Terrorism and Religious Fundamentalism: A Biblical Christian Perspective for Peace Building in Indonesia
Rev. Dr. Yusak B. Setyawan
Faculty of Theology, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana

Abstract
Beginning the second decade of the third millennium terrorism: actions occurring in Indonesia have significantly shifted to those with domestic national issues although in some respects they are still related with trans-national terror organizations yet within very minimal range. Given the fact that religion-based terrorism can be traced back to religious fundamentalism, this paper will set out theological reflection from a Christian perspective on what the deepest essence of religion is: a medium to grasp understanding of the Transcendence and building relationship with fellow human beings. Three suggestions in relation with peace building in Indonesia highlighted in this paper are: the importance for society to enhance religious life in a more critical fashion, the openness to re-read or re-interpret religious texts in the frame of peace building, and the urgency to enhance social justice and welfare that might decelerate religious fundamentalism and terrorism.

(Key words: terrorism, religion-based violence, religious fundamentalism, nature of religion, peace building, Indonesia)

Introduction
In the beginning of the third millennium, incidents of violence related to religious belief have occurred intensely in almost all part of the planet Earth. An impudent terror attack of the 9/11, 2001 with the inhumanly brutal destruction of the WTC in New York, was proved to be executed by Islamic-based international terror organization Al Qaeda. A series of subsequent terror attacks has followed in some part of the world, especially in Indonesia, i.e. that in Bali, Jakarta (Marriot Hotel), and another sporadic terrorism attacks that took the lives of thousand innocent people. Besides that, religion-based violence has occurred in Indonesia in many various ways from the destruction of church buildings, killing the adherents of Ahmadiyya, expelling the Shia community, and many more.

After 2010, religion-based violence and terrorism that have occurred in Indonesia demonstrate different characteristics from those before this decade. In the first decade of this millennium the acts of terrorism have been more connected with trans-national terrorism and organizations, but in the second decade of this they have been mostly related to the internal and national issues within Indonesian society itself. In connection with that, however, the relationship between religion and violence/terrorism that have and might be occurred drive a serious question as to how the religion that is generally assumed as sacred institution teaching about goodness, justice and peace has failed to implement its teachings and in some degrees has encouraged conducts that are in conflict with their main ones. It cannot be denied that there must be some degrees of connection between religion and violence that raise a
question as for why religion that generally speaking teaches about the goodness of humanity propels the behavior that is, in fact, in contradiction with its teachings.

In this article, I argue that religion-based violence and terrorism can be traced back to the religious fundamentalism that has developed itself by adding justification for violence actions that makes any peace building initiatives should minimize and prevent the spread of religious fundamentalism. In explicating this argumentation, this article will be presented in six parts. First, the background of the topic is presented in this introduction. In the second part, I will analyze the face of terrorism in Indonesia in the period after 2010. Thirdly, I will explicate about what the term of religious fundamentalism. Fourthly, I will analyze the most important factors that cause the emergence of religious fundamentalism and terrorism. Fifthly, I will bring up theological reflection on religion and violence drawing from Christian perspective. Finally, I will give some suggestions as for how to make peace building within the reality of religious fundamentalism and terrorism as its challenge.

A New Face of Religion-based Terrorism in Indonesia

In the second decade of the millennium, religion-based violence and terrorism occurring in Indonesia have different characteristics comparing to those of the previous decade. Before, they had been highly related with trans-national terrorism network primarily that of terrorist organization Al-Qaeda and focusing on the issue of combating against the Western domination with the USA as its commander. In the second decade of it, these are more likely connected with national issues although in some degrees they are still connected with international terrorist network especially with ISIS. In the previous decade these involved two different religious groups of Islam on the one hand and Christian on the other hand in conflicts that happened in Ambon, Maluku, and Poso in which the intertwined of economic, demographical (transmigration), political (regional autonomy issues) and cultural factors had played significant role in triggering them. In the second decade, these have usually been conducted by extremist radical Islamic groups in response to the developing issues in Indonesian society and government.

Researchers on terrorism in Indonesia show what factors that drive terrorism in Indonesia occurring in the second decade of this millennium. First, grounded on extremist understanding of Islamic teachings, Indonesian area is believed as a battlefield. Secondly, there is disappointment feeling to Indonesian government that is perceived to be accomplice of the West domination. Thirdly, Christianisation is on going action happening in Indonesian society. Fourthly it is generally believed among terrorist...

groups that the executor of terror bombing (suicide bomber) upon completion their action will directly become *gauhada*, or martyr.2

Along with these mentioned above, since financial sources from external/international terrorists' groups are getting weaker, terrorist groups in Indonesia strengthen themselves with financial sourced from criminal actions such as robbery of bank, ATM and gold store. For terrorist, committing in robbery in Indonesian area is consider as legitimate action that is parallel with taking *fakir* (spoils of war). In line with this, the terrorist considers that Indonesian government is *kafir*, infidel, since it runs itself on the ground of human-made ideology (*thughut*) of the Pancasila.3 While issue of Christianization is deemed to be serious one from the perspective of terrorist, Christian people are worthy to be killed.

