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The Resurgence of Religion in the Age of Globalization

Subhrajit Chatterjee

Abstract

The history of mankind shows that religion is one of the deepest and most intimate urges of mankind which, in one way or another, is found everywhere. There was a widespread assumption that the trends toward industrialization, urbanization, secularization and globalization which world had pioneered in the twenty-first century had led to the complete displacement of religion from any central role in public life. Experts once predicted that as the world grew more modern, religion would decline. Precisely the opposite has proven true. The so-called "information age" is gradually spreading its influence to the realm of religion. The twenty-first century is witnessing a resurgence and globalization of religion. Around the world, religion has become an increasingly more vital and pervasive force in both personal and public life. So this article will focus on the globalization of religion. It connects today's religions to their classical beliefs and practices but also shows how they have been transformed by globalization and by their contact with one another. To highlight, in what way globalization has contributed to the revival and resurgence of religion, is the major theme of this article.

Key Words: Religion, Globalization, Secularization, Return of religion, Fundamentalism, Jihad, New religions, Digitalized religion.

Introduction: There was a widespread assumption that the trends toward industrialization, urbanization, secularization and globalization which world had pioneered in the twenty-first century had led to the complete displacement of religion from any central role in public life. It has been more than a century since Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God. The prophecy was widely accepted as referring to an alleged fact about increasing disbelief in religion, both by those who rejoiced in it and those who deplored it. As the twentieth century proceeded, however, the alleged fact became increasingly dubious. Religion has not been declining. On the contrary, in much of the world there has been a veritable explosion of religious faith in the age of globalization. Looked at globally, there are two particularly powerful religious explosions: resurgent Islam and dynamic evangelical Protestantism. Passionate Islamic movements are on the rise throughout the Muslim world, from the Atlantic Ocean to the China Sea, and in the Muslim diaspora in the West. The rise of evangelical Protestantism has been less noticed by intellectuals, the media, and the general public in Western countries, partly because nowhere is it associated with violence and partly because it more directly challenges the assumptions of established elite opinion. Yet it has spread more rapidly and over a larger geographical area than resurgent Islam. Religious dynamism is not

confined to Islam and Pentecostalism. The Catholic Church, in trouble in Europe, has been doing well in the Global South. There is a revival of the Orthodox Church in Russia. Orthodox Judaism has been rapidly growing in America and in Israel. Both Hinduism and Buddhism have experienced revivals, and the latter has had some successes in proselytizing in America and Europe¹.

It can be said that globalization has a positive and negative impact on religions. Positively the world religions come to know each other much better with rapid communication. So the twenty-first century is witnessing a resurgence of religion. Around the world, religion has become an increasingly more vital and pervasive force in both personal and public life. Globalization has played a tremendous role in providing a context for the current considerable revival and resurgence of religion. Today, most religions are not relegated to the few countries where their roots began. Religions have, in fact, spread and scattered on a global scale. Negatively fundamentalism is not a healthy response to globalization. It is grown out of fear and full of rage that easily leads to violence. Although fighting for survival of their religion, fundamentalist movements frequently act in contrary to their religious values, i.e. compassion and tolerance. Fundamentalism also creates division in society, through its narrow and rigid distinctions between “we” and “others”.

This article will focus on the globalization of religion. It connects today's religions to their classical beliefs and practices but also shows how they have been transformed by globalization and by their contact with one another. To highlight, in what way globalization has contributed to the revival and resurgence of religion, is the major theme of this article.

General view on religion: The history of mankind shows that religion is one of the deepest and most intimate urges of mankind which, in one way or another, is found everywhere. Religion is a system of beliefs and practices comprised of a god (which is the object of one's faith), a faith (which is a belief in a desired power greater than oneself), a religious leadership (which determines the path of belief), and religious institutions (which facilitate the ongoing organization of the religion). Religion also has a theological anthropology (which defines what it means to be human), values (which set the standards to which the religion subscribes), a theology (which is the theoretical justification of the faith), and revelation (which is the diverse ways that the god manifests itself in and to the world)². That is, members of a religion share a set of beliefs, forms of rituals, a system of philosophy and some type of organization. According to some estimates, there are roughly 4,200 religions in the world³.

