



# **Superchurch: The Rhetoric and Politics of American Fundamentalism (Rhetoric & Public Affairs)**

*Jonathan J. Edwards*

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Christian Fundamentalism is a doctrine and a discourse in tension. Fundamentalists describe themselves as both marginal and a majority. They announce the imminent end of the world while building massive megachurches and political lobbying organizations. They speak of the need for purity and separation from the outside world while continually innovating in their search for more effective and persuasive ways to communicate with and convert outsiders. To many outsiders, Fundamentalist speech seems contradictory, irrational, intolerant, and dangerously antidemocratic. To understand the complexity of Fundamentalism, we have to look inside the tensions and the paradoxes. We have to take seriously the ways in which Fundamentalists describe themselves to themselves, and to do that, we must begin by exploring the central role of “the church” in Fundamentalist rhetoric and politics. Drawing on five fascinating case studies, *Superchurch* blends a complex yet readable treatment of rhetorical and political theory with a sophisticated approach to Fundamentalism that neither dismisses its appeal nor glosses over its irresolvable tensions. Edwards challenges theories of rhetoric, counterpublics, deliberation, and civility while offering critical new insights into the evolution and continuing influence of one of the most significant cultural and political movements of the past century.

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