In this decade, it is obvious that some important figures of the terrorist organizations have been vanguished in ambush of the *Densus 88*. Some of them have been prosecuted and jailed. This reality brings about another feature of terrorism that the main target of terror attack is the Indonesian police as the main enemy.4 The effectiveness of the *Densus 88*’s performance in capturing and killing the terrorist in some fire contacts in Aceh, Kudus, Temanggung, Malang, and Pusuk, making the police to be target of terrorist revenge and suicide bombing attack.

In this decade, Islamic-based terrorist organizations emerge from previous ones either as a fraction or as their continuity. *Jamaah Islamiyah* (JI) can probably be one of the most influential radical Islam organizations. It is initiated in 1993 as a fraction of *Barul Islam* (BI).5 Along with a further development regarding internal and external factors of BI, some other extremist organizations emerged from it such as *Hizb ut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) and *Koalisi Maksiat Islam* (KMI). *Jamaah Ansorut Taufid* (JAT) was established by Abu Bakar Baasyir as a rival of *Hizb ut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) rightly upon his resignation from HTI leadership in 2000.6 Another extremist Islamic-based organization is so-called *Kubu Banter*, a fraction of *Barul Islam* (BI) with its emergence related to the unsatisfactory of some members to the leaders of its mother organization in which they were not serious in sending *jihadi* forces to the conflict arena in Ambon 1999 and is believed to be the responsible group of the Bali Bomb incident back to 2002 and Australian Embassy Bomb Attack in 2003.6

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3 Ibid, p 89.
5 Diklo, *Terrorism in Perspective: An Assessment of Jihadi Project Trends in Indonesia,* *Annual from the East-West Center,* 104 (September 2012), 1-12 at 2.
7 Hwang, “Terrorism in Perspective,” 2.
It is highly crucial to note that in this decade along with the decline of terrorist action that is believed to be manifestation of jihadi, the shift on the understanding of jihadi itself occurs in the circle of terrorist groups. Some key important figures of the extremist radical groups while behind the bars of prison deem that terrorist activity with suicide bomb modus has no longer been effective in embodying the dream of establishing Islamic state of Indonesia. In fact, they are becoming more aware that terror actions can make Islam be notorious in the eyes of Indonesian society. Therefore, they proposed alternative ways for achieving their goal by emphasizing on dakwah and Islamic main teachings (tauhid and sharia) through Islamic boarding school (pondok pesantren) and recitation meeting (renggo).15

Religious Fundamentalism

The term of fundamentalism was used for the first time in the conservative Protestant circle in the beginning of the twentieth century CE in the United States of America.10 In the years of 1910 to 1912, Milton dan Lyman Stewart published a series of pamphlets by the title of "The Fundamentals," in which the term of fundamentalism was for the first time used by connecting it with a feature of religious practice, view and belief.11 Through the pamphlet, its writers aimed to defend Christian faith from the attacks of the escalating penetration of modernity occurred in the West, especially in the United States.12 Modernity as shown through history upholds rationality and considered to be the thrust to the process of secularization. It is with reason that science has been developing unlooked from the ecclesiastical authority and Christian dogmas, as it has occurred for centuries before. Meanwhile, secularization promotes the social autonomy including that of institutions from the chain of religious power.13

Three prominent elements in the development of the modernity that has been considered as serious threat for the fundamentalism is the application of historical criticism method in interpreting biblical texts, the strengthening evolution theory both in the academic and social spheres initiated by Charles Darwin, and the popularity of philosophical thought of Nietzsche.14 Historical criticism method sharply divides the concept of the Word of God from the textual forms that has been developed in its historical dynamic. In this frame of thought the Bible is not believed to be the Word of God, but rather the texts that have been developed through history and in communal

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10 Jones, "The Ongoing Extremist Threat in Indonesia," 96.
15 Rietveld, "Fundamentalism and the Resurgence of Religion," 266-70.
circle that might conceive the truth, the Word of God. Evolution theory of Darwin, simplistically speaking, emphasizes the concept that any beings have developed in the struggling process of life from their simplest form of life to the complex and then to the more sophisticated one. In this evolutionary process the fittest survival will continue to live and developed themselves to the more complex beings. The philosophical thought of Nietzsche, developed also by his students, stresses on the understanding that modern people have been reach to the coming of age. This will make humans to be independent and get freedom from the power beyond them, notably the one to whom is believed as God. The coming of age of human beings is inevitably accompanied with the "death" of God.