There are numerous philosophical, anthropological and sociological perspectives on religion. In the nineteenth century the sociology of religion was concerned with two main questions, ‘How did religion begin?’ and ‘How did religion evolve?’ In terms of religion, two main theories, animism and naturism, were advanced to account for its origin. Animism means the belief in spirits. Edward B. Tylor believes this to be the earliest form of religion. Naturism means the belief that the forces of nature have supernatural power. Max Muller believes this to be the earliest form of religion. From the origin of religion, nineteenth century sociologists and anthropologists turned to its evolution. Several schemes were developed. For example, Tylor believed that human society evolved through five major stages, beginning with the simple hunting and gathering band, and ending with the complex nation state. In the same way, religion evolved through five stages, corresponding to the evolution of society. Animism, the belief in a multitude of spirits, formed the religion of the simplest societies, monotheism, the belief in one supreme god, formed the religion of the most complex. The first indication of a possible belief in the supernatural dates from about 60 000 years ago. Archaeological evidence reveals that Neanderthal man in the Near East buried his dead with flowers, stones tools and jewelry⁴. However, theories about the origin of religion can only be based on speculation and intelligent guesswork. Actually sociologists are not interested in the

truth and falsity of any religion; they are concerned with the relationship between religion and society. For example, the functionalist perspective examines religion in terms of society's needs. From this perspective, society requires a certain degree of social solidarity, value consensus, harmony and integration between its parts. The function of religion is the contribution it makes to meet such functional prerequisites. Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski, Durkheim, Talcott Parsons provided the most thorough-going functional interpretation of religion. According to them, religion is regarded as the integrative and legitimizing institution which unites people in a cohesive and binding moral order. The functionalist perspective emphasizes the positive aspects of religion and tends to ignore its dysfunctional aspects. The Marxist perspective on religion provides an interesting contrast to functionalist views. Marx regarded religion as 'the opium of the people'. To Marx, religion is an illusion which eases the pain produced by exploitation and oppression. It is a series of myths that justify and legitimate the subordination of the subject class and the domination and privilege of the ruling class. It is a distortion of reality which provides many of the deceptions that form the basis of ruling-class ideology and false class consciousness⁵. Functionalist and Marxist have generally dismissed the possibility that religion can cause changes in society. Max Weber argued that in some circumstances religion can lead to social change. In his most famous work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber examines the relationship between the rise of certain forms of Protestantism and the development of Western industrial capitalism.

It can be said that, the role of religion in life manifests itself in the individual by giving him an integrated outlook on life which is conducive even to keep his mental balance. Religion is not only one of the most influential forces of society; it is also considered by many as the center and origin of culture. It also supplies a great stimulus to moral progress and social reform. But in the nineteenth century it was widely believed that industrialization and the growth of scientific knowledge would lead to *secularization*, which very broadly can be defined as the process of religious decline. In *Religion in a Secular Society* (1966) Bryan Wilson defines secularization as 'the process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance'⁶. The secularization thesis has both its defenders and critics. Although secularization has been a gradual historical process, it was only in the 1960s that social scientists made serious attempts to develop a systematic and empirical grounded formulation of the theory of secularization. Peter Berger was among the most influential sociologists to develop the secularization thesis. Following his lead, many social scientists argued that modernization inevitably leads to secularization. But the opposite has proven true. The twenty-first century is witnessing a resurgence of religion. Globalization has played a tremendous role in providing a context for the current considerable revival and resurgence of religion. Around the world, religion has become an increasingly more vital and pervasive force in both personal and public life. To discuss these issues, however, I would like to begin by describing the meaning of 'globalization'.

Globalization: Globalization has become one of the most debated topics and key area of research among the policy makers, statesmen, corporate, politicians and academia respectively over the past few years. According to Malcom Waters⁷, the word 'global' is over 400 years old and the common usage of such words as 'globalization', 'globalize' and 'globalizing' did not begin until about 1960. He said that, in 1961 *Webst* became the first major dictionary to offer definitions of 'globalism' and 'globalization'. Globalization has been defined in different way. Waters⁸ offers his definition of globalization as "A social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding." Anthony Giddens⁹ explains that, "Globalization refers to the fact that we all increasingly live in one world, so that individuals, groups and nations become interdependent." According to Harold James¹⁰

“globalization is the increased involvement of interchanges, accelerated by the advanced improvement of technology and communications, between people, goods, capital and ideas and culture.” Y. Singh¹¹ discussed the concept of globalization as a composite process. It results from the convergence of a series of development in society which is qualitatively new. These include: contemporary revolution in science and technology of communication, high velocity movements of finance, capital and market, increased social mobility, migration of personnel and the emergence of a global diaspora. He said that, its associated contributory processes are: intensification of cultural interaction among diverse groups through media exposure, increased incidence of leisure-time activities, growth in tourism, infrastructures of entertainment and marketing of cultural products, personnel and styles.

Globalization is composed of three main dimensions: Economic globalization, Political globalization, Cultural globalization.

Economic globalization refers to the intensification and stretching of economic interrelations around the globe. It encompasses such things as the emergence of a new global economic order, the internationalization of trade and finance, the changing power of transnational corporations, and the enhanced role of international economic institutions¹².

