



**In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, the Scopes  
Trial, and the Making of the Antievolution  
Movement (H. Eugene and Lillian Youngs Lehman  
Series)**



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# In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, the Scopes Trial, and the Making of the Antievolution Movement (H. Eugene and Lillian Youngs Lehman Series)

Michael Lienesch

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The current controversy over teaching evolution in the public schools has grabbed front-page headlines and topped news broadcasts all across the United States. *In the Beginning* investigates the movement that has ignited debate in state legislatures and at school board meetings. Reaching back to the origins of antievolutionism in the 1920s, and continuing to the promotion of intelligent design today, Michael Lienesch skillfully analyzes one of the most formidable political movements of the twentieth century.

Applying extensive original sources and social movement theory, Lienesch begins with fundamentalism, describing how early twentieth-century fundamentalists worked to form a collective identity, to develop their own institutions, and to turn evolution from an idea into an issue. He traces the emerging antievolution movement through the 1920s, examining debates over Darwinism that took place on college campuses and in state legislatures throughout the country. With fresh insights and analysis, Lienesch retells the story of the 1925 Scopes "monkey" trial and reinterprets its meaning. In tracking the movement from that time to today, he explores the rise of creation science in the 1960s, the alliance with the New Christian Right in the 1980s, and the development of the theory of intelligent design in our own time. He concludes by speculating on its place in the politics of the twenty-first century. *In the Beginning* is essential for understanding the past, present, and future debates over the teaching of evolution.

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Review

"Lienesch's valuable book helps us understand why [creationism] continues as a social movement in American society."

-- "Journal of American History"

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"An illuminating study. . . . Easily accessible to advanced students in any field of the humanities or social sciences. . . . A remarkably successful contribution to the voluminous literature on fundamentalism."--"The Journal of Religion"

"So clearly written and argued that it should appeal to the broadest array of readers--specialists, undergraduate and graduate students, and lay persons alike."--"Georgia Historical Quarterly"

"Lienesch is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the successive waves of anti-Darwinism, right up to intelligent design."--"The Nation"

"An informative, important contribution to scholarship."--"American Historical Review"

"A valuable addition to our knowledge of the development of the fundamentalist and antievolution movement."--"Southern Historian"

"Valuable for clarifying how the antievolution movement developed."--"Journal of the American Academy of Religion"

"Advance[s] our understanding of anti-evolution in some significant ways."--"Arkansas Historical Quarterly"

"Appeal[s] to readers interested in the conjunction of science and religion. . . . Recommended."--"Choice"

"Capably analyzes one of the most formidable political movements of the twentieth century. . . . An essential treatise for comprehending the past, present, and future debates over the teaching of evolution."--"The Courier"

"In treating fundamentalism as a social movement--and in a way that is thoroughly informed by cutting-edge

movement theory--"In the Beginning" brings to light much that has been overlooked in the emergence of fundamentalism, and it offers insight into

"A remarkably successful contribution to the voluminous literature on fundamentalism that offers material not only to those who are primarily interested in the evolution of fundamentalism as a political movement but also to readers who seek greater insight

"The book is a smashing success. It is engaging, beautifully written, and it is based on painstaking archival research. The interesting characters in this historical drama come alive in the book's pages. . . . I recommend this book to anyone who wants to

"A thoughtful, well-written, and comprehensive study. . . . Scholars who study the current furor over creationism, intelligent design, and evolution would be well served to consult Lienesch to learn that the current actors are following closely in their

"Excellent. . . . A sophisticated yet jargon-free [prose] that should satisfy academics and lay readers alike. . . . The anti-evolution movement is not abating. It is Lienesch's considerable achievement to demonstrate exactly why that is so."--"Reports

"Brings new insight to the movement and succeeds in making political theory comprehensible through concrete application. . . . A wonderful model of applying political theory to real historical events to retell a familiar tale in new and enlightening ways. Lienesch succeeds marvelously at writing a book that historians, political scientists, and an interested public alike can read for enjoyment and edification."--"Journal of Southern History"

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"This book could be a case study of how social theory can be fruitfully applied to historical work to uncover what might otherwise be hidden. . . . Lienesch's valuable book helps us understand why [creationism] continues as a social movement in American society."--"Journal of American History"

"By tracing the development of the anti-evolution movement from the origins of fundamentalism to the campaign for intelligent design, "In the Beginning" is the first book to consider the movement as a whole. It should therefore be of great interest to scholars of social movements and conservative Protestantism."--"Politics and Religion"

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A remarkably successful contribution to the voluminous literature on fundamentalism that offers material not only to those who are primarily interested in the evolution of fundamentalism as a political movement but also to readers who seek greater insight into the development of American fundamentalism.--*Journal of Religion*

An illuminating study. . . . Easily accessible to advanced students in any field of the humanities or social sciences. . . . A remarkably successful contribution to the voluminous literature on fundamentalism.--*The Journal of Religion*

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Brings new insight to the movement and succeeds in making political theory comprehensible through concrete application. . . . A wonderful model of applying political theory to real historical events to retell a familiar tale in new and enlightening ways. Lienesch succeeds marvelously at writing a book that historians, political scientists, and an interested public alike can read for enjoyment and edification.--*Journal of*

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Synopsis

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Reaching back to the origins of antievolutionism in the 1920s, and continuing to the promotion of intelligent design today, Michael Lienesch skillfully analyzes the creationism movement, one of the most formidable political movements of the twentieth century. With fresh insights, Lienesch retells the story of the 1925

Scopes "monkey" trial and reinterprets its meaning. In tracking the movement from that time to today, he explores the rise of creation science in the 1960s, the alliance with the New Christian Right in the 1980s, and the development of the theory of intelligent design in our own time. He concludes by speculating on its place in the politics of the twenty-first century.

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