

by Jim Fowler

# Those Terrifying Terrorists

The terrorists have struck again! Is there no end to their acts of violence which result in such carnage and destruction? Over and over again we read of the bombings, hijackings, sabotage and massacres. They have no respect for human life, only for their particular ideological cause, and are willing to kill innocent people to attract attention to their cause.

Theirs is the "warfare of the weak." They do not have the common decency to identify themselves and engage in open conflict. They are unwilling to abide by the rules of fair play and to fight fair, bringing their ideas into the arena of reasonable discussion and allowing them to be weighed on their own merits by a pluralistic society. Instead they attempt to bring about forced social change in accord with their minority views by instilling terror and creating paranoia and fear in people.

They sneak around in pretense and deceit engaging in clandestine and surreptitious activities planning their surprise attacks. They attempt to disrupt, to destabilize, in the

hopes that "the powers that be" will capitulate to their demands. The end justifies the means!

Their tactics are very disconcerting to the general population. Why should a few radical fanatics be allowed to create fearful uncertainty in the midst of a society that desires the security of a pluralistic status-quo? But it is extremely difficult for a society to defend itself against the "cheap shots" of the terrorists.

What, or who, is behind all this destructive terrorizing, anyway?

May I be so bold as to suggest that it is fostered and fueled by the philosophical mind-set of "fundamentalism." Whether it be religious, political or nationalistic ideology, adherents of a particular viewpoint attempt to convert others to their narrowly defined thinking. They



structure their fundamental ideas into a belief-system, demanding almost idolatrous reverence and commitment to such, as this is where they now find their identity. It then becomes their *raison d'etre* to protect and preserve the fundamentals of their belief-system, which they believe to be absolutely true and inviolable.

For this reason, it is a truism that "fundamentalists always fight." This is readily apparent among the Muslim fundamentalists of the Middle East, the Hindu fundamentalists of Sri-Lanka, the Christian fundamentalists of Ireland or Marxist fundamentalists in various confrontational

hot-spots around the world. On a more covert level we observe the Christian fundamentalists of the U.S. fighting ideological battles over particular doctrines and social issues, periodically erupting into overt physical violence.

Fundamentalists are essentially terrorists! They will stop at nothing in order to defend and advance their ideology. They will live and die for their cause, often considering it an honor to be persecuted or martyred in the line of duty. Their fanaticism leads them to take the law into their own hands and to violate the rights of others. Disagreement is disallowed, as they have deified their "holy cause."

Solutions to these often violent ideological struggles are not easily ascertained. Prejudices and false-identities die hard. Without a doubt, there will be additional conflict and bloodshed. But it is incumbent that we commence to instruct men to broaden their horizons of thought and to inculcate personal spiritual values of love and toleration. It is imperative that we understand that people are more important than ideas!

God save us from the terrorists! □