Political globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of political interrelations around the globe. Aspects of political globalization include the modern-nation state system and its changing place in today’s world, the role of global governance, and the direction of our global political systems¹³.

Cultural globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the globe. Cultural globalization refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings and values across world space. This process is marked by the common consumption of cultures that have been diffused by the Internet, popular culture, and international travel. The circulation of cultures enables individuals to partake in extended social relations outside the borders. The creation and expansion of such social relations is not merely observed on a material level. Cultural globalization involves the formation of shared norms and knowledge with which people associate their individual and collective cultural identities, and increasing interconnectedness among different populations and cultures.

From any of the point of view as far as explaining globalization is concerned—be it Economic, Political or Cultural, it can be viewed in the light of homogenization, or heterogenization/hybridization. For example, when we view culture in the light of homogenization, it refers to the convergence toward a common set of cultural traits and practices¹⁴. Cultural homogenization is the homogenization of different cultural practices into one blended, uniform cultural practices that do not allow easy identification of the characteristics of many cultures. It means over the years, peoples of two or more cultures have interacted and intermingles in such a manner as to lose their individual cultural identities and merged into a one uniform culture than does not show any trace of diversity of different cultures among the people. On the other hand, hybridization thesis focuses on the intercultural exchange and the incorporation of cultural elements from a variety of sources within particular cultural practices¹⁵.

Relation between religion and globalization: In discussing the issue of Globalization and its relations to religion, very little remains outside these two very significant realms of society. Religion is an institution that has existed since the emergence of the first man and humanity. On the other hand, globalization, as we perceive it today, has been an undergoing process for centuries. Although the term ‘globalization’ emerged as a buzzword in the 1990’s after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the process of globalization had been taking place long before. Globalization is one of the strongest forces that have profound and wide effect around the world. It does not only have deep impact on economy, but also on various aspects of life and society, including religion. In one hand, the

globalization of humanist values, i.e. human rights, equality, democracy, feminism, has enriched religion and civil society. In the other hand, global network of telecommunications and transportation enables many religions to spread around the world, making their visions and core values easily accessible. Globalization also enables religious groups and civil societies around the world to connect and cooperate as a global force in challenging greedy corporate capitalism. On the other hand, however, globalization plays important role in making many religions more materialistic or become obsolete.

'Globalized religion' should not be described here as 'religious globalization', which is a form of globalization which is religiously inspired or motivated. Examples of this are global, faith-based charities, or controversially, proponents of globalization so dedicated and zealous in their belief in globalization they could be described as religiously pursuing it. Although there is a difference, there are present-day movements which are examples of both categories. The Catholic Church is a globalized religion in the sense that it is a global religious organization with churches in almost every country. It's also a form of religious globalization, in the sense that its global presence and outlook creates a bond between people from diverse nations and ethnicities and thus contributes, through religion, to globalization.

The expression "globalization of religions" generally refers to processes of transcending national borders, the politicization of religion as well as its pluralization and increasing conformity with the demands of the market. Due to the increasing irrelevance of nation state borders, religions are finding themselves more and more in competition with each other and in the process of changing their authoritative structures into market-oriented supply-and-demand ones, while people are now no longer presented with one religious tradition with little or no leeway for choice, but with a diversity from which they make their selections that they then combine with each other in individually unique ways, but from which they can also distance themselves¹⁶. According to Nobutaka¹⁷, the globalization of religion can be understood as a process of realignment in this global religious situation, a process which involves the following three facets: *First*, it implies the inevitable transformation of individual religious organizations; *second*, it can be expected that new characteristics will be produced in the contents of doctrines, rituals, and practices; and *third*, globalization will be accompanied by changes in the human beings supporting religions, particularly in their intellectual perspectives.

Globalization has a positive and negative impact on religions. Having paved the way for religions to come in contact with each other and provided a context for their flourishing and thriving, globalization has brought such religions to a circle of competition and conflicts. As Turner, S. Bryan¹⁸ puts forward, "globalization transforms the generic 'religion' into a world-system of competing and conflicting religions. This process of institutional specialization has transformed local, diverse and fragmented cultural practices into recognizable systems of religion. Globalization has therefore had the paradoxical effect of making religions (via their religious leaders) more self-conscious of themselves as being world religions". Such conflicts among the world religions exhibit a solid proof confirming the erosion and the failure of hybridity. Globalization, as stated in the above excerpt, makes religions more conscious of themselves as being "world religions" reinforcing their respective specific identities.