Along with the application of historical-critical method and the strengthening evolution theory, the fundamentalist's defend on the Christian belief includes the apologetics that the Bible is the Word of God that is inerrant, and that the Biblical geology and cosmology should be the story to be believed in, not the evolution theory. Dealing with the theory of the death of God, fundamentalist asserts that God is alive ever and forever and His presence is always relevant with human live. It is also stressed that there will be impossible to separate God from human life in any various spheres.

While protecting the Christian faith from the onslaught of three forces mentioned above, fundamentalist also promotes the core values that must be implemented in society. First, fundamentalist strongly asserts on the patriarchal moral values as the Bible teaches. In this case, hierarchical relationships among people, especially in the ecclesial context, and submissive relationship to the male are highly put into practice. Secondly, fundamentalist strongly promotes the importance of ethical behavior by social controlling especially, but not limited to, the evil conduct and social deviation. Thirdly, fundamentalist strongly emphasizes on spiritual life among Christians characterized by purity and self-controlling.

Given the explication mentioned above, some crucial thoughts on religious fundamentalism can be drawn. First, religious fundamentalism that emerged in the conservative Protestant circle in the USA constituted a religious phenomenon that its emergence has been connected within the context of society influenced and determined by the modernity. Secondly, its emergence has been propelled by developments occurred in the society that have been perceived as threat to the Christian faith. Thirdly, along with the escalating process of secularization, Christian/religious institutions lost their role in the social/public spheres. This marginalization has been perceived as one of the major threats for the sustainability of religious institutions.

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It is significant to note that the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism in the ecclesial context in the USA can be found in other religions. Thus, the term of fundamentalism can be used for the similar phenomena found in other religions. Hence, scholars in the study of fundamentalism and terrorism can discuss about fundamentalism in Islam, Jews and any other religions.\(^7\)

**Characteristics of Religious Fundamentalism**

While it is significant to note that religious fundamentalism can be found in Christianity, Jews and Islam with each distinctive features, however, it can generally be drawn some characteristics of it. By analyzing previous studies, I can bring about four salient characteristics of religious fundamentalism.

**Fundamentalism and the Holy Book**

Religious fundamentalism views the holy book as sacral, truly holy, and un-debatable.\(^8\) Moreover, religious fundamentalism does not only view that the holy book is merely a sacral book, a medium of the Holy One, but more importantly it is viewed to be the holy one itself. Hence, fundamentalism shall defend the holy book desperately from the onslaught of the side out of religious community.

While almost all of the adherents of a particular religion view their holy book as holy, however, fundamentalist goes beyond this conception; putting it as the absolute standard in life, both in individual and social spheres.\(^9\) A fundamentalist is inclined to acknowledge that human life is complicated and so putting it as the absolute standard would underestimate the complexity of humans. It also suggests that it is a naive when a particular religious book authored in centuries before to be insisted as the standard of life for our contemporary people.

Generally speaking, a fundamentalist interprets the holy book without taking its historical context seriously into account.\(^10\) This way of interpretation is highly connected with the view of the holy book as unchangeable beyond space and time. Christian fundamentalism, for example, interprets the narrative of creation as the true story that God created the world in six days as it is recorded. Islamic fundamentalism interprets the holy text on jihad by understanding it beyond space and time, namely, that jihad should be implemented as it was before. Thus, such an interpretation put a text that has been believed and implemented in a particular context in the past should be implemented in recent days universally.

**Fundamentalism as the Defender of Truth**

\(^7\) Weisberg and Pedahzur "Introduction," 4.
\(^8\) De Sade, "Assuming Cultural Freedom: Rereading in the name of God," 57.
Religious fundamentalism views that members of a fundamentalist group convincingly as part of special holy community that has been granted by the Holy One for defending the truth and purity of religious teachings justified by the holy book. Fundamentalism draws the distinctive line between its followers from other people even those who belong to the same religion. People of the same religion are judged to be those who are timid to defend the truth and religious purity from the outer side's attack. Thus, in the perspective of fundamentalism, those people should be ferried into the fundamentalist group. Therefore, on the one hand, religious community is considered less pure one, on the other one, it is considered as the community in where followers of fundamentalism might be recruited. There are many ways to ferret those people to be new member, followed by a process of purification including brain washing.

