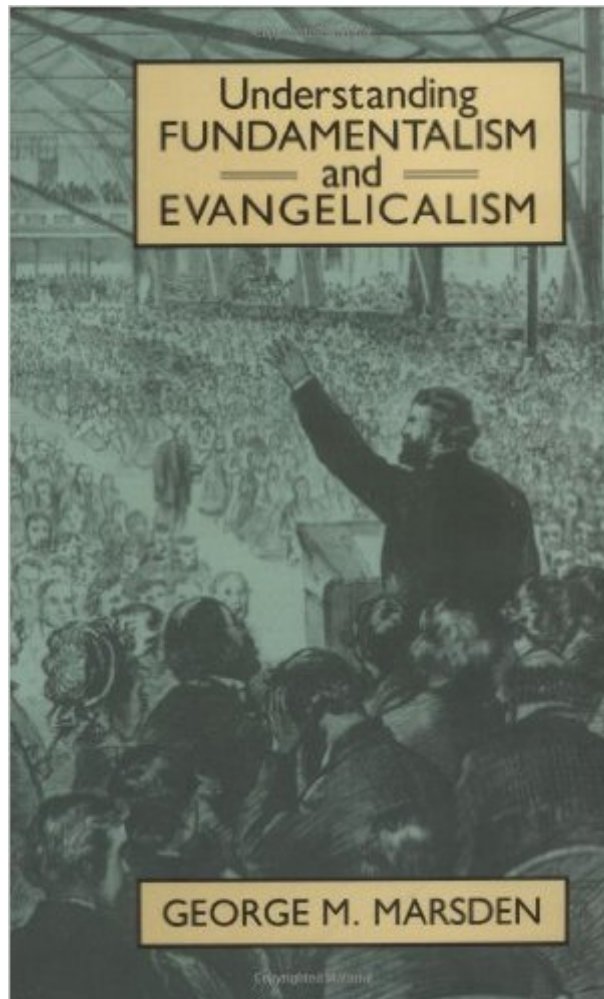


The book was found

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

Paperback: 218 pages

Publisher: Eerdmans (December 26, 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802805396

ISBN-13: 978-0802805393

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (19 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #594,322 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #131 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Fundamentalism #2958 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism #3718 in Books > History > World > Religious > Christianity

Customer Reviews

There are cultural divisions in American society which mark nearly every modern political issue. For those of us who were born in the 1950's and later, and even for some older folks, these divisions may seem confusing, even incomprehensible. How did we get here? What is all the fuss about? Where did all these "conservative wackos" come from? Just who do they think they are? We may recognize that we are divided, but many Americans don't actually understand just how deeply divided, as a nation, we really are. Nor do we understand the underlying issues that divide us, the issues which are finally at the core of many of our debates. This book provides one way of understanding these important issues, from the inside out. Marsden argues that the political and social conflicts we all see today were born out of certain features of the American religious life. He proves his case admirably, and succeeds in providing his readers with a deeper understanding of contemporary conflicts than they will ever receive from contemporary newspapers and magazines, or even from their high-school and college American history classes. All of these other sources tend to ignore religion as a factor in political and social life. For Marsden, it is central. Marsden is able to

show that our conflicts have their roots in the historical encounter of American Christians with the emerging "modern world." When American Christianity began to encounter "Modernity" -in all its many forms: developments in science, politics, academic scholarship, industry, economics, and city life- its own internal conflicts formed the patterns for the larger social and cultural divisions which are now so familiar to us all.

How i got to this book is important about how i read and review it. Started with a directed study of creation and evolution from a Christian viewpoint, see my webpage at fastucson.net/~rmwillia for more detail. After a few months of watching and participating in online debates i became interesting in what i saw to be a common element in the young earth creationist people. That was an elevation of the CED issue to one of a salvation issue. Frankly i was surprised and a little dismayed at this theological development. So i asked for help on trying to get a handle on fundamentalist theology. This was one of perhaps 5 books recommended by lots of people. The book is unusual in the mix of tone and levels of sophistication between the chapters. It stems from the fact that this small volume is primarily a collection of essays from the author's much larger multiple volume work (fundamentalism and the american culture) on the same topic. As a collection of essays, not particularly held together by design they are certainly representative of his thought, and probably the best of his work on the topic. But the chapters are not sequential or connected in a discernible way, other than the general chronological. In this case however this is not a criticism, the book flows fine anyhow. But what it does do is to make it possible to read chapters that you are primarily interested in, out-of-order, a nice feature. What is the history of fundamentalism in america and why should i care? It's a big movement 25-45% of the population by most measurements. But more importantly it represents a criticism of modernism that is hard to miss.

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