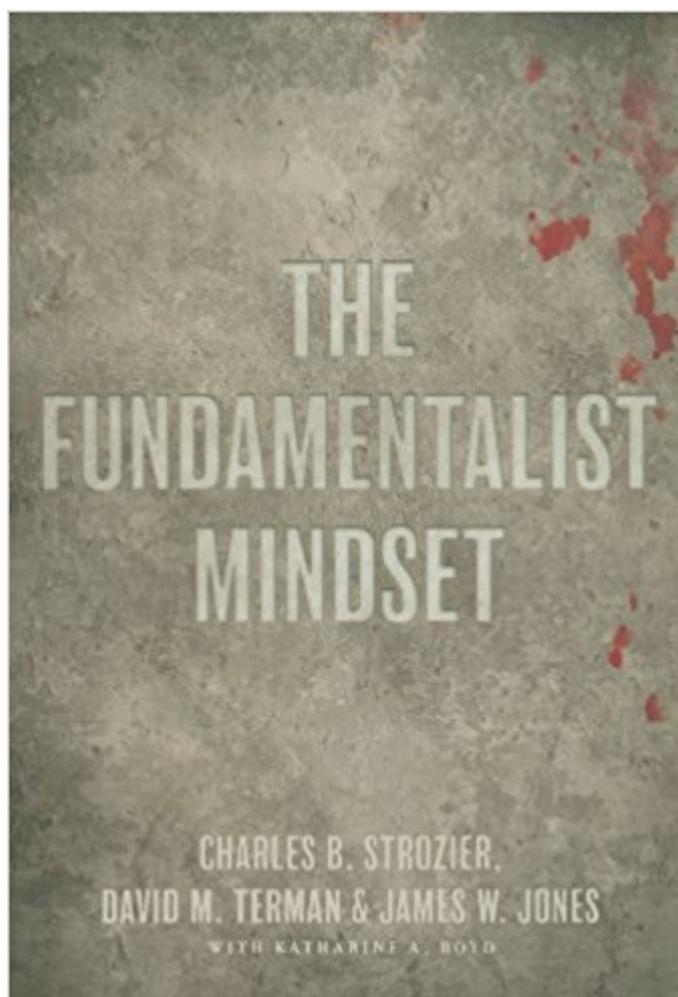


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# The Fundamentalist Mindset: Psychological Perspectives On Religion, Violence, And History



## Synopsis

This penetrating book sheds light on the psychology of fundamentalism, with a particular focus on those who become extremists and fanatics. What accounts for the violence that emerges among some fundamentalist groups? The contributors to this book identify several factors: a radical dualism, in which all aspects of life are bluntly categorized as either good or evil; a destructive inclination to interpret authoritative texts, laws, and teachings in the most literal of terms; an extreme and totalized conversion experience; paranoid thinking; and an apocalyptic world view. After examining each of these concepts in detail, and showing the ways in which they lead to violence among widely disparate groups, these engrossing essays explore such areas as fundamentalism in the American experience and among jihadists, and they illuminate aspects of the same psychology that contributed to such historical crises as the French Revolution, the Nazi movement, and post-Partition Hindu religious practice.

## Book Information

Paperback: 296 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press (April 19, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195379667

ISBN-13: 978-0195379662

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.9 x 6.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #179,780 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Fundamentalism](#) #106 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Comparative Religion](#) #119 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Psychology](#)

## Customer Reviews

"This collection is remarkable in both its scope and quality. It includes the most knowledgeable voices, always rigorous and probing, on the overall subject of apocalypticism. There is no other treatment of the subject that integrates its psychological, historical, theological, and cultural dimensions. The volume will surely be indispensable to everyone concerned with this extremely important phenomenon." --Robert Jay Lifton, author of *Superpower Syndrome: America's Apocalyptic Confrontation with the World* and *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology*

of Genocide "Is there a fundamentalist mind-set that leads to violence? The authors of this excellent volume answer yes. Their arguments are so full of insights that they will make this book the indispensable reference for future debates on this subject." --Marc Sageman, M.D., Ph.D., author of *Leaderless Jihad* "This book succeeds admirably in laying out a distinctive set of criteria for understanding religious fundamentalism. Its great virtue is the care with which it deploys the methods and concepts of individual psychology in order to distinguish fundamentalist violence from religious faith." --Constantin Fasolt, Karl J. Weintraub Professor of History and the College, The University of Chicago "The editors and contributors are to be congratulated for undertaking this interdisciplinary study... there is much here that can contribute to enhanced understanding of new religions and violence." --Nova Religio "This work will have wide appeal to those engaged in work on religion in work on religion and violence....The weakness of the book is the emphasis placed on the potential dangers of the fundamentalist mindset, with but a fleeting mention of its benefits."--Joseph M. Kemp, Drew University "[T]his is a very interesting and timely book deserving of wide attention...These are intelligent people, dealing intelligently with a very serious but slippery subject. What these people have to tell us about the first eight years of their discussion is more than worthy."--Religion

Charles B. Strozier is Professor of History and Criminal Justice at the City University of New York, John Jay College, and a practicing psychoanalyst. David M. Terman is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and Director of the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. James W. Jones is Professor of Religion and adjunct Professor of Clinical Psychology at Rutgers University. Katharine A. Boyd is a doctoral student at John Jay College, City University of New York.

Good book combining psychology and sociology to analyze the roots of fundamentalism. Academic but still accessible.

I recommend this read to anyone

Very powerful book, an inspiration for me to enroll in a psychology doctoral program.

Fundamentalist violence has been extensively studied by sociologists and political scientists but for some reason largely ignored by psychologists. This book provides a long-awaited perspective on the individual fundamentalist. For those who study terrorism, hate crimes, or any other form of

religious violence this book will be a remarkable addition to your bookshelf.

Although this is probably a somewhat difficult read for most casual readers, I found it to be engrossing. Having worked in the field of Mental Health for most of my career, this series of essays pinpoints the psychopathology behind the large number of minions who are attracted to this type of movement. They, for the most part, are not highly educated, were raised in an authoritarian environment, seek continual approval from persons that they deem more informed and charismatic than themselves and have an extreme feeling of hopelessness and despair when it actively comes to dealing with the secular environment around them. The apocalypse is an important concept that they hold onto because it not only creates an "us" against "them" mentality which adds to their 'righteousness' but provides for them an forecoming event whereby their dedication to this religious cause will be rewarded and the persons that they struggled with in life will meet their doomed fate of hell and damnation. Without saying, this is a very frightening and dogmatic group of people who, while they have been with us throughout the ages, offer a severe challenge to the democratic countries in which they reside. The last portion of the book sets aside the concerns of present-day literalists and reviews the past history of other fundamentalistic cults and their effect on society. Nazism, the French Revolution and the Hindi-Muslim conflicts in India all follow the patterns that were previously described in this text. I strongly advise all Mental Health professionals and those who are actively involved with the actions of this sect to read this book thoroughly. One cannot deal with nor overcome an obstacle before one has a solid understanding of its cause. This series of essays provides that understanding

Oh, how tediously we present ourselves, when we are academic! Not even close to most read-able book on how our crazies get that way, in terms of God and Country! This subject matter is prime for a rich and thoughtful presentation. Sadly, it gets way too much stuffy qualification and bending over backwards to cite one another's work! I read this about a month ago, and all I readily recall is just the impression I share here. I'd have to go back and search it again, if I wanted to cite one the compilation's essays in something I am writing. That's too bad, I think. I'd rather remember something vivid and insightful from a book on this big topic.

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