Fundamentalism also draws a distinctive line with people of different religion. Extreme Islamic fundamentalist views people of different religion as infidels and are allowed to be killed. There is no possibility for fundamentalism for accepting the difference in faith. In Christian fundamentalism, people of different religion are considered to be “not yet,” saved people for they do not believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior. They are subject for soul winning program in the evangelism activities.

Fundamentalism and Moral Values
The third characteristic of religious fundamentalism is the emphasis of the moral life based on patriarchal-hierarchical values. This understanding is un-separate with one of the absoluteness of the holy book. Regarding this issue, scholars have come to a conclusion that religious texts of religion rooted in the past circumstance. Those texts had been written in the patriarchal culture stressing on the male leadership (patriarch) as the center of the cultural and societal life. Hence it is inevitable that religious text is colored with the patriarchal culture. In short, values of patriarchal culture determined the aroma of religious text, and in turn, it shapes the moral values crystallized in religious text. For the fundamentalist, this phenomenon is taken for granted and put as the unchangeable moral values.

In accordance to the understanding mentioned above, fundamentalism takes a stand that the leader in its community should be a male, especially in the Islamic fundamentalism. Given the reality that patriarchal culture is highly connected with hierarchical relationships among humans, it is then that the (male) leader of the fundamentalist community constitutes the central position that demands obedience of his members. Therefore, the behaviors of its members are expected to be in accordance to the command of the leader. In this matter, the leader of fundamentalist community is

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21 Da Kadt, “Abusing Cultural Freedom: Grooming in the name of God,” 57.
25 Kastenrüt, “Fundamentalism and the Resurgence of Religion,” 266.
perceived to be the medium between the Holy One and the members. However, in some ways the border between the Holy One and the leader becomes blurred.

**Fundamentalism In Viewing the World**

Fundamentalism considers that the world is not ideal. However, it views that the unideal world should be changed in accordance with the fundamental belief. It can be said that religious fundamentalism comprises of utopian conception for it imagines the unattainable ideal, a social dreaming that never be achieved in the world. For Christian fundamentalism, the world is not ideal for it has been influenced and changed by modernity and the process of secularization. For Islamic fundamentalism, the world is not ideal for it has been captured by the West hegemony with its neo-liberalism and global capitalism. In this perspective, all elements of the world need to be changed radically. The pattern of thought of religious fundamentalism is structured by oppositional binary: black or white, good or evil, and right or wrong. The world is considered as that full with evil and dominated by the darkness. Fundamentalists view themselves to be God's messengers for changing the world radically in order that it can suitable with the truth of religious teachings.

The radical changing of the world can be achieved through various ways including the radical attitude of the members, radical change of public policy, and through violence and terrorism. Christian fundamentalism usually prefers to emphasize on the radical change of its members' attitude. The members are to practice moral and spiritual life more than common people. Islamic fundamentalism is more radical in manifesting the changing of the world. The involvement in the political sphere in influencing public policy can be seen in countries where the Islamic fundamentalist plays important role in it. The more radical ways has been shown by the extreme Islamic fundamentalism, namely terrorist group, by using various means including violence and killing. By radically changing the world in accordance to the purity of religious teachings, religious fundamentalism strongly believes that the heavenly order can be present in this world.

**Factors That Trigger Religious Fundamentalism**

Scholars have intensively studied factors that might trigger the emergence of religious fundamentalism for the last fifteen years. Based on these previous studies, I can come to two fundamental factors that trigger it, which are external and internal ones.

**External Factors**

Studies show that the strong influence of ongoing modernity on almost every aspects of human life globally is highly significant in triggering religious fundamentalism. The emphasis on the importance of reason thanks to the Enlightenment and the process of

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secularization that makes the role of religion has been minimized, and in turn making it marginalized. The upholding of the prominence of reason causes the religion and its teachings become subject of scientific scrutiny, or at least they cannot be taken for granted as truth as such. The authority of religion has been deteriorated as the strengthening of democratic values as it has developed in the West influences the entire world. Thus, religion becomes an institution that lost public support. In this situation, religious fundamentalism seeks to restore society by insisting the application religious teachings in it.

The hegemony of the West to the rest of world has been suspected to be another factor that triggers globally religious fundamentalism. The USA, the prominent actor of the West, exercises power upon the entire world as if it is the sole ruler of the world order. West’s values of democracy, human rights, equality between man and woman have led to crisis on the life of religion, especially that of Islam. In relation to that, it needs to be careful to read Samuel Huntington’s sketch of clash of civilization namely the “clash” between the West and Islam. Although Huntington’s idea of the strengthening weaponry can be viewed to be the West’s triumphalism, the idea of “clash” can be used to explain the growth of the religious fundamentalism, especially in the Islamic circle. When the rest of nations are powerless in dealing with the West penetration, religious fundamentalism comes to the fore as resistant power. Islamic fundamentalism, for instance, is sensitive on the threat of the West’s values and does seek to resist (and also reject) those by insisting the application of the theocracy and patriarchy that are considered to be suitable with Islamic teachings. In Indonesia, resistance of the Islamic fundamentalism towards the West’s hegemony is shown through various actions including anti-the USA demonstration.

