life and they have influenced the nations and nationalism. They stand under the

redemption of God. The job of missiologists is to discover the good elements and bad elements and bring them under the transformative power of God.

2. Missionaries must help retain and maintain culture and the languages of the people among whom they minister. While true internationalization and globalization may be fostered, any attempt to stifle nationalism should be opposed.   The ministry of Bible translation and holistic mission needs to be affirmed. Christian mission should continue to give serious attention to 'accommodation, indigenization, and contextualization'. This is the work of both nationals and international missionaries. This has to be done in a dialogical process and it involves the local context, the recipients of the gospel, the missionary, the Biblical context and the changing international or globalization scenario.

3. Today many would like to belong to Christ but have clearly discarded Christians as a community, Christianity as a religion and Church as an institution. People would like to believe in Christ but do not want to belong to the Church. Some have accepted Christianity but not Churchianity (what might be termed *Churchless Christianity*). Some have seen Church as an unwanted appendix of Christianity. These are caused by several factors and one of these is love for the nation…How do we respond to this?

4. Universality and Particularity of Christianity faith: Christian faith is universal and it is acknowledged, affirmed and accepted in a particular context. Universality does not destroy particularity and particularity cannot claim universality. We need to keep these two dimensions of Christian faith in a creative tension. How do we do this?

5. How do we respond to biblical pluralism?

Summary findings at Thailand by the Group:

1.   Religious nationalism is a reality of life for most of the unreached people in the world.
2.   Freedom of conscience is seminal and fundamental to all freedoms.
3.   We call upon all local Christians to engage in the process of building their nations and sense of nationhood. This is a legitimate Christian duty.
4.   We call upon all Christians to be engaged in reconciliation and the building of communal harmony.
5.   We also call upon Christians to exercise their prophetic role when religious nationalism leads to oppression, discrimination and exploitation.

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Section B: Post 9/11 realities
by Dr Ernest C.T. Chew, Co-Convener, IG 21

1. Introduction

Historians find it difficult to write on "living history", that is, contemporary history or history in the making. This is because of accentuated personal bias, the deficiency of essential primary sources, and the lack of sufficient perspective. The process becomes doubly difficult when historians try to write on controversial recent events such as 9/11 • the simultaneous terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. While it is possible to provide fairly reliable accounts of these events, with audio-visual accompaniments, it is quite another matter to interpret their significance, aftermath, and implications in an objective assessment which would gain universal acceptance.

Yet historians must still attempt to engage in such efforts, along with journalists and political scientists, though the nature of this joint enterprise calls for humility from all participants. I was glad that the 9/11 Commission of Inquiry engaged a professional historian, Philip Zelikow, to be its executive director.[1]

As a historian who has taught courses in American military history, as well as an evangelical Christian leader in Southeast Asia, I have followed the events surrounding 9/11 with both professional interest and personal concern. These developments have serious implications for the Christian Church, its mission, and especially its relations with the Muslim world, and deserve careful and prayerful attention at the Lausanne Forum. Hence this paper.

2. The Pre-9/11 Background

While the focus of this paper is on post-9/11 developments, the events of 9/11 cannot be detached from their pre-9/11 matrix. At the risk of gross oversimplification, I will summarise briefly some significant preceding events. First, we may begin with 11/9 - the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, which was to lead to the broader collapse of Soviet and East European Communism in the early 1990's, the end of the Cold War, and the emergence of the United States as the sole Superpower in a unipolar world.

Second, this new hegemonic American position was already evident in its leadership (under United Nations auspices) of a coalition in the Gulf War of 1991, a war explicitly fought on "Just War" criteria, which led to the liberation of Kuwait and the defeat of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The 41st President of the USA, George H.W. Bush, spoke of a "New World Order". These events did not presage "The End of History" (as argued by Francis Fukuyama), but they did raise questions about a potential future "Clash of Civilizations" (as suggested by Samuel Huntington); their books provoked widespread debate.[2]

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[1] See The 9/11 Commission Report (New York: W.W.Norton, 2004).
[2] For critical reviews of American policies in the 1990s, see Chalmers Johnson, Blowback. The Costs and Consequences of American Empire (Boston: Little Brown,2000; updated,2002) and David Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace (New York: Scribner,2001).

