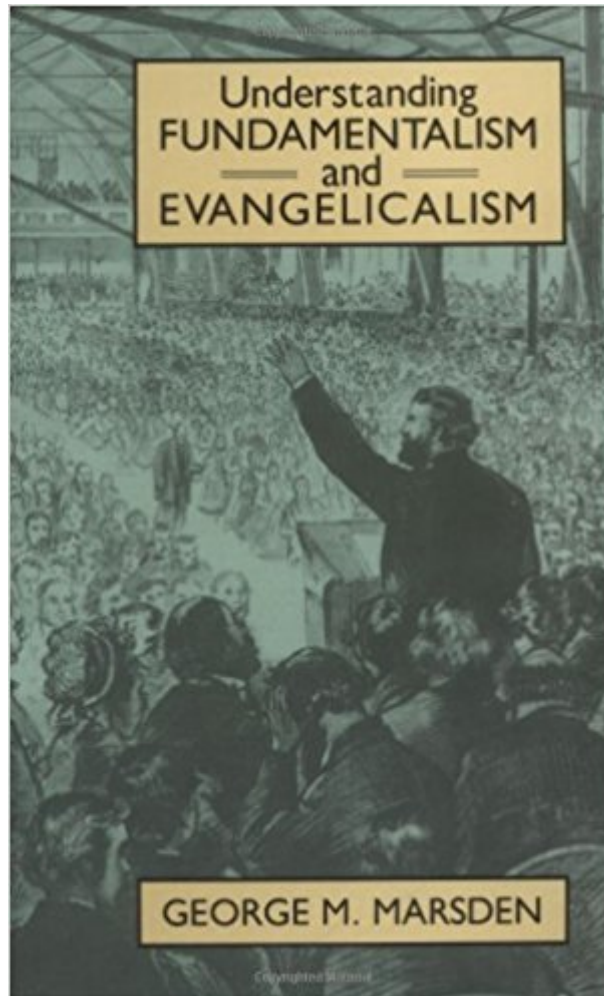


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Understanding Fundamentalism And Evangelicalism



Synopsis

In this historical overview of American fundamentalism and evangelicalism, Marsden provides an introduction to the growing religious movements and a deeper analysis of two themes that have been especially prominent and controversial in these traditions — views of science and views of politics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Marsden (American church history, Duke Univ.), who is considered an expert on fundamentalism, here looks at the interrelated movements of fundamentalism and evangelicalism. Part 1 gives a readable and informative overview of the rise of fundamentalism from 1870 on. It then examines evangelicalism as a separate phenomenon. Part 2 deals primarily with the views held by these groups on politics and science with a special analysis of why creation science is so important to them. This section also includes a close look at the career of J. Gresham Machen, a controversial fundamentalist scholar of the early 20th century. The author is especially good at showing the development of the conservative versus liberal controversy and the surprising appeal of modern fundamentalism for our technological age. Anyone who is interested in understanding this rapidly growing element in today's society will want to read this excellent analysis. Recommended for academic and public libraries.- C. Robert Nixon, M.L.S., Lafayette, Ind.Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Christian Scholar's Review "In the history-of-fundamentalism business, George Marsden remains on top." Interpretation "The work will be useful as a supplementary textbook. The clarity, organization, and detail of Marsden's opening historical overview provide excellent introduction to an extraordinarily lively subject." Choice "There is perhaps no one better able to facilitate an understanding of American Protestant fundamentalism and evangelicalism than George Marsden. . . The volume provides a helpful introduction to and interpretation of the Protestant fundamentalist movement of the 20th century and the evangelicalism that grew out of that movement. . . Marsden is successful in communicating his research and interpretations in a style that is clear and readable, even for those with little background in the subject. Recommended for both academic and public libraries." Religious Studies Review "It can serve as a review for specialists in the field and as a wonderful introduction for those who are not. Professors can put it into the hands of undergraduates with the confidence that they will profit from it." Library Journal "Anyone who is interested in this rapidly growing element in today's society will want to read this excellent analysis. Recommended for academic and public libraries."

