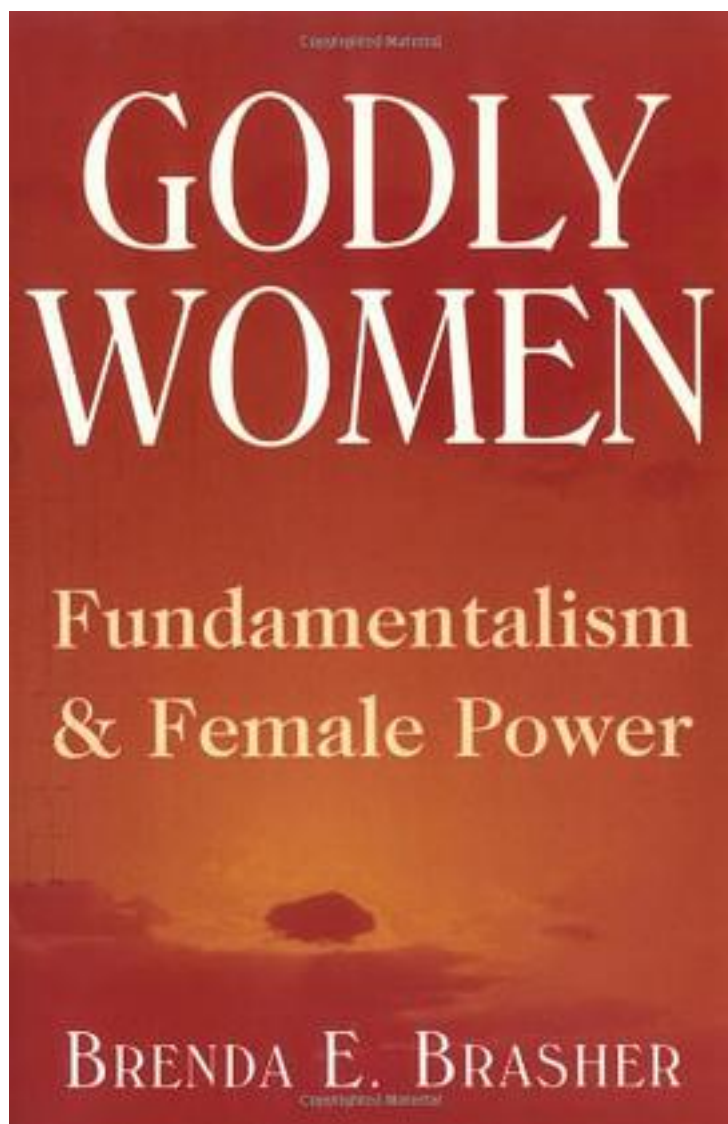


Godly Women



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Fundamentalist women are often depicted as dedicated to furthering the goals and ideas of fundamentalist men and thus of ancillary importance to the movement as a whole. *Godly Women*, Brenda Brasher's groundbreaking ethnographic study, reveals the paradox that fundamentalist women can be powerful people in a religious cosmos generally understood to be organized around their disempowerment. Brasher spent six months as an active participant in two Christian fundamentalist congregations to study firsthand the power of fundamentalist women. In addition to the narrow set of religious beliefs that constitute each congregation, she discovered that gender functions as a sacred partition which literally divides the congregation in two, establishing parallel religious worlds. The first of these worlds is led by men and encompasses overall congregational life; the second is a world composed of and led solely by women. Brasher explores how and why women become involved in this highly gendered religious world by examining women's ministries, Bible study groups, and conversion narratives. She discovers that women-only activities create and sustain a parallel symbolic world within and among congregations, which improves women's ability to direct the course of their lives and empowers them in their relationships with others. The women develop intimate social networks that act as a resource for those in distress and provide the basis for political coalition when women wish to alter the patterns of congregational life. Brasher's study sheds new light on the ideas and faith experiences of fundamentalist women, revealing that the religiosity they develop is not as disempowering as one might think. Brenda Brasher is an assistant professor of religion at Mount Union College.

作者介绍:

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