Third, in the 1990's, the Arab-Israeli conflict (which had commenced with the birth of the state of Israel in 1948) showed little signs of resolution as far as the issue of a Palestinian state was concerned. The Oslo Accords and the Israeli-Palestinian "Declaration of Principles" (signed outside the White House in September 1993) were followed by Rabin's assassination in 1995, and the resumption of the Palestinian Intifada (characterized by suicide bombings) in September 2000.[3]

Fourth, with "Soviet Disunion" came the revival of nationalist movements in its former empire, as well as in Yugoslavia, where genocidal wars erupted. The United States during Bill Clinton's presidency (1993-2001) did attempt to mediate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and belatedly intervened (together with its NATO allies) in the crises in the former Yugoslavia (and also the genocidal wars in central Africa), but it was not able to translate its supposed hegemonic power into immediate, effective peace-making initiatives. Yet it should be recognised that the USA intervened on behalf of "Muslim" groups against "Christian" aggressors in the Yugoslavian civil wars.

Fifth, the People's Republic of China, after suppressing the pro-democracy movement in June 1989, continued on its path of economic modernization and growth, and absorbed Hong Kong as a special autonomous region in July 1997. It had and has an ambivalent attitude towards freedom of religious expression, but the Chinese church continues its rapid growth.

Sixth, the Asian financial crisis after mid-1997 triggered the fall of the Suharto government in Indonesia (the most populous Muslim country in the world) in 1998, followed by the emergence of a new nation-state in the mainly Catholic East Timor in 2001, and periodic persecution of Christians by various militant Islamic groups in different parts of Indonesia before and after 9/11.[4]

Finally, the rise of militancy in the Muslim world can be traced to the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, and the mujahiddin resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-1989). The various mujahiddin groups were supported by their Muslim co-religionists from places like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and also by the USA as part of its Cold-War opposition to the Soviet Union.

When the Taliban regime came to power in Kabul, the al-Qaeda movement headed by Osama bin Laden found sanctuaries in Afghanistan, from which it launched several attacks against the USA, culminating in those on 9/11.

3. The 9/11 Attacks and Their Immediate Aftermath

On September 11, 2001, four American flights were hijacked by al-Qaeda terrorists. Three reached their targets - the twin towers of the World Trade Center, New York City, and the Pentagon on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. The fourth, United 93, was probably directed at the capital, but through the heroism of some passengers, crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people lost their lives, and many more were injured.[5] These horrific events evoked a host of reactions - a mixture of shock, sympathy, anger, and soul-searching. There was a variety of reactions from religious communities, including the Christian Church.[6]

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[3] Randall Price, Fast Facts on the Middle East Conflict (Eugene, Oregon,2003), sections VI -VII.
[4] Indonesia: Unreached People Groups (Indonesia: Persekutuan Jaringan Riset Nasional, 2003).
[5] See The 9/11 Commission Report; and the moving account of United 93 by Todd Beamer's
     widow: Lisa Beamer, Let's Roll! (Wheaton, Il: Tyndale House, 2002).
[6] See, for example, the Beliefnet compilation, From the Ashes. A Spiritual Response to the
     Attack on America (New York: Beliefnet,2001) and the personal account by an NYC pastor,
     Jim Cymbala, God's Grace from Ground Zero (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001).

These were echoed universally. I remember drafting a letter on behalf of the Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore, addressed to the American Ambassador to Singapore, expressing our horror over the 9/11 attacks, our sympathy for the victims and their families, and our prayers for God's wisdom and guidance for the American President and people. We specifically noted that America's response would be in conformity with God's word through the Hebrew Prophet Micah (Micah 6:8, a text that has been quoted many times at various stages and national crises in American history).

There was a widespread consensus of support by a mainly Western coalition of allies for President Bush's War on Terror, specifically for his policy of direct retaliation against al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan, and the Taliban government which provided them sanctuary, and the UN-sanctioned war that followed in late 2001. However, Muslims in many countries condemned the invasion of Afghanistan and the deposition of the Taliban regime. Various observers sought to probe the causes of anti-American hatred.[7] Meanwhile, Muslim terrorist groups launched nearly 200 attacks during 2002, with a total of 725 fatalities. The worst attack since 9/11 occurred on 10/12 (October 12) in Bali, Indonesia, when an Indonesian terrorist group affiliated to al-Qaeda used car bombs in a busy tourist area to kill more than 200 people from 24 countries. In Russia, Chechen terrorists occupied a Moscow theatre and killed some 120 hostages.[8]