The third external factor in triggering religious fundamentalism is the bankruptcy of secular ideology, namely socialism/Communism. It is inevitable that this third one is highly connected with the inherent part of modernism manifesting in capitalism in which it uphold the primary of wealth and capital accumulation by using various means including political power and advanced technology. The challenger of this force is socialism/Marxism; however when this ideology is brittle as shown by the ruin of the USSR it is then that capitalism becomes the sole player without its balancing power. It is likely that this hiatus is filled by religious fundamentalism by offering alternative resistant values ready for challenging the ideology of global capitalism.

32 Eidebrock, "Fundamentalism and the Resurgence of Religion," 267.
34 Kodriusko, "Fundamentalism in the Modern World," 44.
The three external factors that trigger the emergence of religious fundamentalism are accompanied by the internal one namely the unsatisfactory of religion's adherents toward their own religion that is powerless in dealing with the onslaught of the penetration of modernity's power, hegemony of the West and domination of the global capitalism. In many ways, the advocate of the religious fundamentalism criticizes the religion and its leader to be too compromised in dealing with the attack from the outside. This weak attitude of the religion is viewed by the fundamentalist group as threat to the identity and purity of religion. In Christian circle, fundamentalist views the mainstream churches are those that compromise with the world's ways. In the circle of Islamic fundamentalism, the unsatisfactory of its religion reflects in the sharp criticism of it for being too tolerant to the infidel nations. In addition, it views that Islamic countries, such as Arabic Saudi, are perceived to be too close with the western countries, especially with the USA. It also insists that Islamic teachings including that of "ummah" should be articulated in the life of politics. In more extreme Islamic fundamentalism as shown in terrorism organization, this should be manifested into the formation of the Islamic state. It is understood, then, that the final aim of the extreme Islamic fundamentalism is to form the Pan-South East Asia Islamic State, or the Islamic State (of or in Syria and Iraq) so-called IS or ISIS.

Religion-Based Terrorism

While it is significant to realize that there are various definitions on terrorism, however, scholars come to an agreement that terrorism justifies the use of violence and threat in order to achieve the goal. This can be viewed as the manifestation of its belief in the frame of extremely religious fundamentalism. It is also important to note that not all terrorists are connected to and based on religious fundamentalism, however, since the 9/11 incidence, terror based on religious belief has been escalating in numbers by using conventional and unprecedentedly means. The scope of terror area is getting wider and wider covering almost the entire globe accompanied by the growing number of victims.

In relating religious fundamentalism and terrorism, scholars find the different characteristic between Christian and Islamic ones. Religious fundamentalism in Christian circle (with the exception of the IRA) usually is not inclined toward the formation of terrorist group. In contrast to that, Islamic fundamentalism is potentially inclined to form it into terrorist group. The different trajectory between Islamic fundamentalism and that of Christianity in connection with the potential degree to become terrorist group can be connected with each tradition of faith embodied in the doctrine. Christian fundamentalism inherits theological doctrine about the separation of the state from religion, especially after the Reformation of Luther in 1517. Even

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though for some degrees it is still important to get involved in the public area, however, most of Christian fundamentalist groups are ready to withdraw themselves from politic and do focus on the life renewal of their members. In Islamic circle, the doctrine of separation of the state from religion is not recognized. In fact, Islamic doctrine emphasizes on the teaching that religion and the state are not separated in which the sharia must be the foundation of the state. Hence, it can be understood that extreme Islamic fundamentalism can be more active and progressive and even radical in materializing its doctrine supported by one of jihad by using various means including terror attack.

Recent studies on terrorism find the conclusion that terrorist organizations are usually organized under the chief leader, employing a kind of network than rigid structure. However, since August 2014, a terrorist organization reaches a level that claim itself to be a state, as shown in the emergence of ISIS or IS. The power of its leader as charismatic one lies on his fame claiming to be grounded on the truth of religion. With this character of organization and leadership, supported by the social media thanks to the information technology, terrorist organization can coverage almost all places in the world, so it becomes trans-national organization.

