



The Lingnan Commentary

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Editorial

How to Bring Peace Back to the World

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11 tells us that, notwithstanding all the advances in technology and in social institutions, humanity is not as civilized as we thought. We still have people lurking among ourselves who would kill innocent people for their selfish ends. While the killers themselves might think that they were serving a noble cause, the real cause was that they foolishly believed that theirs was a heroic act that would qualify them to enter "heaven" and to enjoy "eternal happiness."

Certainly terrorist acts will not be condoned by any true religion. A true religion must promote peace. A true religion must ask its followers to lead a peaceful life, to respect life, and to banish hatred and to espouse loving kindness. Islam respects Jesus as one of its prophets, and Jesus would not hate even those that persecute him. An Islam web page says clearly that Islam believes that God will reward those who show loving kindness to a dog. There is no doubt that all the great religions of the world, including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism, among others, would ask us to live peacefully with one another and to eschew hatred.

One cannot but be impressed with the parent of one of the victims who died in the September 11 tragedy. He

pleaded against vengeance. He would not add oil to fire. He said that his beloved son only happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I do not know what faith he espouses. But whatever it is, he is a truly religious man.

This is the time when the leaders of the world's religions should come together to convey a clear message to their followers. True religious practice requires respect for life. The respect for life is basic and is really the essence of true religious practice, regardless of the denomination followed. Humanity should learn that our historical religious figures arose in different parts of the world and performed their missions in their different cultural and historical contexts. But true religious practice must transcend cultural, geographical, and political boundaries. We must all learn to tolerate and to respect other religious traditions.

As of today, the US and its allied forces have already embarked on a military attack on Afghanistan, which is believed to have harbored the terrorists. The military attack appears to have been unavoidable, but it must not be an act of vengeance, and every effort should be made to avoid hitting civilians. More important, the US and its allies should make concrete steps towards bringing peace to Middle East. To achieve peace in the Middle East, Israel must respect the rights of the Palestinians. Without this crucial step, grievances will turn into hatred, and hatred will turn into fighting. If a war is on, innocent people will be killed. The world cannot have peace when the fires of grievances and hatred are burning.