This book is a collection of essays, written after Marsden's major work *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. It "elaborates on themes in the *Fundamentalism* volume, particularly as they shed light on recent developments." (vii) As such, this is not a seamless 'book,' though the essays are arranged in an order that makes sense. For Marsden *Fundamentalism* and *Evangelicalism* are on a continuum with considerable overlap, whereas certain *Fundamentalists* would like that line drawn hard and fast. He starts off with a historical overview, covering E/F's roots and the conflict with "modernism" (1870-1930). He then explores how the movement diverged into a more discernable E and F, though noting where they did converge. He discusses politics and science, and ends with a chapter on J. Gresham Machen. I enjoyed the book, and found it helpful in understanding the history of my own "stream" (a nice E/F mixture). I was a little surprised and disappointed with Marsden's treatment of the Young Earth Creationism issue. Usually Marsden is the epitome of cool disinterest - the neutral scholar without a dog in the fight. Though it was subtle, he seemed anxious to paint Creationists in a negative light, sometimes as "undeducated" other times as "looking for a fight." This was subtle, and I did find the 3 chapters on "science" to helpful and enlightening overall. Things are not as cut-and-dried as they may initially appear! This is a good book, but of course, if you want the full treatment, you'll need to read his main book on *Fundamentalism*, as well as the other books *Reforming Fundamentalism*, and *The Soul of the American University*.

A solid history explaining the development of fundamentalism in America and the ensuing birth of evangelicalism. Dr. Marsden knows his church history. Really, I would put it at 4.5 stars if I could.

Great and authoritative writing about the evangelical movement that once dominated and continues to influence US politics.

George was a member of the faculty while my wife and I were at Calvin College and I have always found his work intellectually stimulating. I have been inspired by this work to deepen my study of Pre-Protestant Reformation reform movements and their leaders. This book reminded me that often we don't look for the connections between various ideas and movements when we look at the multitude of Christian and other sects. Well researched and written.

This isn't an easy book for those not already steeped in the intricacies of fundamentalist Christianity, but it is worth the effort.

A clear and concise history of what fundamentalism is, its history and its relationship to evangelism that's sure to entertain and educate the history buff.

I was eager to read this book. As such decentralized movements which are made up of so many divergent groups and theological traditions, the major figures and intellectual currents of fundamentalism and evangelicalism can be somewhat obscure. This book did indeed illuminate many interesting facts and controversies in American Protestantism over the past 150 years or so, and it did give a good overview of what fundamentalists and evangelicals actually believe. All the same, I just don't think it provided too much_valuable_new information for me. Yes, fundamentalism began in the late 19th century in response to theological liberalism. And evangelicalism distinguishes itself from fundamentalism by its comparatively greater openness to science, secular culture and theological diversity. Then the book grew a bit vague and digressed into several directions, leaving me intellectually dissatisfied. As movements which were born in opposition to certain forces (Biblical higher criticism, Darwinism and overall secularism) I think it would be more interesting to know how those forces established themselves in the churches and seminaries. That revolutionary infiltration is the real story, not the faithfulness of a remnant to their traditional beliefs. And I think it would be far more useful to have studied the so-called "conservative innovations" of

evangelicalism/fundamentalism: dispensational millennialism, the Holiness movement and its child, Pentecostalism. Those have been the real vanguard ideas of American Protestantism for many decades now. In short, I think the book just left too many important aspects unexplored and questions unanswered. In addition, the confusion over the term "evangelical" remains. On the one hand, we're told that it was not in general use before the 1940s, but on the other hand we're told that evangelicalism was the dominant American religion in the early 1800s. Does modern evangelicalism really descend directly from 19th century revivalism, or is it a modern movement populated by the suburban refugees from liberal churches? I'm still not sure.

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