The *Economic and Political Weekly* on March 27, 2004 stated the following arguments on the major interface between religion and globalization: (1) the major consequences of globalization have been the transmogrification of traditional religions and belief systems and (2) the beginning of the disintegration of the traditional social fabrics and shared norms by the invasion of consumerism, cyber culture, newfangled religions, social fads, and changing work ethics and work rhythms, (3) allowing people to fall back on religion for moral and social support, attributing to religion the creation and acceleration of extremist, fundamentalist, and terrorist tendencies in the third world countries, which are intended to

destabilize them, and strike at the root of their civilization, and multicultural and pluralistic nature¹⁹. That is not to say that globalization is all negative. It has also brought about a culture of pluralism, which is so prevalent in all religious teachings.

Information technologies, transportation means, and the media are deemed important means on which religionists rely in the dissemination of their religious ideas. For instance, countless websites providing information about religions have been created. This makes pieces of information and explanations about different religions readily at the disposal of any person regardless of his or her geographical location. In addition, the internet allows people to contact each other worldwide and therefore hold forums and debates that allow religious ideas to spread.

Religion and the economy are more closely tied than one would expect. As the economy has grown in the major countries of the world, the main religions of each of those countries have grown financially because its members have accumulated more wealth and are able to contribute more dollars to finance the basic financial needs of the religion as well as its growth and development. Religions have been able to globalize because of their economic strength and willingness to expand beyond their natural geographic borders to the global marketplace, in a way that is very similar to what has taken place with economic growth. A look at the investment in buildings and architecture by the major religions of the world speaks volume about the financial strength of major religions such as Christianity, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, Pentecostal, etc²⁰.

Fundamentalism is not a healthy response to globalization. It is grown out of fear and full of rage that easily leads to violence. Although fighting for survival of their religion, fundamentalist movements frequently act in contrary to their religious values, i.e. compassion and tolerance. Fundamentalism also creates division in society, through its narrow and rigid distinctions between “we” and “others”.

The Revival of Religion in the age of globalization: Experts once predicted that as the world grew more modern, religion would decline. Precisely the opposite has proven true. The so-called "information age" is gradually spreading its influence to the realm of religion. The twenty-first century is witnessing a resurgence and globalization of religion. Around the world, religion has become an increasingly more vital and pervasive force in both personal and public life. The religious revival in the globalized world has many manifestations that should be noted here:

1. The “Return of Religion” within the International Relations Field: The most celebrated “return” of religions on the international scene has been considered by analysts, scholars, and diplomats as a confirmation on a wider scale of the hypothesis that we have entered a globalised era. According to Yihua²¹, since the 1970s, especially since the end of the Cold War, the global resurgence of religion has been changing the look of the global religion layout and even international relations in multiple ways. The resurgence has caused partly subversive or “semi-subversive” impact on the current structure of international relations as well as people’s traditional ideas of religion. He told that the global resurgence of religion has subverted the traditional theory of secularization. For a long time, religion was considered to be receding with the modernization and economic development. The actual situation, however, is the contrary. Religion is on the rise instead of falling under the impact of modernization and economic development. Large-scale religious resurgence occurred mainly in Christianity (especially the Pentecostals), Islam, as well as various folk religions, while the continuous growth and political awakening of the Christian and Muslim conservatives have been the two most notable phenomena in world religious scenes since the second half of the 20th century. To some extent, the global resurgence of religion has partly subverted the unspoken rules of international relations that religion does not interfere in

international affairs. However, religion that played an important role in the formation of the concept of national sovereignty now has posed challenges to it. The global resurgence of religion is changing in the system of international relations, and has constituted a threat to the current principles and rules of international relations. The trend of the politicization of religion has subverted the traditional positioning of religion in international relations to some degree. Accompanied by the global resurgence of religion is the global trend of the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics, which has, to a large extent, subverted the traditional image of religion for being silent, negative and depoliticized, which even made fundamentalism (strong religion) and extremism popular interpretations of religion's role in international relations. The worldwide politicization of religion has various faces, such as the universality of religious extremism and fundamentalism, the "political awakening" of the religious organizations and their large-scale involvement in politics, especially in the field of foreign policy, the faith-based non-governmental organizations that play an increasingly important role in the international political arena, the formation of global network of religions advocacy and the international religious human rights mechanism, as well as "the fourth wave of international terrorism" and the securitization of international religious issues triggered as a result. The religious thought like the Latin American liberation theology, political Islam, the Religious Right in the US, as well as the events closely related with or driven by religion such as the Iranian revolution, the Polish and Eastern European upheavals and the 9/11 attacks are the significant signs of religion being politicized and radicalized since the second half of the 20th century. In recent years, religious NGOs have been very active. Through instruments of influence, including information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, responsibility politics and global movement networks, these NGOs mobilize public opinion, social elite and foreign policymakers in order to achieve their policy goals. However, these organizations have given full play to the religious positive function in international relations by breaking down the boundaries of region, race, color and culture, as well as promoting economic empowerment, social improvement, cognitive liberation, political democracy, and freedom of belief, multinational rescue missions, international exchanges, global governance and world peace.