4. The War Against Iraq

In stark contrast to the war against Afghanistan were the reactions to the American decision to attack Saddam Hussein's Iraq in March 2003 with a much smaller coalition of allies and without the sanction of a specific United Nations Security Council resolution. Of all post-9/11 developments, it is the war against Iraq which has proven most divisive - within America; between America and Britain and some of their Western allies (notably France and Germany); and also within the Christian Church.[9]

There was a spectrum of views among Evangelical leaders. Probably a majority of American Evangelical leaders supported their President, who was perceived to be Evangelical and probably on the justification that Saddam Hussein had and intended to use weapons of mass destruction and was colluding with Muslim terrorist groups. However, there were others who were deeply troubled about the inadequate grounds for a policy of pre-emptive war, and the lack of majority support from the U.N. Security Council. There was widespread opposition to the Iraq War from Latin American churches, including Evangelicals.[10] As far as Asia was concerned, the General Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA) issued the following statement in late March 2003:

> "The Evangelical Fellowship of Asia representing 16 national evangelical fellowships in Asia with a constituency of 190 million Asian evangelical Christians expresses deep regret over the war against Iraq by the United States and its allies. We recognize that the war would certainly and without doubt bring destruction to

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[7] For different perspectives, see Dinesh D'Souza, What's So Great about America? (New York: Regnery,2002); and Ziauddin Sardar, and Merryl Wyn Davies. Why Do People Hate America? (Cambridge: Icon, 2002).

[8] "No end to terrorist strikes", The Straits Times (Singapore), 11 September 2004, 14.

[9] Irwin Abrams, and Gungwu Wang, eds. The Iraq War and Its Consequences. (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2003).

[10] Rene Padilla, and Lindy Scott, Terrorism and the War in Iraq. A Christian Word from Latin America (Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004).

innocent human lives, properties and environment. There will be catastrophic impact on the overall well-beings of all nations - economically, politically, socially and environmentally. The war will trigger a cycle of retaliatory measures. Instead of ending evil, it will proliferate evil. The EFA calls on all the religious adherents in general and the Americans in particular not to spiritualize the situation. It will jeopardize the harmonious relationship developed by the Christians with the people of other faiths especially the Muslims. The current conflict is neither a religious one nor a clash of civilizations between the West and the East. In fact the churches throughout the world and in particular Asia must at all cost diffuse any misunderstanding that Western civilization is synonymous with Christianity. The church should not be perceived as a party advocating or involved in the present conflict. As Evangelical Christians in Asia, we also denounce terror and weapons of mass destruction by all parties threatening the peace and harmony of this world. We therefore call upon the international community to end the development and possession of nuclear and biochemical weapons. We advocate peace and harmony and therefore appeal to all parties concerned to work towards a peaceful and amicable solution in resolving the present impasse. Every effort must be made to end the war."[11]

While it should be noted that this statement was not necessarily representative of the whole constituency of EFA - as was pointed out by the Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore, it did reflect the concerns of a significant number of EFA members about the action taken by the United States and its allies against Iraq, as well as the consequences for the church and its relations with "the people of other faiths, especially the Muslims", in view of the "misunderstanding that Western civilization is synonymous with Christianity". There was also the concern that the church might "be perceived as a party advocating or involved in the present conflict". Behind this was the public support of some Christian leaders (mostly Evangelicals) for President Bush's decision and its justification. President Bush himself had already gained a reputation for his strong moral convictions and positions. Writing in the aftermath of the Iraq War, Bioethics Professor Peter Singer of Princeton opens his critical study of the president thus:

"George W. Bush is not only America's president, but also its most prominent moralist. No other president in living memory has spoken so often about good and evil, right and wrong. His inaugural address was a call to build 'a single nation of justice and opportunity.' A year later, he famously proclaimed North Korea, Iran, and Iraq to be 'an axis of evil,' and in contrast, he called the United States 'a moral nation'....In setting out the 'Bush Doctrine,' which defends pre-emptive strikes against those who might threaten America with weapons of mass destruction, he asserted: 'Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place.' ..."[12]

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[11] Godfrey Yogarajah, EFA Statement, "The Evangelical Fellowship of Asia Opposes War against Iraq", 20 March 2003.

[12] Peter Singer, <u>The President of Good and Evil. Taking George W. Bush Seriously</u> (London: Granta, 2004), 1.

Despite the removal of the Saddam Hussein regime (and the later capture of Saddam), the failure to find weapons of mass destruction (indicative of intelligence shortcomings), the continuing Iraqi resistance to foreign occupation, the revelations of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib and the deficiency of an exit strategy, eroded the moral justification for the war.