In Islamic circle, terrorist group, for instance Al-Qaeda, is initiated by people belong to the upper class of the royal circle, intellectuals, who have experienced the direct domination of the West hegemony. However, the members of it are recruited from various different backgrounds. Brain washing, indoctrination and military-physically training as the defender of truth are inherent part of the terrorist group. One of the most important doctrines to be emphasized is that the member or the defender of truth will be granted with eternal rewards including living in heaven with all facility. When they die in a terror mission they will be martyrs. Suicide bomb is a modus operandi in spreading public terror by which the doers show their commitment in defending the truth.

The response of the religious leaders and adherents on the terrorist organization are varies. However, most of them view that religion-based terrorism is deficient in practicing religious teachings, and on top of that it becomes disgrace to the religion. In some occasions, leaders of Islam assert that terrorism is in contradiction with Islamic teaching, hence it cannot be considered as part of Islam. Islamic leaders in Indonesia affirm that Islam is a religion that put the priority on peace in society. Therefore, according to them, terrorism with its violence action is not in accordance with Islamic teaching for it destroys peace. In sum, religion-based terrorism with violence, brutal killing, and suicide bombing actions are not only regarded as social problem but also, more importantly, religious one.

What Religion Is and For: A Christian Perspective

It is crucial to view the phenomenon of religion-based violence and terrorism in Indonesia from a Christian perspective especially regarding to what the nature of religion and how its adherents should treat and manifestate it in public sphere. This perspective consists of three main theological reflections, consists of what the nature of religion, on religion and violence, and how peace building can be conducted in the context of plural society.

First, it is highly significant to highlight a theological reflection that religion is humane construction in grasping understanding of the Transcendence. Learning from the study of sociology of religion, the existential experiences of human beings are those of dealing with uncertainty, suffering and scarcity. In these experiences, human beings make any efforts to comprehend themselves in connection with the Transcendence. It is in this frame of human experience, religion is constructed through which human beings grasp to understand the mysterious sphere that belong to the domain of the Transcendence. Hence, in existential experience of human beings it is never comprehended that religion is identical with the Transcendence; it is only a medium in grasping understanding of the Transcendence. In the Old Testament, the prophets, including Amos, are depict as ones who warn any ideas that make religion absolute and criticize any misuses of religion for the sake of itself. Religion should be used as mean to undergird humanity and uphold justice and peace.  

In accordance with this, it is highly important to view religion to be an entity that is not an end of itself as emphasized by the biblical texts. When religious rules demand that people should devote themselves to practice sacrificial offerings, it should be accompanied with treating the others especially those who are unfortunate. In the Decalogue – so called the Ten Commandments, it is strongly clear that religion is to be mean guiding people in building relationship with the Transcendence and that with the fellow human beings. It is to affirm that biblical texts recognize religion as merely an aid and never be considered as the absolute, let alone an end of itself.

An emphasis on the idea that religion is not an end of itself is also highlighted by Jesus as recorded in the canonical Gospels. In Jesus’ view religious rule of Sabbath is humanly made for the sake of human beings; therefore, on Sabbath they are to conduct good behaviour by serving the others. Moreover, they are to love one another as one of the most important commands beyond the religious rules. Important to note that it is in mind that religion is humanly created in order that human beings can live their life along with its existential experiences. Hence, it is contradictory with the nature of religion when it is misused to create humanity’s problems, such as using religion for

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41 NIV, Amos 5: 7-25.  
42 NIV, Matthew 12: 12.
killing the others. Religion are employed to serve human beings, and not the other way around, namely, human beings to be slaves of religion.

Secondly, it is crucial to understand the relationships between religion and its adherents in which religion obviously shapes their identity. It is acknowledge that religion should be a means in manifesting their relationships to the Transcendence and to human fellows, however, this should be accompanied by its role in shaping the identity of the adherents. It can be said that religion created in the process of self-understanding of human beings in turn it determines and shapes the personhood of its adherents. This self-identity is intertwined with the religious communal identity and in some aspects it becomes a determinative element of individual formation in relation to the social life. It is, however, significant to note that the self and communal identity can be dangerous since they are inclined to draw a sharp line dividing of “we” and “they,” or “our group,” and “their group,” “we are Christians,” and “they are Moslems.” In some degrees, this could lead to an attitude of neglecting the others: “we are Christian, they are Moslems, so they are not us.” At this point the religious self-identity and communal identity can be a potential element in triggering conflict and violence.

