

Why Be Fundamental

Kevin S. Holland

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Doctrinal positions advocated by various Christian churches are rarely discussed openly in society unless they are about abortion or homosexuality. In *Why Be Fundamental*, Kevin Holland boldly delves beyond the culture war issues to explain specific core beliefs and practices. He believes most people who claim to be Christian err in their beliefs and in the practice of the religion. He covers such fundamentals as salvation, baptism by immersion, a literal Hell, the Last Supper, church discipline, and the history and structure of the true church.

Holland bases his conclusions on extensive quotations from passages throughout the Bible and, to a lesser extent, from biblical reference sources and ministers. Chapters are mostly written in a conversational style akin to church sermons, including lengthy primary scripture quotations, an exploration of related scriptures, and definitive conclusions drawn without room for individual interpretation. Within each chapter, Holland also addresses additional issues as they arise, including that drinking alcohol is actually permitted, faith healers are charlatans, and the common understanding of speaking in tongues is a fallacy. One of the more surprising statements is his assertion that the Roman Catholic Church is the “whore mother” of the Protestant churches, with the exception of the Baptist churches, which, according to his research, predate the Catholic Church.

Holland's main argument is that the majority of Christians—both alive today and throughout history—have misunderstood the Bible's “simplest truths.” In the sixth chapter, “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth,” he discusses how to properly read, understand, and teach the Bible. By placing this four-page chapter near the end of the volume, however, Holland fails to establish what the Bible is, how it was formed, why it is reliable, and how and why it should be used as the basis for all sound doctrine.

The audience and focus of the book shifts from passages that seek to call the spiritually lost to salvation to sections that attempt to correct those who have been led astray. Opposing viewpoints are often summarily dismissed as “heresy,” “ludicrous,” or “perverted.” References to opposing source documents are scant, if provided at all. The result is a muddled gospel message that largely fails to disprove other viewpoints or to make the Christian faith, as presented, desirable to non-Christians.

Why Be Fundamental is the culmination of Holland's thirty years of self-taught Bible study. Fundamentalist Baptists will likely appreciate this book as a restatement of some of their beliefs. Those interested in Christian fundamentalism will encounter a thorough review of many biblical passages, served with a forceful argument for each topic addressed. While not entirely convincing, Holland raises important issues for all Christians to consider.

WILLIAM GEE (October 3, 2012)

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