The transfer of provisional authority to the Iraqi interim government in June 2004, and the promise of elections in January 2005, hardly compensated for the lack of security and stability in the country. By the third anniversary of 9/11-- between March 2003 and September 11, 2004 -- over 1,000 American soldiers had been killed in Iraq, and many thousands of Iraqis (including many civilians) had lost their lives.[13]

Added to the American or coalition shortcomings in Iraq was the lack of progress towards the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian problem, despite the Anglo-American proposal of a roadmap to peace which was meant to address one of the causes of Muslim antipathy towards the West. It was widely perceived that American and other Evangelicals had joined with the Jewish lobby to contribute to the pro-Israel policies of the Bush Administration.[14]

While the Bush Administration has emphasised certain positive developments, the negative aspects of post-9/11 events have continued to cast a shadow over relations between America and some of its own allies, and certainly between America and the Muslim world. Despite President Bush's repeated assurances to Muslim governments and peoples, there continues to be suspicions and tensions in America's relations with the Muslim world. At the same time, various writers have given serious attention to these issues even before 9/11, and some important studies have been produced.[15]

Meanwhile, there are on-going terrorist attacks from Muslim extremists often connected with al-Qaeda, such as that on 3/11, March 11, 2004, in Madrid, leading to the withdrawal of Spanish forces from Iraq. Yet there have also been gains in the war on terror, such as the capture of some al-Qaeda leaders and operatives. As far as Southeast Asia is concerned, there is a need to differentiate between terrorist and separatist movements in the region.[16]

5. Our Response

How then should we as Evangelicals respond? As our Master has commanded us, we are to "keep watching and praying, that [we] may not enter into temptation..." (Matthew 26:41, NASB). The Apostle Paul clearly instructed us as to who and what we are to pray for (1Timothy 2:1-6), and how we are to pray (Ephesians 6:18 and

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[13]"1,000 US soldiers killed in Iraq so far... and counting", The Straits Times (Singapore), 9 September 2004, 8.

[14]Timothy P. Weber, On the Road to Armageddon. How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004).

[15]See, for example, Peter Partner, God of Battles, Holy Wars of Christianity and Islam. London: HarperCollins, 1997; Hugh Goddard, A History of Christian-Muslim Relations (Edinburgh: University Press, 2000); Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, Islam: Empire of Faith (London: BBC,2001); Maurine and Robert Tobin, eds. How Long, O Lord? (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley, 2002); Norman Geisler, and Abdul Saleeb, Answering Islam. The Crescent in the Light of the Cross (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002); and Edward Leroy Long Jr., Facing Terrorism. Responding as Christians (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004).

[16]See Syed Serajul Islam, The Politics of Islamic Identity in Southeast Asia (Singapore: Thomson, 2005, sic); and Rohan Gunaratna eds. Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003).

Colossians 4:2). We need to pray for peace, for stability, so that the gospel of salvation through Christ may be proclaimed to all peoples.

We are to heed the whole counsel of God in holy Scripture, without fear or favour of anyone (Acts 20:27-32).   We must remember that He requires us to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). We are to strive for purity and for unity in the body of Christ, so that the world may know that we belong to Jesus Christ and that they may believe the gospel (John 17:17-21).

We must also love our neighbours. The word translated as 'mercy' in Micah 6:8 is the Hebrew Old Testament word [*hesed*] for covenant-love, or love of neighbour. Like the Greek New Testament word for covenant-love [*agape*], it is a word describing a real act of will, a sacrificial commitment to do what is best for the other person and not necessarily what is best for us personally.

By jumping onto the post-9/11 bandwagon, some of us may be tempted to invoke the ideology or terminology that casts a Muslim neighbour in the role of an 'evildoer', but that may be missing the point: for one of our best allies against radical extremism is, in fact, the long-suffering, peace-loving, moderate Muslim. Moreover, from the Parable of the Good Samaritan, we would do well to remember how it was the unlikely Samaritan whom Jesus commended for neighbourly love, and not the pious Jews from the orthodox (or 'evangelical'?) community who passed by on the other side (Luke 10:25-37). By showing practical care and concern for the wounded victim - left for dead by the wayside- the one who demonstrated genuine mercy and love to a traditional 'enemy' was the one who received God's approval. Real Christian love means treating others the way God treats us: while we were still His enemies, Christ died for us to reconcile us to God (Romans 5:8,10).

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