



# Understanding Fundamentalism: Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Movements

*Richard Antoun*

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Fundamentalism conjures up in the popular imagination images of violence, intolerance, literal readings of ancient scriptures, anachronistic ideas of gender and sexual ethics. Understanding Fundamentalism seeks to provide fuller, more accurate pictures of these religious reactions against the modern secular world. Comparing Christian, Islamic, and Jewish fundamentalist movements, anthropologist Richard Antoun shows how all three share common characteristics. In each tradition, fundamentalists seek purity in an impure world, attempt to make the ancient past relevant to their contemporary situation, look to move religion out of the worship center and into every aspect of life, and actively struggle against the aspects of the modern world they regard as evil. A glossary, Antoun's readable style, and an extended set of conversations with a Muslim fundamentalist make the concepts readily accessible for beginning students. For classes in religious studies, anthropology or sociology of religion, Understanding Fundamentalism brings a balanced introduction to these often misunderstood religious activists.

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