2. The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism: Fundamentalism is a common response by those who feel threatened by the invasion of foreign values and lifestyles, the disintegration of native culture, and the seeming chaos and meaninglessness resulting from all this. It is basically a "reactionary emotional movement" among those who are experiencing rapid disintegration of their cultures, their traditions, their beliefs and ways of life²². Religious fundamentalist movements aim to reform society by changing laws, morality, social norms and political configurations in accordance with religious tenets, with the goal of creating a more traditional society.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND JIHAD: The concept of *jihad* has an astounding spiritual significance in the Islamic faith and is deeply rooted in its everyday practices and beliefs. Jihad is one of the most misunderstood concepts of the Islamic faith, especially given its deadly significance in the fundamentalist movement. Jihad was first revealed in the Koran in scriptures which described the Prophet Muhammad in his quest to create a just egalitarian society, where poor and vulnerable people were treated with respect. Jihad, in this sense, is interpreted as a "struggle" or "effort", not as a "holy war", which is an understandable misconception of the West, given present day Islamic fundamentalists is presenting as such. According to Kelli Skinner²³, today, in the twenty-first century, the situation in the Middle East has escalated to a high point of violence and destruction, as Islamic fundamentalists are calling for a radical militant stand against the Western world. The September 11, 2001 attack

on the United States of America catapulted the country into what Osama Bin Laden declared as a 'jihad' against the United States and its allies, should they attack his country. Since this time, Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda have transformed from a fundamentalist group to a large-scale Islamic fundamentalist movement, and thus carrying on its destructive global jihad ideology. Modern Islamic fundamentalists have taken several of these "essential" ideas about Islam and in a sense twisted them by taking them out of their original context to fit their violent needs. The idea of compassion and tolerance to those who practice other faiths was wiped away, and instead of condemning the false ideas of other religions, they condemn the people who hold these ideas, which was not the intent of the Koran. Muslim fundamentalists also continue the history of an interconnected religious Muslim state and through jihad, are working to establish a unified Muslim state in the heart of the Islamic world "to reinstate its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory". Modern Muslim fundamentalists like Zawahiri and Bin Laden have taken the external, lesser jihad, and transformed it essentially into the sixth pillar of Islam—and a bloody pillar at that. To them, it is not about religion; it is simply about using religion to achieve an end. The Muslim faith, which historically has been generally tolerant and peaceful, has been exploited to suit the violent needs of the modern fundamentalists. It is essential for these individuals to do so in order to provide justification for their cause and therefore gain the support needed to be successful in such a feat. In other words, by misrepresenting the Islamic concept of jihad, fundamentalists are able to provide reason within the faith for the bloodshed and therefore provide empower followers with the idea that they are fighting to preserve Allah.

Visalo & Kangkraw²⁴ said that religious fundamentalist movements are modern phenomena, which has increasingly strengthened in the age of globalization. Globalization contributes to the growth of fundamentalist movements mainly in 3 ways:

i) The pervasiveness of secularism and liberalism: Secularism and liberalism has spread and penetrated every corner of the world through a global network of communications and global tourism. The most prominent secular value that comes from these global networks is consumerism that worships sensual gratification at the expense of religious values. The aggressive invasion of consumerist values increases the fear of religious conservatives that their religion is being destroyed and that the only way to preserve the faith is to unite and fight back.

ii) The spread of conspiracy theory: A belief that is firmly held by most fundamentalist movements is the theory of that a conspiracy of evil forces is planning to destroy their religion. Globalization does nothing but encourages this belief. Christian fundamentalists in the U.S., for example, believe that the "world government" enacted by United Nations, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization are at work to destroy their country and their religion. Islamic fundamentalists share this view, believing that the global network led by the US and Israel conspires to destroy the Islamic world.

iii) The loss of certainty and control over life: In face of rapid changes in the globalized world, people also feel the loss of certainty and confusion. To regain the sense of certainty, a lot of people turn to religion for a clear explanation of what is going on in the world. Fundamentalism can meet this need very well since it has clear and simple answers to every question people have in mind. Political, social and economic chaos can be explained away, for example, by conspiracy theory, apocalyptic prophecy, or as god's punishment of a sinful world.

