

## *The Fundamental Problem*

A Blog Entry in GordonTalk

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**fun·da·men·tal·ism** ... noun

**1 a** *often capitalized* : a movement in 20th century Protestantism emphasizing the literally interpreted Bible as fundamental to Christian life and teaching **b** : the beliefs of this movement **c** : adherence to such beliefs **2** : a movement or attitude stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles

—[Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary](#)

I (your guest-blogger, Doug Drenkow) am a religious man, trying my best—like most of you—to love God and my neighbor; but there is no way around it, folks: Both at home and abroad, one of the greatest threats to both liberty and security is **religious fundamentalism**.

In [the \(uneasily\) United States](#), isn't it religious fundamentalism that makes Red States red, and leaves the rest of us blue?

When conservative, Republican-appointed federal judges are accused of being "liberal activists," isn't it because of such things as the prohibitions against organized prayer in public schools and displays of the Ten Commandments in public courthouses as well as not striking down laws permitting abortion and gay marriage

—all "[hot button](#)" issues for religious [fundamentalists](#)?

When the U.S. Senate is on the brink of [overturning centuries of precedent by eliminating the filibuster](#), thus relegating the viewpoint of the minority party to irrelevance, in order to win the approval of a handful of judges nominated by the president and advocating ultra-conservative positions primarily on those very "hot button" issues, isn't it religious fundamentalism that is attacking our Constitutional balance of power?

When [schools overseas fill children's minds with hate in the name of God](#); when men kill themselves and scores of innocent bystanders in [suicide bombings](#); or when bastards with box cutters plow jetloads of passengers, crew, and volatile fuel into the Twin Towers and Pentagon, killing thousands upon thousands of human beings whom they have never even met, isn't it [religious fundamentalism that is attacking us from abroad](#), as it is [from within](#)?

When two people or two groups [refuse to ever compromise](#) on certain important issues, because they have sworn to never deviate from norms in books written centuries ago and held to be—in every aspect—[the very words of God](#), can we not see that fundamentalism ultimately offers

the world nothing but a self-fulfilling prophesy of [Armageddon and doomsday](#)?

There is, however, one realm of agreement, amongst fundamentalist Christians, Jews, and Muslims ...

They all treat [women as chattel](#).

How did the rest of the world ever emerge from such Dark Ages of thinking?

With the Enlightenment and consequent technological advances.

Unfortunately, the material prosperity that ensued has [enriched some much more than others](#), indeed many individuals and nations at the expense of others.

Fundamentally, fundamentalism appeals to many because it promises a return to "the good old days" (which never did exist) in which selfless [sacrifice for a greater good](#) took precedence over selfish ambition for no one or nothing else greater than [one's self](#).

I wrote previously of a [great schism in the Republican Party](#), which I believe offers at least us in the U.S. an avenue out of this Right Wing hell in which we find ourselves.

To the extent that we Democrats can contrast the [heartless, harmful policies of the administration and Congress](#) with the heartfelt, helpful policies that we offer in opposition, we can turn the Christian Fundamentalist concern

for the poor and the sick and the aged et al. against the Economic Right.

At the Last Judgment, the King will say, ["Whatsoever you did to one of the least of these —you did it unto me."](#)

And [Jews](#) and [Muslims](#) are also, fundamentally, charitable.

We who are tolerant of different beliefs will never be able to shake the faith of fundamentalists in their fundamental beliefs.

The best we can hope to do is to find and emphasize whatever common ground we can, primarily on issues of helpful social programs, and then provide as much enlightenment to the world as we can, by media and example ([knowledge is indeed power](#) ... for better and worse).

Otherwise, all of us may one day be treated as [chattel](#).