In Christian perspective, it is recognized that the sharp demarcation between “our faith” and “your faith” can be dangerous in bringing about conflict and violence since adherents of a particular religion can view that their belief and religion is superior comparing to the others. In this case, it is highly important to note that the biblical texts conceive an understanding of the unity of human beings with heterogeneity as they have been. Moreover, God, the creator of human beings, intends to give common goodness and peace to all of creatures inspire the fact of their distinctive feature. It is also affirmed that human beings who live in the same planet earth should make any efforts to live together in peace and justice. It is mandatory for human beings to recognize and accept plurality, living together shows the reality of differences. In the narrative of Jeremia 29, it is told that Israel people who live in Babylon, the land of exile, are to seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.40 In such a narrative, this biblical text undergirds that seeking the peace and prosperity of the city has to do with the peace and prosperity of all people regardless the differences of religion and race.

In the Gospels, it is affirmed that the core of religious practice is treating fellow human beings in accordance to the human dignity. Jesus underlines this by stating, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”46 Central to this affirmation is that religion is supposedly to motivate people to conduct moral actions to other people without destroying other’s religious identity. Religion, therefore, should become a driving power to enhance human beings becoming more humanly in treating

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40 NIV, Jeremiah 29:7.
46 NIV, Matthew 7:12.
the others. It is noteworthy that Jesus reiterates the dangers of religious practices in which they can motivate people to disrespect the others. He sharply criticizes people who devote themselves to religious rules and practices but neglect to pay attention to their parents and the poor. It becomes hypocrisy when people practice religious rules but kill the others and destroy the peace on behalf of religious belief. So, Jesus said “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”15 This affirmed that the practicing of religious life should be hand in hand with peace building among human beings.

Thirdly, it is highly important to highlight a Christian perspective on the peace among adherents of religions. In relation to this, it is crucial to keep in mind a statement saying that there is no peace on earth without peace among the adherents of religions. History witnesses that religion is a significant factor when merging with another intertwining factors (economic, political, race, military, etc.), violence, terror action, and war can take place. Religion obviously cannot be blamed to be the single factor in trigerring violence and terrorism, however, given the fact that most terror actions that have been happened related to religion, it is, then that it should have responsibility on this issue. One important thing that needs to be aware is that religion can be used and misused by its adherents to conduct violence and terror actions covered by holy theological legitimation. When it is justified by holy teachings, violence, however, is still violence, and terror action should be defined to be crime against humanity.

In the biblical texts, one can find narrative of violence actions abundantly. In the Old Testament, one can find violence-related actions that usually are justified to be “In accordance the God’s will,” such as, the murder of first-born children in Egypt, the demolition of the cities when Joshua and the Israelites invaded the Canaanite lands, and violence actions that had been connected to waging war in era of the kingdom of Israel. Region-based violence can be found in the New Testament texts, in fact, Jesus has been murdered by using violence modus, crucifiction. It is to affirm that the biblical texts do not deny the reality of violence and it has become a part of faith reflection. Biblical texts, however, offer a deep struggle as to how to eliminate war and violence in order to create a new order characterized with peace and prosperity in which “...they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up swords against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”16

In the New Testament, it is remarkably obvious that Jesus teaches new principles pertaining the relationships among people grounded on loving each others and non-violence attitude. One of his disciples was ready to use a sword when Jesus was

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16 NIV, Isaiah 2:4.
arrested, but Jesus prohibited him saying "Put your sword back in its place," and "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword." Violence actions including physical and psychological ones that are worthy to be avenged to guarantee justice (lex talionis) by the same actions have been transformed by Jesus' teachings to cut vicious circle of violence by applying love at its most radical way (lex Christi). His followers are to love each others and to love those who hate them. In that way, Jesus demonstrates that religious teachings that can be used for justifying violence can be transformed into teachings that motivate people to achieve the peace by using non-violence attitudes.

In short, the existence of religion should be for the propagation of the peace and prosperity among human beings in the planet of earth, and to cease violence and terrorism. When peace and prosperity in upheld, the goodness for all human beings is contended, love is manifested, and non-violence principle and ways are revealed in human relationships, it is then that religion becomes a living one. If so, this becomes a religion that serves human beings, and not the way around. It becomes a liberative religion, a means to help human being in grasping the understanding of the Transcendence. A religion that serves God is that that serves human beings.

Peace Building in Indonesian Context
Given the fact of the religious fundamentalism and its extremely manifestation in terrorism action, it is strongly important to initiate peace building in Indonesian context by fully realizing of the incidents of religion-based violences that has been escalating in numbers spreading over in Indonesian archipelago.