3. The Explosion of New Religions: Apart from the rise of fundamentalism, the explosion of new religions and New Religious Movements (NRM) are another prominent religious phenomenon in the globalized world. While fundamentalism is an attempt to return to the past and traditional values, and regards itself as part of conventional religious institutes,

new religions separate themselves from the conventional ones, and develop their own identities. Though some of them still identify themselves with established religions, either as Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam, many movements start brand new religions with their own belief systems, symbols, texts, and supreme entities. A new religious movement (NRM) is a religious community or spiritual group of modern origins, which has a peripheral place within its nation's dominant religious culture. A NRM may be one of a wide range of movements ranging from those with loose affiliations based on novel approaches to spirituality or religion to communitarian enterprises that demand a considerable amount of group conformity and a social identity that separates their adherents from mainstream society. Although there is no one criterion or set of criteria for describing a group as a "new religious movement," use of the term usually requires that the group be both *of recent origin* and *different from existing religions*. Some scholars also have a more restricted approach to what counts as "different from existing religions". For them, "difference" applies to a faith that, although it may be seen as part of an existing religion, meets with rejection from that religion for not sharing the same basic creed or declares itself either separate from the existing religion or even "the only right" faith. Other scholars expand their measurement of difference, considering religious movements new when, taken from their traditional cultural context, they appear in new places, perhaps in modified forms²⁵.

According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, there are 9,900 distinct religions and 2 or 3 new religions created every day. Some study estimated that there are more than 10,000 new religions. The explosion of new religions undoubtedly reflects the failure of conventional religious institutes in responding to the need of people. Rapid changes of society escalated by globalization make it difficult for established institutes to adjust themselves. Most of them still cling to obsolete traditions and world view, while a lot are plagued with scandals and corruptions. Thus pave the way for new religions or new denominations which make quick adjust to grow and draw more followers. It should be noted the needs that new religions have met are not only spiritual, but also social, and economic or material. Although some do not give material assistance, they do give hope to followers that the economic burden will be relieved by the act of god. The El Shaddai and the Winner's Church are the clear examples of the successful new religious groups in the developing country. In developed country like the US, one of the fast-growing churches is the "mega church" which provides the space for family gathering, facilities for sport and entertainment. It also arrange meetings for people to help each other, thus creates the sense of community which is lost in the modern cities²⁶.

4. The Digitalized Religion: If globalization is boosting the cross-border flow of religion, then the Internet will be the cause of another significant combination of the media and religion. Internet religion has amplification effects on the spread of various religions, greatly increasing the number of people participating in religious activities, and turning into "God's microphone". The match between the "worldwide" feature of the internet and the "universality" of religion has given the internet religion an ever greater capacity to travel across borders, an increased direct missionary ability of religious organizations, as well as the enhancement of their social grassroots mobilization, influence on political agenda and ability to participate in global affairs. And it has also enabled any religious issue around the world to quickly become transparent, international and politicized²⁷. The new religious movements operate primarily through the Internet, by means of digital rather than mechanical reproduction. Technology, within the scope of religious globalization, plays a major role in how and to whom the religion and its doctrine extends. Religion and its ceremonies are still practiced within a temple or church, yet we see the influence of technology upon religion as we now have a DVD version of the bible for all Christian followers to appreciate, not only in the digital versatile disc version, but there are possibly half a dozen channels on basic or

digital cable dedicated to religious practice and teachings²⁸. So during the last decades video has become the chosen medium of contemporary religious propaganda and is distributed through different TV channels, the Internet, commercial video stores, etc. This is especially so in the case of the most recent, active, and even aggressive religious movements. The phenomenon of suicide-bomber confession videos and many other kinds of video production reflecting the mentality of radical Islam have meanwhile become familiar to us. On the other hand, the new evangelical movements also operate with the same medium of video. If one asks those responsible for public relations in these movements to provide information, one is initially sent videos. This use of the video as the major medium of self-presentation among different religious movements is a relatively new phenomenon. Traditionally, the standard medium was a script, a book, a painted image or sculpture. The question then arises as to what constitutes the difference between mechanical and digital reproduction and how this difference affects the fate of religion in our age. At this point, Groys²⁹ argue that the use of video as the principle medium by contemporary religious movements is intrinsic to the message of these movements. These religious message has become the digital code. Digital images have the propensity to generate, to multiply, and to distribute themselves almost anonymously through the open fields of contemporary communication. The origin of these messages is difficult, or even impossible, to locate, much like the origin of divine, religious messages. At the same time, digitalization seems to guarantee a literal reproduction of a text or an image more effectively than any other known technique. It is for this reason that fundamentalist religious movements have become so successful in our time, for they combine religious ritual with mechanical reproduction.

5. The Growth of Religion for Consumerism: Amidst the revival of religion around the world is the pervasion of consumerism which, through corporate-driven globalization, is developed into the global culture in its own right. To a lot of people both phenomena look contradictory since religion is regarded as a spiritual matter while consumerism is about materialism. This distinction, however, is irrelevant in the age of globalization since many religions today promote consumerism or transform into consumerism in religious cloak. Consumerism is a powerful world-view which has deep effects on the attitude and way of living of people around the world. Through consumer attitude, virtually everything is transformed into commodity for sale. Health, education, culture, happiness, relationship, identity are all for sale or believed to be accessible in the market. With money, everything can be bought for consumption. Prosperity or material acquisition becomes the goal of life. This attitude has influenced people's approach to religion. Religion is expected to give blessings for prosperity, rather than a refuge for inner peace. Following are some characteristics of consumer religion³⁰:

- Focusing on materialistic values
- Using money as the main tool
- Instant and convenient
- Creating more need to "consume" religious services
- Individualistic-oriented.

6. The "Americanization" of the religious world: According to Paul McCarthy³¹ the process of "nationalization" that religions in the past had been subjected to, above all in Europe, now has to be seen in a new light. The dynamics of the dissolution of boundaries generating from the development of the capitalist global market did not completely eliminate territorial borders, but it did challenge them. It was equally as impossible to redraw the boundaries for religious thinking as it was for the global market. Nevertheless, above all in the Old World, both open and covert forms of state religion continued to exist – despite the individual's right to the freedom of worship, advancing secularization and the formal

separation of church and state. The desire to escape this symbiosis of church and state (or religion and politics) was the main reason for Europeans fleeing to America in the New World where they could enjoy complete freedom of religion. This was not just the beginnings of American individualism and the "stateless" society of the USA; this was also the parting of the ways for two paths of secularization. The European path was only half-hearted in its attempts to separate church and state (even in secular France) and allowed religious communities to virtually monopolize religious assembly and mobility. The path eventually – and only seemingly paradoxically - led to an extensive privatization of religion and ultimately to the dechristianisation of Europe. In America it was a completely different story – the dividing line between religion and politics was much bolder, but religious matters did remain in the public sphere and prevailed in the "civil religion". The variety of different creeds grew as well as the number of believers. It is interesting to observe the results – the multi-religiousness of America survived several waves of faith-challenging and has continued to expand since the middle of the 19th century, it permeates public life and has an influence on general morality – and all this without any "interference" from the state. In USA a person's piety is perfectly compatible with the practices of the free, capitalist market economy. Religious communities often function as capitalist companies. Economic success is considered to be proof of being God's chosen one and of being assured of eternal salvation – and not just in Protestant eyes. And it seems to be this model that is spreading out globally, whereas Western Europe appears to have gone its own way. It was against this background that European churches were advised to turn themselves into a *McJesus Inc.*, a kind of "diocese on demand" (Peter L. Berger). This means – religions do not represent more or less established state or national religious institutions, but get their message across via a daily ballot on an ever-changing commitment and via the situational powers of conviction of their religious communities. They are no longer able to proclaim self-evident truths in their respective cultural contexts to the global society, but have to compete in the economic sense with other claims to truth. On the one hand hereditary collective religious identities are being undermined by individual choice and practice of religion; on the other "glocalisation" enables in some cases the reconstruction and reactivation of a religious identification – in particular a feeling of "we" - and this is then able to draw on an extensive range. This "Americanization" of the religious world is not to be seen as an imitation or true reflection of conditions in the USA, but more as a relativisation carried out in the spirit of the secular path that Europe took. This can be summed up in four dimensions: The religious communities organized themselves independently of the state using their own mental and material resources; they termed this "disestablishment" and it made the privileging/monopolization of certain confessions difficult. This is a reflection of the "practical polytheism" of multi-religious societies whose mainstream religious cultures are subjected to pressure from mass immigration, sustained formation of a diaspora, simple conversion and a good deal of missionizing – they then fan out pluralistically. This is often connected with a certain, often radical repoliticisation of religion that comes to the fore in the public sphere; at times it attacks the separation of church and state and often helps intolerant or violent factions to benefit from it. The European religious world has had problems coming to terms with a certain secularization and informalisation of religious practice which even that most stable of religious institutions, the Vatican has not been spared. This is in line with the general loss of legitimacy of large mass organizations and the advance of various movements - in the field of religious confessions, too.