In initiating peace building in Indonesian context, at least three basic thoughts need to be highlighted as followed. First, it is crucial that all elements of Indonesian society, especially, but not limited to, the young intellectuals and students are to develop their religiosity by studying their own and other religious teachings in depth seriously and critically. This will encourage them to develop religiosity in un-blindly fashion enlightened by reason and consciousness that make it becomes more humane religiosity. In line with this thought, any interpretations of religious teaching should be regarded to be a challenge in deepening it and not necessarily to be put as an absolute truth. The absolute one should be God, therefore any interpretation of God including religious teachings of selection, rites and celebrations should merely be comprehended as interpretation that might (or might not) enrich our religious life. Religious figures who are probably very influential and authoritative persons should also be considered as those who are searching for the truth as another people who are doing the same thing in deepening religious teachings. Thus, their utterances, deeds and interpretations of the religious texts are not taken for granted as the things that should be implemented in life and society without critical consideration.

\[\text{NTW, Matthew 26:52.}\]
The minimal critical standard in deepening religious teachings is how far these and their interpretations might uphold peace building by promoting living together in social harmony, supporting equal justice for people, and strengthening value and dignity of human beings. Religions need to be scrutinised as to how they commit in teaching how the relationships between human and the Holy Transcendence, and how it can be embodied in the relationships among people living in the same plane. Religion should be encouraged to promote teachings on peace building and without it the desire to live together in harmony and tolerance, justice, and appreciation of human beings will thwart any humane effort in building relationship with the Holy Transcendence.

Secondly, religious figures and leaders are to be challenged seriously for developing and interpreting religious teachings by highly considering Indonesian context and strongly stressing on peace building. Religious studies have shown that religion with its elements is medium by which the Holy Transcendence might be understood by human beings, and in turn it become model and inspiration for human beings to conduct themselves. In this perspective, therefore, it is highly significant to develop an understanding that medium should not replace the Holy Transcendence. Religious fundamentalism that brings forth radicalism and terrorism falls in the attitude of making medium to be the absolute one. In other words, religious fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism replace the Holy Transcendence with the unholy medium and view the medium as the "Transcendence." Teachings of religious leaders should not replace the Holy Transcendence. In terrorist circle, the leader is believed to be a holy man and becomes the Holy one itself.

In addition to the thought mentioned above, religious texts should be threatened as contextual ones and therefore they should be interpreted contextually alike. It is generally accepted that religious texts were written in a rather different situation from that of nowadays. Emphasis, hopes, challenges, and world view of the time in which the texts were written are quite different from that of the recent time. Hence, the interpreter of any religious texts is to search for the meaning of them for our contemporary context that might give inspiration and motivation to the contemporary people (this is so-called hermeneutical enterprise). The interpreter is challenged to offer any possibilities of the understanding of the texts in upholding peace building, living together characterized by harmony and tolerance among people, acceptance of differences as inherent part of living together, and appreciate human's value and dignity.

Thirdly, it is strongly crucial for the Indonesian government as the most important policy marker to create social and political atmosphere that minimize the growth of religious fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism. One important among another things is that a situation that allow religions can function properly in society. The hindrance of it can become a nutritious land for the growth of religious fundamentalism, and even the spreading of radicalism and terrorism. Harmonious cooperation between
government and all societal elements, especially religious leaders need to be developed in an intensive level in order that the peaceful society can be manifested.

One another crucial thing government should do to prevent religious fundamentalism, radicalism and terrorism is that social welfare, justice guarantee, law enforcement and equal opportunity for all people need to be tirelessly embodied. Government should treated people without discrimination and marginalization directly and indirectly. The social discrepancy will cause people's unsatisfactory and unhappiness that might drive the seeds of religious fundamentalism grow.

Closing Remarks
In closing this article I should affirm that religious fundamentalism could be found in any religions. Four characteristics of it include its view on religious sacred text, self-identity, morality and the world. The phenomenon of modern fundamentalism is triggered by intertwined factors both external and internal ones. The external one includes modernism, penetration of the hegemony of the West and the bankruptcy of secular ideology of socialism-Marxism. The internal one comes out within the religious circle itself which disappointment of its performance in dealing with the onslaught of the outside penetration. The extreme manifestation of the religious fundamentalism is found in the form of terrorism that aims to achieve the ideological goal by permitting violence, assassinations and spreading fear among society through various means including suicide bombing.

Along with the explication of the religious fundamentalism and religion-based terrorism, I highlight that it is possible to present peace building by fully realizing the phenomena of them as the challenge for manifesting peaceful society. Three principal thoughts for peace building in Indonesian context have been offered as mentioned above. All of them suggest that people of religion need to achieve religious maturity in order that they might live their religion for presenting religious social functions properly. Religion should be practiced for the common good and for the sake of peace building. This is to assert that peace building needs cooperation among all element of society to embody peaceful society for it will never fall down from the sky.

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