Visalo & Kangkraw³² stressed on four factors contributing to the revival of religion mentioned below are related closely with modernization and reinforced by globalization:

i) The disruption of traditional communities: Modernization has contributed a lot to the decline or disintegration of traditional communities, resulting into the mass migration to

cities. Feeling rootless, alienated from urban culture, lost sense of belonging, a lot of people find comfort in religion. Many religious groups help them to adjust to modernity and give them a sense of belonging. Meeting the psychological need of these people is the main reason for the growth of religious movements around the world.

ii) Economic marginalization and political repression: The government's failure to improve economic situation of people, and the increasing polarization in the process of modernization and development, pave the way for religion to play social roles and thus gains more recognition from people, especially the poor or the marginalized.

iii) The offensive thrust of secularism and liberalism: Modernization is always accompanied with propagation of secularism and liberalism which is against some religious values. In the process of modernization, religion has been gradually marginalized or even repressed. The widespread practice of sexual permissiveness and pro-abortion acts, the court ruling that religion be confined to private life, and that prayer be disallowed in U.S. public schools, for example, are among reasons that convince a lot of Christians that their religion is being destroyed. This is also true of Muslim who experienced the secular offensive in such countries as Turkey, Egypt and Iran. In Iran, for example, women were forbidden by the Shah to wear the veil. In Egypt, Islam was regarded by Nasser as the cause of nations' ill and has to be subordinated to the secular state. Fearing that Islam was about to be eliminated, many Muslim began to fight for the survival of their religion.

iv) Mental stress and spiritual problem: Under the influence of modernity, worldly achievement and material prosperity has become the aim of life while inner peace is ignored. However, after attaining worldly achievement, a lot of people do not feel happiness. Unsatisfied desire drives them endlessly to pursue the dream which is never fulfilled. Extreme materialism drives people to stress, anxiety, restless mind, and the feeling of emptiness of life. It is these people who feel the need of inner peace which is never achieved through incessant material acquisition. To these people, religion can provide them the way to inner peace and the sense of personal fulfillment. That is, religion meets the population's needs for psychological comfort and spiritual fulfillment, especially in confronting a variety of problems inherent in the modernization program, including increasing marketization, rapid social transition, and emerging social problems. A large body of literature on modernization suggests that this process could transform and disrupt the existing class structure, ethnic and tribal relations, political power structure, and even the values system. Buddhism is popular in the west mainly because of its meditation technique that can relieve stress and restore internal balance. Prayer to god and Allah is also increasingly practiced especially by people who feel insecure with the uncontrollable and unpredictable fluctuations, in business and personal life, in the globalized world.

Conclusion: Religion is an undeniable reality in the globalized world. Religion and globalization can also be seen as partners in historical change. In times past, religion, in various manifestations, has been a carrier of globalizing tendencies in the world. Everywhere in the world one can observe the deep connection between religion and the state or ethnic group, and various religious structures --- together with the characteristics originally held by the religion or sect --- have often undergone great transformations in the process of developing within specific nations or ethnic groups. Globalization, due to the advent of communication and transportation technology and the roles played by the media, has contributed to the deterritorialization and the blurring of geographical spaces and boundaries. Undoubtedly, religion is not immune from these changes and their burgeoning effects brought about by globalization. Information technologies, transportation means and media are deemed important means on which religionists rely in the dissemination of their religious ideas. For instance, countless websites providing information about religions are created. This

makes pieces of information and explanations about different religions become at the disposal of any person regardless of his or her geographical location. In addition, the internet allows people to contact each other worldwide and therefore hold forums and debates that allow religious ideas to spread. Furthermore, media play the same important role in the dissemination of religious ideas. In this respect, a lot of T.V channels, radio stations and print media are founded solely for advocating religions respectively. Transportation means, as a technology of globalization as well, have contributed considerably to the emergence, revivalism and fortification of religion. The growth of mainstream religions, the rise of new religions, and the revival of folk beliefs are intertwined, becoming an integral part of the global resurgence of religion.

Though religion is strengthened and fortified by globalization, it represents a challenge to its (globalization's) hybridizing effects. Religion seeks to assert its identity in the light of globalization. As a result, different religious identities come to the fore and assert themselves. Such assertions of religious identities constitute a defensive reaction to globalization. Fundamentalism is not a healthy response to globalization. It is grown out of fear and full of rage that easily leads to violence. Although fighting for survival of their religion, fundamentalist movements frequently act in contrary to their religious values, i.e. compassion and tolerance. In order to lessen the disadvantages created by globalization on religion and religious groups, all States of the world cannot politically discriminate any religion. Heads of States should prioritize their political agendas by reiterating the importance of religious unity in examples made in state functions' by quoting from different religions on the importance of religious understanding, mutual respect and emphasize on the unity of religion to bring about peace and justice. Every religion preaches peace as the foremost importance; therefore, religious groups and religious leaders must work to disseminate this.

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